


HISTORIC LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM



A Christian reveals true humility
by showing the gentleness of
Christ, by being always ready to
help others, by speaking kind
words and performing unselfish
acts, which elevate and ennoble
the most sacred message that
has come to our world.

Ellen G. White



Editor's Letter

John J. Grosboll

The Secret of Christian Success

Many people are striving to be or become successful. Although it is important to be successful, the most important success of all is to be successful in becoming fitted to receive the gift of eternal life. If you gain this, you will gain everything; but if you fail to obtain eternal life, Jesus said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul” (Matthew 16:26)?

Like Naaman, some people think that success comes by some wonderful or dramatic action, but the truth is just the opposite of this. The secret of success is the faithful conscientious attention to what are called the little things—things that many people consider insignificant. (See John 20:6, 7 and *The Desire of Ages*, 789.) “Only by faithfulness in the little things can the soul be trained to act with fidelity

under larger responsibilities.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 356.

Heaven is a place where each citizen is constantly seeking ways to be of service to others. This world on the other hand is a place where most people serve themselves first and only serve others after themselves. None of these people will be in the kingdom of heaven: “They consent to live for the service of self, and Satan is satisfied.” *The Desire of Ages*, 130.

“In the great judgment day those who have not worked for Christ, those who have drifted along, carrying no responsibility, thinking of themselves, pleasing themselves, will be placed by the Judge of all the earth with those who did evil. They receive the same condemnation.

“Many who profess to be Christians neglect the claims of God, and yet

they do not feel that in this there is any wrong. They know that the blasphemer, the murderer, the adulterer, deserves punishment; but as for them, they enjoy the services of religion. They love to hear the gospel preached, and therefore they think themselves Christians. Though they have spent their lives in caring for themselves, they will be as much surprised as was the unfaithful servant in the parable to hear the sentence, “Take the talent from him.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 365.

This is a major reason professed Christians do not receive the Holy Spirit even when they pray for it: “The continual misuse of their talents will effectually quench for them the Holy Spirit, which is the only light.” *Ibid.*

If we want to receive the Holy Spirit we must be seeking to be about our Master’s business.

LANDMARKS

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LandMarks is a magazine of Steps to Life, a ministry established in 1988 by Seventh-day Adventists. It is dedicated to the publication of the historic doctrines held by God's true people in all ages. Its special emphasis is to present truth (II Peter 1:12)—those historic doctrines espoused by Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in the nineteenth century. Its purpose is to help all of God's remnant people to press together in unity, holding high the banner on which is inscribed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Because the powers of darkness have attempted to take control of God's last-day people through infiltration and false signs and teaching which if possible would deceive the very elect, this magazine is intended to help those believers who are contending with professed brethren over the faith once delivered to the saints. Many historic believers have established home churches where they can bring new interests and converts to hear the Three Angels' Messages instead of the New Theology. This magazine is designed to help them to defend the faith and to expose the flood of false doctrine by which the truth is being assailed in these last days.

It is the goal of *LandMarks'* editors to present articles based on truth from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Viewpoints of writers and/or contributors expressed outside of articles printed in this publication are not necessarily the views of this magazine's editors and are not endorsed by Steps to Life Ministries.

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The *Happiest* Place on Earth

By John J. Grosboll

God has told us that He created men and women for happiness, and yet the majority in our world today do not experience it.

Many people mistakenly think that happiness is dependent on some type of outward circumstance. In other words, the thought that if I had a better job, if I had a nicer spouse, if I had better health, if I lived in a better house, and another hundred “ifs,” then I would be happy. That is a delusion.

Unhappiness began in heaven—in a perfect society. Nobody was sick; there was not one who did not have enough of anything they wanted or needed. It was a perfect society. There was no defect in the society of heaven, and yet, in a perfect place, unhappiness developed, because a leading angel found himself dissatisfied. Why? He became dissatisfied for two of the very same reasons that people become dissatisfied today. First, because he could not be first and highest in com-

mand, so he became jealous of Jesus Christ, who was above him.

A couple of thousand years ago, one of the most famous men of antiquity, Julius Caesar, was leading a group of soldiers through a deep mountain valley. Julius Caesar was not only one of the most famous men of antiquity, he was also one of the most wicked. As they passed through the deep mountain valley they noticed on the top of the mountain a little village with smoke rising from the home



hearths. Julius Caesar was reported to say to one of his aids walking with him, "I would rather be number one in that little village than to be number two in Rome." This was the same problem that Lucifer had and it is all through the human race.

Lucifer wanted to be number one but God did not consent for him to be number one and he was dissatisfied. The Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, sometimes had council meetings together where the angels were not included. These were secret councils. The angels were not told what happened in these secret councils. Lucifer was jealous thinking that he should be included. Because he was not accorded supreme honor, he began to ask some questions in which he impugned the justice of God and talked to the angels about his dissatisfaction. Ellen White wrote, "He bent all his powers to allure the angels from their allegiance. The fact that he was an archangel, glorious and powerful, enabled him to exert a mighty influence. His complaints against God's government, at first met with no favor; yet being urged again and again, they were finally accepted by those who had before been loyal and happy subjects of the King of Heaven. There was not the shadow of justification or excuse for disaffection; but envy and jealousy, once cherished, gained a power that paralyzed reason and destroyed honor and loyalty." *The Signs of the Times*, September 14, 1882.

It is impossible to reason with a person once his reason has been paralyzed. That happens to human beings all the time. If you have that problem, if there are times in your life when you get so wrought up with depression or anger or any other emotion that your reason becomes paralyzed, you must overcome that by the grace of God, or you will not be in kingdom of heaven.

Lucifer told the angels that God had shown preference to Jesus Christ, to the neglect of himself. He then started telling some lies. Jesus called the devil the father of lies (John 8:14).

"Henceforth all the sweet liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end." *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 19. Eventually, the result was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God because they were discontented and unhappy. Remember, this problem started in heaven, the place that we say we want to go. But here angels are discontent because they could not look into God's unsearchable councils.

How arrogant for a created being to think that he would have a right to

succeeded in persuading approximately one third of them to rebel against the government of God, he started using down here on this earth with our first mother, Eve.

He lied about God just as he had to the angels. He also lied about herself, telling her that she was immortal and that if she ate the fruit she would become like God. Only God has immortality.

Since the fall in Eden, the devil has continued to stir up dissatisfaction among the people of the world, even among God's professed people. For example, when the children of Israel were delivered from the land of Egypt there were 600,000 men over 20 years of age, and of those 600,000 men only two of them entered the land of

Unhappiness began in heaven—in a perfect society. Nobody was sick; there was not one who did not have enough of anything they wanted or needed.

make demands on what his Creator should or should not do. This opened into a revolt and we see this same arrogance displayed by human beings today in all kinds of situations. The Bible says because of this, war broke out in heaven (Revelation 12:7–9).

The translation of the Hebrew word *Mich-a-el*, which we call in English Michael, is *One who is like God*. Michael [Jesus] and His angels fought and the dragon fought, and his angels. The war in heaven was angels against angels. Evil did not prevail. The dragon (Satan) and his angels were cast out to the earth. The very same technique that Lucifer used to deceive the angels, by which he eventually

Canaan. That is an awful record, all because of dissatisfaction.

God had miraculously rescued them from slavery but they did not trust Him. The first time they didn't have enough water they murmured against Moses saying, "Why have you brought us out of Egypt, to kill us ..." (Exodus 17:3, literal translation). They continually complained. In Numbers 11:1 it says, "... when the people complained, it displeased the LORD ... His anger was aroused ..."

Verse 4 says, "Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said, 'Who will give us meat to eat?'" They craved

their Egyptian diet, not satisfied with the manna that fell from heaven that sustained them in health for 40 years. Today, there are still people craving their Egyptian diet over the original diet that God gave mankind in the beginning.

Ellen White wrote in *The Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1906, “Do not look on the dark side. When the Israelites were content with the portion of manna that God gave, they found it sweet and full of nourishment. When they became dissatisfied, it was loathsome to them. Content is a blessing; discontent, a curse.”

there would have been no feeble one in all their tribes.

“God’s commands are never designed to make men unhappy.” *The Signs of the Times*, September 29, 1881. God never tells you to do something or not to do something for an arbitrary reason or to make you unhappy.

“They [God’s commandments] are the dictates of infinite wisdom, goodness, and love. While they secure the glory of God, they also promote the happiness of men. His restrictions are a safeguard against depravity of heart and corruption of life. The appetites and passions, indulged without re-

multitudes became dissatisfied with Him. “Their dissatisfied hearts queried why, if Jesus could perform so many wondrous works as they had witnessed, could He not give health, strength, and riches to all His people, free them from their oppressors, and exalt them to power and honor? The fact that He claimed to be the Sent of God, and yet refused to be Israel’s king, was a mystery which they could not fathom. His refusal was misinterpreted.” *The Desire of Ages*, 385. This mystery that they could not fathom caused many to leave Jesus and never come back. They became dissatisfied, one of the most successful tools of the devil.

“The world is full of dissatisfied spirits who overlook the happiness and blessings within their reach, and are continually seeking for happiness and satisfaction that they do not realize.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 640.

The reason for this is the same reason the devil had in the beginning. He wanted control as do people today. Control springs from selfishness. It is rampant in people who have not died to self, have too much idle time, and who have never been born again in the Spirit of God.

“It is in a life of service only that true happiness is found. He who lives a useless, selfish life is miserable. He is dissatisfied with himself and with every one else.” *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1907.

If we do not overcome the temptation to dissatisfaction, we will lose heaven. It is a habit that once it gains a hold in your mind will eventually lead to dissatisfaction with everything. If you were taken to heaven, you would eventually be dissatisfied with the Lord Himself.

The story of Abraham in Genesis 12 reveals the secret of overcoming the temptation to dissatisfaction. Abraham was seventy-five years old at the

How arrogant for a created being to think that he would have a right to make demands on what his Creator should or should not do.

Unfortunately, “Because of their dissatisfied, impatient, and rebellious spirit, they wandered for forty years in the wilderness.” Ibid., July 22, 1886.

“Whenever their appetite was restricted, the Israelites were dissatisfied, and murmured and complained against Moses and Aaron, and against God ...” Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1102. The Bible says that the Lord gave them angel’s food. So why were they not happy with it? “In Egypt their taste had become perverted. God designed to restore their appetite to a pure, healthy state, in order that they might enjoy the simple fruits that were given to Adam and Eve in Eden.” Ibid. If they had been willing to deny their appetite in obedience to God’s restrictions,

straint, enslave and degrade the higher and nobler powers.” Ibid.

We are living in a time when men want to please themselves without restrictions of any kind. However, any restriction that God gives is given for the happiness of mankind. This problem of dissatisfaction did not cease in the wilderness. Some hundreds of years later God’s people became dissatisfied with the guidance of the King of kings through the prophets. They told Samuel they wanted a human king. Now just think that through. They already had a King, the God of heaven, but they wanted to trade Him for a human king so they could be like everybody else. So God gave them what they wanted.

Human carnal nature can not help itself but be dissatisfied. Right after Jesus had fed the five thousand, the

time, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’ ” (verses 1–3).

God made some wonderful promises to Abraham. First, He promises He would bless him and make his name great. Today we see that has happened. Christian, Jewish and Muslim nations all know that Abraham is great and call him their father.

Abraham knew how the world would be blessed through him. Though the nations around him worshiped idols Abraham worshiped the true God. The Lord had appeared to him and explained the plan of salvation. He knew that someday the Messiah would come through one of his descendants and as a result, salvation would be available to everybody in the world. That thrilled him more than anything else. God had promised Abraham that He would bless him and make of him a great nation. But Abraham questioned how could this be, as he had no children.

“And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This one [Eliezer of Damascus, Abraham’s servant] shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be’ ” (Genesis 15:4, 5).

God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven. The Messiah would come from one of his descen-



The appetites and passions, indulged without restraint, enslave and degrade the higher and nobler powers.

dants. His name would be great and he would be made into a great nation. But that was not all. Along with these promises would be a test.

Hebrews 11:8, 9, says, “By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he would receive as an inheritance, obeyed. And he went out, not knowing where he was going” (literal translation).

Abraham packed up and left his home, Ur of the Chaldees, without knowing where he would be led. Ur of the Chaldees is down by the Persian Gulf in the southern part of what is now called Iraq. Nimrod had founded a whole group of cities there in Mesopotamia, which means *the land between the rivers*.

It was a very fertile tropical country and in ancient times a large part of the world population lived there. They were a highly civilized group of people. Modern archeology has found out some very interesting things about Ur of the Chaldees. The streets were paved. The streets in the city had lights at night. Houses were built with indoor plumbing with running water. The people did not live in tents but in houses, permanent dwellings that were built out of brick or masonry.

God called Abraham from a comfortable living from one of the most wealthy, civilized cities in the world to an unknown place and by faith he obeyed. God said, I want you to leave your country, and leave all your relatives.

Ellen White says it was no light test that was brought upon Abraham, no small sacrifice that was required of him. There were strong ties to bind him to his country, his kindred, and his home. And what was worse, Abraham was not able to explain why he was doing this or where he was going so that his friends could understand. This must have appeared to his friends and family that he was crazy.

Abraham did not question God’s instructions. When God told Abraham something, he obeyed and he did not need to ask any questions. The Bible describes Abraham as the father of the faithful. The apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:7, 29).

So, Abraham left his home and went to Haran. Eventually he landed in southern Palestine in a place that was later called Shechem.

Abraham no longer had a masonry house. There were no paved streets or city lights at night. He lived in a tent and was not dissatisfied because, “God has spoken, and His servant must obey; the happiest place on earth for him was the place where God would have him to be.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 126.

If you are a child of Abraham and you know that you are where God wants you to be, that is all you need to know and you will be satisfied. Unfortunately, dissatisfaction is still a problem for God’s children all over the world today. Have you ever met somebody who is dissatisfied with where they are? In fact, often people come to work at places like Steps

me to be? That was all Abraham needed to know.

The happiest place on earth is where God wants you to be. The happiest place on earth for Abraham was where God wanted him to be, even without the temporal comforts of the city he had left.

Then came more trials. It had stopped raining and the land was in a famine. Abraham had a lot of livestock that he had the potential of losing, as well as not being able to get enough food for his family. They were threatened with starvation. What would he do now?

Often when trials come, people start to question if that is really where the Lord wants them to be.

through some very severe trials. In Canaan he found that the whole land, populated with Canaanites, not only worshiped idols, but on the mountains they offered human sacrifices. It was a terrible place to be, but Abraham stayed, knowing that the Lord had led him there. For him it was where God had put him. There would be a purpose because the happiest place on earth for him was where God would have him to be.

My friend, if you surrender your life to God, it will cut short the thousands of problems the people of this world have, because you need to ask far fewer questions. All you need to ask is, What do You want me to do and where do you want me to live?

It worked for Abraham; he was at the place where God would have him be. He would then rest in the Lord and wait to see the bright side of what God was going to do in his life. Do you see how simple it is? You just need divine guidance in your life and you don’t need to get in all the quandary the people in this world have.

Thank God for the example of Abraham in Scripture and for the faith that he manifested. Pray that God will impart to us that same faith that Abraham had and that we may learn the lesson of satisfaction in this life and overcome the temptation to be dissatisfied. Remember, the happiest place on earth is where God wants you to be.

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

Dissatisfaction is a habit that once it gains a hold in your mind will lead to dissatisfaction with everything.

to Life and they are so dissatisfied in Wichita, Kansas, that they want us to move the ministry somewhere else. That has happened many times. We are asked why we do not move this ministry to Hawaii or some other place they would desire to be. Why not move the ministry to Colorado where there are some mountains to look at?

If you are a Christian, the question is the same as was the question for Abraham: Where does God want me to be? That’s it. If I know that, then that is all I need to know. It is not important if there are mountains, or how the economy is, or the condition of the soil, or any number of other things. All I need to know is, Is this where God wants

But not Abraham; he knew the Lord had led him there so he did not go back to where he had come from. To avoid starvation and losing everything he went as close as he could to the land of promise. He went down to the land of Egypt a while to sojourn there.

Abraham could not explain the leadings of providence and had not realized his expectations but he never questioned Him who knows all. Ellen White wrote, “God leads His children by a way that they know not, but He does not forget or cast off those who put their trust in Him.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 129.

God has always sent His children trials of various kinds to prepare them for heaven and Abraham had to go

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THE APPROACHING STORM

BY LAWRENCE NELSON

The basis for this study is found in Luke the 8th chapter verses 22–25, *first part*, which says, “Now it came to pass on a certain day, that He [Christ] went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And He said unto them, Where is your faith?”

This is a scriptural record of an actual experience which took place in the life of Jesus Christ and His disciples. They had just experienced a very busy day. Since early morning Christ had been teaching and healing. They were so busy that they had not taken time for food or for rest. To make matters even worse they were constantly being surrounded by malicious criticism and misrepresentation by the Pharisees who continually pursued Christ making His labors more severe and harassing.

So now at the close of this busy day the Lord was utterly wearied and He determined to seek a retirement in a secluded place across the lake. Dismissing the multitude Jesus and His disciples hastily set off in a boat to relieve the pressure of the crowd. Overcome with weariness and hunger Jesus lies down in the stern of the little boat and is soon sound asleep. The evening is calm and pleasant and the boat gently rides upon the lake, but suddenly a

The disciples are helpless in the face of this tempest, for Satan is attempting to destroy both the Master and His disciples. So absorbed are these men to save themselves that they have completely forgotten that Jesus is on board. Now as death is imminent they recall that it was Christ who commanded them to cross the lake and in their helpless condition they cried, Master, Master! but in such a stormy darkness they see no one and their voices are drowned by the roaring tempest. Doubts and fears grip their hearts. Had Jesus forsaken them? Could it be that He who would conquer disease and demons and even death itself could not help them now?

Again, they called for help, for the boat is beginning to sink. Another moment and they will be swallowed up by the angry waters. Suddenly there is a flash of lightning and they see Jesus lying asleep – undisturbed by the raging storm. In amazement they cry out, “Master, carest Thou not



The financial structures of this world are consolidating. Bank after bank merge together in a colossal empire.

The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.

strange darkness spreads over the lake and the wind sweeps wildly down the mountain gorges as a fierce tempest bursts upon them. The waves lashed by such howling wind dash completely over the tiny boat threatening to engulf them. These hardy fishermen have guided their craft safely through many a storm but this time their strength and skill avail nothing.

that we perish” (Mark 4:38)? Their cry arouses Jesus and in the lightning glare they see the peace of Heaven on His face. Again, they cry, “Lord, save us! We perish” (Matthew 8:25)! Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded.

Jesus arises as the waves sweep over them. Lifting His hands He says to the angry sea, “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). Immediately the stormy billows

cease their attack. The clouds roll away, the stars shine forth, and the tiny boat rests upon a quiet sea. Jesus looks around at His disciples and asks sorrowfully, “Why are ye so fearful?” “Where is your faith” (Mark 4:40; Luke 8:25)? In this life and death crisis Jesus did not ask the questions that are so often to be found in the minds of uncertainty. He did not ask like we would today, “Don’t you have a bank account that you can count on? Don’t you have some investments? Don’t you have a lot of friends that will help you? What type of insurance do you carry, and how much?” No, He asked a very personal, heart searching question: “Where is your faith?”

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe that men are justified by faith for “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6), and we believe that “faith cometh by hearing ... the word of God” (Romans 10:17). But how many of us know the faith that

will be required of each one to meet the coming storm? When we are surrounded by riots and protests leading to civil strife and war here in America and with the united evangelical movement joined against us, when suddenly every security we've ever known has vanished in a time of trouble such as never was, what good will it be then to talk about the prestige of our great institutions? the luxury of our beautiful churches which architects have built with our sacrificial money? the well-edited literature and international broadcasts that our church presents? when every religious body in this world will be against us? I ask, Are we ready for persecution, even the facing of a universal death decree? Then to discover that our very best friends, even those within the church we love, are testifying against us. When our world collapses around us, will we be strong enough in the faith to stand alone or will we be captured in total fear as were the disciples? What will our answer be when Jesus speaks, "Where is your faith?"

In Revelation 14:12 the remnant have two characteristics. They keep the commandments of God and they keep the faith of Jesus. Let's consider just for one more moment the faith of Jesus—literally. "When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the 'Master of earth and sea and sky' that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, 'I can of Mine own self do nothing' (John 5:30). He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith—faith in God's love and care—that Jesus rested, and the power of that Word which stilled the storm was the power of God," His Father. *The Desire of Ages*, 336.



Jesus arises as the waves sweep over the disciples. Lifting His hands He says to the angry sea, "Peace, be still."

Let us think now of some very serious questions which I hope will awaken your mind to the approaching storm that is so soon to break upon us. I trust we will truly keep the faith of Jesus. There is a sinister force at work in our world today to overthrow the cause of God. "The agencies of evil are combining their forces and *consolidating*. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 11. "We are on the very verge of the time of trouble, and perplexities that are scarcely dreamed of are before us. A power from beneath is leading men to war against Heaven. Human beings have *confederated* with satanic agencies to make void the law of God." Ibid., 43. [Emphasis added.]

Let's take the word *consolidation*. Never in my life span have I seen such a surge of consolidation that we now see taking place. The financial structures of this world are consolidating. Bank after bank merge together in a colossal empire. Giant corporations are swallowing up one another so that

a few are now controlling every aspect of life. Even denominational churches are consolidating so that today a few are emerging with a powerful political clout. Even the nations are consolidating. Take the North American Process Technology Alliance (NAPTA). You find the joining together of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. And then look at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in which the third world countries are joining together for their power. Look across the Atlantic to the European commonwealth. Here countries are uniting in a European union which has one currency and a tremendous trade power.

Now let's look at the word *confederation*. We hear much today of a United Nations for a new world order, and for what purpose? for peace? so that there will be no more war? Don't be fooled. Inspiration has made it clear that it is to make void the law of God producing a worldwide united power in which it will not be possible to buy or to sell unless you have the mark of the beast.



We hear much today of a United Nations for a new world order, and for what purpose? For peace? Don't be fooled.

Things are developing fast. The Lord said the last movements would be rapid ones. How is this crisis coming? *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 367: "The word of God plainly declares that His law is to be scorned, trampled upon, by the world; there will be an extraordinary prevalence of iniquity." And nobody can shut their eyes today at the evils and say this is not here. It is. "The professed Protestant world will form a confederacy with the man of sin, and the church and the world will be in corrupt harmony.

"Here the great crisis is coming upon the world. The Scriptures teach that popery is to regain its lost supremacy, and that the fires of persecution will be rekindled through the time-serving concessions of the so-called Protestant world." Ibid., 367, 368.

Did you catch that? Did you notice a confederacy between Protestants and the man of sin? Need I tell you that this just recently happened when Protestant and Catholic leadership in 1994 signed the document called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together"? An idea that was conceived by Charles

Colson, the founder of the prison fellowship and a Catholic priest by the name of Richard Neuhaus.

Christianity Today, the evangelical magazine, was so excited that it called this document the most important. It said, "All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ. Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. However imperfect our communion with one another, however deep our disagreements with one another, we recognize that there is but *One* church." [Emphasis added.] Oh, it's here, friend!

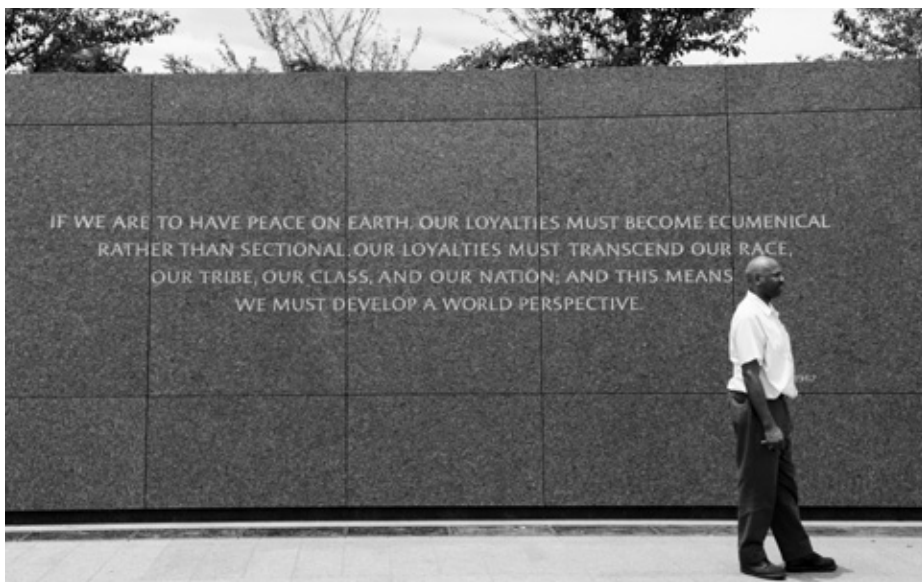
The Great Controversy, 445, says, "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common" Let me tell you, the crisis is not coming; the crisis is here now! From our pulpits is being preached peace and safety. The purpose of this great ecumenical movement is to reestablish papal power as it was before the reformation. The papacy accomplished its authority in A.D. 538 by conducting councils, conventions, and evangelical alliances and

they are using the same strategy today. "Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? And what do we see just ahead? Another general council! A world's convention! Evangelical alliance, and universal creed!" Ibid.

There have been two great Vatican councils that have been held and there are numerous evangelical alliances that are now being formed by dialogs between Catholics, Protestants and Jews. I know of this personally because one day while I was pastor in Sacramento, California, I received a call from a Catholic priest from a nearby church. He remarked that there is a great ecumenical movement now. He wanted to come speak in my church on our Sabbath day. He would then invite me to come and speak to his people on a Sunday. My answer was, no thank you. ...

Let me read to you from the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, of the Bible Commentary, pages 410 and 411: "The ecumenical movement will ... become a concerted effort to unite the world as to secure universal peace and security by enlisting the power of the civil government in a universal religio-political crusade to eliminate all dissent. SDA's envision this crusade as the great apostasy to which John the revelator refers to 'Babylon the great' (Revelation 17:5)." ...

In *The Great Controversy*, 571, are these words: "The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4). ... Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ?" And then *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 108: "To bind ourselves up by contracts with those not of our faith is not in the order of God. We are to treat with kindness and cour-



Did you notice a confederacy between Protestants and the man of sin? Washington DC, USA - A quote at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial in Washington DC. The quote is from a 1967 Christmas sermon in Atlanta, Georgia.

tesy those who refuse to be loyal to God, but we are never, *never* to unite with them in counsel regarding the vital interests of His work.” [Emphasis added.] These things will only lead to persecution. *The Great Controversy*, 445: “When this shall be gained, then, in the effort to secure complete uniformity, it will be only a step to the resort of force.”

“In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance ...” *The Great Controversy*, 573.

Did you notice those words? “To regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she lost in the Old World.”

History reveals that in Europe during the 1260 years of papal supremacy Rome was in complete control of every kingdom and every law was based on Catholic law. Do we realize what it must have been to live there? Freedom of worship as we know it today was absolutely forbidden. You could be destroyed to think differently from than that which Rome taught. Freedom as we have experienced it in our lifetime did not exist then. Approximately a hundred and fifty million were put to death as heretics. You see, the reason why the founders of America established a strict separation of church and state was to give full freedom for religious groups to flourish as their own message would grow. But today’s religious right is not satisfied with this freedom. It feels driven by the name of God to conduct its doctrinal principles into the political arena.

I was amazed to read *The Monitor* of McAllen, Texas, January 24, 1995, in which the editor said some very bold things. He talks about the political principles, for example, of

this new religious right. He says, “It tends to confine women to traditional roles proscribing any productive rights and impose public manifestations of religion such as school prayer. It is punitive in its outlook on people who receive government assistance and as a retributive view of criminal justice offering strong support for capital punishment.” Then are these words: “The religious right brooks no tolerance or possibility of divergent moral beliefs by equally religious folks. Perhaps for that reason it seems so full of hatred and intolerance, hardly biblical values, and for those who do not subscribe to its agenda, the religious right unleashes its version of the inquisition.” Here we see developing in America the beginning of the image of the beast.

Will churches seek the aid of the state? *The Great Controversy*, 443: “It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy Said Paul: ‘There’ shall ‘come a falling away, ... and that man of sin be revealed’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3). So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.”

God speaks of this in the second angel’s message when He said in Revelation 14:8: “... Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” In 1935 there was a man, Professor Beltz, who sent out questionnaires to the leading Protestant ministers throughout America. The statistics speak for themselves. These ministers of Protestant churches confessed as follows, that they believe no longer in the Bible as being trustworthy. So spoke the Baptists, 37%; the Congregational Church, 91% said they no longer believe the Bible to be trustworthy; the Episcopalians, 96%; the Presbyterians, 80%.

Thirty-five years later (1970), *Look Magazine* sent out a survey to the



History reveals that in Europe during the 1260 years of papal supremacy Rome was in complete control of every kingdom and every law was based on Catholic law. Do we realize what it must have been to live there? Freedom of worship as we know it today was absolutely forbidden. You could be destroyed to think differently from than that which Rome taught. Freedom as we have experienced it in our lifetime did not exist then. Approximately a hundred and fifty million were put to death as heretics.

students in North American seminaries, asking them a question about the Second Coming. Only one percent believed that Jesus Christ would ever return. And these are the ministers that are in the churches today. Should we be amazed when we look at the books that are coming from our presses today which are teaching the doctrines of Babylon, that we can be saved in sin, that we don't have to keep the law, that obedience is not required, that we do not have to overcome, that Jesus did it all for us on the cross? All we have to do is just believe.

We see the image of the beast developing. *The Great Controversy*, 445: "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of

the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result."

What is meant by giving life to the image of the beast? *Testimonies*, vol. 5, page 712: "When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to spring again into active despotism."

And so, in *The Great Controversy*, 449: "Hence the enforcement of Sundaykeeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image." Have we been told when it will be formed? Yes, we have. *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 8r: "The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes."

And what is the mark? "The mark ... is the observance of the first day of the week." *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 117.

And what will the enforcement of the national Sunday law do to our church? "When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate, will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 368.

And what will happen to our nation? *The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1893: "The result of this apostasy will be national ruin."

We see it all coming together. I believe as we have been told in *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 451, "The angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return." "We may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near." Ibid.

Let me tell you friend, a storm is coming. May I ask you again that personal question, Is Christ on board your ship? When the storm breaks, will the Master ask, "Where is your faith?" Will you cringe in despair or will you be able to go to sleep at night just like Jesus in that little boat, without fear in a raging storm because His faith was in His God, His Father. God give us this kind of faith today is my prayer. **LM**

For more than fifty years Lawrence Nelson served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a church pastor, evangelist, and then in Conference, Union, and General Conference leadership. When God laid upon him the responsibility to "tell it like it is" to alert the people how the church was leading them into the worldwide ecumenical movement he was forbidden to preach in any church within the Oregon Conference. Though nothing could be found in his preaching that was contrary to the doctrines of the church he was considered divisive. Thus Keep the Faith Audio Tape Ministry was born.



WHEN A CURSE IS A BLESSING

BY BRENDA DOUAY

Let us talk just a little bit about trials, difficulties, hardships—those things that we would naturally think of as unfortunate circumstances, or consider negative, things we would choose, in our human thinking and nature, to avoid. In studying this topic, we find many seeming dichotomies in Christianity, and herein is another. What looks good or right through human eyes is not good at all, and what looks unpleasant or distasteful or bad to human eyes, is the very thing that God, in His love and mercy, ordains.

We will begin our study right at the very beginning of the history of these dichotomies; the entrance of sin. Genesis 3:17: “Cursed is the ground *for your sake*; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” [Emphasis supplied.] This curse is a blessing.

We know that God is speaking to Adam and Eve after their fall, and in addressing them, He is addressing all humanity, caught in the net of sin. How is it that He pronounces a curse for our sake? What does the phrase mean “for your sake”? What do we mean when we say something is for your sake? It means that something is done or said for your good, your help, your benefit or blessing. In this Scripture God is telling us that He is pronouncing a curse for our good, our help, our benefit or blessing.

pointment, grief, and pain, and finally to death.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 59.

Oh, friends, our God of love and mercy gave freely and abundantly all that was good, that was lovely, that was pleasant, that would produce joy and happiness, and an eternal life of bliss. But man, seeing another choice and deeming it better, distrusted and disobeyed God’s explicit instructions and took that which seemed better in his own eyes. And this opened the floodgates of woe and misery and death. It brought “the knowledge of evil” to all mankind.

This is the lot in which Adam and Eve found themselves after eating the forbidden fruit. But the full consequences were hidden from their initial vision and understanding. Therefore these consequences

Life-giver. His whole purpose in this world—after the entrance of sin—is the redemption of man. Therefore, everything He does in relation to this world is in relation to His plan of redemption and that one issue—sin, and rectifying that problem in our lives.

We are going to continue reading our passage in *Patriarchs and Prophets* that indicates God’s thoughts and intentions in regard to suffering, sorrow, trials, and difficulties that come our way. “Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God.” *Ibid.*

When Adam and Eve sinned they did not understand or comprehend the nature of sin—of rebellion against God, and the severity of the consequences. God saw that they needed to be taught these things and what we read next is God’s method to teach them this truth.

“When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule. Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree.” *Ibid.*, 59, 60.

It is very painful to experience rebellion, but God saw that in order for man to comprehend the significance of his own rebellion to God, man must himself experience what it was like. There is not the least hint or shred of vindictiveness in this lesson that God has ordained. Rather it is given in the depths of Divine love. God knew we needed this lesson for our eternal salvation. This curse then, is really a blessing—a blessing for our eternal life.

Faith grows through difficulty and trial. If you want your faith to grow then welcome trials. Know that they are ordained of God for your blessing.

Let’s turn to a passage of inspiration to help us understand this seeming dichotomy. “It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good, and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree, and now they would continue to eat of it—they would have the knowledge of evil—all the days of their life. From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan’s temptations. Instead of the happy labor heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disap-

of sin “disappointment, anxiety, and toil” were, in God’s merciful, gracious, and loving plan, “appointed” [prearranged, selected, employed or allotted] them, and were intended for their good—their eternal good.

It seems possible, and maybe even likely, that Adam and Eve would have raised the very questions we so often ask when we undergo trial, difficulty, hardship, pain, or sorrow: Why?

Before we continue, I would like to consider for just a moment the greatest danger that threatens our well-being the most. It is sin—the loss of a connection with God—the

God continues, “And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man’s lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin ...” Ibid., 60. What is the sin that stands at the head of all sin? “Under the general heading of selfishness came every other sin.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 384.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “selfish” as “Having or showing concern only for yourself and not for the needs or feelings of other people.” So what does this have to do with “the life of toil and care ... being a discipline rendered needful by his sin [selfishness]?”

“And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man’s lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 60.

With what or whom does the “indulgence of appetite and passion” have to do? With self. It has to do with what gratifies “self.” What do I want, regardless of what is good for me, or my family, or my friends, or my God. What do I feel like? Will this kind of thinking ever bring happiness? “Simplicity of character and lowliness of heart will give happiness, while self-conceit will bring discontent, repining, and continual disappointment. It is learning to think less of ourselves and more of making others happy that will bring to us divine strength.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 476.

So, God ordained “the life of toil and care” to protect us against selfishness, the “indulgence of appetite and passion.” Is that a blessing, or a curse?

No sin or selfishness will be allowed in heaven. “Never will evil again be manifest. Says the word of God: ‘Affliction shall not rise up the second time’ (Nahum 1:9).” *The Great Controversy*, 504.



God, in His mercy and love, wants to teach us the consequences of sin and rebellion, and the best way is to experience it for ourselves. This can never take place in a situation of ease, a lack of trial and tribulation.

God, in His mercy and love, wants to teach us the consequences of sin and rebellion, and the best way is to experience it for ourselves. This can never take place in a situation of ease, a lack of trial and tribulation. So as we continue to read from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 60, it says, “It [that is, “the life of toil and care”] was a part of God’s great plan of man’s recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.”

Let’s look at this briefly from another angle. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6). To please God, we must have faith. Now what does this have to do with trials, tribulations, the “curse” of sin?

“But ‘we know that all things work together for good to them that love God’ (Romans 8:28). ‘All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution’ (2 Timothy 3:12). It is good for me to tread a hard and humble path, to encounter difficulties, to experience disappointments, to suffer afflictions and bereavements. The Saviour knows what is best. Faith grows by conflict with doubt and difficulty and trial.” *The Review and Herald*, August 28, 1883.

Faith grows through difficulty and trial. If you want your faith to grow then welcome trials. Know that they are ordained of God for your blessing. “Faith grows by conflict with doubt and difficulty and trial.”

We have seen that trial and difficulty under the “curse of sin” has been allowed by God as a blessing—to show us, to teach us the reality of the consequences of sin so that we will flee from it.

When you experience what in your view is a trial or difficulty, remember, it is given through the hand of Omnipotent love—for your eternal salvation. The key is—how do you accept it? Do you mumble and grumble and complain, or receive it in gratitude for what it really is—a messenger from God for your salvation—a curse that is a blessing. It is God Himself that said, “Cursed is the ground *for your sake*.” [Emphasis supplied.]

All Bible quotes NKJV unless otherwise noted. **LM**

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Ruth—Clues

BY ROB HAGAR

Across

B3	What Ruth did after the reapers	2:3
B13	The second harvest Ruth worked in	2:23
C19	A wealthy kinsman of Naomi's husband	2:1, 3
D3	Father of Boaz	4:21
D10	Ruth gathered this	2:2
E1	Ten city elders were invited to do this	4:2
E13	Boaz wanted _____ to reward Ruth	2:12
F6	Boaz discovered Ruth to be this	3:11
F17	A deal was confirmed by taking this off	4:7, 8
G2	Another kinsman feared he might do this to his inheritance	4:6
H7	Boaz invited Ruth to eat this	2:14
H13	What Orpah did on leaving Naomi	1:14
I3	Ruth hoped to find this from a kinsman	2:2
J9	Boaz told his servants to leave this much for Ruth	2:16
J18	Boaz bought Ruth to be this	4:10
K5	What the kinsman and elders did at Boaz' request	4:1, 2
L18	Neighbors gave Ruth's son this name	4:17
M2	Ruth's first husband	4:10
M13	Boaz knew Ruth had this relationship with God	2:12
N8	For Naomi, Ruth was better than _____ sons	4:15
O14	Ruth's first father-in-law	1:2
P4	Ruth born here	1:2
Q1	Boaz gave Ruth this many measures of barley	3:15
R7	Time Boaz discovered Ruth sleeping near him	3:8
S2	Boaz and the other kinsman negotiated here	4:1
S16	Ruth's sister-in-law returned to her _____	1:15

Down

A5	Ruth _____ on her face in appreciation to Boaz	2:10
A15	Number of years Naomi was away from home	1:4
B7	Ruth's mother-in-law	1:2
B13	Boaz saw that Ruth trusted under these	2:12
B21	Naomi's choice of a new name	1:20
C11	Naomi thought herself to be this (two words)	1:12
C19	Naomi put Ruth's baby here	4:16
D3	Ruth surprised at Boaz because she was this	2:10
D17	Ruth's grandson	4:17
E15	Boaz asked "Whose _____ is this?"	2:5
H5	A servant called Ruth a Moabitish _____	2:6

A	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		16	17	18	19	20	21	A
B																					B
C																					
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12	13	14	15		17	18	19	20	21	22

Answer key on page 26.

H7	What Ruth did to glean grain	2:17
H9	Amount of Ruth's first gleaning	2:17
I21	Naomi blessed Boaz for kindness to these	2:20
J11	What Naomi was to her grandson	4:16
J13	Naomi told Ruth to uncover these	3:4
L15	Naomi complained that she left home _____	1:21
L19	Ruth arrived at Bethlehem at beginning of this harvest	1:22
M2	Boaz told Ruth to stay with him until _____	3:13, 14
M6	Ruth's sister-in-law	1:4
O14	Naomi complained that she came home _____	1:21
O21	Ruth did this to Naomi when Orpah left	1:14
P9	Orpah returned to her _____	1:15
Q11	Where Naomi was while Ruth gleaned	2:18
Q16	What Ruth did with her mother and sister in law	1:9

MICHAEL'S TWO MIRACLES

Michael bent his head against the stinging north wind as he hurried home from school. Even though it was still early autumn in the southern part of Canada where he lived he knew that the wind and the gray low-hanging clouds meant snow before morning. Jersey Girl would certainly have to be put in the barn tonight.

Jersey Girl was the purebred dairy heifer that Uncle Bill had given him. "She's due to freshen soon," Uncle Bill had said at breakfast that morning.

Michael could hardly wait to see the heifer's little calf. "Maybe Jersey Girl will have a surprise for me today!" he exclaimed to himself as he hurried along.

When Michael reached home he found Uncle Bill in the barn filling the kerosene lantern. Uncle Bill glanced up, his face drawn with worry. "We'll have to let the milking go for now. Jersey Girl had her calf today, but she left it somewhere in the pasture. She didn't bring it when she came in with the herd."



Michael swallowed hard at a lump in his throat. "Do you think the calf is dead?" he asked.

Uncle Bill shook his head. "No. If it were dead Jersey Girl wouldn't have left it. The calf is alive, all right. She has just hidden it. Some first-calf heifers do that. I meant to leave her in the corral this morning, but she slipped past me."

Uncle Bill opened the barn door as he spoke, and a gust of icy wind rushed in.

The lump in Michael's throat grew. "Will the calf freeze?"

Quickly Uncle Bill nodded. "It will tonight if we can't find it right away."

Michael no longer minded the cold wind. He didn't even think about it. All that mattered now was the tiny calf huddled somewhere in the big pasture. "Where will we look first?" he asked his uncle.

"Up the washout. Because of the cold, Jersey Girl would pick the warmest spot she could find. After we've searched the washout, we'll try the grove."

Michael nodded. He knew now why Uncle Bill had brought the lantern. The thick grove of oaks lay on the back side of the pasture more than half a mile away. Darkness would fall before they could make their way there and back, if they had to go that far looking for the calf.

"We can search the washout on our way to the grove," Uncle Bill said. "This will save time. But I don't believe we will find the calf there. The grove is the most likely place."

Uncle Bill was right. Although he and Michael searched behind every rock and bush along the washout, there was no sign of a calf.

"The grove next," said Uncle Bill, "and we'd better hurry. I see snow-flakes."

Michael could see some too. Quietly he stopped and bowed his head.

"Dear Jesus," he whispered, "please don't let the snow keep us from finding Jersey Girl's calf."

When Michael had finished his prayer he looked up to find his uncle staring at him in disapproval. "We'd better not waste time," he said shortly.

Uncle Bill did not believe in prayer. He didn't believe in Jesus. This made Michael and his mother very sad. They had prayed many times for something to happen that would make Uncle Bill change, but so far he hadn't.

Michael stumbled on the path and he realized it was beginning to grow dark. Uncle Bill paused long enough to light the lantern. As he did so,

steps when he tripped and fell heavily onto a snow-shrouded bush. A snow-covered mound lay beside it. Michael put his right hand against it to brace himself in getting up. It gave way under his touch. Instantly a familiar-sounding small bawl filled Michael's ears, and a little animal sprang up and out into the path. Michael seized it with a joyful cry.

"It's Jersey Girl's calf! Oh, Uncle Bill, we've found it!"

"So we have." Uncle Bill's voice sounded strange as he took the struggling calf from Michael's arms. "We had better get it to its mother as quickly as we can."

Darkness would fall before they could make their way there and back . . .

heavy flakes of snow swirled against the yellow globe.

Soon the flakes were beating thickly against Michael's face. The path turned white. So did Uncle Bill's back and shoulders.

Michael grew frightened. "Uncle Bill," he cried, "how can we find the calf? I can hardly see the lantern, the snow is so thick!"

"It will be a miracle," Uncle Bill's voice sounded hollow. "We're at the edge of the grove now, but we could walk within inches of the calf without seeing it."

"Maybe it will bawl for Jersey Girl," suggested Michael.

"It might," answered Uncle Bill. "But it isn't likely."

"Please, Jesus, make the calf bawl!" Michael prayed as he plunged ahead on the path. He had only taken a few

Michael took the lantern and held it close to the calf. "It's so small—and so pretty!" he exclaimed happily. "It's the color of fresh churned butter!"

After the calf and Jersey Girl had been put in the barn for the night and the milking was done, Michael told his mother what had happened.

"Your finding the calf like that certainly was a miracle," she said softly. "We must thank Jesus for it."

Michael nodded in agreement. He and Mother both knelt, then before either one had begun to pray Uncle Bill slipped into the room and knelt with them.

Michael's heart nearly burst with thanksgiving as he leaned forward and whispered to his mother, "Let's thank Jesus for two miracles!"

Heaven, Please! Helena Welch,
36–41. **LM**

FINAL MOVEMENTS WILL BE RAPID

“We are living in the time of the end. The fast-fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. ...

“Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 11.

This was written over a century ago and today we see its fulfillment. The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation this month is being celebrated in unity by both the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church, confirming that the Reformation has come to an end and that they are uniting on points of mutual interest. One might wonder if Martin Luther and the many martyrs that stood for truth would celebrate with

them. How the churches have backslidden in these latter days! It is certainly a call to prayer for those that still believe that the Lord was leading those brave souls who stood for Bible truth against the tyranny of the Roman Church.

Pedestrians, enjoying the summer evening in a crowded boulevard in a tourist area in Barcelona, were mowed down in two vehicle attacks killing 15 people and wounding more than 120 others. This was Plan B of a much larger assault with explosives. According to the police, the 12-man cell’s plan for a more lethal attack fell apart after the house, filled with bomb-making equipment, blew up and they resorted to using the vehicles to carry out their mayhem. There seems to be no end to these terrorist attacks.

Natural disasters are also on the increase. In southern Texas, USA, Hurricane Harvey could be the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history with an estimated cost of \$160 billion. Over 50” of rain has caused wide-spread flooding with a staggering death toll.

Earlier in the year, flooding and mudslides in Sri Lanka left more than

150 people dead and almost half a million displaced after the worst torrential rains to hit the tropical island nation since 2003.

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

“Now as He (Jesus) sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘... And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. ... You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. ... But he who endures to the end shall be saved’ ” (Matthew 24:3-13).

If ever there was a time for the people of God to pray, it is now! **LM**

Hurricane Harvey, Texas, USA, August 2017.





Heavenly Father: What a miracle it is that Jesus died that He might cover our confessed sins and by His continued grace we may perfect a character fit for heaven. The devil is roaring to prevent this miracle so I plead for you to “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not” (Psalm 17:5). Amen.

FORGIVENESS

BY JUDY HALLINGSTAD

Forgiveness does not create character. Many believe that all they need is to be forgiven and they are ready to go to heaven. Could that belief be wrong? The following may give insight about forgiveness and character.

“In the work of restoring man from sin, there are two distinct phases, which every seeker after this restoration needs to understand very clearly and to distinguish, but which are often too little understood.

“First: Those who come to Christ are given forgiveness for all their past sins upon repentance. After man has repented and been forgiven he is not counted as guilty, but he does not yet have a good character—because forgiveness does not and cannot give character—cannot restore the image of God in man; it can only take away the existing condemnation. Therefore God could not restore the eternal life to those who receive forgiveness only, if they were to develop no character. Such people would only continue disobeying and needing forgiveness. ...

“Second: A righteous character is developed through continued obedience—through overcoming. This experience must follow that of forgiveness. This is the proof of the sincerity of the repentance. ... It is obedience which develops character. ‘Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience.’ *The Acts of the Apostles*, 561. Forgiveness may be the work of a moment, but the development of a character cannot be done that quickly.

“The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God’s power to save, are acquired by the experience of years.’ *The Ministry of Healing*, 454.

“Therefore in the present probation man is given another opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to God through obedience.

“The great controversy in heaven between good and evil was transferred to this earth. Satan said that the obedience which God required could not possibly be rendered. And

in the first probation given to man (Adam), Satan helped man to depart from obedience; and in the second probation which men now have, he does all he can to make it difficult and impossible for man to return to his obedience.

“And so all down through the ages God has been calling for obedience and helping man to obey, while Satan has been saying it could not be done, and doing all he could to prevent it. The history of the world and the church from that time to this would give the impression that Satan has been more successful than has God.” *The Place of Health Reform in Character Development*, Julius Gilbert White, 5, 6, Light Bearers “Present Truth” Ministries, 1989.

Ask God to forgive you and then make it a point to demonstrate your loyalty to God through obedience to all of His laws, health laws included. God is waiting for each of us to develop a righteous character. He is waiting for you! **LM**

Rejoice in the Lord

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Christ says to His followers, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Then let your light shine forth in clear, steady rays, Do not wrap about you a cloud of darkness. Cease to suspect others. By good works represent the character of Christ. When you are tempted to yield to despondency, look to Jesus, and talk with Him. Your Elder Brother will never make a mistake. He will judge righteously. He will guide you aright.



God is not pleased to see His children wrapped in gloom and sadness. His arm is mighty to save all who will lay hold on Him. He desires us to be cheerful, but not trifling. He says to each one of us, "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:15). God wants us to be happy. He desires to put a new song on our lips, even praise to our God. He wants us to believe that He forgives our sins, and takes away our unrighteousness. He wants us to make melody in our hearts to Him.

The "hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18) – what is it? – The hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this will satisfy the Redeemer; and it is our part to lay hold of this hope by living faith in Him. If we are partakers with Him in His sufferings, we shall be partakers with Him in the glory which will be His; for His merits have purchased forgiveness and immortality for every sinful, perishing soul. "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Our trust in this hope, purchased for us by the atonement and intercession of Christ, is to keep us steadfast and unmovable in every hour of conflict. With such a hope as this before us, shall we allow Satan to cast his shadow across our pathway, to eclipse our view of the future?

Christ values human beings with a value that is beyond any human computation. Then let us encourage faith. Take your eyes off yourself. Faith and hope are not to be centered in self: they are to enter into that within the veil, whither our Forerunner is for us entered. Talk of the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are exposed to great moral danger; and if we trust in self, looking no higher, we shall make shipwreck of faith. Do not fail

nor be discouraged. Hope is an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast when it enters into that within the veil. Thus the tempest-tossed soul becomes anchored in Christ. Amid the raging of temptation, he will neither be driven upon the rocks nor drawn into the whirlpool. His ship will outride the storm.

Close the door of the heart to distrust, and throw it open to the heavenly Guest. Put away all fretting and complaining; for these things are a snare of the devil. Let us make a pledge before God and the heavenly angels that we will not dishonor our Maker by cherishing darkness and unbelief, by speaking words of dis-

greater light will come. We must banish the spirit of complaining, and open the heart to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. There is peace in perfect submission. Peace follows grace. They work in perfect harmony, and are multiplied in progression. When the hand of faith takes hold of the hand of Christ, the expression of the heart is: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 1:3, 4).

Do not fail nor be discouraged. Hope is an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast when it enters into that within the veil. Thus the tempest-tossed soul becomes anchored in Christ.

couragement and mistrust. Let every word we utter, every line we write, be fraught with encouragement and unwavering faith. If we live faith, we shall talk faith. Think not that Jesus is the Saviour of your brother only. He is your personal Saviour. If you entertain this precious thought, you will beat back the clouds of despondency and gloom, and make melody to God in your soul. It is our privilege to triumph in God. It is our privilege to lead others to see that their only hope is in God, and to flee to Him for refuge.

Every act of consecration to God brings joy; for as we appreciate the light He has given us, more and

Open the windows of the soul heavenward, and let the rays of the Sun of Righteousness in. Look on the bright side. Let the peace of God reign in your soul. Then you will have strength to bear all suffering, and you will rejoice that you have grace to endure. Praise the Lord; talk of His goodness; tell of His power. Sweeten the atmosphere that surrounds your soul. Do not dishonor God by words of fretfulness and repining. Praise, with heart and soul and voice, Him who is the health of your countenance, your Saviour, and your God.

The Youth's Instructor, December 27, 1900. **LM**

October 2017

BETTER COME DOWN.

A man stood up in an experience meeting and said, "I have been for five years on the Mount of Transfiguration."

"How many souls have you led to Christ in that time?" inquired the pastor.

"Well, I don't know," he replied.

"Have you brought a single one?"

"I don't know that I have."

"Well, you had better come down."

When a man gets too high for service, there is something wrong.

—Selected *The Signs of the Times*,
May 27, 1897.

Crossword Puzzle (p. 19) Answers

A	3	4	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	T	16	17	18	19	20	21	A	
B		G	L	E	A	N	E	D					W	H	E	A	T		M	B	
C			L		A					T	I	N						B	O	A	Z
D		S	A	L	M	O	N		C	O	R	N			J		O		R	D	
S	I	T			M				O	G	O	D		E	S		A	E			
F		R			V	I	R	T	U	O	U	S		A		S	H	O	E	F	
G	M	A	R						L				M	S		M				G	
H		N		D		B	R	E	A	D		K	I	S	S	E	D			H	
I		G	R	A	C	E	P											D		I	
J		E	M		A		H	A	N	D	F	U	L	S		W	I	F	E	J	
K		R	S	I	T		A		U	E									A	K	
L			E			H		R	E		F					O	B	E	D	L	
M	M	A	H	L	O	N		S		T	R	U	S	T		A				M	
N	O					R		S	E	V	E	N		L			R			N	
O					P								E	L	I	M	E	L	E	C	H
P	N		M	O	A	B		G					M							P	
S	I	X		H		O		C		P			W			Y		A		Q	
R	N				M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T		E				V		R	
S	G	A	T	E			S	T		Y			P	E	O	P	L	E	S		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Dear Friend,

Our mission is to take the three angels' messages to every person in the world. If we are going to be ready for His appearing, we must be faithful in communicating the last message of mercy to a fallen world because, "no one will be registered in the books of heaven as a Christian, who has not a missionary spirit." *The Review and Herald*, August 23, 1892

Many believers are sending missionary letters and Bible studies into prisons. Others are visiting medical facilities where many receive few visitors. Have you found the mission field where the Lord wants you to minister? "Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 326.

Inspired: "Since Jesus has made such an infinite sacrifice for us, how cruel it is that we should remain indifferent. Individually we have cost the life of the Son of God, and He desires us to walk out by living faith, believing in Him with all the heart. He would have you bring the truth of God into the inner sanctuary, to soften and subdue the soul; for when Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, you will love those for whom He died. Suppose that the trump of God should sound tonight, who is ready to respond with gladness? How many of you would cry, 'Oh, stay the chariot wheels; I am not ready'? Of how many would it be written, as it was written of Belshazzar, 'Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting' (Daniel 5:27)? To be wanting in that day is to be wanting forever; for when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, we must be all ready to be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Your only safety is in coming to Christ, and ceasing from sin this very moment. The sweet voice of mercy is sounding in your ears today, but who can tell if it will sound tomorrow? How precious will be the appearing of Christ to those who have done good upon the earth. Jesus, our Redeemer, is coming back to the world, and all those who believe in Him, who love Him, and keep His commandments, will be able to say, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us' (Isaiah 25:9)." *The Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1892.

Your brother in witnessing,



John J. Grosboll

The Ostrich

By Judy Hallingstad

The ostrich is the largest and heaviest living bird. As its species name, *camelus*, suggests, the ostrich was once known as the “camel bird” because of its long neck, prominent eyes, and sweeping eyelashes, as well as its jolting walk. Also, like camels, the ostrich can tolerate high temperatures and go without water for long periods of time.

As it is so heavy, this flightless bird can never take to the skies; instead, it’s built to run. Its long, thick, and powerful legs can cover great distances without much effort, and its feet have only two toes for greater speed. Ostriches can sprint in short bursts up to 43 miles per hour, and they can maintain a steady speed of 31 miles per hour. Just



one stride can be 10 to 16 feet long—that’s longer than many rooms!

When danger threatens, ostriches can escape pretty easily by running away.

Ostrich chicks can run at speeds approaching 35 miles per hour at just a month old!

If they can’t fly, why do they have wings? For one thing, ostriches hold their wings out to help them balance when they run, especially if they suddenly change direction. Their main use, though, along with the tail feathers, is for displays and courtship. To show dominance, an ostrich holds its head up high and lifts its wings and tail feathers; to show submission, the head, wings, and tail droop down.

Unlike most birds’ feathers, ostrich feathers are loose, soft, and smooth. They don’t hook together the way feathers of other birds do, giving ostriches a “shaggy” look. The feathers can also get soaked in the rain, because ostriches do not have the special gland many birds have to waterproof their feathers while preening. Adult male ostriches have striking black-and-white plum-

age; immature birds and adult females have grayish brown feathers.

Ostriches live in groups, which helps with defense. With their long necks and keen vision, they can see for great distances, so in a group at least one of them is likely to notice danger approaching. ...

Contrary to the popular myth, ostriches do not bury their heads in the sand! When an ostrich senses danger and cannot run away, it flops to the ground and remains still, with its head and neck flat on the ground in front of it. Because the head and neck are lightly colored, they blend in with the color of the soil. From a distance, it just looks like the ostrich has buried its head in the sand, because only the body is visible. Some ostrich eggs are lost to hyenas, jackals, and even Egyptian vultures, which break open eggs by dropping stones on them. But when an adult ostrich is threatened, it attacks with a clawed foot that delivers a kick powerful enough to kill a lion. Excerpts from <http://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/ostrich>

When there is danger, we are told to, “Be still, and know that I am God ...” Psalm 46:10.





Electronic Media Evangelism

Saving Much People Alive

During the lifetime of Ellen G. White, the means of mass communication was fairly limited to the printed page—newspapers, broadsides, and books. The effectiveness of these in disseminating information was a subject of several of her remarks.

“I have been shown that the press is powerful for good or evil. This agency can reach and influence the public mind as no other means can.” *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, 214.

“We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light of truth before the people. The press must be utilized, and every advertising medium employed that will call attention to our work.” *Pamphlet 89*, 1903, 20.

“The press is a powerful instrumentality, which God has ordained, to bring the truth before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.” *The Central Union Outlook*, February 18, 1913.

She also wrote, “Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 57.

Just as the principle expressed in her counsel regarding theatrical performances must be understood today to include modern movies and television, considering time and place, so should the principle expressed in her counsel regarding the press be understood to include today’s means of mass communication—not only television, but also the worldwide web.

It is undisputable that Satan has achieved great success in using the web for his own nefarious ends. Works of evil are so easily accessible now that blatant, appalling, and absolutely shocking examples are just a mouse click away.

However, just as Joseph said in Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive,” the same principle can be applied to the Internet.

Satan certainly thinks evil against mankind and is using every means possible to lead as many people as he can to stand squarely under his black banner,

though often unknowingly to his victims.

Nevertheless, what he intends to use for evil, God can use as a means of good “to save much people alive.”

Such is the case with the Internet. Just as much evil can be disseminated by electronic means, so can much good.

To achieve this latter end, Steps to Life has begun the process of redesigning its website and adding features that can be used to facilitate the spread of the three angels’ messages around the world.

First, we are establishing an archive of *LandMarks* magazines. Users will soon be able to have access to the many and varied articles that have appeared in past years.

Second, we will offer Bible studies in two formats—one online and one via US mail.

Third, we have an online bookstore from which can be ordered many Spirit of Prophecy publications, Bibles, complete sets of Bible studies so that you can conduct studies with family and friends, books by our



Production of the television program and sermon subscriptions involves many others in addition to Pr. John. Two camera operators, a director, and an assistant are all involved in our efforts to spread the three angels' messages. After recording, the raw video has to be edited, Bible texts and Spirit of Prophecy quotes inserted, and the final version reviewed for overall quality.

pioneers, tracts, and low-cost witnessing tools.

Fourth, we "live stream" our Sabbath school (audio only) and divine worship service (audio and video) each Sabbath to enable

those who are either homebound or who have no others with whom to worship to enjoy at least some degree of fellowship with like believers.

If you would like to sup-

port our efforts to use website evangelism to take the three angels' messages to the world in our generation, please mark your 13th Sabbath offering *Website Evangelism*.



Most of the world's population now accesses the Internet via mobile devices.

Website Evangelism



In addition to the inspired preacher and Bible worker, the Lord has provided many means for spreading the three angels' messages to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Ellen G. White's day, it was

primarily by the printed page—pamphlets, tracts, tabloids, and books. Today, the methods have expanded, thanks to

the development of the Internet. While much falsehood and indeed, even evil, is being disseminated by electronic means, so too can much present truth be.

This quarter's thirteenth Sabbath appeal gives you an opportunity to support our efforts to use the Internet and our website to hasten the return of our Lord and Saviour and end the chaotic, sinful condition that prevails in this world.

Please mark your offerings *Website Evangelism*.

October Sermon of the Month

Ordinances of the Lord's House

By John J. Grosboll

Just as every organized home has regulations in place for the peace and happiness of its inhabitants, God has instituted ordinances for His house. Following these will result in receiving all the blessings heaven can supply for this life and in the life to come.

All who have donated in the past month will automatically receive this Sermon of the Month free of charge.

Question

How is the third hour of the day determined in Mark 15:25, Acts 2:15?

Answer

And it was the *third hour*, and they crucified Him” (Mark 15:25); “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the *third hour of the day*” (Acts 2:15). [Emphasis supplied.]

“The Jewish people divided the twenty-four-hour day into two great divisions—the day, the light part, and the night, the dark part. The light part was subdivided into four sections; namely, the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and the evening. The light part of the day began at six o’clock in the morning. The third hour of the day would be 9 a.m.” *Messiah in His Sanctuary*, F.C. Gilbert, 105.

The third hour of the day would be three hours past 6:00 a.m. which was the beginning of the Jewish day. Further information on this subject is as follows:

- “Day. A term used variously to mean:
1. The period of daylight in contrast to the night. In postexilic [relating to the Jewish history following the Babylonian captivity] and NT times it was divided into twelve hours

(John 11:9; cf. Matthew 20:1–12), between approximately sunrise and sunset, or dawn and dark. Thus the sixth hour was at noon. In this system, the hours were longer in the summer than in the winter.

2. The period of a day and a night, approximately the time of one rotation of the earth on its axis.
 - The calendar day was reckoned by the Hebrews from evening to evening (Leviticus 23:27, 32; cf. Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, etc.), that is, from sunset to sunset (Leviticus 22:6, 7; cf. Mark 1:32).
 - The Babylonians began the day likewise with sunset, but
 - the Egyptians [began the day] with sunrise; and
 - the Romans began it with midnight, whence we derive the custom. . . .” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, Revised Edition, 275, 276. The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979. **LM**



SUNLIGHT —AND— PHYSICAL FITNESS

Before the time of Christ, men such as Herodotus and Antyllus believed in the beneficial effect of sunlight in promoting physical fitness. They believed that “the sun feeds the muscles.” The Romans made use of the sun in training their gladiators, for they knew that sunlight seemed to strengthen and enlarge the muscles.



There seems to be conclusive evidence that sunlight produces a metabolic effect in the body that is very similar to physical training. Tuberculosis patients being treated by sunbathing have been observed to have well-developed muscles with very little fat, even though they have not exercised for months.

Beneficial effects which are apparently the same as those of an endurance exercise program can be achieved by a series of exposures to sunlight.

Resting heart rate decreases

It has been demonstrated that after a patient has been on a good endurance exercise program for several months, his resting heart rate begins to decrease (1); it has also been demonstrated that a patient's resting heart rate will decrease and will return to normal much more rapidly following exercise, if he includes sunbathing in his physical program (2).

Respiratory rate decreases

Similarly, a patient's respiratory rate not only decreases following an endurance exercise program, but it also decreases following sunbathing, and the patient's breathing is slower, deeper, and seems to be easier (3).

Lactic acid decreases

Less lactic acid accumulates in the blood during exercise following sunbathing (4) (another effect which usually follows a course of physical training).

Cellular oxygen increases

The ability of the lungs to absorb more of the inspired oxygen (and the ability of the muscle cell to utilize more oxygen) comes as the result of endurance exercises continued for at least several weeks. This means that more oxygen is available for delivery

to the muscles while exercising, and to the other body organs while at rest. After fitness has been established through a program of endurance exercises, a marked improvement in the level of energy is noticed. This results in a greatly improved, longer performance in work or play and also allows one to endure stress much better. This whole general improvement in one's physical condition has come about from an improvement in the circulation and its ability to carry life-giving oxygen out into the tissues.

Sunlight seems also to increase the blood's capacity to carry oxygen and

very clear at this point: both exercise and sunlight increase the oxygen in the tissues.

Energy and endurance increase

Fatigue is a common complaint today, but contrary to feelings, more rest may not always be the best answer. As stated previously, a good exercise program decreases fatigue and increases the capacity for work. Marked improvements in one's endurance and working capacity has also been found to follow sunlight treatments (2). The fact that sunlight seems to increase oxygen in the tissues undoubtedly

There seems to be conclusive evidence that sunlight produces a metabolic effect in the body that is very similar to physical training.

to deliver it to the tissues. A striking increase in the oxygen content of the blood has been shown to follow a single exposure to ultraviolet light. This effect lasts for many days (5). Severe, intractable bronchial asthma patients were able to breathe freely and the color of their skin returned to a normal pink following an ultraviolet light treatment (6). The blue color of a seriously ill patient suffering from peritonitis, paralytic ileus, and bronchial pneumonia, returned to a normal pink following an ultraviolet light treatment (7).

The mechanism whereby sunlight increases the oxygen content of the blood and its utilization in the tissues may not be the same mechanism by which exercise accomplishes this same goal; but one thing becomes

contributes to this effect. Another factor may be that glycogen (stored energy for the body) is increased in the liver and the muscles following sunbathing (8). This would allow for the increased endurance observed.

Muscular strength increases

Sunlight seems, also, to increase the blood supply to the deep internal organs and muscles (9). The skeletal muscles underlying the skin get an increased amount of blood when exposed to the sunlight (10). This is important in helping to develop muscular strength and will also help to prevent sore muscles when a new activity is undertaken. ...

Recently a young male patient consulted me about his elevated cholesterol. Being a muscle builder, he was



Beneficial effects which are apparently the same as those of an endurance exercise program can be achieved by a series of exposures to sunlight.

on a high protein diet and had always believed that a high carbohydrate diet would not provide the building blocks his body needed. When he was told that the ideal diet, for lowering the cholesterol, was a diet low in fat and protein and high in complex carbohydrates, he seemed rather shocked. He expressed his fear of not being able to continue on his muscle building program with this new diet. I told him about sunlight and its cholesterol lowering effect, and how it has been known for centuries to have a muscle building effect. The diet, high in complex carbohydrates with legumes and grains, would have all the protein his body could use in a muscle building program. When I saw this patient several months later and checked his cholesterol, it had fallen by over 30%. He looked well, tanned, and happy, and was enthusiastic about the progress he was achieving as his muscles had increased in strength and bulk on the new program. He was particularly pleased with the fact that he had lost subcutaneous fat. ...

Blood pressure decreases

Exercise can be of great benefit in lowering the blood pressure. In one study, 23 men who had high blood pressure were given a moderate exercise program. They did 20 minutes of calisthenics and 30 to 35 minutes of jogging twice a week. After six months on this program, they averaged an 8% drop in their blood pressure (12). In another study, 656 men who had high blood pressure were given a more vigorous program of exercise. It was found that these men had an average reduction in their blood pressure of 15% (13).

A study done at Tulane University, on the effect of ultraviolet light on blood pressure, showed that men, who had normal blood pressure, had a slight lowering that lasted one or two days following a single exposure. At the same time, a group, that had high blood pressure, had a marked lowering of the blood pressure, that lasted five or six days (14). ...

Single exposures of a large area of the body to ultraviolet light were

found to dramatically lower elevated blood pressure (up to a 40 mm Hg drop). ...

It would seem that a good exercise program, combined with a sunbathing program, would go a long way towards eliminating hypertension in this country.

The heart's efficiency increases

A good endurance exercise program will not only lower the pulse rate, but will also increase the efficiency of the heart, allowing it to pump more blood at each beat, and also allowing the heart more time to rest between beats.

Sunbathing can also increase the efficiency of the heart. In one study, the output of blood from the heart was increased by an average of 39% in the group of patients studied. The increased output continued for five or six days following a single ultraviolet light exposure (14).

Physicians use drugs to stimulate the heart, causing it to pump more blood. These drugs could possibly be eliminated in some cases if the patient were to follow an active exercise program out-of-doors in the sunlight.

Blood sugar decreases

Exercise will lower the blood sugar in a diabetic and enable the diabetic to require less insulin or medication (15). Exercise also helps those with hypoglycemia by stabilizing their blood sugars and keeping them from dropping to the point where they experience alarming symptoms.

Exposure to sunlight appears to have an insulin-like effect in that it causes a lowering of the blood sugar. This is minimal in normal individuals, but dramatic in diabetics (8, 16). When the blood sugar drops in diabetics, it is manifested by a reduction of sugar in the urine. Blood sugar is lowered by a process in which some

sugar is removed from the blood and is stored in the muscles and liver as glycogen, thus by increasing its glycogen stores, the human body can reduce its blood sugar.

This process can apparently be achieved by the sun's stimulating enzymatic reactions in the body. Initially, the sunlight stimulates an increase of the enzyme phosphorylase. Phosphorylase decreases the amount of stored glycogen. After a few hours an enzyme called glycogen synthetase starts to increase. This enzyme increases glycogen storage in the tissues while decreasing blood sugar levels. This effect continues and reaches its maximum level in about ten hours (17).

A high level of glycogen means that the body has enough reserves of energy to supply prolonged physical exercise. From this it can be seen that it would be best to take part in strenuous exercise on the day following exposure to the sunlight. A single suberythema dose (before reddening of the skin) of sunlight produces this effect and it may last several days.

Because of this dramatic effect, a diabetic may need to adjust his insulin dose when he is following a sunbathing program. ... Because sunlight combined with insulin can have a very powerful hypoglycemic effect, a diabetic must sunbathe with caution. By gradually increasing the exposure to sunlight and decreasing the dose of insulin, one may avoid a hypoglycemic reaction. A diabetic who chooses to sunbathe should always keep in touch with his physician, who can best determine his need for insulin. ...

Tolerance of stress increases

The psychological effects of training and exercise are beginning to find a prominent place in scientific literature. One study of 60 middle-aged men, showed that after an intensive, four-



A diet high in complex carbohydrates with legumes and grains, has all the protein a body needs in a muscle building program.

month physical fitness program, most were significantly more emotionally mature, more self-sufficient, and more imaginative. Others have reported an increased ability to tolerate the stresses of daily life, mood elevation, and ability to sleep and relax; and with this change, came the ability to overcome faulty living habits such as alcoholism and/or cigarette smoking (15).

Those who have had experience with the beneficial effects of sunlight, say that it not only improves the general health, but it also stimulates the appetite, gives a feeling of well-being, and enables one to sleep at night. Somehow, exposure to sunlight has a more relaxing effect upon patients than simply lying down and resting (19). ...

One very nervous patient of mine had tried everything to calm her nerves: tranquilizers, vitamins, minerals Nothing seemed to work. I informed her of the relaxing benefits associated with sunlight and suggested she try sunbathing following moments of emotional trauma. When next I saw her, she was delighted with the wonderfully relaxing effect

of the sunbaths, which far surpassed any benefit she had found from other modes of treatment. ...

Sunlight seems to have a relaxing and soothing effect on the stomach and intestines. A research report from Russia shows that duodenal ulcers are greatly improved after a course of sunlight treatments and can also be prevented from reoccurring (21).

Sunlight and exercise better than exercise alone

The fear of heart disease may be the major motivating factor in stimulating people to exercise – and for good reason. It has been known for some time that exercise “converts abnormal electrocardiograms to normal ones” (22, 23). And a study of the results of combined sunlight and exercise, showed that a group that was getting the sunlight treatments with exercise, had improved almost twice as much, as shown by their electrocardiograms, as had those who only exercised, even though both groups were on a general health resort treatment program (24). ...



Exercise can be of great benefit in lowering the blood pressure.

There is some evidence in the scientific literature that sunlight can increase the energy level in human cells (28). This could explain some of the increased physical fitness that comes with exposure to sunlight. Certainly sunlight is the source of energy for the entire plant kingdom and man may also derive direct energy from the rays of the sun. ...

It should be emphasized that, in order to achieve the training effect associated with exercise, a gradual and consistent exercise program must be maintained over a period of months. To achieve this "training effect" from sunlight, a similar gradual and consistent exposure to sunlight must be maintained. ...

How to sunbathe

One should always consult his physician before beginning a sunbathing program. He can best evaluate your particular needs and possible problems.

One's sensitivity to sunlight is the first deciding factor. ... Some can

spend hours during the summer out-of-doors and not become sunburn, while others can spend only a few minutes. Many drugs, cosmetics and soaps can so sensitize the skin that burning becomes a real problem. Generally, blonde, and red-haired people need to begin with brief exposures, and will require less total sunlight than do brunettes because the light can pass more readily through lighter skin. Dark-skinned people can spend more time in the sun initially, and then they will need to increase their exposure time, because sunlight does not readily penetrate dark skin. ...

As to how much time to sunbathe, it really comes down to a program that varies with individuals. The best way to start is by experimenting, perhaps 2 minutes on each area – front, back, right, and left side – in full summer sun, then gradually increase the exposure on each area by, one minute or longer every day. If you turn slightly pink several hours after the exposure, hold the time steady for several days and then start again in-

creasing the exposure time. It is best, when starting, to keep the time lower than necessary rather than longer and experiencing a burn. Never burn! The circumstances and the situation certainly will dictate how much skin can be exposed while sunbathing. ...

The time of day, season of the year, and latitude are all important when considering how much time to sunbathe. Elevation also plays an important part, for sunburning can take place faster at a higher elevation than it can at sea level. The amount of ultraviolet light reflected from the environment can also make a big difference. Snow will reflect about 85% of the ultraviolet, dry sand 17%, and grass 2.5%. Water is a poor reflector of ultraviolet light, contrary to public opinion. ...

In most temperate climates, it is possible to sunbathe year around if you get out of the wind with no air movement over your body. On bright, sunny winter days it is a fabulous experience to lie in the warm sun. ... Most of the beneficial effects of sunlight can be obtained without turning the skin red, so even in northern areas, winter sunbathing can be helpful. ...

During the summer, it is preferable to sunbathe earlier in the day while the air is cooler, because sunbathing can become uncomfortable as well as dangerous during the heat of the day. ... If one feels himself becoming too warm, he should move to the shade or take a lukewarm shower. ... One should not be afraid of sweating, as the sweating process cools the body and eliminates toxins, and the sweat contains substances that can absorb some of the sun's burning rays. ...

No kind of cream or lotion should be applied to the skin while sunbathing. Clear skin is the best (skin washed with plain water to remove



Single exposures of a large area of the body to ultraviolet light were found to dramatically lower blood pressure.



Sunlight can increase the ability to tolerate the stress of daily life, mood elevation, and ability to sleep and relax.

soap films and cosmetics). Fat or oil applied to the skin will stimulate the formation of cancer cells. Most of the suntan creams, butters, and lotions have fat as their base and should not be used. ...

If one burns easily, get out of the sun sooner; season yourself by graduated, day by day exposure. Used moderately, sunlight will give the skin a soft, velvety-smooth feel along with a healthy glow.

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KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

BY JOHN J. GROSBOLL

Sometimes people will experience a life-changing event that will completely turn their life upside down and they know that life as they knew it will never be the same again. Such events are described in the Bible, and there is a life-changing event that everyone must experience if they are going to have eternal life. However, not everybody experiences it in the same way.

The stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was a pivotal turning point in the history of the Christian church. Before that event, the apostles preached the gospel almost exclusively to the Jews. In fact, we do not have a record of the apostles preaching the gospel to non-Jews up until that time. But, after the stoning

of Stephen, it is very clear in the book of Acts that the gospel then went to the Gentiles.

This opening of the gospel to the Gentiles met with severe opposition, for the Jews did not want the Christian church to exist. In fact, they set out to destroy it so that there would be no Christians left. One of the chief persecutors was a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus. The first mention in Scripture of this man is at the time of the stoning of Stephen. It says, "They (the Jews) cast him (Stephen) out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man, first named Saul" (Acts 7:58). In Acts 8:1, *first part*, it says that "... Saul was consenting to his death."

"Saul of Tarsus was present [at Stephen's trial] and took a leading part against Stephen. He brought the weight of eloquence and the logic of the rabbis to bear upon the case, to convince the people that Stephen was preaching delusive and dangerous doctrines" *The Acts of the Apostles*, 98. "At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:1, *second part-3*).

Saul tried to destroy the Christian church by putting Christians in prison and having the leaders killed to stop the spread of what he deemed to be a terrible so-called heresy. Now, Saul was greatly esteemed by the Jewish nation because of his zeal. He, a learned and zealous rabbi, had become a member of the Sanhedrin counsel. He was a mighty instrument in the hand of Satan, used to carry out the rebellion against the Son of God.

However, things would soon change. The very person who was the leading persecutor of the Christian church would become the leading Christian apologist, the leading Christian apostle and proponent of the Christian religion. This story is stranger than fiction. It is a story in which we see that there is Someone mightier than Satan, who had selected the very person who led the persecution of the Christian church to become the leader of the Christian religion. This man would later write more than half the books of the New Testament.

The Bible records Stephen's death this way: "He, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) standing at the right hand of God'" (Acts 7:55, 56)! It says that, "all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15).

Stephen died, but he did not die a defeated man. He died a conqueror. He said, "I see the heavens opened." He said that he saw the Son of Man "standing at the right hand of the throne of God." Saul and the Jewish leaders could not stand to hear that, for it was contrary to their beliefs, especially the Sadducees who taught that

there was no such thing as a resurrection from the dead. When Saul witnessed this man's faith, it shook him.

"The mind of Saul was greatly stirred by the triumphant death of Stephen. He was shaken in his prejudice; but the opinions and arguments of the priests and rulers finally convinced him that Stephen was a blasphemer; that Jesus Christ whom he preached was an imposter, and that those ministering in holy offices must be right." *The Story of Redemption*, 268.

Saul was a man of decided mind and determined purpose and he became very bitter in his opposition to Christianity that he considered now to be a delusion. He had it entirely settled in his mind that the views of the

be tried and punished. So he set out, as recorded in Acts 9:1, 2: "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way (Christians), whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

He set out on his way full of the vigor of manhood and the fire of a mistaken zeal that has possessed millions upon millions of men and women down through the ages. When you study history, you find very often the worst persecutors of all time have been those who believed that what they were doing was for the glory

The mind of Saul was greatly stirred by the triumphant death of Stephen. He was shaken in his prejudice.

priests and the scribes were right, and his zeal led him to voluntarily engage in persecuting the believers. He made havoc of the church, going everywhere, and putting men and women in prison. He caused the Christians to be dragged before judicial councils. Some were imprisoned and some were condemned to death without evidence of any offence, except the fact that they had faith in Jesus.

Having to travel to Damascus upon his own business, Saul decided that he would accomplish a double purpose. He would obtain letters from the high priest to be read in the synagogues that would authorize him to seize all who were suspected of being believers in Jesus and send them by messengers to Jerusalem, to

of God. The cry of persecutors for thousands of years has been, "We have to get rid of these people so that they won't deceive the rest of the people in the world."

Saul and his companions had to travel over a desolate, dry desert region to reach their destination. But as they neared Damascus, they looked upon the fertile land, beautiful gardens, fruitful orchards, and cool streams. It was a very refreshing scene on which to look after such a wearisome journey.

"As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'

“And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads [pricks].’” (Acts 9:3–5).

The scene was one of greatest confusion. The companions of Saul were stricken with terror, and almost blinded by the intensity of the light. They heard the voice, but they did not see anybody. To them it was all unintelligible and mysterious, but Saul, lying prostrate on the ground, understood exactly the words that were spoken. He

Is your faith founded in an intelligent knowledge of the word of God, that you have studied and read for yourself, or is your faith just anchored in what somebody has said, or what some group of people have said? That was the problem with Saul. His faith had been in what the religious leaders had told him. His faith was in the religious leaders that he talked to himself. He thought that these “holy men” would not be wrong.

Millions of people through the ages have been misled by placing their faith

that the priests and rulers had said was blasphemy.

In those few moments of illumination, Saul’s mind reacted with remarkable rapidity. Your mind can work very rapidly in certain situations. Perhaps you have met people who just before a car accident, or before some other traumatic event, have later recalled, “My whole life history went before my mind.” It is an event like that which happened to Saul of Tarsus. He traced quickly through prophetic history and realized that in the Old Testament it was predicted that the Messiah would be rejected by the Jews. He knew those prophecies in Isaiah. He thought through the prophets of the Old Testament who had predicted the crucifixion of Jesus. He knew those prophecies in the Psalms.

He thought through the prophecies predicting the resurrection of Jesus. He also knew the prophecy in the Psalms that predicted the ascension of Jesus upon high, with a multitude of captives that had been freed from captivity. He saw that all this had been foretold by the prophets, and proved that Jesus Christ really was the Messiah. He remembered again the words of Stephen, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” And he knew then that the dying saint whose death to which he had consented had looked upon the kingdom of Glory. In a moment, the scales had been lifted from his eyes and now he understood.

What a revelation it was. It was light, clear but also terrible. Christ was revealed to him as having come to earth and having fulfilled his mission, being rejected, abused, condemned, and crucified by those that He came to save, but also as having risen from the dead, and having ascended into the heavens. In that terrible moment, Saul remembered that the holy man,

When you study history, you find very often the worst persecutors of all time have been those who believed that what they were doing was for the glory of God.

saw before him a Being brighter than the light of the sun, and the image of that glorified Being was indelibly marked upon his mind, and His words struck home to his heart with appalling force. A flood of light poured into his darkened mind, revealing his ignorance and error. He saw that while he had imagined himself to be zealously serving God in persecuting the followers of Christ, he had actually been doing the work of Satan. He saw his folly in resting his faith upon the assurances of the priests and rulers.

Oh, friend, are you aware that there are millions of people today, who can give you no other reason for what they believe than that it was told them by some religious teacher? They have never checked in the Bible for themselves to find out if what they believe is true? Where is your faith? In the word of man, or the word of God?

in men that they called “holy,” that led them directly contrary to what the Bible says. Jesus, talking to the Jews about this very problem, said, “Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). They were reading a book about Jesus and when He was there they did not recognize Him.

These priests and rulers in sacred office had great influence over the mind of Saul, and they had caused him to believe that the story of the resurrection was an artful fabrication of the disciples of Jesus. But now, he had seen Jesus Christ Himself, a glorified being, brighter than the light of the sun. And then suddenly, the forcible sermon of Stephen was brought again to his mind. He now understood the truth of the dying words that Stephen had exclaimed and

Stephen, had been stoned with his consent. It was through his instrumentality that not only Stephen, but other Christians, had met their death by cruel persecution. "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' (Acts 9:6, *first part*)? That is never a bad question to ask. "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

"Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do'" (verse 6, *last part*). Jesus had spoken to him. There was no doubt in his mind who this was. The person had identified Himself as Jesus. He said, "I'm Jesus, whom you are persecuting." He knew now. He knew that this Jesus was the Messiah, that He was the One who had come to this world to save anyone who was willing to be saved from sin and give them the opportunity to have eternal life.

He was the Consolation, the Redeemer of Israel. While on earth, Jesus had often used parables and symbolic language to explain the truth to people. He also now used a familiar object to illustrate His meaning in talking to the man that became the apostle Paul. Jesus said to him, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks."

Those forcible words illustrate a truth that everyone in this world someday will know and understand. There are still millions of people in the world who are kicking against the pricks. They think that if they can get enough people to kick, and kick hard enough and long enough, they will be able to destroy the Christian religion and maybe all the Christians as well. Jesus' words reveal the fact that it is hard for you to kick against the pricks of your own conscience.

There are many stories of people who were atheists, communists, socialists, of various non-Christian re-



The conversion of Saul.

ligions who had persecuted Christians and then become converted. There is the prick of seeing the effect of the Christian religion on human beings as no other religion can have and the prick of their own conscience.

The fact is that it is impossible for any man or for any group of men to stop the onward progress of the truth of Christ. The truth of Christ is going to march on to victory and triumph, and every effort by any man or any group of men to stop it, will simply result in injury to the opposer.

In the end, the persecutor will suffer far more than those whom he has persecuted, for, sooner or later, his own heart will condemn him for what he has done.

The Saviour, Jesus Christ, had spoken to Saul through His servant Stephen, whose clear reasoning from the Scriptures could not be controverted. The learned Jew had seen in the face of the martyr the reflected glory of Christ. "Everyone that saw Stephen, saw his face as if it were the face of an angel." He had witnessed not only Stephen's forbearance, but the for-

bearance of other Christians toward their enemies. He had witnessed their forgiveness of their persecutors. He had also witnessed the fortitude and cheerful resignation of other believers in Jesus while they had been tormented and afflicted and still others who had yielded up their lives as martyrs, rejoicing that they might give up their life for the truth's sake.

All this testimony had appealed to Saul of Tarsus and had put conviction on his mind, causing him to struggle against it night and day. One reason some people become persecutors is because they are struggling against the conviction of their conscience, and to be free they fight those who bring the conviction. Saul's education, his prejudices, his respect for priests and rulers and his pride of popularity had braced him to rebel against all the voice of his conscience and the grace of God.

He had believed that Christians were deluded fanatics, but now Jesus had spoken to him with His own voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Oh, my friend, how is it with you? The way that you treat your fellow men is recorded in the books of heaven as the way you treat Jesus. Are you kicking against the pricks or are you ready to have a life-changing event that will turn you around 180 degrees and send you in the direction of eternal life?

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

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Our Compassionate Father

Key Text

“Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God” (Isaiah 40:9)!

Study Help: *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 150–163.

Introduction

“The prophet [Isaiah] exalted God as Creator of all. His message to the cities of Judah was, ‘Behold your God’ (Isaiah 40:9)!” *Prophets and Kings*, 315.

Sunday

I PEACEFUL, UNDERLYING HOPE

- a. What was Isaiah told to expect in the call he had accepted? Isaiah 6:9–12. What assurance was he to cherish nonetheless? Verse 13; 10:20, 21.

Note: “His [Isaiah’s] burden of soul in behalf of erring Judah was not to be borne in vain. His mission was not to be wholly fruitless. . . . Throughout his lifetime he must be a patient, courageous teacher—a prophet of hope as well as of doom. The divine purpose finally accomplished, the full fruitage of his efforts, and of the labors of all God’s faithful messengers, would appear. A remnant should be saved.” *Prophets and Kings*, 308, 309.

- b. Name some key concepts the prophet emphasized—and why such uplifting themes can inspire us with hope. Isaiah 40:9, 13–15, 21–31.

Note: “The stars also have a message of good cheer for every human being. In those hours that come to all, when the heart is faint and temptation presses sore; when obstacles seem insurmountable, life’s aims impossible of achievement, its fair promises like apples of Sodom; where, then, can such courage and steadfastness be found as in that lesson which God has bidden us learn from the stars in their untroubled course?” *Education*, 115.

Monday

2 THE HEART BEHIND THE CLOUD

- a. Throughout the history of the world, what misconception about God’s character has always needed to be clarified? Ezekiel 18:25; Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Note: “In Isaiah’s day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through misapprehension of God. Long had Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death. Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him. The law of love by which heaven is ruled had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men’s happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily.

“In losing sight of the true character of Jehovah, the Israelites were without excuse. Often had God revealed Himself to them as one ‘full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth’ (Psalm 86:15).” *Prophets and Kings*, 311.

- b. What genuine picture about God do we too often forget? Isaiah 49:13–16.

Note: “When we seem to doubt God’s love and distrust His promises we dishonor Him and grieve His Holy Spirit. How would a mother feel if her children were constantly complaining of her, just as though she did not mean them well, when her whole life’s effort had been to forward their interests and to give them comfort? Suppose they should doubt her love; it would break her heart. How would any parent feel to be thus treated by his children? And how can our heavenly Father regard us when we distrust His love, which has led Him to give His only-begotten Son that we might have life? [Romans 8:32 quoted.] And yet how many, by their actions, if not in word, are saying, ‘The Lord does not mean this for me. Perhaps He loves others, but He does not love me.’

“All this is harming your own soul; for every word of doubt you utter is inviting Satan’s temptations; it is strengthening in you the tendency to doubt, and it is grieving from you the ministering angels. When Satan tempts you, breathe not a word of doubt or darkness.” *Steps to Christ*, 118, 119.

Tuesday

3 A LOVING INVITATION

- a. What did Isaiah reveal as God’s plan for His wayward people? Isaiah 41:14; 48:4, 8–11.

Note: “The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. ...

“The inhabitants of Judah were all undeserving, yet God would not give them up. By them His name was to be exalted among the heathen. Many who were wholly unacquainted with His attributes were yet to behold the glory of the divine character. It was for the purpose of making plain His merciful designs that He kept sending His servants the prophets with the message, ‘Turn ye again now everyone from his evil way’ (Jeremiah 25:5). ...

“The call to repentance was sounded with unmistakable clearness, and all were invited to return.” *Prophets and Kings*, 316, 319.

- b. What glorious assurances are given to each one of us if we would only accept them? Isaiah 55:6, 7; 44:21, 22.



Keep nothing back from God, and neglect not the confession of your faults to the brethren when they have a connection with them.

Note: “Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your life plans thwarted and your hopes dead, do you sit alone and desolate? That voice which has long been speaking to your heart, but to which you would not listen, comes to you distinct and clear, ‘Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction’ (Micah 2:10). Return to your Father’s house. ...

“Do not listen to the enemy’s suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of the Saviour, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out’ (John 6:37). Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.” *Prophets and Kings*, 319, 320.

Wednesday

4 HUMBLE BEFORE GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

- a. Explain the transition God wants His people to make from idolatry and pride, to become children of one heavenly Father. Isaiah 57:13–21.

Note: “Let not pride, or self-esteem, or self-righteousness keep any one from confessing his sins, that he may claim the promise: ‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy’ (Proverbs 28:13). Keep nothing back from God, and neglect not the confession of your faults to the brethren when they have a connection with them. ...

“It is a lamentable fact that the erring heart is unwilling to be criticised [sic], or to subject itself to humiliation by the confession of sin. Some see their faults, but thinking confession will detract from their dignity, they excuse their wrong, and shield themselves from the discipline that confession would give to the soul. ... They see the errors of others; but how can they have courage to give the advice, ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed’ (James 5:16), when they have failed to follow this instruction in their own lives? How much will ministers or people learn of a truth which they thrust aside, and forget if possible, because it is not agreeable; because it does not flatter their pride, but reproves and pains? ... They must hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ, the illumination of the Holy Spirit.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 239, 240.

b. How can we better cooperate with the Holy Spirit to be part of the Lord’s great plan? Isaiah 59:20, 21.

Note: “Sin must not be cherished. This is a time when the love of many is waxing cold, and any defection on your part may encourage others in a wrong course, and lead to many and grievous transgressions. Do not set an example of lukewarmness; do not turn away from testimonies of the Spirit of God. We are intrusted with a solemn message to give to the world, and there is much at stake. We cannot be safe amid the temptations that surround us in these times of peril, without constantly watching unto prayer. We must guard against accepting a low standard of our own instead of the high Bible standard of character.” *Gospel Workers* (1892), 462.

Thursday

5 LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

a. What gracious invitation given to the inhabitants of Judah echoes down to us today? Isaiah 27:5.

Note: “It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear. ... Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. ...

“Christ has pledged Himself to be our substitute and surety, and He neglects no one. He who could not see human beings exposed to eternal ruin without pouring out His soul unto death in their behalf, will look with pity and compassion upon every soul who realizes that he cannot save himself.

“He will look upon no trembling suppliant without raising him up. He who through His own atonement provided for man an infinite fund of moral power, will not fail to employ this power in our behalf. We may take our sins and sorrows to His feet; for He loves us.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 156, 157.

b. With what words does Isaiah describe the experience that is to be ours? Isaiah 12:1–6.

Note: “Oh, how many times has your heart been touched with the beauty of the Saviour’s countenance, charmed with the loveliness of His character, and subdued with the thought of His suffering. Now He wants you to lean your whole weight upon Him.” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 232.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why was Isaiah able to minister to his people with hope?
- 2 How are we to avoid being duped by common misconceptions about God?
- 3 Why does God bother to call proud, stubborn people to repentance?
- 4 We may confess our sins to God, but how is James 5:16 often neglected?
- 5 Despite Satan’s claims, why did God want us to study this week’s lesson?

November 5 – 11

Unbelief by Confederacy

Key Text

“Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread” (Isaiah 8:12, 13).

Study Help: *The Ministry of Healing*, 183–200.

Introduction

“He [God] calls for men who will remain separate from the enemies of the truth. He calls for men who will not dare to resort to the arm of flesh by entering into partnership with worldlings in order to secure means for advancing His work—even for the building of institutions.” *Counsels on Health*, 290.

Sunday

1 EXTREME APOSTASY

- a. Explain the extent of the adverse conditions that God’s faithful few faced during the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. 2 Chronicles 28:1–4. How did Micah describe the situation? Micah 7:2, 4.

Note: “The accession of Ahaz to the throne brought Isaiah and his associates face to face with conditions more appalling than any that had hitherto existed in the realm of Judah. Many who had formerly withstood the seductive influence of idolatrous practices were now being persuaded to take part in the worship of heathen deities. Princes in Israel were proving untrue to their trust; false prophets were arising with messages to lead astray; even some of the priests were teaching for hire. Yet the leaders in apostasy still kept up the forms of divine worship and claimed to be numbered among the people of God.” *Prophets and Kings*, 322.

“‘They which lead thee,’ ... ‘cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths’ (Isaiah 3:12). During the reign of Ahaz this was literally true. ...

“The forces for good were rapidly diminishing, the forces for evil multiplying.” *Ibid.*, 324.

Monday

2 AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

- a. What did God appeal during the crisis in Ahaz’s time? Micah 6:1–5. How did He depict the situation, and what did He do about it? Isaiah 28:5–13.

Note: “In every age, for the sake of those who have remained true, as well as because of His infinite love for the erring, God has borne long with the rebellious, and has urged them to forsake their course of evil and return to Him. ‘Precept upon precept; line upon line, ... here a little, and there a little,’ through men of His appointment, He has taught transgressors the way of righteousness (Isaiah 28:10).

“And thus it was during the reign of Ahaz. Invitation upon invitation was sent to erring Israel to return to their allegiance to Jehovah. Tender were the pleadings of the prophets; and as they stood before the people, earnestly exhorting to repentance and reformation, their words bore fruit to the glory of God.” *Prophets and Kings*, 324, 325.

- b. While Ahaz ignored the appeals of the prophets and continued in his idolatrous course, what finally frightened him? 2 Kings 16:5. Why did God allow this to happen? 2 Chronicles 29:6–8.

Note: “Had Ahaz and the chief men of his realm been true servants of the Most High, they would have had no fear of so unnatural an alliance as had been formed against them. But repeated transgression had shorn them of strength. Stricken with a nameless dread of the retributive judgments of an offended God, the heart of the king ‘was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind’ (Isaiah 7:2).” *Prophets and Kings*, 328, 329.

c. What message was then given to Ahaz at this crucial moment? Isaiah 7:4–9. How did the king respond? 2 Kings 16:6–8.

Note: “Well would it have been for the kingdom of Judah had Ahaz received this [Isaiah’s] message as from heaven. But choosing to lean on the arm of flesh, he sought help from the heathen.” *Prophets and Kings*, 329.

Tuesday

3 HOPE AT THE DARKEST HOUR

a. What warnings should we take from the bitter results of Ahaz’s alliance with Assyria? 2 Chronicles 28:14–23.

Note: “The tribute [Ahaz] offered aroused the cupidity of Assyria, and that treacherous nation soon threatened to overflow and spoil Judah. Ahaz and his unhappy subjects were now harassed by the fear of falling completely into the hands of the cruel Assyrians.” *Prophets and Kings*, 329.

b. What was the worst part of Ahaz’s apostasy? 2 Chronicles 28:24–27.

Note: “As the apostate king neared the end of his reign, he caused the doors of the temple to be closed. The sacred services were interrupted. No longer were the candlesticks kept burning before the altar. No longer were offerings made for the sins of the people. No longer did sweet incense ascend on high at the time of the morning and the evening sacrifice. Deserting the courts of the house of God and locking fast its doors, the inhabitants of the godless city boldly set up altars for the

worship of heathen deities on the street corners throughout Jerusalem. Heathenism had seemingly triumphed; the powers of darkness had well-nigh prevailed.” *Prophets and Kings*, 330.

c. Why are confederacies so dangerous—and what can we learn from Isaiah’s message of hope to the remnant? Isaiah 8:9–14.

Note: “In Judah there dwelt some who maintained their allegiance to Jehovah, steadfastly refusing to be led into idolatry. It was to these that Isaiah and Micah and their associates looked in hope as they surveyed the ruin wrought during the last years of Ahaz. Their sanctuary was closed, but the faithful ones were assured: ‘God is with us’ (Isaiah 8:10).” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 330.

“The question has been asked, What do you mean by a confederacy? Who have formed confederacies? You know what a confederacy is—a union of men in a work that does not bear the stamp of pure, straightforward, unswerving integrity.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1142.

Wednesday

4 A TIMELESS PRINCIPLE

a. What warnings, if heeded, will protect us from the mistake of forming alliances with those who do not adhere to the present truth? Isaiah 31:1–3.

Note: “Satan is moving with his power from beneath to inspire men to form alliances and confederacies of evil against light and against the word of God. Infidelity, papacy, and semi-papacy are coming in close and powerful companionship with professed Christianity. The low views of inspiration, the exalting of human ideas from men called wise, are placing human talent above the divine wisdom and forms, and science so-called above the power of vital godliness. These are the signs of the last days.” *That I May Know Him*, 345.

“All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth’s

history. God's presentation of the detestable works of the inhabitants of the ruling powers of the world who bind themselves into secret societies and confederacies, not honoring the law of God, should enable the people who have the light of truth to keep clear of all these evils. More and more will all false religionists of the world manifest their evil doings; for there are but two parties, those who keep the commandments of God and those who war against God's holy law." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, 322.

- b. What Bible principle warns against confederacies?
2 Corinthians 6:14–18.

Note: "The wicked are being bound up in bundles, bound up in trusts, in unions, in confederacies. Let us have nothing to do with these organizations. God is our Ruler, our Governor, and He calls us to come out from the world and be separate. ... If we refuse to do this, if we continue to link up with the world, and to look at every matter from a worldly standpoint, we shall become like the world. When worldly policy and worldly ideas govern our transactions, we cannot stand on the high and holy platform of eternal truth." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1142.

"The trades unions and confederacies of the world are a snare. Keep out of them, and away from them, brethren. Have nothing to do with them. Because of these unions and confederacies, it will soon be very difficult for our institutions to carry on their work in the cities." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 142.

Thursday

5 A FAR-REACHING CONCEPT

- a. How does Inspiration depict the bustle of city life and the alliances it requires—in contrast to the peaceful existence God wants for His people? Nahum 2:4; Lamentations 5:4; Isaiah 32:17–19.

Note: "It is God's design that our people should locate outside the cities, and from these outposts warn the cities, and raise in them memorials for God. There must be a force of influence in the cities, that the message of warning shall be heard.



The low views of inspiration, the exalting of human ideas from men called wise, are placing human talent above the divine wisdom and forms, and science so-called above the power of vital godliness. These are the signs of the last days.

"For years the warning has been given to our people, Get out of Battle Creek. But because of the many interests established there, it was convenient to remain, and men could not see why they should move. ... Take the school out of Battle Creek if you can possibly do so. Go out into a place where there are no people who believe as we do, and there establish the school on a location with plenty of land, that the students who come may be educated in right lines. They [brethren Sutherland and Magan] obeyed the instruction given. This was the first move made. It has been a success. God has been pleased with it." *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903.

"In God's plan for Israel every family had a home on the land, with sufficient ground for tilling. Thus were provided both the means and the incentive for a useful, industrious, and self-supporting life. And no devising of men has ever improved upon that plan.

"The earth has blessings hidden in her depths for those who have courage and will and perseverance to gather her treasures. Fathers and mothers who possess a piece of land and a comfortable home are kings and queens.

"An expensive dwelling, elaborate furnishings, display, luxury, and ease, do not furnish the conditions essential to a happy, useful life." *The Faith I Live By*, 260.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How far into apostasy did Ahaz lead the people of Judah?
- In what ways did Ahaz's alliance with Assyria show serious unbelief?
- When the temple services ceased, how did God comfort the faithful?
- What is the real problem with alliances?
- Why is country living good for our faith—especially nowadays?

Hezekiah

Key Text

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”
(1 Corinthians 10:12).

Study Help: *Prophets and Kings*, 331–348.

Introduction

“Every day, our words and acts are making impressions upon those with whom we associate. How great the need that we set a watch upon our lips and guard carefully our steps!”
Prophets and Kings, 348.

Sunday

1 HOPE RENEWED

- a. What did Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, realize when he became king of Judah? 2 Chronicles 29:1, 6–9. What were his first steps? 2 Chronicles 29:2–5, 10.

Note: “Hezekiah came to the throne determined to do all in his power to save Judah from the fate that was overtaking the northern kingdom. The messages of the prophets offered no encouragement to halfway measures. Only by most decided reformation could the threatened judgments be averted.

“In the crisis, Hezekiah proved to be a man of opportunity. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he began to plan and to execute. He first turned his attention to the restoration of the temple services, so long neglected.” *Prophets and Kings*, 331.

- b. What appeal did God direct to Judah? Isaiah 31:6. How did the “goodly remnant” respond? Micah 7:7–9; 2 Chronicles 29:16–20, 27–31, 35, 36.

Note: “God had indeed prepared the hearts of the chief men of Judah to lead out in a decided reformatory movement, that the tide of apostasy might be stayed.” *Prophets and Kings*, 333.

Monday

2 THE JOY OF REFORMATION

- a. What prophetic prayer, previously offered at the dedication of the temple, was fulfilled in the reformation of Hezekiah? 1 Kings 8:33, 34; 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Note: “[1 Kings 8:33, 34 quoted.] The seal of divine approval had been placed upon this prayer; for at its close fire had come down from heaven to consume the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord had filled the temple. (See 2 Chronicles 7:1.) And by night the Lord had appeared to Solomon to tell him that his prayer had been heard, and that mercy would be shown those who should worship there. ...

“These promises met abundant fulfillment during the reformation under Hezekiah.” *Prophets and Kings*, 335.

- b. Describe the success of Hezekiah’s reformation. 2 Chronicles 30:1, 9–13, 21–23, 26, 27.

Note: “The seven days usually allotted to the Passover feast passed all too quickly, and the worshipers determined to spend another seven days in learning more fully the way of the Lord. The teaching priests continued their work of instruction from the book of the law; daily the people assembled at the temple to offer their tribute of praise and thanksgiving; and as the great meeting drew to a close, it was evident that God had wrought marvelously in the conversion of backsliding Judah and in stemming the tide of idolatry which threatened to sweep all before it. The solemn warnings of the prophets had not been uttered in vain.” *Prophets and Kings*, 337, 338.

- c. After the Passover, what further steps marked the genuineness of Hezekiah's reformation? 2 Chronicles 31:1, 5, 6. How was his administration described? Verses 20, 21; 2 Kings 18:4-7.



Every day, our words and acts are making impressions upon those with whom we associate.

Note: "The reign of Hezekiah was characterized by a series of remarkable providences which revealed to the surrounding nations that the God of Israel was with His people." *Prophets and Kings*, 339.

Tuesday

3 MERCY AND A MISSION

- a. What message came to Hezekiah when he was sick, and how was he shown mercy? 2 Kings 20:1-7. How did he express thanks? Isaiah 38:9-20.

Note: "Restored to his wonted strength, the king of Judah acknowledged in words of song the mercies of Jehovah, and vowed to spend his remaining days in willing service to the King of kings. His grateful recognition of God's compassionate dealing with him is an inspiration to all who desire to spend their years to the glory of their Maker." *Prophets and Kings*, 342.

- b. Through what sign did God confirm His promise to Hezekiah, and what reaction did this spark in a faraway land? 2 Kings 20:8-12.

greatly. Their king, Merodachbaladan, upon learning that this miracle had been wrought as a sign to the king of Judah that the God of heaven had granted him a new lease of life, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery and to learn, if possible, more of the God who was able to perform so great a wonder.

"The visit of these messengers from the ruler of a far-away land gave Hezekiah an opportunity to extol the living God. How easy it would have been for him to tell them of God, the upholder of all created things, through whose favor his own life had been spared when all other hope had fled! What momentous transformations might have taken place had these seekers after truth from the plains of Chaldea been led to acknowledge the supreme sovereignty of the living God!" *Prophets and Kings*, 344.

- c. What can we learn from the missionary opportunity God gave Hezekiah? Colossians 4:5; Revelation 3:18, *last part*.

Note: "Eyes need to be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve to see and sense their opportunities." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 130.

Wednesday

4 A BIG MISTAKE

- a. What mistake tarnished Hezekiah's good record? 2 Chronicles 32:25, 31; Isaiah 39:1-4.

Note: "In the fertile valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates there dwelt an ancient race which, though at that time subject to Assyria, was destined to rule the world. Among its people were wise men who gave much attention to the study of astronomy; and when they noticed that the shadow on the sundial had been turned back ten degrees, they marveled

Note: “Pride and vanity took possession of Hezekiah’s heart, and in self-exaltation he laid open to covetous eyes the treasures with which God had enriched His people. ... [Isaiah 39:2 quoted.] Not to glorify God did he do this, but to exalt himself in the eyes of the foreign princes. He did not stop to consider that these men were representatives of a powerful nation that had not the fear nor the love of God in their hearts, and that it was imprudent to make them his confidants concerning the temporal riches of the nation.

“The visit of the ambassadors to Hezekiah was a test of his gratitude and devotion. ... [2 Chronicles 32:31 quoted.] Had Hezekiah improved the opportunity given him to bear witness to the power, the goodness, the compassion, of the God of Israel, the report of the ambassadors would have been as light piercing darkness. But he magnified himself above the Lord of hosts. He ‘rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up’ (verse 25, *first part*).

“How disastrous the results which were to follow! To Isaiah it was revealed that the returning ambassadors were carrying with them a report of the riches they had seen, and that the king of Babylon and his counselors would plan to enrich their own country with the treasures of Jerusalem. Hezekiah had grievously sinned; ‘therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem’ (verse 25, *last part*).” *Prophets and Kings*, 344–346.

- b. What news did Isaiah need to tell Hezekiah—and how did the king show repentance for his imprudence? Isaiah 39:5–8; 2 Chronicles 32:26.

Note: “During his remaining years the king of Judah was to have much prosperity because of his steadfast purpose to redeem the past and to bring honor to the name of the God whom he served; yet his faith was to be severely tried, and he was to learn that only by putting his trust fully in Jehovah could he hope to triumph over the powers of darkness that were plotting his ruin and the utter destruction of his people.” *Prophets and Kings*, 347.

Thursday

5 ALWAYS READY IN MEEKNESS

- a. What should we all learn from Hezekiah’s experience with the Babylonian ambassadors? Psalm 141:3; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Peter 3:15.

Note: “The story of Hezekiah’s failure to prove true to his trust at the time of the visit of the ambassadors is fraught with an important lesson for all. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience, of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour’s love. ...

“Every day, our words and acts are making impressions upon those with whom we associate. How great the need that we set a watch upon our lips and guard carefully our steps! One reckless movement, one imprudent step, and the surging waves of some strong temptation may sweep a soul into the downward path. ...

“On the other hand, if by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same beneficial influence over others. Thus hundreds and thousands are helped by our unconscious influence.” *Prophets and Kings*, 347, 348.

“When the Lord’s voice calls, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ the Divine Spirit puts it into hearts to respond: ‘Here am I; send me’ (Isaiah 6:8). But bear in mind that the live coal from the altar must first touch your lips. Then the words you speak will be wise and holy words. Then you will have wisdom to know what to say and what to leave unsaid. ...

“[1 Peter 3:15 quoted.] Why fear? Fear lest your words should savor of self-importance, lest unadvised words be spoken, lest the words and manner should not be after Christ’s likeness. Connect firmly with Christ and present the truth as it is in Him.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 325.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why can we be inspired by the proactive approach of Ahaz’s heir?
- 2 Why was Hezekiah’s reign crowned with joy and success?
- 3 Besides helping Judah’s king, whom else was God seeking to draw?
- 4 What did Hezekiah forget when the ambassadors came to visit?
- 5 When seeking to witness for God, why do we need to be watchful?

November 19 – 25

Pride and Humility

Key Text

“Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

Study Help: *Prophets and Kings*, 349–366.

Introduction

“The pride of Assyria and its fall are to serve as an object lesson to the end of time.” *Prophets and Kings*, 366.

Sunday

I FAITHFUL LEADERSHIP

- a. With what reasoning did Hezekiah encourage his people to face the Assyrians—and how had the words of Isaiah helped in this crisis? 2 Chronicles 32:7, 8, *first part*; Isaiah 12:6.

Note: “At the time of Hezekiah’s accession to the throne of Judah, the Assyrians had already carried captive a large number of the children of Israel from the northern kingdom; and a few years after he had begun to reign, and while he was still strengthening the defenses of Jerusalem, the Assyrians besieged and captured Samaria and scattered the ten tribes among the many provinces of the Assyrian realm. The borders of Judah were only a few miles distant, with Jerusalem less than fifty miles away; and the rich spoils to be found within the temple would tempt the enemy to return. But the king of Judah had determined to do his part in preparing to resist the enemy.” *Prophets and Kings*, 351.

- b. Why could Hezekiah trust in God’s help? Isaiah 10:12, 24–27; 14:24–27. How did the people respond to his appeal? 2 Chronicles 32:8, *last part*.

Note: “Nothing more quickly inspires faith than the exercise of faith. The king of Judah had prepared for the coming storm; and now, confident that the prophecy against the Assyrians would be fulfilled, he stayed his soul upon God.” *Prophets and Kings*, 351.

Monday

2 THE CRISIS ARRIVES

- a. When, to all appearances, the prospects seemed hopeless for Judah, how did the Assyrian officers make things even worse? Isaiah 36:13–20.

Note: “The long-expected crisis finally came. The forces of Assyria, advancing from triumph to triumph, appeared in Judea. Confident of victory, the leaders divided their forces into two armies, one of which was to meet the Egyptian army to the southward, while the other was to besiege Jerusalem.

“Judah’s only hope was now in God. All possible help from Egypt had been cut off, and no other nations were near to lend a friendly hand.

“The Assyrian officers, sure of the strength of their disciplined forces, arranged for a conference with the chief men of Judah, during which they insolently demanded the surrender of the city. This demand was accompanied by blasphemous revilings against the God of the Hebrews. Because of the weakness and apostasy of Israel and Judah, the name of God was no longer feared among the nations, but had become a subject for continual reproach.” *Prophets and Kings*, 352.

- b. How did Judah respond to the taunts of the haughty Assyrians—and what does this experience remind us about attitude? Isaiah 36:21, 22; 37:1–4.

Note: “The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. ... Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 450.

“When persons meet together for the investigation of points of faith concerning which there is a difference of opinion, the spirit which controls them will be manifested. Those who are standing in defense of truth should be calm and self-possessed. If they have the mind of Christ, they will be kind and courteous. They will not be betrayed into the use of harsh language. They will not regard themselves as infallible, nor look with contempt upon those who differ with them. They will not regard them as enemies, nor meet them with ridicule or jesting.” *Gospel Workers* (1892), 389.

Tuesday

3 FAITH UNDER BLEAK CIRCUMSTANCES

- a. At the peak of Judah’s crisis with Assyria, what message did God give to Hezekiah through Isaiah? 2 Kings 19:5–7. Why are these great historical experiences so important for us to contemplate?

Note: “God would have us recall His dealings with His people in the past to save them from their enemies. He has always chosen extremities, when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan’s workings, for the manifestation of His power. Man’s necessity is God’s opportunity.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 714.

“Not in freedom from trial, but in the midst of it, is Christian character developed. Exposure to rebuffs and opposition leads the follower of Christ to greater watchfulness and more earnest prayer to the mighty Helper. Severe trial endured by the grace of God develops patience, vigilance, fortitude, and a deep and abiding trust in God. It is the triumph of the Christian faith that it enables its followers to suffer and be strong; to submit, and thus to conquer; to be killed all the day long, and yet to live; to bear the cross, and thus to win the crown of glory.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 467, 468.

“Those who are finally victorious will have seasons of terrible perplexity and trial in their religious life; but they must not cast away their confidence, for this is a part of their discipline in the school of Christ, and it is essential in order that all dross may be purged away.” *Messages to Young People*, 63.

- b. During this crisis, what did Isaiah and Hezekiah do? 2 Chronicles 32:20; 2 Kings 19:14–19.

Note: “Hezekiah’s pleadings in behalf of Judah and of the honor of their Supreme Ruler were in harmony with the mind of God. Solomon, in his benediction at the dedication of the temple, had prayed the Lord to maintain ‘the cause of His people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else’ (1 Kings 8:59, 60). Especially was the Lord to show favor when, in times of war or of oppression by an army, the chief men of Israel should enter the house of prayer and plead for deliverance.” *Prophets and Kings*, 359.

Wednesday

4 GOD OVERRULES FOR JUSTICE’ SAKE

- a. What reassurance did the Lord send to the king and people of Judah? 2 Kings 19:20–22, 28, 32–34. What should we learn from the way God supplied their needs, though their land was laid waste? Verse 29.

Note: “As were God’s people anciently, so we should be prepared to advance when the cloud rises and moves forward, and to halt when the cloud stops. We must adjust our movements to the guidance of God’s Spirit. In the place of following ways of our own devising, we are to co-operate with divinity. Thus we shall be enabled to keep pace with our Leader.

“In order to be a Christian, it is not necessary for a man to have great talents. The human agent may have no voice in legislative councils; he may not be permitted to deliberate in senates or vote in parliaments; yet he has access to God. The King of kings bends low to listen to the prayer coming from one who desires to do the Master’s will. An earnest prayer offered from a sincere, contrite heart is of more value in God’s sight than is eloquence of speech. God hears every prayer offered with the incense of faith. His weakest child may exert an influence in harmony with the councils of heaven. It is in answer to prayer that God revives His work.” *The Review and Herald*, June 23, 1903.

- b. In what sense does the fate of Assyria present a general principle for every age? Isaiah 30:27, 28; Proverbs 11:17; 16:18.

Note: “With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps account with the nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account remains open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath begins. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. Mercy no longer pleads in their behalf.” *The Review and Herald*, June 3, 1915.

“The pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart away’ (Zechariah 10:11). This is true not only of the nations that arrayed themselves against God in ancient times, but also of nations today who fail of fulfilling the divine purpose. In the day of final awards, when the righteous Judge of all the earth shall ‘sift the nations’ (Isaiah 30:28), and those that have kept the truth shall be permitted to enter the City of God, heaven’s arches will ring with the triumphant songs of the redeemed.” *Prophets and Kings*, 366.

Thursday

5 HUMBLING THE PRIDE IN OURSELVES

- a. What practical lessons should we derive from the experience involving Hezekiah, Isaiah, and the Assyrians? 1 Peter 5:5–7; Proverbs 16:18.

Note: “There are many ways in which God can punish, and punishment will surely follow wherever pride is indulged. ... Let a man be lifted up by a sense of his own ability, and trust in his human strength, and he will surely be overcome by temptation. God will bring him down. He will teach him his utter weakness, that he may feel his need of divine aid.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 332, 333.

“We should humble ourselves daily before God, and not feel that our wisdom is perfect. We should take hold of the work with earnestness. We should not pray for God to humble us; for when God takes hold of us, He will humble us in a way that we would not enjoy. But we must day by day humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and with trembling. While it is God that works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we are to co-operate with Him while He works through us. We must guard against lifting up our souls in self-esteem. But you will say, How am I to know that Christ is in my heart? If, when you are criticized or corrected in your way, and things do not go just as you think they ought to go—if then you let your passion arise instead of bearing the correction and being patient and kind, Christ is not abiding in the heart.



When persons meet together for the investigation of points of faith concerning which there is a difference of opinion, the spirit which controls them will be manifested. Those who are standing in defense of truth should be calm and self-possessed. If they have the mind of Christ, they will be kind and courteous. They will not be betrayed into the use of harsh language.

“Christ placed such a value upon man that He gave His own life to redeem him; and He requires every power and faculty of our being to be in perfect subjection to Him. But we are not to esteem ourselves only in the light in which God esteemed us by the cross of Calvary. Let us not be afraid to show our humility by kindness, courteousness, and forbearance. Do not let self arise and think, It is I they are trying to hurt by their false reports.” *The Review and Herald*, July 12, 1887.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Hezekiah rise to the occasion in the face of the Assyrian threat?
- 2 How should we respond to the “Sennacheribs” in our life?
- 3 In the crisis Judah faced, how did God honor His ancient covenant?
- 4 What can we learn from the way Assyria’s apparent prosperity melted?
- 5 Name a few litmus tests that reveal our individual level of humility.

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Figgy Figs

By Lynette Golia

Delicious sweet fig fruit, dried or fresh, has been a popular delicacy in the Mediterranean diet since biblical times. A member of the family of mulberry, figs are botanically identified as *Ficus carica* and universally called the “common fig” or “edible fig” in a genus including over 1,000 species.

Part of the wonder of the fig comes from its unique taste and texture. Figs are the sweetest of all fruits, boasting a 55% sugar content and featuring a complex texture that combines the chewiness of their flesh, the smoothness of their skin, and the crunchiness of their seeds.

Fig trees never blossom because the flowers are on the inside. Figs are not technically a fruit but are inverted flowers. Tiny flowers bloom within the pear-shaped pod called syconia, which later matures into the fruit. Each flower within the syconium then produces a single, one-seeded, hard-shelled fruit called achene which gives the fig its crunch. The fig is made up of masses of achene. Thus when you eat a fig, you are actually eating multiple fruits.

Neither bee nor wind contribute to the pollination of figs. Instead, a unique species of wasp, only about ⅛ inch long, pollinates the numerous, tiny club-shaped ovaries extending toward the central hollow cavity of the syconium, as it enters and exits through the small pore or apex on the rounded end of the fig.

Figs have been known to have many medicinal properties. Traditional medicine around the world has made use of figs as poultices on tumors, warts, and wounds. The fruit and leaves have been pulverized and gargled to relieve sore throats. Juice extracted from the leaves are beneficial in soothing insect bites. Used as a facial mask, figs tighten and nourish the skin. Due to high alkalinity, figs diminish desire for cigarettes for those who want to quit smoking.

Figs are dense in phenolic antioxidants. Although sweetest at the firm to tender stage, the riper they are, the more antioxidants they provide, with the dried fruit providing higher concentrations of antioxidants than the fresh fruit. Figs have been shown

to increase antioxidant activity in humans for four hours after consumption.

Figs are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, most notoriously when Adam and Eve covered their nakedness with fig leaves after they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:7). Isaiah used them to heal skin problems (Isaiah 38:21). In the New Testament Jesus used fig symbolism in some of His parables (Matthew 21; Luke 21).

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:32, 33). Be ready, be watchful, ever ready for His soon return! **LM**



Recipe

Fig and Banana Cookies

2 ripe bananas, mashed

½ tsp. cardamom

1 ¼ cups ground almonds, lightly packed

1 Tbsp. chia seeds

¾ cup dried figs, chopped

1 Tbsp. natural sweetener of choice (if using liquid, add ½ tsp. chia seeds), optional

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and let sit 5-10 minutes. Drop 1 ½ Tbsp. dough on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Flatten cookies to desired thickness. Bake in 400°F oven for 7-10 minutes, until cookies firm up and edges turn golden. Let cool completely. Enjoy!

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