

HISTORIC  
**LANDMARKS**  
OF ADVENTISM



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of Satan*

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## From the Editor

*John J. Grosboll*

# Character Perfection

Some people have said that nobody is perfect, but that is not correct. Jesus is perfect, and you and I are to become as He is.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3).

When the Lord returns He is coming back to receive a church—“That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27).

“The longest journey is performed by taking one step at a time. A succession of steps brings us to the end of the road. The longest chain is composed of separate links. If one of these links is faulty, the chain is worthless. Thus it is with character. A well-balanced character is formed by single acts well performed.

One defect, cultivated instead of being overcome, makes the man imperfect, and closes against him the gate of the Holy City. He who enters heaven must have a character that is without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Naught that defileth can ever enter there. In all the redeemed host not one defect will be seen.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, January 17, 1901.

When has a person reached perfection? “When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 384.

“Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’ (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts.” *The Desire of Ages*, 641. **LM**

HISTORIC

## LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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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 (2 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. This magazine is designed to help believers 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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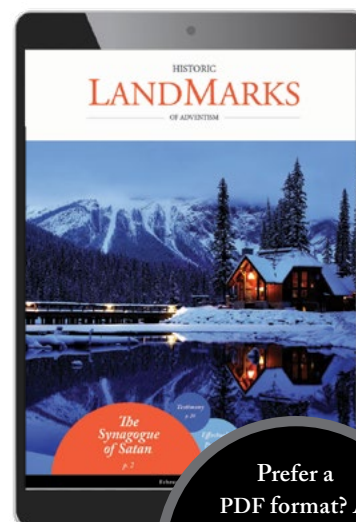
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# Synagogue of Satan

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By John J. Grosboll

*“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: “I know your works. . . . I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”’”*

*Revelation 2:8, 9*

**A**lthough Jesus did not give any reproof or rebuke to the church at Smyrna, that did not mean they were without problems. They endured persecution and suffering.

Ellen White gave strong and pointed counsel to our medical workers and ministers that when people are suffering, it is not the time to talk to them about their doctrinal errors. We are to follow Jesus' example of providing encouragement to the church at Smyrna who needed to hear about the love of Jesus and to surrender all to Him and abide in His loving arms. Those who are suffering are not in a position mentally to be able to think through or figure out the 2300 days for the first time or some other doctrine though it may be very important. Much wisdom is needed when counseling those who are suffering.



Many of those whom Jesus met were indeed suffering physically. They were also mixed up theologically and did not understand what the kingdom of heaven was about or understand the work of the Messiah, so He simply healed them.

To the church in Smyrna, Jesus said, “I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9).

Paul gives us an understanding of what Jesus meant when he said to the Galatians, “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7). In verse 29, he said, “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

If you are of faith, you are Christ’s and an heir according to the promise. Christians are spiritual Jews and when Jesus says to the church of Smyrna that these people say that they are Jews and are not, He is also referring to Christians. It is possible to think you are a Christian yet be part of the synagogue of Satan—professing to be part of God’s church, but in reality are part of Satan’s church, furthering his cause.

For this reason, we speak about the professed church and the true church. All who are part of the true church are also part of the professed church because you can’t be part of the true church if you make no profession. Paul said, “... with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10).

Jesus said, “Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32). You have to make a confession to be part of the true church. There is no such thing as a person who is part of the church who doesn’t make a profession. But everybody who makes a profession is not necessarily a part of the true church. Some make big claims of being followers of Jesus but in reality, Satan is their leader.

That there is a distinction between the professed church and the true



*When people are suffering, it is not the time to talk to them about their doctrinal errors.*

church is a clear teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy. Everyone who belongs to the true church is also part of the professed church. However, not everyone who claims membership in the professed church is a member of the true church. The situation in the church at Smyrna is used to illustrate this dichotomy.

Throughout the Spirit of Prophecy, the expression “professed people of God” is used a hundred and fifty-five times, according to a search of the CD of the writings of E. G. White. The expression “His professed people” is used a hundred and eleven times. The expression “God’s professed people” is used a hundred and ten times. Ellen White even uses the expression “professed church,” and contrasts it with the true church on occasion. Here’s an example:

In *The Signs of the Times*, November 1, 1899, she says, “Through the agency of Romanism, Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the people of God [the true church] suffered under the dragon’s ire.” The true church here in this statement is the people of God. The professed church persecuted the true church for over a thousand years.

Within the church at Smyrna were these two groups. To human vision, often the synagogue of Satan appeared to be more holy and spiritual than the true church. We wonder how that can be. The synagogue of Satan considered themselves better Christians with a more elevated form of Christianity than the true church.

History identifies the characteristics of the synagogue of Satan. “Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 958.

There was a group of people like this in the Smyrna Church in the first century. Understanding the origin and destiny of the synagogue of Satan in the church of Smyrna is the secret to understanding how Christianity got from where it was in A.D. 80 or 90 to where we are today.

### What is Hellenism?

Hellenism is the culture, philosophy, and religion of the Greeks that became dominant in the near east after the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The name comes



from Hellen, a Greek goddess, and the name *Hellenist* is a designation for the Greeks. Hellenistic philosophy was the product of the great pagan reformation that occurred in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. This culture, philosophy, and religion spread throughout the near east.

### What does Hellenistic philosophy have to do with Christianity?

The answer is “everything.”

Christians in the first century combined Hellenistic philosophy or religion with Christianity. This hybrid was called Gnostic Christianity. Gnosticism was a collection of teachings that essentially proclaimed the basic principles of paganism, Hellenistic religion, under the name of Christianity. Although there were dozens of Gnostic sects, the principle doctrines believed by most Gnostics included the following:

1. Man has a divine immortal soul. That was derived from Plato. The New Testament contradicts that belief and in fact contradicts all Gnostic doctrines.
2. The Gnostics believe that this divine immortal soul originated in the heavens and is destined to return to heaven after death.
3. Most Gnostic Christians passionately and totally rejected the Old Testament and Hebrew religion, believing it to be the religion of the old covenant based on materialistic animal sacrifices.
4. They considered the material world to be evil.
5. The Gnostics saw themselves as a reformation, not of Judaism, but of the New Testament church itself and promoted their teachings within the church. They called themselves Christians and promoted their teachings within the church as an advanced, more elevated revelation of Christianity.

The focus was on the spiritual alone and not the material world. They relied especially on the writings of Paul because of his

emphasis on inner spirituality. An example of that is found in the book of Ephesians where Paul talks about being filled with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16–19). Their doctrines depended heavily on these texts.

The theory of progressive revelation was believed, saying this was a second, more advanced revelation of the Christian faith. They thought there was nothing intrinsically good or evil. Everything depended on the situation, especially its relation to materialism, because they believed that the material world was evil. Today we call that “situation ethics.” Given the right situation, almost any act could be justified.

Gnosticism developed several major strands, going in different directions. One strand would go into libertinism. If the material world had no value, then what you did didn’t really matter that much because you were concentrating on the heavens and on the spiritual. The Old Testament had no value. Simply receive the Holy Spirit and concentrate on your spiritual life and all these problems will be over. Bondage to sinful habits would be lost and disappear automatically.

Subjective morality was preached. Some rejected marriage and advocated celibacy. Many Gnostics, not all, were antinomian. *Antinomianism* means *against the law*. This belief needs to be explained because the Gnostics preached against sin, and they had powerful preachers. Not only did they preach against sin, but they also preached in favor of the highest moral standards. At the same time, they essentially licensed sin by removing the penalty. Gnosticism taught that God would never punish someone spiritual—and they maintained that all are spiritual.

Gnosticism targeted and infiltrated the Roman church in the second and third centuries. In the history of Christianity, one topic—the Sabbath—more than any other, has become the centerpiece of the controversy over Hebrew religion. It was the Gnostics that pioneered the conversion from Sabbath keeping to Sunday keeping. They said Sunday, which they called the eighth day, was symbolic. Sunday worship, they

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*Not everyone who claims membership in the professed church is a member of the true church.*



*Through  
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Satan took the  
world captive.*

said, symbolized for Gnostic Christians their rejection of the material world, the rejection of the Creator God. They said the God of the Old Testament who gave the law and the Sabbath symbolizes the creation of the material world, and they did not like that.

The Gnostics wanted something that was spiritual. Hellenism emphasized the spiritual and de-emphasized anything material. The Sabbath promotes both physical and spiritual rest, but Hellenistic rest is exclusively spiritual, non-material.

In the early centuries after Christ, just as today, the distinction between the material and the spiritual was presented as a primary justification for discarding the Sabbath.

The Sabbath, because of its attachment to Creation, was considered materialistic, and therefore inferior, and spiritually dangerous. Both Gnosticism and Hellenistic Christianity in general understood the eighth day to signify breaking away from Hebrew religion and the Old Testament. They said the material world was the first creation and that the Sabbath celebrates the first creation of the material world. As a rebuttal to that assertion, the apostle Paul says, that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, and everything is become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So, according to the Gnostics, we need some way to celebrate the new creation. The second creation is only beginning and it can only be honored by celebrating its beginning, and when did it begin? On resurrection Sunday.

Here are a couple of other points. If you have studied the Old Testament you will know that the Passover always occurred on the full moon. The Jewish year had lunar months, and the Passover was on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month, always occurring at full moon.

Gnostics said that because the Passover always occurs at full moon, the entire 24-hour day is lighted. The evening portion was lighted with the brightness of the full moon, and the morning portion with the sun. They said it is prophetic that someday Easter would replace the Passover. Easter, like Sunday, is supposed to be purely spiritual and therefore points to the time after the end of the material creation when there will be only light and no darkness. There will be a day, a 24-hour period, with all light and no darkness and they argued that Sunday is a natural fulfillment of the Sabbath.

They also claimed that they were not abolishing the Sabbath but fulfilling its spiritual intent. They condemned the Sabbath by accusing Sabbath keepers of excessive idleness, asserting that every day is the Lord's day. So the spiritu-

al rest was described as an on-going spiritual state, not associated with any particular day.

This is not just ancient history. What is described here is rampant over the world today. Eighth day theology is not just some historical phenomenon. Hellenistic Christian churches today, both Catholic and Protestant, openly preach veneration of Sunday as the eighth day.

An example of this erroneous doctrine is the apostolic letter released by pope John Paul II in 1998, "Dies Domini," on keeping the Lord's day holy. In it, the pope echoes many of these same ancient arguments, including the contention that Sunday marks a new spiritual creation for Christians. He says that Sunday is the true Christian fulfillment of creation rest because it honors the spiritual creation, echoing the teachings of the Gnostics of the first century.

When it comes to eight-day symbolism, the pope confirms its importance in the theology of the early Roman church and describes it as much loved by the Catholic church fathers. He said that Sunday is not only the first day, it is also the eighth day, in a unique and transcendent position which evokes not only the beginning of time, but also its end in the age to come, linking this belief directly with the first century Gnostics.

The letter says, "Sunday symbolizes the truly singular day which will follow

“  
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 church over which Satan  
 presides as the synagogue  
 of Satan. Its members  
 are the children of  
 disobedience.*”

the present time, the day without end, which will know neither evening nor morning.”

And then, “Sunday is the ceaseless foretelling of life without end, which renews the hope of Christians.” Just as in Gnostic theology, Pope John Paul II saw the eighth day as a symbol of the age that exists outside the present material world when there will be no alternation of day and night, in which we will know, as he says, neither evening nor morning.

Here is the issue. Is it the will of God that the Sabbath be observed in Christian worship as it was in the Ephesian church in the first century, and as it was by all the apostles? Or is it the divine will that the true Sabbath be replaced by a pagan, Hellenistic symbol in practice?

It matters not what any man or group of men say. If you believe that there is a God in heaven, the real question is, What is the divine will? The real issue is what is the will of God.

This synagogue of Satan was right within the Smyrna Church. Though Jesus did not reprove them, it does not mean they did not have major problems. The Gnostic Christians in Smyrna made the persecution of the true church much more severe. They saw no problem with participating in the pagan religious customs of the day that the apostolic Christians would never do, causing millions of the faithful to be killed for refusing to sacrifice to pagan gods. All that was required was to take a piece of incense and throw it on the fire, and say, “Kaiser es kurios” and they would be free. Those who refused were taken off to one side and killed.

The Gnostic Christians compromised. It did not bother them to participate in the pagan festivals, maintaining that this is just the material world and therefore it doesn't even matter, for we are spiritual. By participating in the festivals they escaped much of the persecution that fell upon the primitive church. For them, it was one of those issues

of outward conduct that has no effect upon inward spirituality.

Imagine how hard it would have been to be a Sabbath keeping Christian and stand for principle when half the church members claiming to believe the same, saw no need to make a stand and caved in to the powers that be. The result was greater persecution.

We must all stand strong as did Daniel and the three worthies when confronted with matters of conscience. Each person must be in control of their own conscience and not be controlled by the community of faith, the church, or the government.

This has been a controversy between the professed church and the true church for thousands of years. Around A.D. 800, Charlemagne made a decree that all who stubbornly refuse “Christian” baptism shall be put to death.

Nor are Protestants guiltless. Around 1600 the Groniter Edict was issued that said henceforth no religion other than the reformed [Presbyterian] shall be permitted in their city. He who attends any meeting of the papists or the Anabaptists shall be fined.

The Groniter Edict became very popular in Europe and many cities copied it. In the city of Deventer, in 1620, it was made into a law as follows: “The magistrates of the city of Deventer instruct all citizens and residents of their city that no Mennonites, etc., shall hold any secret or public assembly, where any preaching, marriage, or any other exercise of religion is practiced, under whatever pretense, under pain of perpetual banishment, any person found at such a place or in such an assembly shall forfeit his upper garment plus twenty-five florens. The second offense, his upper garment plus fifty florins. The third offense shall be followed by arbitrary punishment. He who lets his house be used for such a gathering, shall forfeit one hundred florins. The second offense two hundred florins. The third time, perpetual banishment.”

That was in the Netherlands. In the Low Countries, there were repeated attempts made to squelch the Catholics, the Anabaptists and anyone who wasn't Presbyterian. An attempt was made to exterminate the papists and papal priests.



In modern times, an authority on Calvinism who has studied in detail this history, which we have remarked on briefly in this article, has stated as his conclusion: "Every religious cultist that gets tied up with coercion must of necessity become corrupt."

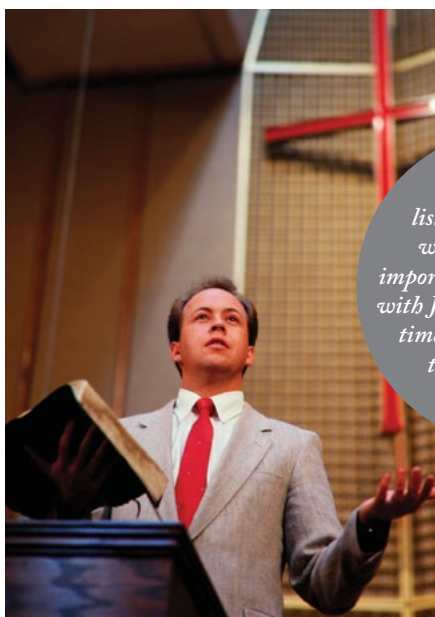
Don't think it won't happen to the Adventists. If you get involved in coercion, your church will become corrupt. The Gnostics in the Smyrna Church evidently cooperated with the pagans, making the persecution of the primitive, or apostolic Christians even worse.

This did not escape the notice of Jesus, who knew all about it. "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison. ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ... He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

Ever since the days of the church of Smyrna, the professed church, whether you are talking about the Catholic church, or the Protestant churches, or various Adventist churches, are a mixture of two groups. One group consists of those who love God and keep His commandments as far as they understand them. The other group Jesus called the synagogue of Satan, even though they claimed to have a more elevated and advanced system of Christianity.

Friends, billions have been deceived by religion. You must not listen to any preacher who emphasizes the importance of a relationship with Jesus while at the same time claiming obedience to His word is not necessary. Those people don't even know Jesus, and He doesn't know them. It was that group who caused persecution to increase in the Smyrna church.

Ellen White makes a statement in the *Signs of the Times*, April 22, 1889, in



*You must not listen to any preacher who emphasizes the importance of a relationship with Jesus while at the same time claiming obedience to His word is not necessary.*

which she says, "It is not the true church of God that makes war with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The true church of God does not take the people who love God and keep His commandments to court and try to put them in prison.

Commenting on Luke 9:54-56, Ellen White says, "There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas." *The Desire of Ages*, 487.

The Samaritans showed no hospitality to James and John because Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. The "sons of thunder" were furious and asked Jesus if they could call down fire from heaven on them like Elijah did. But they were shocked when they saw the pain on Jesus' face and even more shocked when they heard the rebuke that came from His lips. He said to them that they did not know what spirit they were of. They had the spirit of Satan while believing they were with the Lord.

We are studying Christ's message to His church and we are living in the end time. As we approach the end of the

world, the true church will be persecuted by the synagogue of Satan. At the end

of the world, there will be only two

sides—the true church, the

persecuted, and the syn-

agogue of Satan, their

fellow church mem-

bers. The synagogue

of Satan has almost

always professed to

be the true church,

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The message of

Jesus to His end time

church today is, "I know the

blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. ... He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" (Revelation 2:9-11).

The message to the church of Smyrna is a message that needs to be known in the coming crisis.

Before probation closes, Ellen White has told us there will be many who will be martyred, but Jesus said do not be afraid of anything that you suffer because He has promised to be with you. Paul says we do not need to be afraid of what man is going to do to us because the One who stands with us is more powerful than man.

Remember the communication Jesus gave to the suffering church so that we may be comforted by His presence in every situation. Nothing is impossible for God. He can get us through any situation.

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

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# *The Sure Word of Prophecy*

## *The foundation of our faith*

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By John R. Pearson

*"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober."*

*1 Thessalonians 5:1-6*





**A**lthough the birth of Jesus was not an obvious fulfillment of prophecy to the Jews (and still isn't), those walking in the Light that streamed so brilliantly from heaven indeed recognized it as fulfillment of prophecy. Strangely, though, even His faithful disciples did not realize that His crucifixion was also prophecy fulfilled. After the resurrection, however, there was no doubt in the minds of Christ's followers that His birth, crucifixion, and resurrection had been clearly foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

When the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, did the Jewish leaders recognize what was happening? Clearly not, for we are told, "The priests and rulers were greatly enraged at this wonderful manifestation." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 40.

So clearly, they did not recognize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of prophecy.

"In answer to the accusation of the priests Peter showed that this demonstration was in direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, wherein he foretold that such power would come upon men to fit them for a special work." *Ibid.*, 41.

Are there prophecies being fulfilled in our day, this very day, that are not being acknowledged as fulfillment of prophecy? Certainly there are—most not recognized by the world and some not recognized even by Adventists.

"There are in the world today many who close their eyes to the evidences that Christ has given to warn men of His coming. They seek to quiet all apprehension, while at the same time the signs of the end are rapidly fulfilling, and the world is hastening to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven. *Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ.* Those guilty of this neglect he calls children of the night and of darkness. He encourages the vigilant and watchful with these words: 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that



day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.' " *Ibid.*, 260. [Emphasis supplied.]

Let's look briefly at some of the events that are occurring around the world right now that perhaps only the children of light recognize as fulfillment of prophecy.

### **Wars and rumors of war...**

What is sometimes termed "saber rattling" is occurring with greater and greater frequency. Think of the situations in Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the tension between India and Pakistan, between Turkey and Syria, or between the US and China or between the US and Iran. The list goes on.

### **Famines...**

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that about 815 million people of the 7.6 billion people in the world, or more than 10%, are suffering from chronic undernourishment.

The FAO estimates that as many as 25,000 people lose their lives every day as a result of hunger. That adds up to roughly 9.1 million people who die of starvation each year.

### **Pestilences...**

The 2014–2016 outbreak in West Africa was the largest Ebola outbreak since

the virus was first discovered in 1976.

The outbreak started in Guinea and then moved across land borders to Sierra Leone and Liberia. The current 2018–2019 outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is highly complex, with insecurity adversely affecting public health response activities.

AIDS, MRSA, Legionnaire's disease, and other pestilences are so common today that we no longer grow alarmed when we hear of occurrences.

Fifty years ago, entire city school systems had at most one medical professional on staff, since chronic illness was relatively unknown among school-age children. Today, it is not uncommon to have a registered health-care professional at every elementary educational facility because of the general degeneration in the health of humankind and the pervasiveness of chronic illnesses among the youth.

### **Earthquakes in various places**

"Scientists analyzed the historical record of earthquakes greater than 8.0 in magnitude and concluded that the global frequency of large earthquakes is no higher today than it has been in the past. Results of the study were published on January 17, 2012, in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences."

<https://earthsky.org/earth/are-large-earthquakes-increasing-in-frequency>

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*The beautifully  
balanced ecosystems that  
Divine wisdom established  
when the earth was  
created have been royally  
imbalanced.*

Further reading reveals that the frequency has increased from 1.0 to 1.2 per year, which is noted in the cited article as not statistically significant. It should be noted, however, that a 20% increase is indeed significant. Just ask the folks in Alpine, Texas, Hutchinson, Kansas, or Perry, Oklahoma, where earthquakes have recently occurred, with no precedents.

“Magnitude 2 and smaller earthquakes occur several hundred times a day worldwide.

Major earthquakes, greater than magnitude 7, happen more than once per month.

‘Great earthquakes,’ magnitude 8 and higher, occur about once a year.” Ibid.

**What are some other prophetic signs of the times that Scripture mentions, some that even those who might claim to be children of light fail to recognize as fulfillment of prophecy?**

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment, and those who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished” (Isaiah 51:6).

Psalm 102:25, 26 states, “Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed.”

These texts provide a rather reassuring declaration of the current state of things: “They will perish ... they will grow old like a garment”; and a declaration also of the hope we maintain in an earth made new: “You will change them, and they will be changed.”

Paul quotes this passage from Psalm 102 in Hebrews 1:10–12—approximately seven centuries after Isaiah wrote them. So clearly, he understood the prophetic implications of this passage.



*The  
evidences  
of aging creep  
up little by  
little.*

Most people who are in their sixth or seventh decade of life and who might be feeling what Inspiration terms “the infirmities of age” can attest to the fact that “growing old” does not happen overnight. The evidences of aging creep up little by little until one finds that aches, pains, and stiffness are not just infrequent visitors but have become permanent residents. But as to the earth’s growing old like a garment, we query: Is there evidence of that terrestrial aging now? Most would assert that there definitely is.

Before we look at some of these, however, let’s make sure that we understand the difference between a theory and a fact.

According to the dictionary, a theory is “a proposed explanation whose status is still conjectural and subject to experimentation.” One example given is “Darwin’s theory of evolution.” Unfortunately, this theory has been accepted as fact by much of the scientific community. Synonyms for “theory” include hypothesis, conjecture, supposition, speculation.

A fact, on the other hand, is “a truth known by actual experience or observation; something known to be true.” Examples: Fire is hot; water is wet; ice is cold.

Let’s look at some actual, empirical facts that indicate that the earth is indeed growing old. These are not theories that cannot be proven, such as evolution. These are empirically determined *facts*. Unfortunately, many



of these facts are clouded by the theory that the earth is billions of years old. We need to be careful not to let that erroneous and unprovable *theory* cause us to disregard provable scientific findings.

## **I Increase in carbon dioxide in atmosphere**

Ancient air bubbles trapped in ice enable us to step back in time and see what Earth's atmosphere and climate were like in the distant past. They tell us that levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere today are higher than they have been at any time in the past. [The author's give the time estimate at 400,000 years, based on the unproven *theory* of uniformitarianism.] During ice ages, CO<sub>2</sub> levels were around 200 parts per million (ppm), and during the warmer interglacial periods, they hovered around 280 ppm. In 2013, CO<sub>2</sub> levels surpassed 400 ppm for the first time in recorded history. This recent relentless rise in CO<sub>2</sub> shows a remarkably constant relationship with fossil-fuel burning, and can be well accounted for based on the simple premise that about 60 percent of fossil-fuel emissions stay in the air. (See [https://climate.nasa.gov/climate\\_resources/24/graphic-the-re-lentless-rise-of-carbon-dioxide/](https://climate.nasa.gov/climate_resources/24/graphic-the-re-lentless-rise-of-carbon-dioxide/).) Different studies quote vastly different time periods, a fact which clouds the empirical findings of these studies.

## **2 The effects that changes in the nature of the ocean have on aquatic life**

Warming oceans are losing oxygen. Oxygen levels in some tropical regions have dropped by a startling 40 percent in the last 50 years, some recent studies reveal. Levels have dropped more subtly elsewhere, with an average loss of 2 percent globally. [www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-ocean-is-running-out-of-breath-scientists-warn/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-ocean-is-running-out-of-breath-scientists-warn/)

## **3 Sea level rise**

Since at least the start of the 20th century, the average global sea level



*In 2013, CO<sub>2</sub> levels surpassed 400 ppm for the first time in recorded history.*

has been rising. Between 1900 and 2016, the sea level rose by more than 6 inches. More precise data gathered from satellite radar measurements reveal an accelerating rise of 3.0 inches from 1993 to 2017, which is a trend of roughly 12 inches per century. This acceleration is due mostly to global warming, which is driving thermal expansion of seawater and the melting of land-based ice sheets and glaciers. [www.globalchange.gov/browse/indicators/global-sea-level-rise](http://www.globalchange.gov/browse/indicators/global-sea-level-rise)

## **4 Ecosystems are changing drastically due to invasive plant and animal species**

An invasive species is a species that is not native to a specific location (an introduced species), and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy, or human health.

Notable examples of invasive plant species include the kudzu vine, Andean pampas grass, and yellow starthistle. Animal examples include the New Zealand mud snail, feral pigs, European rabbits, grey squirrels, domestic cats, carp, zebra mussels, Japanese beetles, boa constrictors in Florida, iguanas throughout the southeast and into Arizona, and ferrets.

Invasion of long-established ecosystems by organisms from distant bio-regions has accelerated massively in recent decades, hastened by international trade. (See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive\\_species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species).)

The beautifully balanced ecosystems that Divine wisdom established when the earth was created have been royally imbalanced as a result of the sinful nature of man, inherited from our fallen forebears.

When we see these signs of the time, there is no need to be despondent and discouraged that earth's ecosystems are getting out of kilter and signs of an aging planet are becoming more and more prevalent. After all, that's what the Bible predicts. Instead, let us rejoice and recognize that the return of our Lord and Saviour is drawing ever closer.

May it be said of us, as it was said of Paul, "The foundation of his faith was the sure word of prophecy." May God enlighten us so that we can recognize prophecy being fulfilled on a daily basis. **LM**

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# *The Burnt Offering*

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By Stephen N. Haskell

**T**he whole burnt offering had its origin at the gate of the garden of Eden (Genesis 4:4; 8:20) and extended to the cross; and it will never lose its significance as long as mankind is subject to temptation and sin. The entire sacrifice was laid upon the altar and burned (Leviticus 1:2–9) typifying not only a surrender of sin, but a consecration of the entire life to the service of God.





Wherever the people of God so-journed during the patriarchal age, rude altars of stone were erected, upon which to offer their whole burnt offerings (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 35:3). After the long period of Egyptian bondage, Israel was so prone to idolatry that the Lord had the brazen altar built in the court of the tabernacle, and instead of burnt-offerings being offered anywhere by the father of the household, they were brought to the sanctuary and offered by the priests of divine appointment (Deuteronomy 12:5, 6). There were special occasions when burnt offerings were offered in other places than the sanctuary, as the sacrifice offered by David on the threshing-floor of Ornan (2 Samuel 24:18–25) and the memorable sacrifice offered by Elijah upon Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:31–38).

The accounts of the burnt-offerings in the Bible are a history of wonderful victories when individuals drew near to God by putting away their sins and surrendering their lives and all they possessed to the service of the Lord. Abraham's great test of faith was a burnt-offering upon Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2–13). Gideon's wonderful victories dated from the whole burnt offerings offered before the Lord when he, by those offerings, showed he surrendered all to the Lord to be consumed on the altar as the Lord directed (Judges 6:21–28).

The whole burnt offering was a type of the full consecration that must come into every life that God can use to His glory. Paul urged the fulfilling of the antitype in the following words: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). The offering of the most costly animal was only an abomination to the Lord unless it was accompanied by the surrender of the heart and life of the one who offered it (Isaiah 1:10, 11; Amos 5:22).



*The heart filled with love to God and our fellow-men is an offering always acceptable to God.*

This principle was beautifully illustrated in the Saviour's passing by as of little value the large gifts of the rich who offered only for display, and stating that in the valuation of heaven the two mites which the poor widow gave with a heart full of love, were of more value than all the wealth given for vain display (Mark 12:41–44). The Lord regards the gifts and offerings made by His people to carry forward His work on the earth as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God," and He pledges to supply all their needs (Philippians 4:16–19). "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

The whole burnt offering was offered as an atonement for sin (Leviticus 9:7). The individual making the offering laid his hands on the head of the animal, confessing his sins (Leviticus 1:4; Numbers 8:12); and then, if it was from the flock or the herd, with his own hands he took its life. If the burnt offering was a bird, the priest killed the offering. The blood was sprinkled round about upon the brazen altar, in type of the cleansing blood of Christ, and then the offering was burned upon the altar.

Every morning and evening a lamb was offered at the sanctuary as a whole burnt offering (Exodus 29:38–42). Each Sabbath day four lambs were offered,

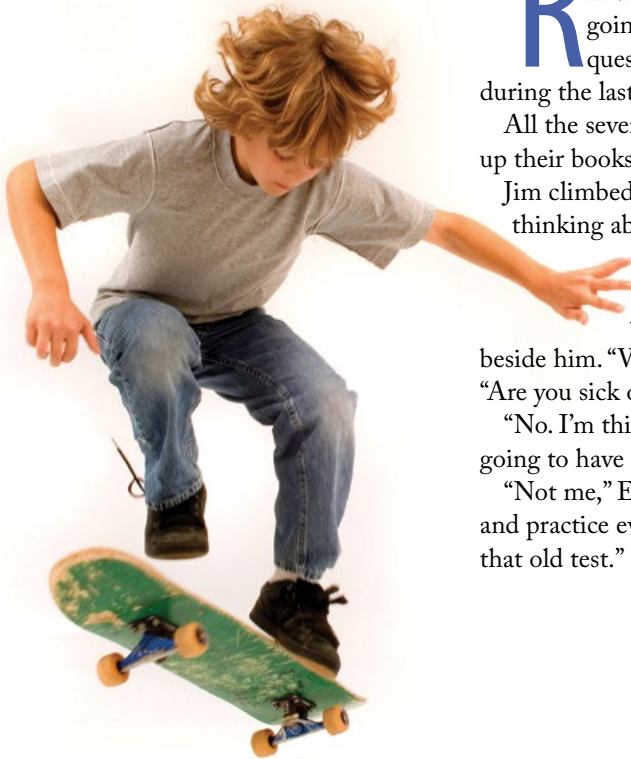
two in the morning and two in the evening (Numbers 28:9,10). These sacrifices typified a re-consecration of the whole congregation each morning and evening to the service of God.

Since the shadow has met the substance, it would be hollow mockery to offer burnt offerings morning and evening now; but the type had lost none of its significance, and contains lessons for us; for "to love Him [God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:33).

The heart filled with love to God and our fellow-men is an offering always acceptable to God. In order to keep the heart in this condition, it must be filled with the life-giving word of God. The Lord regards a "knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6). The individual who will sacrifice selfish interests and pleasures sufficiently to take time morning and evening to study God's word, will experience that love in the heart which always has been and ever will be far more acceptable to God than "whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

*The Cross and Its Shadow*, 132–134, Stephen N. Haskell, The Bible Training School, 1914. [LM](#)

## *Jim's Big Decision*



"Remember," Mrs. Allen told all the boys and girls in the seventh grade, "one week from today we are going to have our final test in American history. The questions will cover everything we've been studying during the last three months, so you'll have to study hard."

All the seventh graders groaned out loud as they gathered up their books and papers and got ready to go home.

Jim climbed on the school bus and took a seat. He was thinking about the history test and how much studying he was going to have to do if he wanted to get a good grade. He was thinking so hard about the test he hardly noticed when Eric sat down beside him. "What's the matter?" Eric asked looking at Jim. "Are you sick or something?"

"No. I'm thinking about that history test next week. We're going to have to spend a lot of time studying."

"Not me," Eric said. "I'm going down to the skateboard park and practice every night this week. I don't have to study for that old test."

“Why not?” Jim wanted to know.

“Because I already know all the questions that will be on it,” Eric told him. “Several of the kids in class have them. You just have to be sure you know the answers to those questions, and you’ll do fine. You don’t have to spend all week studying.”

“How do you know the questions?” Jim asked.

Eric looked around carefully and lowered his voice. “George found a copy of the test in the wastebasket last week when he was helping the janitor take out the trash. I guess Mrs. Allen had forgotten to shred it before she threw it away. George managed to slip it out of the wastebasket and put it under his coat without the janitor seeing him. He’s selling copies for five dollars. He’ll sell you one if you want it. He’s keeping it a secret from most of the kids in the class since he doesn’t want word to get out. But he would sell you a copy, I’m sure. It’s good money for George, and several of us will get a good grade without having to study.”

Jim didn’t know what to think. He knew what George was doing was wrong. And he knew that to buy a copy of the test would be cheating. But he also knew that he was going to have to spend several hours every night studying to have any chance at all of doing well on the test. And he knew that the test counted a lot toward his final grade in the class. He was tempted to give George five dollars and not have to study.

For a while, a battle was going on in his mind. What should he do? The bus was almost at his stop. Eric was looking at him; he had to make a decision. Should he cheat or should he spend all week studying? The bus was slowing down, and the driver was turning on the flashing red lights. Eric waited for Jim’s answer.

“No, Eric,” Jim said as the bus stopped. “I don’t want a copy of the test. That wouldn’t be fair. I want to take the

test honestly and do well because I’ve studied—not because I’ve cheated.”

Eric shrugged. “Suit yourself,” he said.

All that week, Jim studied hard, reviewing what he had learned in class over the last few months. He went over all his notes and tried his best to remember the important points that Mrs. Allen had stressed in class. It seemed like the longest week in his life.

Finally, the morning came. Test day! Jim wasn’t sure how well he would do on the test, but he knew he had studied hard and was as prepared as he would ever be. And he knew that no matter what happened, he had done the right thing. His conscience was clear.

As Jim walked into the classroom, Eric looked at him carefully. So did George. So did three or four other students. They all knew that Jim knew they had the questions already. “You should have bought the questions,” Eric whispered. “You didn’t have to spend all that time studying, you know!”

Jim didn’t say anything. He looked around. Mrs. Allen wasn’t in the room yet. The kids in the classroom were talking and putting their things away. It was time for class to begin, and still Mrs. Allen hadn’t arrived. “Where is Mrs. Allen?” everyone began asking. “Why isn’t she here? What’s wrong?”

Just then the door opened, and the school principal entered the room, followed by Mrs. Allen. The principal wasn’t smiling; neither was Mrs. Allen. Instead, they had serious expressions on their faces. The students quit talking

and turned their attention to the front of the classroom. When everything was quiet, the principal said, “Yesterday, your teacher learned that some stu-

dents had managed to get a copy of today’s history test. We aren’t sure yet just how this happened, but we’re investigating. Meanwhile, Mrs. Allen has stayed up all night preparing a new test with all new questions. It wasn’t easy for her to do so, but she’s ready now.” The principal turned and walked out the door, and Mrs.

Allen began passing out the test—a completely new test with all new questions.

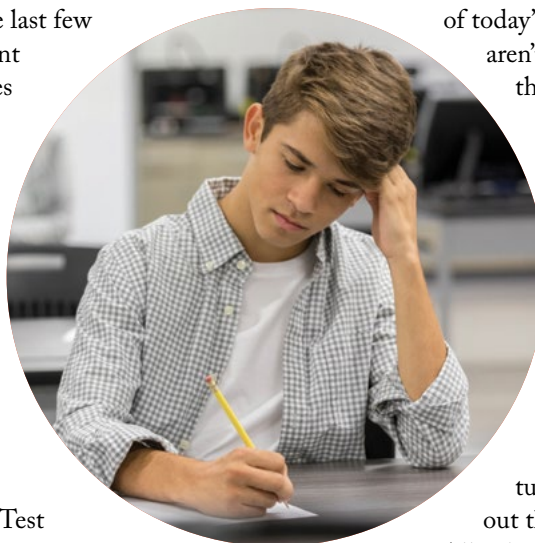
Some of the students looked puzzled. A few of the students looked sick. But there was joy in Jim’s heart. He was happy that he had made the decision to be honest.

Jim picked up the test and began to read the questions. He had studied hard, and he knew he was going to do well.

*Storytime*, Character-building Stories for Children, ©2008, 74–77.

Young people, each one of us is taking a test—our final test. If we don’t pass this test there will be no second chance to take it again. Are we studying as if our eternal life depended on it? or are we listening to the devil who tells us we don’t need to study and prepare—we can cheat through this life and still win the prize of heaven?

“You are now in probationary [final test] time, and a second probation will not come to any of you. This is the only opportunity you will have of standing the test and proving of God.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 245. [LM](#)





# *Josiah: Boy King, Reformer*

Clues – 2 Chronicles 34, 35 KJV

## *Across:*

- B<sub>5</sub> Josiah feared God's \_\_\_\_\_ because their fathers had not obeyed God's word..... 34:21  
 C<sub>15</sub> Josiah made a public covenant with God to keep all these ..... 34:31  
 D<sub>2</sub> God said He would bring all these that were written in the book ..... 34:24  
 D<sub>9</sub> Josiah had altars to this false god destroyed ..... 34:4  
 E<sub>19</sub> The priests were busy with this until night ..... 35:14  
 F<sub>5</sub> The people used works of their hands to do this to God..... 34:25  
 F<sub>14</sub> The Passover sacrifice was roasted with this..... 35:13  
 G<sub>19</sub> Shaphan read this to the king ..... 34:18  
 H<sub>2</sub> Josiah cut down all these throughout all of Israel (singular) ..... 34:7  
 H<sub>9</sub> What Josiah did to the Lord's priests ..... 35:2  
 I<sub>7</sub> Josiah burned false priests' \_\_\_\_\_ on their altars (singular)..... 34:5  
 J<sub>14</sub> The rest of Josiah's \_\_\_\_\_ are written in the book of Kings ..... 35:26, 27  
 J<sub>19</sub> God's wrath was incurred because the people burned incense to other \_\_\_\_\_ ..... 34:25  
 K<sub>3</sub> This prophet lamented for Josiah's death ..... 35:25  
 L<sub>9</sub> All Jerusalem and Judah did this at Josiah's death ..... 35:24  
 M<sub>1</sub> One of the types of animals used for the Passover..... 35:7  
 M<sub>16</sub> Hilkiah found a book of the law when they brought this out ..... 34:14  
 O<sub>2</sub> What Egyptian archers did to Josiah..... 35:23  
 O<sub>9</sub> What Josiah did to himself to fight the Egyptians ..... 35:22  
 P<sub>18</sub> Josiah made a public covenant to keep all God's testimonies with all his \_\_\_\_\_ ..... 34:31  
 Q<sub>1</sub> The Egyptians did not want this with Josiah ..... 35:21  
 Q<sub>11</sub> What did the workmen do faithfully?..... 34:12  
 R<sub>4</sub> Money to repair the house of the Lord came from all the \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel ..... 34:9  
 R<sub>16</sub> Josiah made a public covenant to keep God's commandments with all his \_\_\_\_\_ ..... 34:31  
 S<sub>11</sub> When Josiah heard God's word he \_\_\_\_\_ his clothes..... 34:19

## *Down:*

- A<sub>7</sub> Some Passover offerings were sod in these ..... 35:13  
 B<sub>11</sub> Josiah ground false images into dust and strowed it upon these (singular) ..... 34:4  
 B<sub>13</sub> God said He would bring this upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants..... 34:24  
 B<sub>17</sub> God had commanded the Egyptians to make \_\_\_\_\_ against the Babylonians ..... 35:21  
 B<sub>21</sub> Workmen had to repair houses that earlier kings had \_\_\_\_\_ ..... 34:11  
 C<sub>3</sub> By the eighteenth year of his reign he had done this to the land ..... 34:8  
 D<sub>5</sub> Josiah was buried in one of these (singular) ..... 35:24  
 D<sub>9</sub> Josiah didn't return to Jerusalem until he had \_\_\_\_\_ down all false altars ..... 34:7  
 F<sub>14</sub> The Jews had done this to God to incur His wrath..... 34:25  
 F<sub>16</sub> King Josiah did that which was \_\_\_\_\_ in God's sight ..... 34:2  
 G<sub>12</sub> These were at every gate for the Passover..... 35:15  
 H<sub>7</sub> Josiah removed all these from the entire land of Judah and Israel ..... 34:33  
 H<sub>10</sub> Josiah wanted to fight this king of Egypt ..... 35:20  
 J<sub>17</sub> The wounded Josiah was brought to Jerusalem in which chariot?..... 35:24  
 J<sub>19</sub> Josiah \_\_\_\_\_ the people lambs for the Passover..... 35:7  
 K<sub>3</sub> All the people of this country were present for Josiah's big Passover ..... 34:21

A	2	3	4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	A
B																					B
C																					
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## Answer Key:

22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
S																					S
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- K9 Workmen were paid to repair and \_\_\_\_\_ the house of the Lord ..... 34:10  
 N5 The temple workmen had to buy hewn ..... 34:11  
 N21 The Levites that taught the people were this ..... 35:3  
 O2 Josiah read the book that was found to even these people ..... 34:30  
 O12 Josiah purged Judah and Jerusalem of these false worship places..... 34:3  
 O16 How old was Josiah when he became king of Judah? ..... 34:1  
 O19 Levites who kept these had collected money (singular) ..... 34:9  
 Q9 Josiah's reign lasted for thirty-\_\_\_\_\_ years..... 34:1  
 R18 Josiah ordered this put back in Solomon's temple..... 35:3



## *Effectual Prayer*

**M**any prayers are offered without faith. A set form of words is used, but there is no real importunity. These prayers are doubtful, hesitating; they bring no relief to those who offer them, and no comfort or hope to others. The form of prayer is used, but the spirit is wanting, showing that the petitioner does not feel his need, and is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. These long, cold prayers are untimely and wearisome; they are too much like preaching the Lord a sermon.

Learn to pray short, and right to the point, asking for just what you need. Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you. Do not offer make-believe

prayers, but earnest, feeling petitions, expressing the hunger of the soul for the Bread of Life. If we prayed more in secret, we should be able to pray more intelligently in public. These doubtful, hesitating prayers would cease. And when engaged with our brethren in public worship, we could add to the interest of the meeting; for we should bring with us some of the atmosphere of heaven, and our worship would be a reality, and not a mere form. Those about us can soon tell whether we are in a habit of praying or not. If the soul is not drawn out in prayer in the closet, and while engaged in the business of the day, the lack will be manifest in the prayer-meeting. The public prayers will

be dry and formal, consisting of repetitions and customary phrases, and they will bring darkness rather than light into the meeting.

The life of the soul depends upon habitual communion with God. Its wants are made known, and the heart is open to receive fresh blessings. Gratitude flows from unfeigned lips; and the refreshing that is received from Jesus is manifested in words, in deeds of active benevolence, and in public devotion. There is love to Jesus in the heart; and where love exists, it will not be repressed, but will express itself. Secret prayer sustains the inner life. The heart that loves God will desire to commune with Him, and will lean on Him in holy confidence.



Let us learn to pray intelligently, expressing our requests with clearness and precision. Let us put away the listless, sluggish habit into which we have fallen, and pray as though we meant it. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16, *last part*). Faith takes a firm hold of the promises of God, and urges her petitions with fervor; but when the life of the soul stagnates, the outward devotions become formal and powerless.

Jesus is our Saviour to-day. He is pleading for us in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and He will forgive our sins. It makes all the difference in the world with us spiritually whether we rely upon God without doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether we are seeking to find some righteousness in ourselves before we come to Him. Look away from self to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It is a sin to doubt. The least unbelief, if cherished, involves the soul in guilt, and brings great darkness and discouragement. It is saying that the Lord is false, that He will not do as He has promised; and He is greatly dishonored.

Some have cherished doubts, discontent, and a disposition to be on the wrong side, until they are in an atmosphere of doubt, and seem to think it praise-worthy to be on the side of the doubting. But when the believing ones shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls, the doubting ones, who have sowed unbelief, will reap that which they have sown, and an undesirable harvest it will be.

Some obtain answers to prayer, a little freedom, and they become elated. They do not increase in faith, do not grow in strength and courage, but they depend on feeling. If they happen to feel well, they think they are in favor with God. How many stumble here! how many are overcome! Feeling is no criterion for any of us. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not

seen" (Hebrews 11:1). We are to examine our character in God's mirror, His holy law, to detect our errors and imperfections, and then to remove them by the precious blood of Christ.

We may commit the keeping of our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator, not because we are sinless, but because Jesus died to save just such erring, faulty creatures as we are. We may rest upon God, not because of our own merit, but because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb of God, who did no sin; and by looking to Him in faith we shall become like Him.

There are rich promises for us in the word of God. It is no narrow, limited provision that has been made for us. The plan of salvation is ample. We are not obliged to trust in the evidences that we had a year or a month ago, but we may have the assurance to-day that Jesus lives, and is making intercession for us. We cannot do good to those around us while our own souls are destitute of spiritual life.

Our brethren do not wrestle all night in prayer as many godly men before us have done. They sit up bent over tables, writing lessons, or preparing articles to be read by thousands; they arrange facts in shape to convince the mind in regard to doctrine. All these things are essential; but how much God can do for us in sending light and power to convict hearts in the prayer of faith! The empty seats in our prayer-meetings testify that Christians do not realize the claims of God upon them; they do not real-

ize their duty to make these meetings interesting and successful. They go over a monotonous, wearisome round, and return home unrefreshed, unbled.

If we would refresh others, we must ourselves drink of the Fountain that never becomes dry. It is our privilege to become acquainted with the Source of our strength; to have hold of the arm of God. If we would have spiritual life and energy, we must commune with God. We can speak to Him of our real wants; and our earnest petitions will show that we realize our needs, and will do what we can to answer our own prayers. We must obey the injunction of Paul, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14).

Luther was a man of prayer. He worked and prayed as though something must be done, and that at once, and it was done. His prayers were followed up by venturing something on the promises of God; and through divine aid he was enabled to shake the vast power of Rome, so that in every country the foundation of the papacy trembled.

The Spirit of God co-operates with the humble worker who abides in Christ and communes with Him. Pray when you are faint-hearted. When you are desponding, close the lips firmly to men; keep all the darkness within, lest you shadow the path of another; but tell it to Jesus. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith, that you may see light in His light, and rejoice in His love. Only believe, and you shall surely see the salvation of God.

*Morning Talks*, To the Ministers at the General Conference, Ellen G. White, November 1883, 15-18. LM

“  
*Many prayers are offered  
without faith. A set form of  
words is used, but there is no  
real importunity.*”

# *Ripples in the Witnessing Pond*

**T**hank you for your kindness and compassion. There was a time in my life I did not love God or anyone else, not even myself.

I was born in a family full of abuse and hatred. My father would beat us and our mother for no reason except for his pleasure. I was introduced to physical abuse at the age of 5 which continued to the age 15.

At 15 I finally lived on the streets till I was 18. By this time I was so ashamed of myself I wanted to just die, look God in the face and spit in His eyes for allowing all this to happen to me.

At age 21 I met a man on a Christian construction crew and he told me every day about God. I didn't want to hear it and I threatened his life if he ever told me about God again. I felt sick for what I said to him because I had never before disrespected my elders.

On a Monday at a job site it was raining so the boss gave us the day off. I went into one of the offices we were finishing to stay out of the weather. Neil came in and asked if he could talk about Jesus. I was not wanting to disrespect

him again so I said sure. As he talked about this loving man the hate in me melted. That is when I accepted Jesus into my heart and found the love for God in my life.

I've been sharing both ever since. It took me a long time to be able to trust others but since I've been in prison, I've been able to help others with the same past. It doesn't hurt anymore and now I use my past as a tool to bring others to Christ.

It's not always easy to try to convince these guys from age 20 to 35 that they are valuable, worthy of love and to be loved in a correct manner. But by the grace of a loving Father and the leading of the Holy Spirit, I've been able to help at least 100 other men find Christ and love in themselves. I pray that at this 50 and older camp, I can teach people how to find their worth in Jesus and I will continue in the Holy Spirit's leading.

This is the part of my testimony, without going in the nasty details, that I want people to understand. When I got saved God spoke to me. He said, "What my Son went through was not for

Himself but for Me. The same is what I went through. [It] was not for me but for someone else."

I did not understand this until I gave my testimony at another camp and 6 men gave their lives to Christ. I had to go through all that so I could understand them and have compassion on them and I thank the Lord every day for this. May this help some in need.

Everyone has a value. There is a job that God needs us to do and only you can do it. May God bless you and your family. Please continue to stay focused on the Lord and His service.

Love always in Christ,

*Michael* (This name has been changed to protect the privacy of the author.)

*My sayings:*

"I do not want to be the man the world says that I am."

"I am not yet the man that God wants me to be but I am not the man I used to be."

"Work in progress." **LM**



# *The Battle*

**H**ow often the battle rages within our souls. Whom will we crucify in our lives—Jesus or Barabbas? The choice is ours. If we crucify Barabbas, the Lord Jesus is free to work a miracle in our hearts, but if we deny and crucify Jesus, we are left alone with no strength to battle the evil one. In the words of an old song written by F. E. Belden in 1908 from “Christ in Song,” pg. 1, came forth the real battle of our hearts: Christ or Barabbas? Whom will you crucify in your life?

## *Christ or Barabbas?*

What shall I do with Jesus? He stands before me now,  
Wearing the robe of purple, And thorns upon His brow.  
This is the question now; What shall the answer be?  
Shall I crucify King Jesus, And set Barabbas free?

Shall I release the robber, The carnal man of pride?  
Sin or a sinless Saviour? O which shall be denied?  
This is the question now; What shall the answer be?  
Shall I crucify King Jesus, And set Barabbas free?

Solemn and awful question! How still the balance stands!  
Mercy a moment lingers, It trembles in her hands.  
This is the question now; What shall the answer be?  
Shall I crucify King Jesus, And set Barabbas free?

Self on the seat of judgment, Dare you the world deny?  
Louder and louder calling, “Away!” and “Crucify!”  
This is the question now; What shall the answer be?  
Shall I crucify King Jesus, And set Barabbas free?

Not to the sinner only, The question comes with pow’r,  
Hear it, ye halting Christians, In every trial hour.  
This is the question now; What shall the answer be?  
I will crucify Barabbas and set King Jesus free.

**Heavenly Father: The battle rages within my heart—who will reign, Jesus or Barabbas? Too many times I have crucified Jesus and allowed Barabbas to sit upon the throne of my heart. Every trial I go through comes down to the big choice “who receives my heart—Jesus or Barabbas?” Give me courage to shut the door to Barabbas and to open it to Jesus in each and every battle. Amen. LM**





## Your Letters

“When I need to draw closer to God and Jesus, I read my back issues of *LandMarks*. There is a special blessing God places on the writers of the sermons. They help me understand God’s word so clearly.”

—VT, New Mexico

“Thank you for the inspiring articles in *Landmarks*. They are always a blessing to my family.”

—PR, Texas

“It is good to know there are still some who are unafraid to speak the truth of the three angels’ messages. Blessings to your ministry.”

—ST, Wisconsin

### February Sermon of the Month

## One Church in Heaven

By John J. Grosboll

Unity cannot be negotiated. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men and women.

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

## From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

### February 2020

Dear Friend,

Our mission is to take the three angels’ messages to all the world. “Our message is to go forth in power to all parts of the world—to Oregon, England, Australia, to the Islands of the sea, to all nations, tongues, and peoples.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, 379.

Soon many opportunities that we now have will exist no longer because, “Perilous times are before us. The whole world will be involved in perplexity and distress, disease of every kind will be upon the human family, and such ignorance as now prevails concerning the laws of health would result in great suffering and the loss of many lives that might be saved.

“While Satan is constantly doing his utmost to take advantage of men’s ignorance and to lay the foundation of disease by improper treatment of the body, it is best for those who claim to be sons and daughters of God to avail themselves while they can of the opportunities now presented to gain a knowledge of the human system and how it may be preserved in health.” *Counsels on Health*, 504.

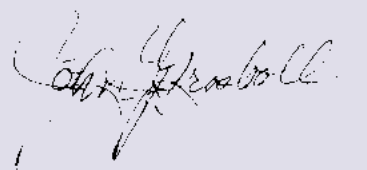
“I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work.” *Ibid.*, 533.

Christians need to be prepared to help others to stop smoking and get off the addictive drugs that are destroying them physically, mentally and spiritually, and get on an effective and healthy dietary program and an appropriate exercise program. The Lord sent to His people these counsels over 100 years ago. Don’t let the final events of this earth’s history find you unprepared to do your part in the final work.

The following books could help you in your search to be ready for the time predicted above. Relatively inexpensive used copies can be found on the Internet.

1. Encyclopedia of Natural Healing
2. Get Well at Home
3. When There is no Doctor

Your brother in Christ,



John J. Grosboll

# 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Offering

## *Hands Across the Border*

### *Sharing the Gospel with the Neighbors*

By Henry Mwesa



*Pastor Mwesa conducting one of his seminars.*

**A**part from the Zambia churches, we are also working with churches in Malawi and Mozambique under the umbrella Zambia Malawi division of Free Seventh-day Adventists. Our goal is to come up with a ministry that shall be governed by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. We are praying for an organized system that will embrace all historic SDA churches and help establish an organized system of truth, harmonious and complete. Apart from promoting the Training Program for Ministers and Church Leaders, we have also been evangelizing by way of

medical missionary work, nutrition and literature distribution. As we get more and more organized, our focus has been that we have well trained evangelist and medical missionary workers. We are alive to the fact that independent churches are vulnerable to different winds of doctrine that can poison the work and impede it from progressing. Tremendous progress has been recorded in the area of training workers in the division. This has had a trickle-down effect on the progress of the work as a whole.

As a division, we often have combined revival meetings and Bible

conferences for the youth as well as camp meetings. These are interchangeably held between Zambia and Malawi. They have also been used as a means to reach out especially to our friends in the conference churches. We conduct prophecy seminars and public evangelistic campaigns after which we baptize those that make decisions for eternity. The Lord has been kind to us and has thus far blessed our efforts.

To support Pastor Mwesa and his work in Zambia and the surrounding area, please mark your donations *Zambia. LM*

*from the*  
**Mission Fields**

# *A Bright and Shining Beacon in the Philippines*

*Little by Little, the Light  
Shines More Brightly*

*We have periodically reported on the efforts of a faithful historic Adventist group in the Philippines who are striving to be a beacon of light in Bayambang. We recently received the following progress report from Sister Esmie de Guzman:*

**P**raise God from Whom all blessings flow! Thank you so much for remembering Bayambang Church, Bayambang, Pangasinan, here in the Pearl of the Orient. We hope and pray that this report on our building project will resolve the financial needs of the unfinished church building and generate more funds.

The time has come for much aggressive work to be done in all the unworked and neglected fields.







**Top:** Church entry.

**Top right:** Beginning work on the second storey.

**Bottom right:** Sabbath worship.

A few months ago we finished the first floor of the church building in which the LORD truly revived and blessed us. There are lots of obstacles to surmount but our God is much much stronger than all the enemy's attacks: illnesses, discouragements, financial constraints, to name a few. With all these difficulties, God will provide, God will heal, and ALL HIS WORDS are encouragements and inspirations!

God will do great things for His faithful people when they put their trust in Him. Through faith, we today are to reach the heights of God's purpose for us. Our only time is Now. We will never pass this way again. Time waits for no one. Regrets even will not turn back time. Excuses will not slow down time.

THANK YOU for all the right people at the right time to help build the memorial here.

KUDOS to all. May our God in heaven bless you all. Much gratitude to all.

In Christian service,

*Sister Esmie de Guzman*

To assist this faithful group in the completion of their construction efforts, please mark your contributions *Philippines*. **LM**

## *The Report*

1. The donated lot has been officially and judicially transferred to *Revelation 12:17 Ministry Inc.* of Free SDA with the Transfer Certificate of Title in favor of the ministry.
2. The ground or first floor, which will serve as office/administration building and children's division, is done but without a ceiling yet. At the moment it serves as our worship hall. It can host district fellowship wherein we have just concluded feet washing and communion services with Urdaneta Church and Nueva Ecija Church.
3. It has two comfort rooms with the floor tiled; the wall of the facade is also with tiles. The inside walls are all painted but the outside walls are not yet done. A dividing curtain has been put up temporarily to divide the Sabbath School class and the children's division.  
Our desire is to finish the worship hall (the second floor) to meet the needs of the worshipers. Currently, we have no place for a separate Bible study classroom for newcomers during Sabbath School.
4. Water and electric lines had been installed.

# Yellow-Eyed Penguin

**Y**ellow-eyed penguins are easily identifiable among other species because of the yellow color of their eyes. They have a light yellow stripe around each eye that continues and joins in the back of their head. The rest of their dark plumage on the back, wings, and tail is not completely black as in other species, mixed white feathers in those areas give it the appearance of dark brown or dark gray.

Their front from the throat to the legs is fully white, and their legs are pink. Their beak has mixed parts of pink and orange and as their name implies the iris of their eyes are yellow. Newborn chicks look very different; they have light brown plumage and lack the yellow eyes and all the colorful details of the head that adults have.

Yellow-eyed penguins' main colonies are on Campbell Island, Auckland Island, Stewart Island, South Island of New Zealand and the Otago Peninsula.

Colorful plants, trees, and humidity are part of the natural landscape of the Yellow-eyed Penguin.

These penguins are sedentary, and they do not make migratory journeys. They are not as social as other species, so they do not group in crowded colonies; they prefer hiking on their own and dive into the sea individually. The yellow-eyed penguin forages predominantly over the continental shelf between one and sixteen miles offshore, diving to depths of 131 feet to 394 feet and feeding on small fish such as opal fish, red cod, blue cod and kingfish as well as shellfish.

Both partners and their offspring communicate acoustically. They do not show as much bonding as other penguins because of their individual character. They prefer to hide their chicks in natural cavities made by tree trunks or rocks to avoid any disturbance.

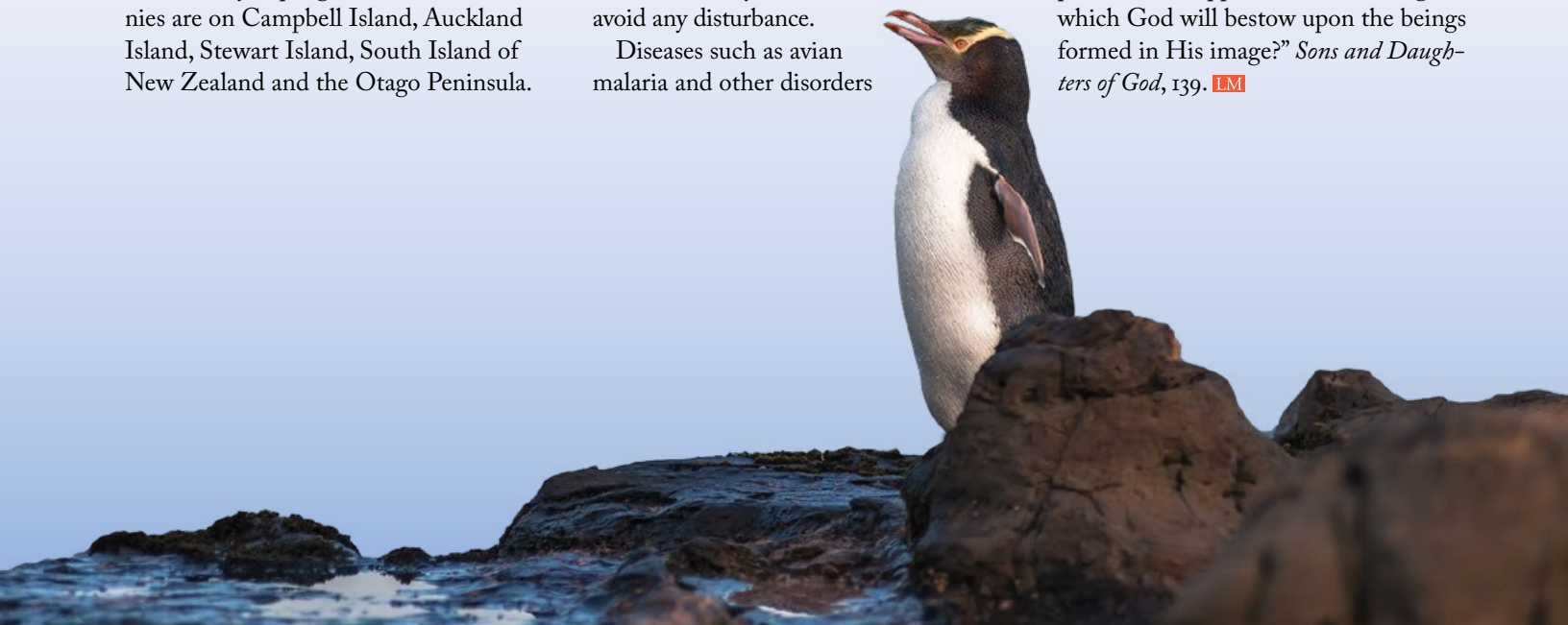
Diseases such as avian malaria and other disorders

caused by bacteria and parasites, as well as the lack of food as a result of temperature changes in the ocean are their main threats.

Human activities like disturbance due to tourism, forgotten fishing nets, and accidental forest fires are also factors that threaten the *Megadyptes antipodes*.

**Excerpts from:** [www.penguins-world.com/yellow-eyed-penguin/](http://www.penguins-world.com/yellow-eyed-penguin/)

“The bounties of God’s providence speak to every soul, confirming Christ’s testimony to the supreme goodness of His Father. The Lord would have His people realize that the blessings bestowed upon any object of creation are proportionate to the place that object occupies in the scale of creation. If even the wants of dumb animals are supplied, can we appreciate the blessings which God will bestow upon the beings formed in His image?” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 139. **LM**





Q:

*What does the  
"narrow way"  
involve?*

A:

**B**ecause strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

"Tests are placed all along the way from earth to heaven. It is because of this that the road to heaven is called the narrow way. Character must be tested, else there would be many spurious Christians who would keep up a fair semblance of religion until their inclinations, their desire to have their own way, their pride and ambition, were crossed. When by the Lord's permission sharp trials come to them, their lack of genuine religion, of the meekness and lowliness of Christ, shows them to be in need of the work of the Holy Spirit. ...

"He [Christ] invites all to wear His yoke and learn His meekness and lowliness. He knows that it is positively necessary for them to do this. But no human being can wear the yoke of submission and obedience who does not learn daily in the school of Christ. ... No one, whatever his supposed abilities, can bear the test of trial unless he is a student in the school of Christ. ...

"The true Christian keeps his eyes fixed on Him who searches the heart

and tries the reins, who requires truth in the inward parts. His constant prayer is, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psalm 139:23, 24)." *In Heavenly Places*, 266.

"Why is it so hard to lead a self-denying, humble life? Because professed Christians are not dead to the world. It is easy living after we are dead. But many are longing for the leeks and onions of Egypt. They have a disposition to dress and act as much like the world as possible, and yet go to heaven. Such climb up some other way. They do not enter through the strait gate and narrow way. ..." *Messages to Young People*, 127, 128.

"Before you are two ways—the broad road of self-indulgence and the narrow path of self-sacrifice. Into the broad road you can take selfishness, pride, love of the world; but those who walk in the narrow way must lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset. Which road have you chosen—the road which leads to everlasting death, or the road which leads to glory and immortality?" *Our High Calling*, 8. **LM**





*Destination:*  
***Eternity***

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By Vernon Sparks

**O**ur support systems are failing. Through greed and needless ignorance we ourselves have done much of the damage. Those who persist in harming God's creation have an account to settle with the Designer/Creator. "I will destroy them that destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).

As marvelous as this earth is, with its numerous life-supporting systems, the human being with his ability to love, to reason, to invent and to reproduce after his kind, is the Creator's masterpiece—the ultimate evidence for a higher intelligent Being. Anyone who persists in abusing, misusing or harming the ultimate evidence of His creative power will not only suffer the present consequences of increased disease and perhaps premature death, but also must give an accounting to his Creator.



“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

Inherent in our life-by-design are the eight principles of proper care for this marvelous creation. To intelligently care for our bodies, we must understand how they are constructed and how they function. We must have an understanding of anatomy and physiology. We must also have an understanding of the support systems of our being and how best we can utilize them in their present, less than ideal, condition.

If we are to get out of this earth alive, each one of us, to a greater or lesser extent, must make a new start. We recognize that we have not always taken the best possible care of this amazing life that we have been intrusted with. Someone has placed the life-support systems for mankind in the form of the acronym NEW START—Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in Divine Power. Undoubtedly, we all need a new start.

There is definite evidence that if we will relate properly to these eight support systems, we will have a marked improvement in health and function of our bodies. It is well documented that two thirds of all deaths in America are due to causes which we know how to prevent. (“Closing the Gap,” JAMA, September 13, 1985.) The types of illnesses from which people suffer and die are determined largely by how they live hour by hour and day by day. Improper use of life-support systems are presently the major cause of disease and premature death.

Unhealthful living habits are rampant among earth’s inhabitants. When attempts to change are made, we discover that chronic thought patterns and physical habits are much more difficult to change than we believed. Many times

we are confronted with the fact that we would rather continue in our misuse of nature’s resources and suffer the consequences than to make the struggle to change. This rebellion and arrogancy against that which is for our own good is known as sin. Because of sin, with its senseless disregard for the operating instructions for human life, mankind has been placed on the endangered species list of the universe.

When malfunction first occurred on this world, it was only because of emergency back-up systems that all was not instantaneously lost. These emergency measures have continued to keep this planet and the human race alive to this day, but they can be continued only until all have had the opportunity to choose knowledgeably as to whether they desire to remain in sinful rebellion or not. Those who choose to live in harmony with the Creator’s design standards are forgiven of the past. They are also given the power thereafter to cease their senseless rebellion.

Yes, the good news is that the Divine-Rescue plan for Planet Earth provides power to change the physical and spiritual health-destroying habits from which we suffer. No life on board need be lost. All that is required is a recognition of our hopeless state, a repentance for our past, a request for that transforming power, and a total surrender to God’s enabling power on a moment-by-moment basis.

Let’s face it. This planet is out of control. In spite of our own ingenuity and inventiveness, modern science cannot remove the selfishness from our

own stubborn hearts. Man’s own selfish motives result in famine and pestilence stalking the earth. Social and political strife continue unabated. As a result of monetary greed, mankind continues to strip the earth of its vegetation, and

to pollute his own water, air, and food supplies. The

answer is not more technical ability.

The problems demand a change of heart—a new birth—and that is available only through Heaven’s rescue plan of salvation.

Those who

escape from this earth with their lives will be

destined for eternity. Once

mankind’s life is brought into harmony with his life-support systems, he can be safely reinstated into the original plan for the human race.

Those who are rescued and restored will be placed in an earth made new with its original support systems. Humanity will once again have access to the river and the tree of life. With stubborn rebellion thoroughly removed from mankind’s heart, malfunction will never rise again.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And

“

*The types of illnesses from which people suffer and die are determined largely by how they live hour by hour and day by day.*

“  
As a result of  
monetary greed, mankind  
continues to strip the earth  
of its vegetation, and to  
pollute his own water, air,  
and food supplies.”

I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” “And he [the angel] shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 21:3–5, 1; 22:1, 2).

Ellen White, in *The Great Controversy*, 677, 678, has penned it thus:

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

“And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand

times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

“‘And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever’ (Revelation 5:13).

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”

Friend, let me assure you, this is not science fiction. This account is fact and not fancy. The destiny of those rescued from this crippled earth is perfect life throughout eternity. You and I, with our friends and loved ones, can be there. Yes, we must be there!

*Health for Today*, Vernon Sparks, M.D., No. 3, ©1991, 28, 29.

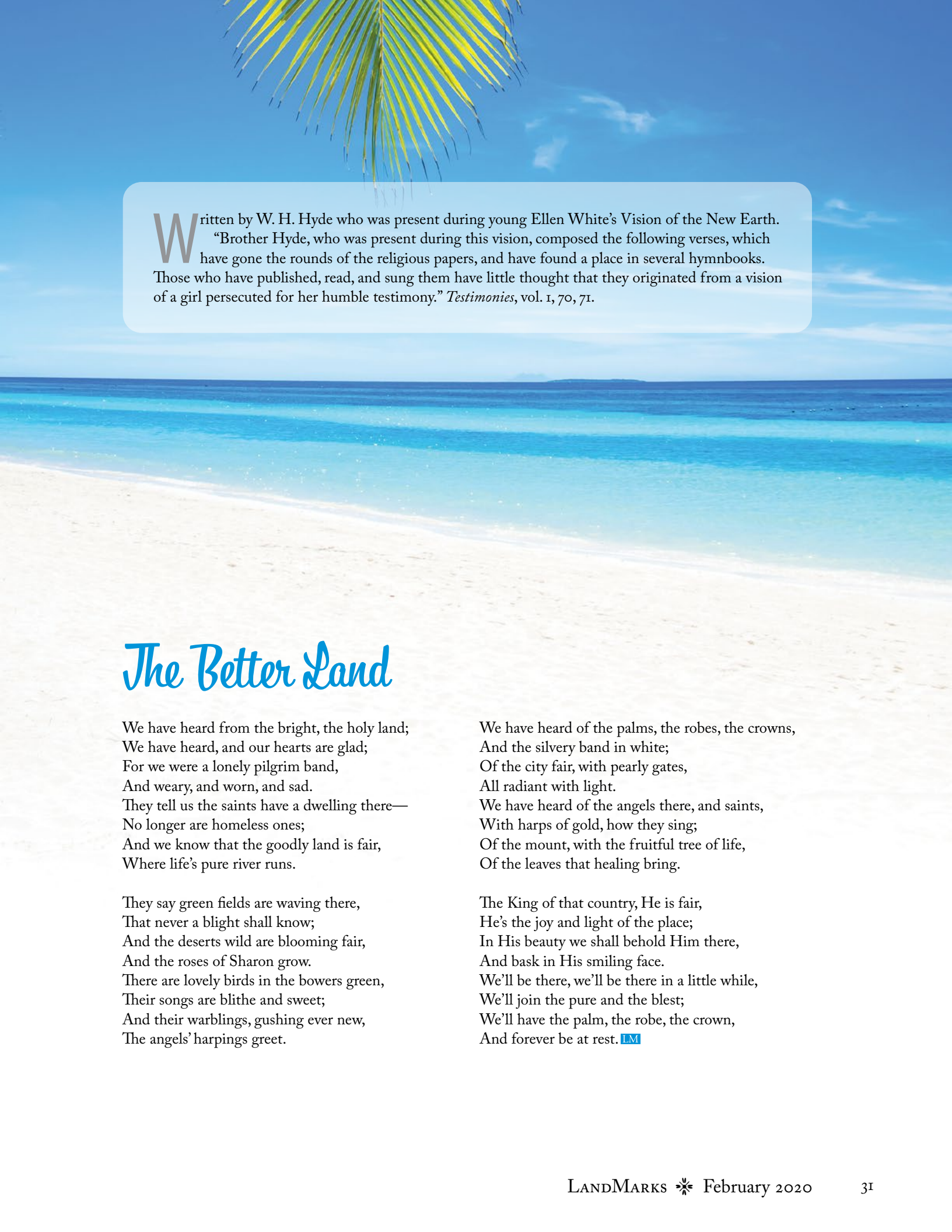
Vernon Sparks served as a guest lecturer at Life Abundant Missionary Institute, Eatonville, Washington.

“Over the years, my primary interests have shifted from physical health to spiritual health. Both areas are extremely important; however, of the two, the latter is primary. In the spiritual area, my interest is focused on the natural-to-fallen-man tendency to not measure up in experience to the spiritual knowledge available. My desire is to make available publications and truths that tend to be neglected, forgotten, or misunderstood.” LM

**Dr. Sparks** received his M.D. degree from Loma Linda University in 1962 and served in various capacities within the Seventh-day Adventist health system for many years. Since retiring in 1997, his work has focused on making available historic Adventist publications that have long been out of print.







**W**ritten by W. H. Hyde who was present during young Ellen White's Vision of the New Earth. "Brother Hyde, who was present during this vision, composed the following verses, which have gone the rounds of the religious papers, and have found a place in several hymnbooks. Those who have published, read, and sung them have little thought that they originated from a vision of a girl persecuted for her humble testimony." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 70, 71.

## The Better Land

We have heard from the bright, the holy land;  
We have heard, and our hearts are glad;  
For we were a lonely pilgrim band,  
And weary, and worn, and sad.  
They tell us the saints have a dwelling there—  
No longer are homeless ones;  
And we know that the goodly land is fair,  
Where life's pure river runs.

They say green fields are waving there,  
That never a blight shall know;  
And the deserts wild are blooming fair,  
And the roses of Sharon grow.  
There are lovely birds in the bowers green,  
Their songs are blithe and sweet;  
And their warblings, gushing ever new,  
The angels' harpings greet.

We have heard of the palms, the robes, the crowns,  
And the silvery band in white;  
Of the city fair, with pearly gates,  
All radiant with light.  
We have heard of the angels there, and saints,  
With harps of gold, how they sing;  
Of the mount, with the fruitful tree of life,  
Of the leaves that healing bring.

The King of that country, He is fair,  
He's the joy and light of the place;  
In His beauty we shall behold Him there,  
And bask in His smiling face.  
We'll be there, we'll be there in a little while,  
We'll join the pure and the blest;  
We'll have the palm, the robe, the crown,  
And forever be at rest. [LM](#)



## *A Good Inheritance*

By John J. Grosboll

It is customary today for people to make out and deliver to their heirs their last will and testament. Before his imprisonment, the apostle Paul delivered his last will and testament to the church. In it we find most interesting instruction for not only the early church but for the church in all ages to show the destiny of the different members.

One Saturday night while he was in Troas, Paul preached until midnight. The next day, it says in Acts 20:13–16, “Then we [Paul’s disciples] went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot [around 15 or 16 miles]. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.”

But then, because of a delay, it says in verse 17, “From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church” (about 30 miles away). Paul knew he was going to be delayed for some time so the elders of the church at Ephesus and their families came for what was to be their last meeting with him. We do not know if he intended it to be this way ahead of time, but the Holy Spirit came upon him and

revealed to Paul while he was talking to them that this was going to be the last time they were going to see him. So, Paul left with them his final instructions, his last will and testament, for the Christian church.

“When they had come to him, he said to them: ‘You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house ...’” (verses 18–20). Paul told them everything. He understood the concept taught in both the Old and New Testaments that all of us one day are going to appear before

the judgment seat of Christ. If you are a minister it is a fearful thing to think about appearing before the judgment seat of Christ. What if you have not taught the people what they need to understand so that they can be saved? Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Jesus had something specific to say about the people who were Christian leaders and teaching others concerning that day of judgment. He said, "Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over His household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that He will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:44–51).

If you study all the statements in the New Testament where Jesus said when He comes again there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, you will find something very interesting. Those who will weep and gnash their teeth are not the heathen, but the Christians who thought that they would be saved. They claim to be God's people and expect to have eternal life. But Jesus said to them, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28).

What a disappointment for them to find out they are not saved but are



*The wicked servants are the people who partake with those who are spiritually drunk.*

in fact wicked servants who beat their fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunkards. This is not necessarily referring to a physical beating for today there are more sophisticated ways to beat one another. Some use the courts. Others enslave people in debt or use other methods to take control of somebody else's life. The book of Revelation predicts that the whole world in the last days is going to be spiritually drunk. (See Revelation 14:8; Revelation 17; Revelation 18.) The wicked servants are the people who partake with those who are spiritually drunk and not ready for the day of judgment. Paul told the church that he was not in the category of the false teachers who are afraid to tell the truth and tickle the ears of the church members telling them only what they want to hear.

Notice what Peter says about the false teachers: "They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. ... When they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness [licentiousness], the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they

themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire'" (2 Peter 2:15, 18–22).

The carnal heart looks for a way to be saved in sin, but this is not possible, for sin and holiness cannot abide together. Jesus alone can save you from your sins. Paul said, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20, 21).

To be saved you must repent of your sins. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4 KJV). We all have sinned (Romans 3:23) and need to repent.



*Repentance* means to *change your mind about sin*. Those who are living in sin and have not been converted, sin because they want to; they choose to sin. But when you repent it means you are sorry for your sins (2 Corinthians 7), a godly sorrow for sin that does not need to be repented of, sorry for what you have done that is contrary to God's law.

Paul said, "Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). What happens when you have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ?

Jesus gives to you the gift of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8) and through the power of the Holy Spirit you live a new life that is in harmony with God's law. Many claim that it is impossible to keep God's law. Without the power of the Holy Spirit that is true. However when you receive the Holy Spirit it is the power necessary to keep God's law. If you want to be saved, you must have repentance towards God whose law you have broken, and you must have faith toward Jesus Christ who will be your Lord and Saviour and Deliverer from the guilt of your sins. He gives you the power to start living a life that is in harmony with God's law.

Paul knew what was going to happen in the very near future from the enlightenment he received from the Holy Spirit. He said, "And see, now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do

I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I

testify to you [his last will and testament to the church]

this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole council of God" (Acts 20:22–27). Paul did not preach just those things that would please men and win him friends and influence people. He preached all

the counsel of God so that nobody could come to him in the day of judgment and say, "You didn't tell me what I needed to know to be saved."

Then he gave them a charge. He said, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure [his death] savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (verses 28, 29). Jesus talked about these wolves. Notice what He said: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles" (Matthew 7:15, 16)? So, Jesus warned to watch out for false prophets, false teachers. They will come to you in sheep's clothing. In other words, they claim that they are Christians; they claim that they are disciples of Christ. They claim

they are part of God's people, part of His church. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside, Jesus said, they are ravenous wolves. You do not know what is in someone's heart. So, Jesus said, "By their fruit you will know them" (verse 20). The kind of life that they live is a revelation of their character. Do they live a life that is in harmony with the law of God? How is it with your life, friend? What message are you giving to those in your sphere of influence? Is your life in harmony with the law of God, with the government of heaven? Or are you living as though you are a rebel, even though you may claim to be a Christian?

Peter predicted that this same thing would happen, and he devoted a whole chapter to it in 2 Peter 2.

Paul, addressing the same issue, said, "From among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30). Paul is speaking to the leaders of the Christian church and he said that from among the leadership of the church—the elders, the bishops, the pastors, the overseers of the church—people are going to arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves.

And then he says, "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (verses 31, 32). That's the eternal inheritance.

My dear friend, do you want to receive the eternal inheritance? Have you noticed that in the Bible the only people who receive the eternal inheritance are the sanctified? A sanctified person is a holy person. The word *sanctify* means *to make holy*. Paul, who understood from the time he met Jesus on the Damascus road, that the word of His grace is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those

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*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.*”

*Matthew 7:15, 16*

who are sanctified. Notice how the apostle related his conversion to King Agrippa in Acts 26:17, 18. He said that the Lord told him this: “I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”

Paul taught the lesson that the inheritance is only shared among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. He said, “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13). God chose you and you were chosen for sanctification; He chose you to make you a holy person.

The good news of the gospel is that a person who is wicked and sinful can have his or her guilt taken away and receive what the Bible calls “the new birth” experience and through the power of the Holy Spirit can receive a new spirit, a new heart, and a new mind, and can become a holy person. We are encouraged by Paul to “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). It is that plain!

Again Peter taught that, “As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb

without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:14–19).

Then, “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart” (verse 22). He goes on to say that is the experience of the new birth (verse 23).

O, friend, have you been born again? Have you received the grace of Christ into your heart? Have you received forgiveness of sins and a new birth of the Holy Spirit so that you have new motives, a new heart, a new spirit, and new desires? Is your life coming into harmony with the law of God so that the whole universe can see that you really are one of His children?

Never be deceived by the lie that you can be saved while you are living in sin. That is not the message from the Bible. The choice is yours. If you want to be saved, you must be purified and made holy, not in your own strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit working in you.

God told Paul that He was sending him to the Gentiles so that they could receive not only forgiveness of sins, but so they could receive an inheritance among all the others who are sanctified. After the apostle Paul told them this, he said, “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided

for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ And when he had said

these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship” (Acts 20:33–38).

What a last will and testament to the church! Paul committed the church to God and said the word of God’s grace is able to build each one up and prepare them so that they can receive an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. It is the will and testament of heaven that all should be sanctified and made holy so they can take their places among holy beings but, sadly, not everyone makes that choice. Will you surrender your life to the Lordship and sovereignty of Jesus Christ?

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

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March 1 – 7, 2020

## Early Life in Canaan

### Key Text

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them” (Joshua 18:1).

**Study Help:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 512–518.

### Introduction

“The land to which we are traveling is in every sense far more attractive than was the land of Canaan to the children of Israel. They were led by the hand of God. Christ Himself gave them a description of the country in which they were to find a home; for He wished to place before them every incentive to press on with hope and courage. ... They had need of courage and constant faith.” *The Review and Herald*, November 29, 1881.

## Sunday

### A MAN OF COURAGE

- a. Before the land was distributed, what did Caleb testify of his experience from forty years prior? Joshua 14:6–9. How had he shown courage before?

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- b. What can we learn from God’s promise to Caleb? Numbers 14:22–24.

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**Note:** “While the doubting ones talk of impossibilities, while they tremble at the thought of high walls and strong giants, let the faithful Calebs, who have ‘another spirit’ (Numbers 14:24), come to the front. The truth of God, which bringeth salvation, will go forth to the people if ministers and professed believers

will not hedge up its way, as did the unfaithful spies. Our work is aggressive. Something must be done to warn the world; and let no voice be heard that will encourage selfish interests to the neglect of missionary fields. We must engage in the work with heart and soul and voice; both mental and physical powers must be aroused. All heaven is interested in our work, and angels of God are ashamed of our weak efforts.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 380, 381.

## Monday

### THE FAITH OF AN AGED WARRIOR

- a. What refreshing request did 85-year-old Caleb make? Joshua 14:10–12. How is his amazing courage and trust in God inspiring to us?

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**Note:** “Zeal and energy must be intensified; talents that are rusting from inaction must be pressed into service. The voice that would say, ‘Wait; do not allow yourself to have burdens imposed upon you,’ is the voice of the cowardly spies. We want Calebs now who will press to the front—chieftains in Israel who with courageous words will make a strong report in favor of immediate action. When the selfish, ease-loving, panic-stricken people, fearing tall giants and inaccessible walls, clamor for retreat, let the voice of the Calebs be heard, even though the cowardly ones stand with stones in their hands, ready to beat them down for their faithful testimony.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 383.

- b. How was Caleb’s faithful claim blessed? Joshua 14:13–15.

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**Note:** “Caleb’s faith now was just what it was when his testimony had contradicted the evil report of the spies. He had believed God’s promise that He would put His people in possession of Canaan, and in this he had followed the Lord fully. He had endured with his people the long wandering in the wilderness, thus sharing the disappointments and burdens of the guilty; yet he made no complaint of this, but exalted the mercy of God that had preserved him in the wilderness



when his brethren were cut off. Amid all the hardships, perils, and plagues of the desert wanderings, and during the years of warfare since entering Canaan, the Lord had preserved him; and now at upwards of fourscore his vigor was unabated. He did not ask for himself a land already conquered, but the place which above all others the spies had thought it impossible to subdue. By the help of God he would wrest his stronghold from the very giants whose power had staggered the faith of Israel. It was no desire for honor or aggrandizement that prompted Caleb's request. The brave old warrior was desirous of giving to the people an example that would honor God, and encourage the tribes fully to subdue the land which their fathers had deemed unconquerable." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 512, 513.

## Tuesday

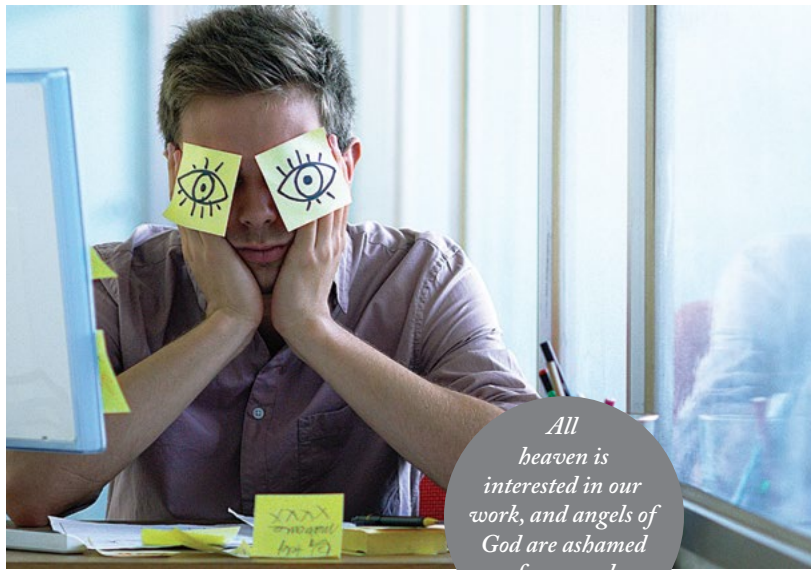
### FAITH THAT WORKS

- a. Explain how Caleb's courageous faith was demonstrated in works, even in his old age. Joshua 15:13, 14.

**Note:** "Caleb obtained the inheritance upon which his heart had been set for forty years, and, trusting in God to be with him, he 'drove thence the three sons of Anak' (Joshua 15:14). Having thus secured a possession for himself and his house, his zeal did not abate; he did not settle down to enjoy his inheritance, but pushed on to further conquests for the benefit of the nation and the glory of God." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 513.

- b. Explain the difference in outcome between the experience of Joshua and Caleb versus that of the unbelieving spies. Numbers 14:30-32; 1 Corinthians 10:5.

**Note:** "The cowards and rebels had perished in the wilderness, but the righteous spies ate of the grapes of Eschol. To each was given according to his faith. The unbelieving had seen their fears fulfilled. Notwithstanding God's promise, they had declared that it was impossible to inherit Canaan, and they did not possess it. But those who trusted in God, looking not so much to the difficulties to be encountered as to the strength of



their Almighty Helper, entered the goodly land." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 513.

- c. What does God want us to realize about the power of faith? 1 John 5:4.

**Note:** "All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 140.

## Wednesday

### SHARING BURDENS IN UNITY

- a. Which tribes were located (a) on the east side of the Jordan; (b) on the west side of the Jordan? (To view the division of Canaan among the twelve tribes, see a Bible map.) Numbers 34:14, 15; Joshua 13:7, 8.

**Note:** “Two of the tribes of Israel, Gad and Reuben, with half the tribe of Manasseh, had received their inheritance before crossing the Jordan. To a pastoral people, the wide upland plains and rich forests of Gilead and Bashan, offering extensive grazing land for their flocks and herds, had attractions which were not to be found in Canaan itself, and the two and a half tribes, desiring to settle here, had pledged themselves to furnish their proportion of armed men to accompany their brethren across the Jordan and to share their battles till they also should enter upon their inheritance. The obligation had been faithfully discharged. When the ten tribes entered Canaan forty thousand of ‘the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh ... prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle, to the plains of Jericho’ (Joshua 4:12, 13). For years they had fought bravely by the side of their brethren. Now the time had come for them to get unto the land of their possession. As they had united with their brethren in the conflicts, so they had shared the spoils; and they returned ‘with much riches ... and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment’ (Judges 22:8), all of which they were to share with those who had remained with the families and flocks.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 517, 518.

**b. Where was the headquarters of the nation? Joshua 4:19; 10:6, first part.**

**Note:** “Here [at the first encampment in Canaan], Joshua ‘circumcised the children of Israel’ (Joshua 5:3); ‘and the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover’ (verse 10). ... And the Lord declared to Joshua, ‘This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you’ (verse 9), and in allusion to this the place of their encampment was called Gilgal, ‘a rolling away,’ or ‘rolling off.’” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 485, 486.

## Thursday

### A NEW HEADQUARTERS

- a. After the claim of Joseph’s children had been settled, to where was the tabernacle moved? Joshua 18:1, 10. Why? How long was it there?

**Note:** “Heretofore Gilgal had been the headquarters of the nation and the seat of the tabernacle. But now the tabernacle was to be removed to the place chosen for its permanent location. This was Shiloh, a little town in the lot of Ephraim. It was near the center of the land, and was easy of access to all the tribes. Here a portion of country had been thoroughly subdued, so that the worshipers would not be molested. [Joshua 18:1 quoted.] The tribes that were still encamped when the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal followed it, and pitched near Shiloh. Here these tribes remained until they dispersed to their possessions.

“The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli’s house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never returned to the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally transferred to the temple at Jerusalem.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 514.

**b. What valuable practice was later instituted at Shiloh? Judges 21:19.**

**Note:** “As a means of education an important place was filled by the feasts of Israel. In ordinary life the family was both a school and a church, the parents being the instructors in secular and in religious lines. But three times a year seasons were appointed for social intercourse and worship. First at Shiloh, and afterward at Jerusalem, these gatherings were held.” *Education*, 41, 42.

## Friday

### PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did God say Caleb had “another spirit” suited to the promised land?
- 2 How can I develop an attitude more like Caleb than like Joseph’s children?
- 3 What do I need to realize about faith that perhaps I have not seen before?
- 4 What kind of faith was exercised by those tribes east of the Jordan?
- 5 Name some of the blessings reaped by the location of Shiloh.

March 8 – 14, 2020

# Dealing with Misunderstanding

## Key Text

“He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly” (Proverbs 14:29).

**Study Help:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518–520.

## Introduction

“No one was ever reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 519.

## Sunday

### ACROSS THE MIGHTY RIVER

- a. The children of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were all situated on the east side of Jordan. What problems were associated with having such a distant location from the sanctuary? Joshua 22:10.

**Note:** “They [these tribes] were now to dwell at a distance from the sanctuary of the Lord, and it was with an anxious heart that Joshua witnessed their departure, knowing how strong would be the temptations, in their isolated and wandering life, to fall into the customs of the heathen tribes that dwelt upon their borders.

“While the minds of Joshua and other leaders were still oppressed with anxious forebodings, strange tidings reached them. Beside the Jordan, near the place of Israel’s miraculous passage of the river, the two and a half tribes had erected a great altar, similar to the altar of burnt offering at Shiloh.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518.

- b. How did the remaining tribes react? Why? Joshua 22:11, 12.

**Note:** “The law of God prohibited, on pain of death, the establishment of another worship than that at the sanctuary. If such was the object of this altar, it would, if permitted to remain, lead the people away from the true faith.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518.

## Monday

### COOLING DOWN THE FURY

- a. When the two and a half tribes east of Jordan built an altar, what calm approach cooled down the initial reaction of the others? Joshua 22:13, 14.

**Note:** “The representatives of the people assembled at Shiloh, and in the heat of their excitement and indignation proposed to make war at once upon the offenders. Through the influence of the more cautious, however, it was decided to send first a delegation to obtain from the two and a half tribes an explanation of their conduct. Ten princes, one from each tribe, were chosen. At their head was Phinehas, who had distinguished himself by his zeal in the matter of Peor.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518.

- b. Explain the appeal that was made to the eastern tribes. Joshua 22:15–18.

**Note:** “The two and a half tribes had been at fault in entering, without explanation, upon an act open to such grave suspicions. The ambassadors, taking it for granted that their brethren were guilty, met them with sharp rebuke. They accused them of rebelling against the Lord, and bade them remember how judgments had been visited upon Israel for joining themselves to Baalpeor.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518.



- c. To what experience was Phinehas referring? Numbers 25:1–9. What should we learn from the spirit he manifested toward his brethren? Joshua 22:19.

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**Note:** “In behalf of all Israel, Phinehas stated to the children of Gad and Reuben that if they were unwilling to abide in that land without an altar for sacrifice, they would be welcome to a share in the possessions and privileges of their brethren on the other side.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 518, 519.

“We need good, heart religion and divine wisdom to deal with human minds, that we shall not only reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, but we shall take the erring in our arms of faith and bear them to the cross of Christ.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, 339.

## Tuesday

### REASONING TOGETHER

- a. How serious a comparison did the tribes on the western side of Jordan make regarding the altar built on the east side of Jordan? Joshua 22:20. What can we learn from their mistaken zeal for the right?

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**Note:** “Care should be exercised by all Christians, to shun the two extremes, of laxness in dealing with sin on the one hand, and harsh judgment and groundless suspicion on the other. The Israelites who manifested so much zeal against the men of Gad and Reuben remembered how, in Achan’s case, God had rebuked the lack of vigilance to discover the sins existing among them. Then they resolved to act promptly and earnestly in the future; but in seeking to do this they went to the opposite extreme. Instead of meeting their brethren with censure, they should first have made courteous inquiry to learn all the facts in the case.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, 999.

- b. How did the children of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh explain their reason for the altar on the east side of Jordan? Joshua 22:21–29.

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**Note:** “The accused explained that their altar was not intended for sacrifice, but simply as a witness that, although separated by the river, they were of the same faith as their brethren in Canaan. They had feared that in future years their children might be excluded from the tabernacle, as having no part in Israel. Then this altar, erected after the pattern of the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, would be a witness that its builders were also worshippers of the living God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 519.

- c. How did the reasoning approach prove to be successful? Joshua 22:30, 31.

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**Note:** “With great joy the ambassadors accepted this explanation, and immediately carried back the tidings to those who sent them. All thoughts of war were dismissed, and the people united in rejoicing, and praise to God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 519.

## Wednesday

### WISDOM IN CALMNESS

- a. To reveal that their intentions were honorable in having an altar east of Jordan, what did the children of Gad and Reuben do? Joshua 22:34.

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**Note:** “The children of Gad and Reuben now placed upon their altar an inscription pointing out the purpose for which it was erected; and they said, ‘It shall be a witness between us that Jehovah is God’ (Joshua 22:34). Thus they endeavored to prevent future misapprehension and to remove what might be a cause of temptation.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 519.

- b. What wise lessons are we to learn from this experience among the tribes? Proverbs 14:17, 29; James 1:19.

**Note:** “How often serious difficulties arise from a simple misunderstanding, even among those who are actuated by the worthiest motives; and without the exercise of courtesy and forbearance, what serious and even fatal results may follow. ...

“While very sensitive to the least blame in regard to their own course, many are too severe in dealing with those whom they suppose to be in error.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 519.

“The powers of darkness will assault every soul, but let us not join with the evil one in his work, and deal with severity to discourage and dishearten the weak and erring. Let us be pitiful, compassionate one to another, and let an influence go out from us to heal, to bind up, to establish, rather than to wound and to uproot. There is altogether too much haste ... and often that which we think is justice, the Lord writes in His book as oppression. ... Let us love one another, be kind and courteous.” *The Review and Herald*, October 24, 1893.

- c. What other principles should we keep in mind when dealing with our brethren? 1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:32.

**Note:** “In all your transactions with your fellow men never forget that you are dealing with God’s property. Be kind; be pitiful; be courteous. Respect God’s purchased possession. Treat one another with tenderness and courtesy.” *My Life Today*, 235.

## Thursday

### WHEN FALSELY ACCUSED

- a. What should we remember when we are falsely accused? What attitude should we have? 1 Peter 2:19–24; 4:14–16.

**Note:** “The wisdom displayed by the Reubenites and their companions is worthy of imitation. While honestly seeking to promote the cause of true religion, they were misjudged and severely censured; yet they manifested no resentment. They listened with courtesy and patience to the charges of their brethren before attempting to make their defense, and then fully explained their motives and showed their innocence. Thus the difficulty which had threatened such serious consequences was amicably settled.

“Even under false accusation those who are in the right can afford to be calm and considerate. God is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misinterpreted by men, and we can safely leave our case in His hands. He will as surely vindicate the cause of those who put their trust in Him as He searched out the guilt of Achan. Those who are actuated by the spirit of Christ will possess that charity which suffers long and is kind.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 520.

“How much of evil would be averted, if all, when falsely accused, would avoid recrimination, and in its stead employ mild, conciliating words. And at the same time, those who in their zeal to oppose sin have indulged unjust suspicions, should ever seek to take the most favorable view of their brethren, and should rejoice when they are found guiltless.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 12, 1881.

## Friday

### PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 To what perils are isolated members of the church especially exposed?
- 2 What examples do I recall when a calmer approach may have yielded better results in dealing with others?
- 3 Why does honest, open interaction in the spirit of Christ always pay off?
- 4 With what attitude should I approach those whom I think are in error?
- 5 If I feel that I am falsely accused, what knowledge will lead me to leave my case in God’s hands? How will this affect my frame of mind?

March 15 – 21, 2020

# The Cities of Refuge

## Key Text

“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble” (Psalm 9:9).

**Study Help:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 515–517.

## Introduction

“The cities of refuge appointed for God’s ancient people were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 516.

## Sunday

### A MERCIFUL PROVISION

- a. What provision was made in behalf of those in Israel who unintentionally killed another person? Numbers 35:9–12; Joshua 20:1–3.

- b. How many cities of refuge were assigned? Where? Numbers 35:13, 14.

- c. Why and for whom were these cities necessary? Numbers 35:15.

**Note:** “This merciful provision was rendered necessary by the ancient custom of private vengeance, by which the punishment of the murderer devolved on the nearest relative or the next heir of the deceased. In cases where guilt was clearly evident it was not necessary to wait for a trial by the magistrates. The avenger might pursue the criminal anywhere and put him to death wherever he should be found. The Lord did not see fit

to abolish this custom at that time, but He made provision to ensure the safety of those who should take life unintentionally.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 515.

## Monday

### PATHWAYS TO REFUGE

- a. Explain the distribution of the cities of refuge and the procedure for making use of them. Joshua 20:4–6. What distinction was made between willful murder and involuntary manslaughter? Numbers 35:16–24.

**Note:** “The cities of refuge were so distributed as to be within a half day’s journey of every part of the land. The roads leading to them were always to be kept in good repair; all along the way signposts were to be erected bearing the word ‘Refuge’ in plain, bold characters, that the fleeing one might not be delayed for a moment. Any person—Hebrew, stranger, or sojourner—might avail himself of this provision. But while the guiltless were not to be rashly slain, neither were the guilty to escape punishment. The case of the fugitive was to be fairly tried by the proper authorities, and only when found innocent of intentional murder was he to be protected in the city of refuge.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 515.

- b. What was the rule in case of trial for murder? Numbers 35:30. As far as the number of witnesses is concerned, what rule was repeated in the New Testament? Matthew 18:16; 1 Timothy 5:19. Why is this so important?

**Note:** “Personal enmity, or the prospect of personal advantage, has ruined the reputation and usefulness of thousands of innocent men. ... One man might be controlled by prejudice, selfishness, or malice. But it was not likely that two or more persons would be so perverted as to unite in bearing false witness; and even should they do so, a separate examination would lead to a discovery of the truth.



“This merciful provision contains a lesson for the people of God until the close of time. It was Christ who gave to Moses those explicit directions for the Hebrew host; and when personally with His disciples on earth, the great Leader repeated the same lesson as He taught them, how to treat the erring. One man’s testimony was not to acquit or to condemn. One man’s views and opinions were not to settle disputed questions. ... God has made it the duty of His servants to be subject one to another. No one man’s judgment is to control in any important matter. Mutual consideration and respect imparts proper dignity to the ministry, and unites the servants of God in close bonds of love and harmony.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881.

## Tuesday

### A SYMBOL OF REFUGE

- a. On what condition was the refugee protected from the avengers, and when was he free to go home? Numbers 35:25–32.

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- b. Who is our refuge from the death due for sin? Psalm 9:9; Romans 8:1.

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**Note:** “The same merciful Saviour who appointed those temporal cities of refuge has by the shedding of His own blood provided for the transgressors of God’s law a sure retreat, into which they may flee for safety from the second death. No power can take out of His hands the souls that go to Him for pardon.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 516.

- c. How does Christ urge us to take refuge in Him? 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2; Hebrews 10:26, 27. How is this illustrated through the cities of refuge?

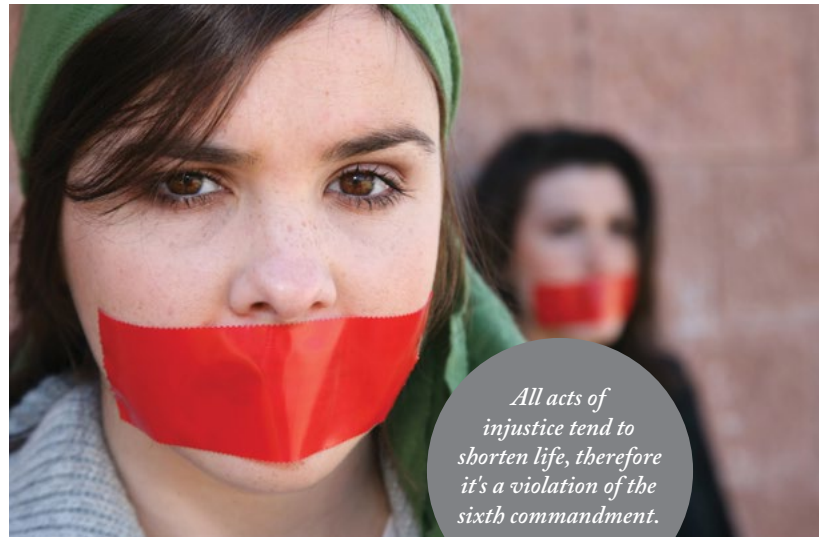
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*All acts of injustice tend to shorten life, therefore it's a violation of the sixth commandment.*

**Note:** “If the fugitive would escape with his life, there must be no delay; family and employment must be left behind, there was no time to say farewell to loved ones. His life is at stake, and every other interest must be sacrificed to the one purpose—to reach the city of refuge. Weariness is forgotten, difficulties are unheeded. He does not for one moment slacken his pace until he is safe within the walls of the city.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881.

“We are living in the last time, and Satan is now working with masterly power in order that with subtle temptations he may overcome those who believe in Jesus. But we are to be ‘kept by the power of God’; therefore, in temptation give glory to God who is able and will keep the believing soul so that he shall not be overcome by the wily foe. ...

“The crafty deceiver has been found to be an accuser, a liar, a tormentor and a murderer; but whatever he may have led others to say concerning you, the Lord can say to him as He said to Peter, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan’ (Matthew 16:23). He can say to him, ‘You shall not come in between this soul and Me. You shall not interpose yourself between Me and the soul for whom I died a ransom.’” *The Upward Look*, 42.

## Wednesday

### THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE

- a. How does God consider the shedding of blood? Numbers 35:33, 34.

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- b. What ceremony occurred when someone was found slain? Deuteronomy 21:1–9. What does this tell us about God’s hatred of sin and His regard for human life?

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**Note:** “After the most diligent search had failed to discover the murderer, the rulers were by this solemn ceremony to show their abhorrence of the crime. They were not to regard with carelessness and negligence the deeds of the guilty. In all their acts they were to show that sin has a contaminating influence—that it leaves a stain upon every land and every person who will not by all possible means seek to bring the wrong-doer to justice. God regards as His enemies those who will by any act of negligence shield the guilty. They are in His sight partakers in the evil deeds of the sinner. ...

“Sin may be called by false names, and glossed over by plausible excuses and pretended good motives, but this does not lessen its guilt in the sight of God. Wherever it may be found, sin is offensive to God, and will surely meet its punishment.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881.

- c. What other things are considered murder in God’s eyes? 1 John 3:15.

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**Note:** “All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for ‘whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer’); a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 308.

“The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 56.

## Thursday

### HOPE FOR ALL SEEKING REFUGE

- a. What provision has been made for our refuge today? John 10:14, 15.

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**Note:** “The same merciful Saviour who appointed those temporal cities of refuge has by the shedding of His own blood provided for the transgressors of God’s law a sure retreat, into which they may flee for safety from the second death. No power can take out of His hands the souls that go to Him for pardon. ...

“The sinner is exposed to eternal death, until he finds a hiding place in Christ; and as loitering and carelessness might rob the fugitive of his only chance for life, so delays and indifference may prove the ruin of the soul. Satan, the great adversary, is on the track of every transgressor of God’s holy law, and he who is not sensible of his danger, and does not earnestly seek shelter in the eternal refuge, will fall a prey to the destroyer.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 516, 517.

- b. What role does the church have in this process? John 10:16.

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**Note:** “The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 11.

“God’s Spirit convicts sinners of the truth, and He places them in the arms of the church. The ministers may do their part, but they can never perform the work that the church should do. God requires His church to nurse those who are young in faith and experience, to go to them, not for the purpose of gossiping with them, but to pray, to speak unto them words that are ‘like apples of gold in pictures of silver’ (Proverbs 25:11).” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 69.

## Friday

### PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Who established the cities of refuge, and for what purpose?
- 2 Why is it so important to have two or more witnesses in any trial?
- 3 What should we learn from the haste needed in going to the city of refuge?
- 4 What do these cities teach us about God’s mercy and justice?
- 5 When is Christ a sure Refuge for me? How can I help others find this?

March 22 – 28, 2020

# Joshua's Final Message

## Key Text

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve ... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

**Study Help:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 521–524; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 361–368.

## Introduction

“You may yet become sanctified through the truth; or you may, if you choose, walk in the darkness of unbelief, lose heaven, and lose all. By walking in the light and working out the will of God, you may overcome your selfish nature.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 214.

## Sunday

### A SOLEMN GATHERING

- a. What condition did Israel finally enjoy for some time? Of what did Joshua then remind the people? Joshua 23:1–4; 24:11–13.

- b. With what assurances did Joshua exhort them? Joshua 23:5–10. What should we learn from the commitment required of them?

**Note:** “They [the people] were to form no allegiance with the idolatrous nations that God had appointed to utter destruction. They were forbidden to manifest the least respect for the gods of the heathen. ... They were warned that familiarity with

idolatry would remove their abhorrence of it, and would expose them to God’s displeasure.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1881.

“If we love the things of the world and have pleasure in unrighteousness or fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness we have put the stumbling block of our iniquity before our face and have set up idols in our heart. And unless by determined effort we put them away we shall never be acknowledged as the sons and daughters of God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 164.

## Monday

### A WARNING AGAINST MIXED MARRIAGES

- a. What warning did Joshua give as a key factor to help God’s people reduce their chances of slipping into idolatry? Joshua 23:11–13.

- b. How is this solemn warning repeated in the Christian era? 2 Corinthians 6:14–18; 1 Corinthians 7:39.

**Note:** “Ask yourself: ‘Will not an unbelieving husband lead my thoughts away from Jesus? He is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God; will he not lead me to enjoy the things that he enjoys?’ The path to eternal life is steep and rugged. Take no additional weights to retard your progress. ...

“As a child of God, a subject of Christ’s kingdom, the purchase of His blood, how can you connect yourself with one who does not acknowledge His claims, who is not controlled by His Spirit? ... Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction.

“I would warn you of your danger before it shall be too late. You listen to smooth, pleasant words and are led to believe that all will be well; but you do not read the motives that prompt these fair speeches. You cannot see the depths of wickedness hidden in the heart. You cannot look behind the scenes and discern the snares that Satan is laying for your soul. He would



lead you to pursue such a course that he can obtain easy access to aim his shafts of temptation against you. Do not give him the least advantage. While God moves upon the minds of His servants, Satan works through the children of disobedience. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The two cannot harmonize. To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan's ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life? ...

"Remember, you have a heaven to gain, an open path to perdition to shun. God means what He says." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 363–365.

## Tuesday

### OBEDIENT LOVE TO GOD

- a. Why is inordinate affection a problem? Isaiah 5:18–21; Colossians 3:5, 6.

**Note:** "One of the greatest dangers that besets the people of God today, is that of association with the ungodly; especially in uniting themselves in marriage with unbelievers. With many, the love for the human eclipses the love for the divine. They take the first step in backsliding by venturing to disregard the Lord's express command; and complete apostasy is too often the result. It has ever proved a dangerous thing for men to carry out their own will in opposition to the requirements of God. ...

"As a rule, those who choose for their friends and companions, persons who reject Christ and trample upon God's law, eventually become of the same mind and spirit." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, 1000.

"There is in the Christian world an astonishing, alarming indifference to the teaching of God's word in regard to the marriage of Christians with unbelievers. ... Men and women who are otherwise sensible and conscientious close their ears to counsel; they are deaf to the appeals and entreaties of friends and kindred and of the servants of God... , and the friend who is faithful enough to utter a remonstrance is treated as an enemy. All this is as Satan would have it. He weaves his spell about the soul, and it becomes bewitched, infatuated. Reason lets fall the reins of self-control upon the neck of lust, unsanctified passion bears sway, until, too late, the victim awakens to a life of misery and bondage." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 365, 366.

- b. Explain the cause-and-effect reality Joshua presented. Joshua 23:14–16.

**Note:** "God's plan for the salvation of men, is perfect in every particular. If we will faithfully perform our allotted part, all will be well with us. It is man's apostasy that causes discord, and brings wretchedness and ruin. God never uses His power to oppress the creatures of His hand. He never requires more than man is able to perform; never punishes His disobedient children more than is necessary to bring them to repentance; or to deter others from following their example. Rebellion against God is inexcusable." *The Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1881.

## Wednesday

### CHOOSING GOD

- a. What appeal did Joshua make? Joshua 24:1, 14, 15. How can this inspire us?

**Note:** "The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practiced, and Joshua endeavored now to bring them [the people] to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 523.

"If the favor of God was worth anything, it was worth everything. Thus Joshua had decided; and after weighing the whole matter, he had determined to serve Him with full purpose of heart. And more than this, he would endeavour to induce his family to pursue the same course. ...

"The oft-repeated warnings against idolatry addressed to the Hebrew host, are no less applicable to us. Everything which leads the affections away from God is an idol, and betrays us into sin. If we serve God willingly and joyfully, preferring His service to the service of sin and Satan; if we choose Him, openly and boldly turning from all the attractions and vanities of the world, we shall enjoy His blessing in this life, and shall dwell forever in His presence in the future life.

"The Lord our God is a jealous God. He is just and holy. He will not be trifled with. He reads a deceptive heart. He abhors a double mind. He hates lukewarmness. We cannot serve God and mammon, for they are antagonistic." *The Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1881.



- b. What did God want the Israelites to realize about their frailty? Joshua 24:16–20. Are we any different?

**Note:** “Before there could be any permanent reformation the people must be led to feel their utter inability in themselves to render obedience to God. ... While they trusted in their own strength and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God’s perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God’s law. They must cease to rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 524.

## Thursday

### REMARKABLE VICTORY

- a. What remarkable pledge did Israel make before Joshua in the sight of God? What was done as a memorial of this pledge? Joshua 24:21–27.

- b. How was the closing period of Joshua’s life filled with dedication to God? Joshua 24:29–31. How did the people react under reproof when their experience wavered? Judges 2:1–5.

**Note:** “No stain rested upon the holy character of Joshua. He was a wise leader. His life was wholly devoted to God. ...

“Joshua was loved and respected by all Israel, and his death was much lamented by them.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 351, 352.

“[Judges 2:1, 2 quoted.] The people bowed before God in contrition and repentance. They offered sacrifice, and confessed to God and to one another. The sacrifices they offered would have been of no value if they had not shown true repentance. Their contrition was genuine. The grace of Christ wrought in their hearts as they confessed their sins and offered sacrifice, and God forgave them.

“The revival was genuine. It wrought a reformation among the people. They remained true to the covenant they had made. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen the great works of the Lord.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, 1001.

## Friday

### PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 On what condition do the people of God enjoy His special protection?
- 2 What happens when a person is enticed into marriage with an unbeliever?
- 3 Why is it so difficult to reason with a person infatuated with an unbeliever?
- 4 How liable is human nature to slip into idolatry? Why?
- 5 What makes the era of Joshua’s leadership outstanding in Israel’s history?

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Fruit

**Vegetables**

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



## RATATOUILLE PROVENCALE

### Ingredients

1 cup onions, sliced  
3 cups eggplant, cubed  
¼ cup olive oil, or water  
4 cups zucchini, cubed  
½ cup green or red pepper, coarsely chopped  
1 ½ tsp. salt  
3 Tbsp. water  
¼ cup tomato puree  
1 Tbsp. fresh basil  
1 bay leaf

1 Tbsp. Herbs de Provence OR equal amounts of sage, marjoram, thyme, basil, rosemary and savory, mixed together

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 cups tomatoes, cut in chunks

### Process

Sauté onions in oil or water until tender. Add eggplant and cook 5 minutes. Add zucchini and pepper; cook 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except tomatoes. Cover and cook until zucchini and eggplant are tender. Add tomatoes and cook briefly until soft. Remove bay leaf. Serve over brown rice, quinoa, or whole grain noodles.





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*Ripe and fresh, they [fruit and vegetables] are as wholesome as they are delicious; but green, partly decayed, or overripe fruit should never be eaten raw. When cooked, unripe fruit is less objectionable.*

*Ellen White*

