

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS
OF ADVENTISM

The Heavenly Character

God's promises assimilated into our lives are perfecting our character.

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*Promises
for the Time
of Trouble*

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*To Fear or
Not to Fear*

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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

Dealing with Satan's Devices

The great controversy between Christ and Satan that has been carried on for almost six thousand years, is soon to close. And yet how few have their attention called to this matter, how few realize that we are living amid the closing scenes of earth's history! Satan is working diligently, binding his sheaves preparatory to gathering in his harvest. He is uniting the elements of his kingdom for the final struggle. ...

"He has access to minds that are open to receive his suggestions, and by long experience he has learned how to apply his temptations to the best advantage. His first effort is to keep as many minds as possible in a state of careless indifference. ...

"God will not work a miracle to change natural causes which you can control. If you place yourself and family in the current of the world, you and your children will be borne downward by it. ...

"You let bitterness into your soul, then jealousy and evil-surmising, and you do not realize it. Your heart becomes hardened against your brethren, and you speak evil of them. You do not know that you are doing the work of Satan, but you are; and you are growing spiritually weaker and weaker, and darker and darker. ...

"By beholding we become changed. If you allow your mind to dwell upon the imperfections and moral deformities of others, you will be changed into the same image. ...

"The way to eternal life is a battle and a march. The great adversary of souls is continually seeking to insinuate himself between you and the Source of your strength. If you allow your mind to be taken up with worldly cares, he will manage to have these cares so varied in character, and press so continually upon you, that you can find no time for the spiritual and the eternal. ...

"We need constant communion with Jesus just as much as we need daily food to nourish the body. ...

"God estimates a man by what he is in the bosom of his family. Fix the mind on things that are pure and holy. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things' (Philippians 4:8)." ...

Excerpts from a morning devotional talk by Ellen G. White, printed in *Signs of the Times*, May 8, 1884. **LM**

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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Subscriptions

United States: 1 year, \$35.00
Other countries: Cost of postage only

If you are unable to purchase a subscription, please request a gift subscription.

Publisher

Steps to Life, Inc.
P. O. Box 782828
Wichita, KS 67278

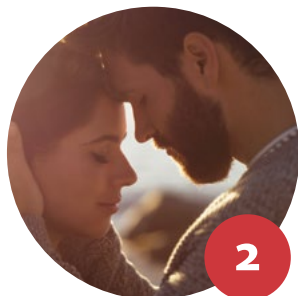
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LANDMARKS is a magazine of Steps to Life, a ministry established in 1988 by Seventh-day Adventists. It is dedicated to the publication of the historic doctrines held by God's true people in all ages. Its special emphasis is to present truth (2 Peter 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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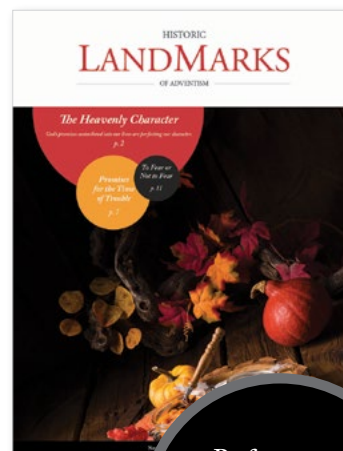
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By John J. Grosboll

John, in writing about the New Jerusalem from his lonely exile on the Island of Patmos, said that “There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Revelation 21:27). The word *defiled* in the Greek language means *profane, unclean, dirty, unwashed*, sometimes translated *common*; in other words, taking something that is holy and making it for everyday use. We know from this text that there is a requirement for entering the Holy City and a careful study of this text will reveal that requirement.

In a very simple way, Ellen White writes of the one requirement to have eternal life: “No unlikeness to Christ will be permitted in the holy city.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, 171.

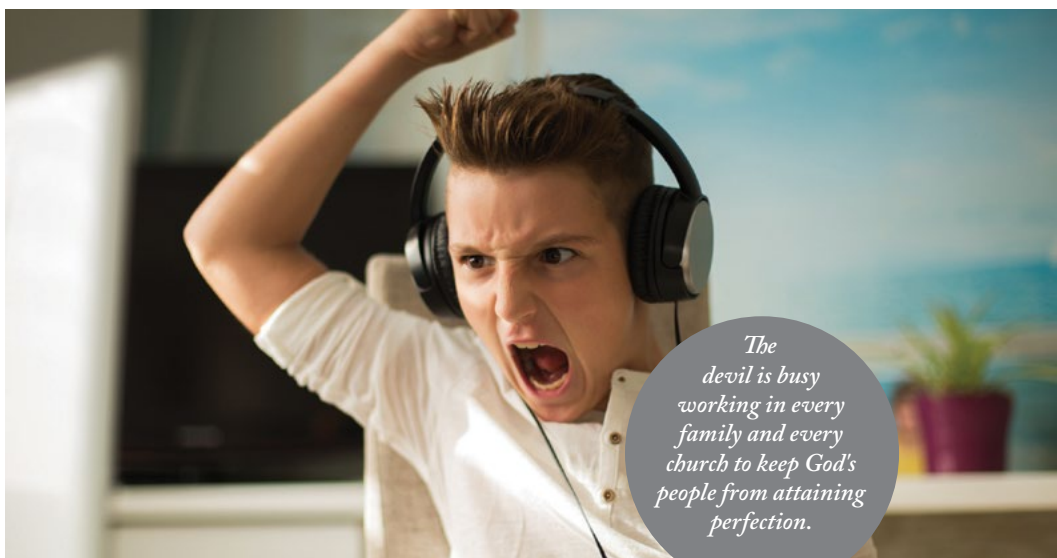
We can see by the strong language used in Revelation 21:27 that there are no exceptions to this. In English, a double negative is not used, but in the Greek language when you want to emphasize something that is not going to happen, a double negative is used, which means it will in no case happen; it will absolutely not happen. There it is; that is all you need to know. There are many other statements along the same line. The prerequisite or requirement needed to be in heaven is to have a Christlike character.

“God can only be honored when we who profess to believe in Him are conformed to His image. We are to represent to the world the beauty of holiness, and we shall never enter the gates of the city of God until we perfect a Christlike character. If we, with trust in God, strive for sanctification, we shall receive it. Then as witnesses for Christ, we are to make known what the grace of God has wrought in us.” *The Upward Look*, 99.

If all who are saved have a Christlike character, then we need to find out what it is like and aim to be like Him. Salvation has never been something you can earn; it is something that those who are like Christ receive as a free gift. The door will be wide open for them to enter through the pearly gate. Jesus has already paid the price for them to enter and all they have to do is follow Him.

When we start to study this subject, we begin to understand what Jesus said to the people while He was here on earth. He would say, “Follow Me.” Just before He left the earth the disciples said to Him, “Show us the Father.” But Jesus said, “Have I been so long with you and you don’t know who I am? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father.” They said to Him, “Show us the way to heaven. We don’t know how to get there.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (See John 14.)

Continuing in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, 17: “The process of gaining perfection of character is to be carried



on in this life, that we may be prepared for the future immortal life. It is God’s purpose that His church on earth shall reach perfection.”

I have discovered during my years in ministry that there are many people who think it impossible for them to be perfect. They defend their belief using the parable of the wheat and the tares, but remember, part of that parable indicates that all the tares will be burned up. This statement says that God has a purpose for His church and His purpose is that His church is to reach perfection. To the human eye this seems impossible, but when God purposes something, He can make it happen. The devil is determined that it will not happen, and he is busy working in every family and every church to keep this from happening.

“It is essential that His [God’s] directions be strictly obeyed. The members are to help and strengthen one another. No self-exaltation or accusing or harshness are to be shown in our dealings with one another. We must purify our souls through love and obedience to the truth. . . . We must act like saints toward one another, preparing ourselves, drilling ourselves, to be without fault in character, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” Ibid.

Every defect of character will be overcome. There are many places in the

New Testament that we could read that would confirm this need. We could read from almost any one of the apostles, or from James, Peter or Paul (see Ephesians 5; Philippians 1; 1 Corinthians 1), and in the book of Revelation; in fact, all the authors of the New Testament say the same.

“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things [2 Peter 3:10–13], be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless [without blemish]” (verse 14). There is only one prerequisite to having the gift of eternal life given to you and that is to have a Christlike character.

In the magazine *The Southern Watchman*, April 16, 1903, Ellen White made this statement: “It is not money or lands or position, but the possession of a Christlike character, that will open to us the gates of Paradise. It is not dignity, it is not intellectual attainments, that will win for us the crown of immortality. Only the meek and lowly ones, who have made God their efficiency, will receive this gift.”

Jesus said, “Follow Me.” We must walk as He walked (1 John 2:6). The people who are ready for His return will be like Him (1 John 3:1, 2). “Nothing should divert the mind from the main object in life, which is to have

Christ in the soul, melting and subduing the heart.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 278.

To become like Jesus, surely that ought to be our main goal in life and to be ready when He comes.

Two big questions are then raised.

1 What does it mean to be Christlike?

2 How do I become Christlike?

Simply knowing what it is to be Christlike will not do any good unless that knowledge is used to change the person. The devil knows well what Christlikeness is, but it does him no good because he has chosen the different path. Consider these 13 main points about what is involved in acquiring a Christlike character.

I Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden [weighted down], and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle [meek, humble] and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy [kind] and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

Being gentle and lowly in heart was one of the main reasons Jesus was rejected and crucified. This characteristic is not a natural tendency. In fact, most people are just the opposite. However, if you surrender your heart and your life to Jesus and begin to learn from Him, copy Him, the Holy Spirit will work a change inside so that your nature will become gentle.

In the book of Numbers is recorded that Moses was the meekest of all men who lived on the earth. We know that did not happen when he was in Egypt; it happened during the 40 years while he was herding sheep. You would not generally send a person who had the equivalent of a Ph.D, a doctor’s degree, been trained as a military general, someone who was in line to rule a kingdom, out to herd sheep, but that’s exactly what God did to Moses because He had something more to teach him.

Maybe some terrible experience you may be going through in your life is just plain unexplainable. You may wonder how so many bad things could happen to one person. I can’t explain, but I know one thing, if out of all the trouble you may be going through you end up becoming gentle and lowly in heart, it will be worth it because you will then be fit to live in the presence of holy beings. In heaven, gentleness will be the trait of all. This is hard to imagine, a place without anybody who is rough, coarse, overbearing, proud, or haughty. We must examine ourselves to see if we would be a good fit there!

2 Many people around us are gloomy and despondent, who in the midst of this gloominess eventually get to complaining. In *The Adventist Home*, 431, Ellen White wrote, “Do you ever see me gloomy, desponding, complaining? I have a faith which forbids this. It is a misconception of the true ideal of Christian character and Christian service that leads to these conclusions. It is the want of genuine religion that produces gloom, despondency, and sadness. Earnest Christians seek to imitate Jesus, for to be Christians is to be Christlike. It will be really essential to have correct conceptions of Christ’s life, Christ’s habits, that His principles may be reproduced in us who would be Christlike.”

Oh friend, do you know of any time when Jesus was gloomy? There wasn’t any time. When Jesus went to the cross, He went not only willingly, but without a murmuring thought, in order to save mankind.

We read in the book of Numbers how the children of Israel continually fell into complaining and despondency. In most English translations it says the people became impatient. In the Hebrew language it talks about their temper and says it got short. In their discouragement they accused Moses of promising them a good land of vineyards, olive orchards and fig trees, but just led them out into a desert. Who was leading them? Was Moses really the one leading them?

“

The prerequisite or requirement needed to be in heaven is to have a Christlike character.



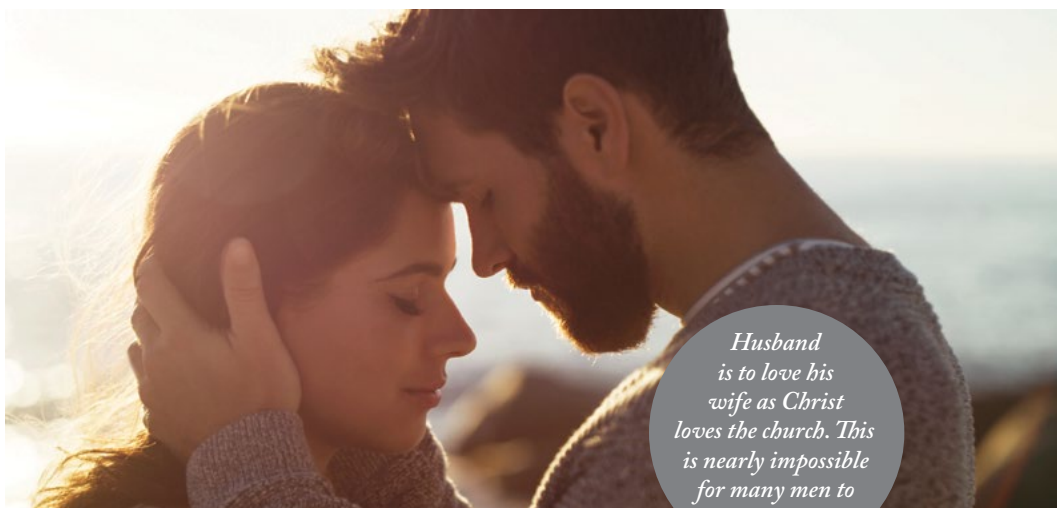
3 In John 15:10, Jesus said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” If we become Christlike, we will be obedient to God’s commandments.

4 Jesus was always courteous (Luke 7). Can we say the same? The Bible says that the man that never says anything offensive with his tongue is perfect (James 3:2). In heaven, everyone will always be courteous – the angels and the saved.

5 In John the 13th and 14th chapters, Jesus told His disciples to love others the way that He loved them. It’s unfortunate that men at times bang their wives over the head with their words, claiming Ephesians 5 where Paul says the wife is to submit to her husband. But look at the context of that statement. It says that the husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church (verse 25). This text is hard on men. I’ve read that text and said, Lord, that’s impossible. I’ll never be able to love any human being the way Christ loved the church. How can this ever be? Christ loved the church so much that He eagerly pressed His way toward Jerusalem in 31 A.D. so that He could be crucified for it. He was eager to do that without one murmuring thought.

A husband who struggles with his wife should go to the Lord and ask that He work a miracle in his heart so that he could love his wife just as Christ loves the church and see if anything happens.

6 Jesus was pure. It says in 1 John 3:3, “Everyone who has this hope [of eternal life] in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” Purity is a subject that needs careful study because we live in a world that is impure and the worldly ideal of purity is far from the ideal of Christian purity.



Husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. This is nearly impossible for many men to achieve.

Some believe you can think whatever you want as long as you don’t do it. However, purity involves the mind, heart, and feelings.

7 A favorite characteristic of Jesus to meditate on is His mercy. When you begin to recognize your own great need of mercy you become compassionate to others and treat them with more mercy. The person who is not merciful is not going to receive mercy. (See Matthew 6; James 2:13.) Mercy forgives somebody when they have made a mistake. What if they make more than one? The disciples wanted to be sure they got liberal on this so Peter said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times” (Matthew 18:21)? Then Jesus said, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (verse 22). That is mercy.

8 Jesus could endure contradiction without becoming angry or upset or impatient. “To be a Christian is to be Christlike, to possess humility and a meek and quiet spirit that will bear contradiction without being enraged or becoming insane.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2. 573.

9 Jesus had a pitying tenderness for sinners. How do you feel about sinners, especially when they have done something against you? Forget about the sinners that have done something against somebody else. How do you feel about the sinners that have done something against you? There are so many instances in the scriptures where Jesus had a tender pity for them. Remember the woman brought to Him who had been taken in adultery. After Jesus arranged to have her accusers leave, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you” (John 8:10)? She expected to be stoned. “She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more’” (verse 11).

Jesus had tender pity for people who were caught in the bondage of sin. Sin is like a net or a spider’s web. When an insect gets caught in there, a battle goes on. While the insect is trying to get out, the spider waits until it gets weak enough and then comes in for the kill. Sin is like that. There are people all around us that are caught in the spider web of sin and unless Divine power sets them free, they will never get free. Our condemnation will never help them. We need to have tender pity for those who

are caught in the web of sin, praying that the Lord will set them free.

IO Jesus had a spirit of forgiveness. When He was nailed to the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they’re doing” (Luke 23:34). The verb used in the Greek New Testament in this verse has a continuous meaning. It wasn’t just something that He thought for a moment; it was something that was going through His mind. In fact, some scholars believe that this is something that He said over and over again. It’s recorded only once in the Scripture.

II Jesus was self-denying and self-sacrificing. Repeating it many times to His disciples, He said, “If any man will come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24 KJV). In Luke 9:23, the word “daily” is added. “Take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me.” Nobody will be in the kingdom of heaven that has not learned the lesson of self-sacrifice and self-denial. That is an integral part of the character of Christ.

I2 Jesus was kind, so kind that the children loved to climb up and sit in His lap. Children don’t usually like to climb up and sit in the lap of a person who is unkind; they are afraid of them.

I3 If we are Christlike, we will have unity among us. “Christ in one worker will acknowledge Christ in a brother worker. Those who are exacting, who are faultfinding, who think evil of others, are advancing the work of the enemy, tearing down that which God would have built up. All these discordant elements represent the powers of darkness, and show that Christ, the hope of glory, is not found within.” *Testimonies to Southern Africa*, 26, 27.

Those who are exacting, faultfinding, and think evil of others are doing the work of the enemy and demonstrate that Christ is not formed within their hearts. This one touches us all.

This evil surmising of others is going on all over the world and it is not Christlike. Pray that the Lord will help us overcome the temptation to think and speak evil of others. Ask that the Holy Spirit will help you to determine to become Christlike. We can never do it unless God works a miracle. But the Bible says that the God we serve is faithful and that He will do it; He will sanctify us totally (1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24). Do you want that miracle to happen in your life?

“He who has given his life to God in ministry to His children is linked with Him who has all the resources of the universe at His command. His life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises with the life of God. The Lord will not fail him in the hour of suffering and need. ‘My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus’ (Philippians 4:19). And in the hour of final need the merciful shall find refuge in the mercy of the compassionate Saviour and shall be received into everlasting habitations.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 24.

God’s promise to complete the work He began in us are “leaves from that tree which is ‘for the healing of the nations’ (Revelation 22:2). Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of the character, the inspiration and sustenance of the life.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 122.

We need that promised complete change of character. Determine to make whatever sacrifice you need to make to be Christlike. Ask the Lord to help you to have each one of these characteristics.

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

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The process of gaining perfection of character is to be carried on in this life, that we may be prepared for the future.





Promises for the Time of Trouble

By John R. Pearson

“After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.”

Revelation 15:5–8

“
*When we serve God
 in whatever capacity His
 providences lead us, our
 names are entered into the
 heavenly record.*”

The image that comes to mind when we read the details of the seven last plagues described in Revelation 16 is not a pretty one: foul and loathsome sores, every creature in the sea dying, all the rivers and streams turning to blood, incredible sunburns, pain so severe that people gnaw their tongues in anguish, hailstones weighing almost 130 pounds. The mind's eye can hardly conjure up an image that encompasses such pain, misery, and destruction.

It will indeed be a terrible time, referenced in two very familiar Bible texts.

“For thus says the LORD:
 ‘We have heard a voice of

trembling,
 Of fear, and not of peace.

Ask now, and see,
 Whether a man is ever in labor with child?
 So why do I see every man with his hands
 on his loins

Like a woman in labor,
 And all faces turned pale?
 Alas! For that day is great,
 So that none is like it;
 And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,
 But he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:5–7).

“At that time Michael shall stand up,
 The great prince who stands watch over
 the sons of your people;
 And there shall be a time of trouble,
 Such as never was since there was a nation,
 Even to that time.

And at that time your people shall be
 delivered,

Every one who is found written in the
 book” (Daniel 12:1).

Both of these texts—Jeremiah and Daniel—refer to what Adventists rightfully call “Jacob's time of trouble,” or more commonly, “the time of trouble.” But notice how each of these passages ends. Daniel says, “And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book,” and Jer-

emiah says, “But he shall be saved out of it,” “he” being Jacob, a symbol in this instance of God's people—those, as Daniel noted, whose names are written in the book of life.

Although this will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and although it will take extreme faith to endure the troubles that arise during this awesome time, God's word gives us great hope, great assurance, and great promises that we can confidently claim that He will see us through this unprecedented period of time. Let's look at just a few of those promises.

1 First of all, note that the person for whom this time is named survived his personal time of trouble by claiming God's promise. On Jacob's return to his homeland, when he feared Esau's attack, he reminded God of the promise He had made to him. In Genesis 32:9 we have Jacob's prayer in which he reiterates that promise: “Then Jacob said, ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, “Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you ...”’” Jacob claimed this promise that God would “deal well” with him, and He did! That is essentially the same promise that God gives to His people in Daniel—“your people shall be delivered,” and in Jeremiah—“he shall be saved out of it.” Jacob was also undoubtedly aware of the promise that God had made to Abraham and that had been repeated to Isaac and himself that God would make of them a great nation. Surely he recognized that for that to occur, God would have to see him through this threat from Esau, although that realization did not make Esau's approach any less foreboding.

2 When the seven last plagues come, the saints will have a place to hide. Psalm 91 provides a litany of some of the most encouraging promises in all the Bible. The entire psalm offers a wealth of comfort, but since we are addressing the plagues of the last days, consider only verses 9 and 10, which specifically address the plagues of God's wrath:



“Because you have made the LORD,
who is my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling
place,
No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your
dwelling.”

Here the psalmist provides a very specific promise for a very specific time.

3 Scripture makes it clear that God will provide us with the necessities of life during the time of trouble. Satan, in his effort to make God’s people—indeed, all people—break the fourth commandment, will succeed in preventing anyone who refuses to accept his mark from buying or selling. Nevertheless, God assures us in Isaiah 33:15, 16 that bread and water is assured for each saint “who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, . . . who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil.” It is a wonderful promise, but one—like all promises—with conditions. The specific condition in this specific instance is that the recipient of this promise must be one who “walks righteously.” Only those who are obedient to all of God’s commandments can be thus considered.

4 In Daniel 12:1, it is made clear that this time of trouble will be such as has never before occurred on earth. With this forewarning, what is a wise Christian to do? Proverbs 22:3 tells us: “A prudent man foresees the evil and hides himself.” God, in His almost incomprehensible mercy, has forewarned His people and given us type and antitype of the protection from destruction that He so lovingly provides. Just as the children of Israel were protected by the typical blood of the lamb when they spread it on their doorposts, we are protected by the antitype: the blood of the real Lamb of God. Isaiah 26:20 gives



*God
will provide
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during the time of
trouble.*

us an illustration of the actions the prudent man takes as he by faith claims the protection that the antitypical blood provides: “Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past.” Colossians 3 describes in detail what is involved in entering by faith that chamber of safety and being hid with Christ in God.

5 Daniel 12:1 notes that those who are saved from this terrible time to come are those whose names are written in the records in heaven. By taking advantage of the provisions given us so plainly in God’s word, we can be assured that our names are indeed written in the Book of Life, and Revelation 3:5 tells us that “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” When we surrender our will to God’s will and determine to walk the narrow way, serving God in whatever capacity His

providences lead us, our names are entered into that heavenly record.

6 In Revelation 12:12, we are given this warning: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Too often, Adventists dwell on this threat, failing to remember that God is bigger than the devil. We can be assured of this, if we need any assurance, because God banished the devil from heaven. But, we also need to remember that the devil is stronger than any of us. However, if we follow the counsel of 2 Corinthians 3:18, beholding the face of our loving Saviour, rather than dwelling on the works of Satan, we will become more and more like Jesus. Let us remember the counsel Paul gives us in Philippians 4:8. Whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report—think on these things. Malachi 3:16, 17 sums up this concept: “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written



before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”

It is important that all engage in self-examination from time to time to be sure that we have not concentrated so much on Satan’s sinful attributes that we have inadvertently incorporated vestiges of those traits in our character. By beholding, we become changed. Are we beholding the lovely character of Christ, or the unrighteousness of Satan?

7 The Bible indicates clearly that as we near the end, the Lord is going to slowly but surely withdraw His Spirit from this world and that the love of many will grow cold. The Bible-believing Christian sees evidence of this more and more clearly with each passing day. However, even in the face of this irrefutable evidence of the approach of “that day,” we need not fear. The Lord has given us sufficient evidence of His power for this time, too. It is up to us to ask for, believe, and claim this promised power. Matthew 7:7 tells us to ask and we will receive. Mark 11:24 repeats that promise: “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” In Luke 11:13, the Lord has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, and Inspiration tells us that this gift brings all other blessings in its train. Among those blessings are love,

joy, and peace, exactly the blessings we need to maintain our walk on the narrow way during the time of trouble.

8 The final promise we will look at is a special one for those who have family members, especially children, who have lost their way and departed from the path of truth and righteousness. Surprisingly, it is the prophet of doom who provides some of the most reassuring and comforting promises about this heart-breaking situation. In Jeremiah 24:7, the prophet writes, “Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.” When you claim this promise and read it to yourself, substitute your child’s name in the appropriate place. It then reads, “Then I will give [your child] a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord, and he shall know My name, and I will be his God, for he shall return to Me with his whole heart.”

We can use the same principle with Jeremiah 31:16, 17: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Refrain [Mom and Dad], your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded,’ says the LORD, ‘And [your children] shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future,’ says the LORD, ‘that your children shall come back to their own border.’”

There are indeed some rough waters ahead over which we must sail. However,

come what may, we have a promise and an anchor. What more can we ask for? God Himself has promised us safety and victory. Notice this last promise from Isaiah 43.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,

Nor shall the flame scorch you.

For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.

Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored,

And I have loved you;

Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.

Fear not, for I am with you;

I will bring your descendants from the east,

And gather you from the west” (Isaiah 43:2–5).

And finally, let us remember always that God will keep in perfect peace those whose mind is stayed on Him, because he trusts in Him (Isaiah 26:3).

All Bible quotes NKJV unless otherwise noted. LM

John R. Pearson is the office manager and a board member of Steps to Life. He may be contacted by email at: johnpearson@stepstolife.org.

To Fear or Not to Fear, That is the Question

By Revella Knight



In this world marred by sin, fear is a natural response for survival and the preservation of life. Imagine fearlessness leading one to walk into oncoming traffic, step off rooftops, or jump out of an airplane without a parachute. You would deem this person insane and restrain them for their own good.

Yet the majority of the human race continually perform acts that shorten their lifespan. There is a common phrase, “to hammer a nail into your coffin” or “death by inches.” Our bad habits and lifestyle can be just as dangerous.

Apart from preserving the body, fear is necessary in preserving the soul. The Bible says, “Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart” (1 Samuel 12:24).

So what is fear? It is an anxious feeling caused by an anticipation of some imagined event or experience.

President Franklin Roosevelt famously stated, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” He went on to say, “Nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” In saying this, he was trying to prevent the population from running to the banks in mass to remove their money, which would cause more damage to the economy.

Karl Albrecht, Ph.D., states that there are five basic fears:

1. **Extinction:** Fear of ceasing to exist.
2. **Mutilation:** Fear of losing part of the body structure.
3. **Loss of Autonomy:** Fear of being overwhelmed, physically paralyzed (claustrophobia or emotionally controlled by circumstances).
4. **Separation:** Fear of abandonment, social rejection.
5. **Ego-death:** Fear of humiliation, shame, loss of integrity.

“

*The only thing we have
to fear is fear itself.*

Franklin Roosevelt

I would venture to say that when we fear the Lord, we never need fear Karl Albrecht's list of fears.

The logical thought process would lead to the conclusion that there are, in essence, only two types of fear. We either fear God and give glory to Him, or fear man and live for this world.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

Both Luke and Matthew inform us whom to fear: “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:5).

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Who has the power to cast into hell? Only God, my friend. Man may kill the body, but only God can permanently destroy.

Another convincing verse: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

In other words, the consequences of rejecting God's offer of salvation is to be permanently separated from Him and joined with Satan and his evil angels and accept the final punishment of permanent death.

Job 28:28 states, “And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

There was a time in this world when man was first created that fear did not exist, simply because there was nothing to cause fear. Our first parents experienced perfect love, harmony, and face to face communion with the Creator of the universe. But as soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they experienced nakedness and fear. The protective covering created by Jesus was lifted and fear was born.

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:7–10).

Think of this: Adam was the happy, open faced, contented man, in the prime of his life, given the privilege of naming the animals and appointed caretaker of the earth. He lived in the most magnificent garden home with his beautiful wife, and best of all, he had available to him face to face communion with the Majesty of Heaven. Adam did not have to work long tiring hours or sweat and strain to make a living. He was provided everything he needed for his enjoyment. After he sinned, he experienced emotions that were foreign to him: shame, fear, regret, and loss of his perfect home. He and his wife were removed from their sanctuary home and for the first time saw the results of their sin.

“As they witnessed the drooping flower and the falling leaf, the first signs of decay, Adam and his companion mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 62.

We as sinful humans grieve for a loved one and we know how painful an experience that is; however, our first parents, with their first experience in sin, felt the pain of death so much more deeply.

The first lie ever told, “Ye shall not surely die,” was now a reality. Creation began to experience aging, which is in reality a slow death. The animals were no longer in harmony and worst of all, Cain, the firstborn son, murdered his brother Abel.

Sin is a trap of fear—fear of man with negative feelings and experiences, which is a snare of Satan. If we fear man, we are drawn into Satan’s trap, but there is safety in trusting the Lord with godly fear.

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25).

Ellen White warns us about our worldly fear in *Gospel Workers*, 261, 262: “Faith takes God at His word, not asking to understand the meaning of the trying experiences that come. But there are many who have little faith. They are always fearing and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded by the tokens of God’s love, every day they enjoy the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these blessings. And the difficulties they encounter, instead of driving them to God, separate them from Him, by arousing unrest and repining. ...

“Jesus is their Friend. All heaven is interested in their welfare, and their fear and repining grieve the Holy Spirit. Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust His promises. When we come to Him in faith, we should believe that every petition enters into the heart of Christ. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be sent when we need it most. When we have learned to do this, we shall know that our prayers are answered. God will do for us ‘exceeding abundantly,’ ‘according to the riches of His glory’ and ‘the working of His mighty power’ (Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 1:19).”



*Aging
is in
reality a slow
death.*

Then what is our duty?

“My son, if thou wilt receive My words, and hide My commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Proverbs 2:1–5).

“And now Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Notice the intensity of desire, the desperate need to seek after the Lord and the fear of offending Him expressed in these verses. Fearing God produces a hatred towards evil, confidence in being a blessing to others and is a fountain of life-giving wisdom and knowledge.

For many years now I have heard in the churches a discussion of the word FEAR. Teachers of the Word try to analyze the meaning and dilute the intensity

of the Word by describing the meaning as a mere “respect” or “reverence.” For what purpose? Is it because we like to be pampered and coaxed to soften the blow of God’s word? I am no theologian, but as I read the Bible, I believe what it says. Revelation 14:6, 7 says, “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, ... Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

The wise man, Solomon, said, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to fear God and trust Him completely to the extent that we would fear nothing else? I pray that this will be our experience. **LM**

Revella Knight is a registered nurse and writes from her home in Northwest Arkansas.

Ripples of Influence

By Georgia Jacobs



Our mom worked hard to keep us together as a family after our dad passed away while we were still school aged children. We faithfully attended Sunday morning church services and continued this custom as adults with our young families. That was until I heard Dan, a new acquaintance, speak of the seventh day as God's true Sabbath.

Now I needed to know the truth and I earnestly prayed for it. I had a Bible which I had never really read or studied, but now I began randomly to turn its pages and each time I stopped to read a verse, it spoke to me about the Sabbath. This happened again and again until I realized that God was answering my prayer, and I accepted with joy this wonderful truth. Thus began a change in many lives.

After attending a Seventh-day Adventist Church for a few weeks, I wrote to my sister Jeannie about the Sabbath. At that time I didn't know that she had asked our mom, who lived with her, to visit some other churches than the one they attended. Mom's dad had believed that the Lutheran Church was the closest to Bible truth, and our mom also believed that.

Not long after I wrote to my sister, Mom drove the four-hour drive to my brother's home, which was a short distance from where I lived. While there, Mom called me on a Sabbath afternoon to invite me to go to church with her the next day, Sunday. We had been taught to obey our parents and as I momentarily hesitated to answer her, I heard a voice say, "If you don't tell her now, you never will." I knew and understood that was true and quickly replied, "I go to church on Sabbath now." That ended our conversation and Mom returned home.

My sister wrote to let me know how unhappy Mom was about my going to church on the Sabbath day. When Dan heard this news, he suggested that we fast and pray for my mom and sister, which we then did. I had never fasted before, but I deeply desired that God would help my family to understand this important truth. I felt so near to God as I fasted and prayed for three and a half days without eating any food, but did drink plenty of water.

Meanwhile my sister said to Mom concerning the Sabbath, "But Mom, we need to check it out to see if it is truth." God was soon answering our prayers as mom and my sister started to attend church on Sabbath. And this was just the beginning of God's rich blessings to us and to many others.

Shortly after my husband, our children and I were baptized, Dan Collins baptized Mom, my sister and her children in February 1975. And the blessings continued; one year later Mom became a colporteur and Bible worker. She loved the truth and sharing it with others. In 1981, she was selected as the literature evangelist of the year in the North Pacific Conference.

A fellow Bible worker wrote this report about our mom:

"Every one who knew Annabelle would probably describe her with one word—Committed. She was committed to her Lord and His work. She left behind an example of untiring effort



and enthusiasm for sharing the Lord through literature and Bible studies. And as the words of God's people in ages past continue to tell their story, even so Annabelle continues her work of soul saving through the seeds she left behind. The story unfolded at a Bible study a couple of weeks ago.

"Upon arriving at my Wednesday afternoon study with Lisa and her mother Carol, I was pleasantly surprised at what had transpired since our last lesson. Carol told me the story; it went something like this: While at their church's weekly Bible study, someone in the discussion brought up the state of the dead. And when Carol defended the biblical position, there was quite a disagreement. I was thrilled that Carol stood in defense of Bible truth, not only before this small study group, but even before her pastors.

"I was somewhat puzzled at where she could have gotten her information as we were nowhere near that topic in our studies. Then it was that I noticed the familiar looking family Bible that she was using that week. I asked her, 'Where did you get that family Bible?' She replied, 'A lady sold it to me about 21 years ago.' Feeling sure that this was Annabelle's work, I asked, 'Was this lady in her early sixties at the time and did she have white curly hair?' 'Yes,' she replied, 'And these Bible studies in the back of this Bible is where I get a lot of my information.'

"Now I knew the source of her information; it was the sure result of Annabelle's service in the Lord's army. It was the fulfillment of one of her favorite Bible promises, 'So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void' (Isaiah 55:11). Even though Annabelle rests, the seeds she planted still continue to bear their harvest. In dying, she has passed the baton on to us. May we, as Annabelle, be faithful to the call. And some day soon when this war is over and the controversy ended, may we all be reunited in the kingdom of heaven."

Ellen G. White illustrates our influence on others in this way: "Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing." *Christ's Object lessons*, 340. **LM**

Georgia Jacobs went to Wildwood Sanitarium four years after her baptism and was in the nursing program from 1978–1985; then worked at Hope International as an artist for the *Our Firm Foundation* magazine from 1988–1992. She later resided in South Africa where she did some missionary work.

Jeannie Hogarty also contributed to this article. She worked for *Amazing Discoveries* for more than seven years packing and shipping orders for all the world except Canada.

Daniel, Faithful in Youth and Old Age

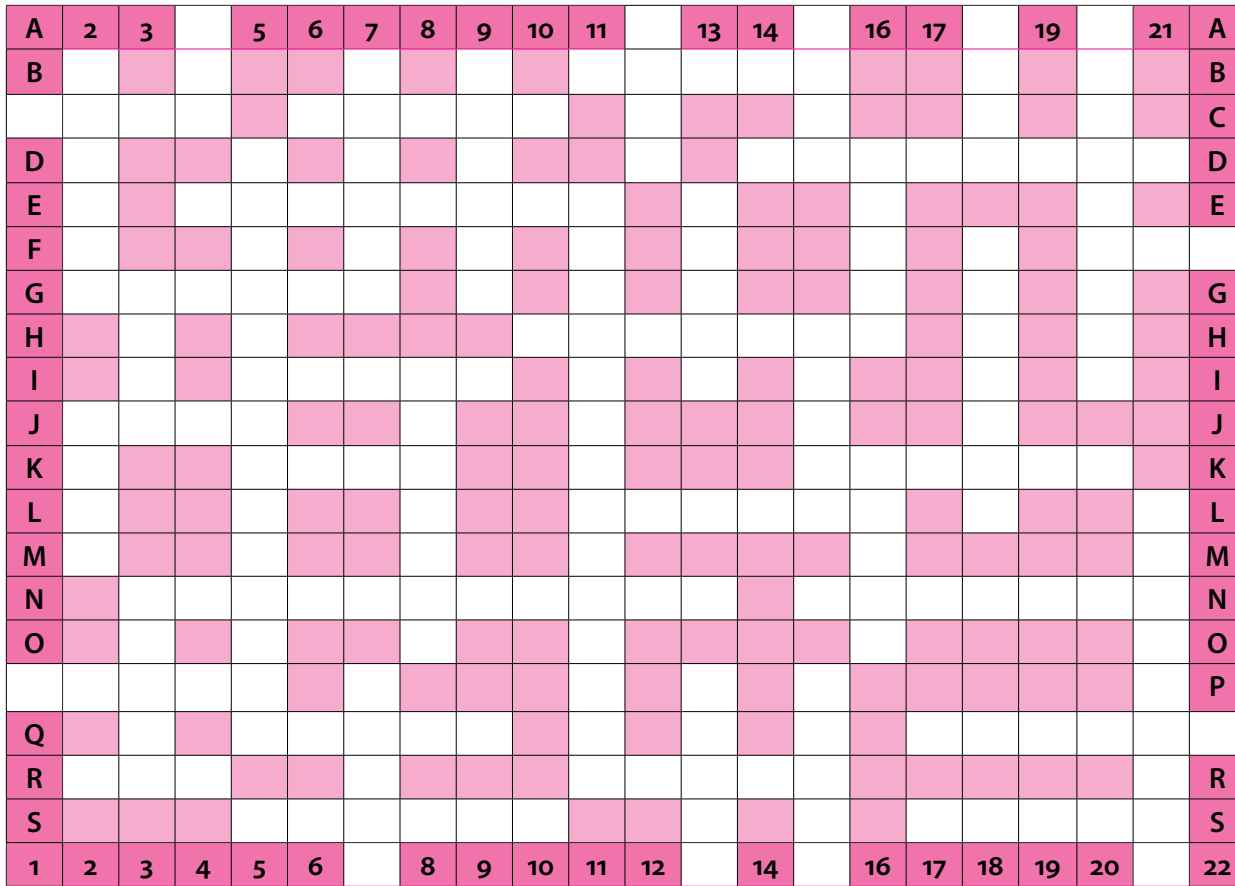
Clues –Based on Daniel 1, 6

Across:

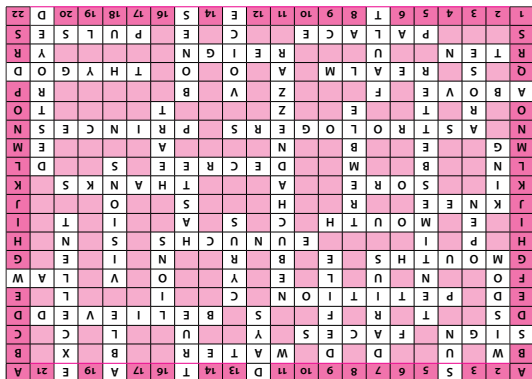
- B11 What Daniel requested to drink instead of wine during the trial..... 1:11, 12
 C1 What evil men wanted the king to do to the “writing”..... 6:8, 9
 C6 It was feared this would look worse without the king’s food 1:10
 D14 No hurt was upon Daniel after his removal because he 6:23
 E4 Evil royal statute: no one may ask this of anyone except king Darius..... 6:6, 7
 F20 This, of the Medes and Persians, could not be changed 6:8
 G2 Daniel to Darius: my God’s angel has shut the lion’s 6:22
 H10 Daniel became one of this group in Babylon..... 1:3
 I5 A stone covered this 6:17
 J2 Daniel regularly thanked God on these (singular)..... 6:10
 K5 Darius was how displeased with himself over his decree?..... 6:14
 K15 What Daniel continued to give to God daily..... 6:10
 L11 Darius was “tricked” into making a firm 6:7
 N3 Daniel outperformed these in the king’s “test” 1:20
 N15 Daniel had been one of this group in Judah 1:3
 P1 How Daniel was preferred compared to the other princes and presidents 6:1-3
 Q5 Darius wanted to put Daniel over the whole 6:3
 Q17 Darius to Daniel: _____ will deliver you (two words) 6:16
 R2 How many days was Daniel’s “trial?” 1:14
 R11 Daniel prospered in these of Darius and Cyrus..... 6:28
 S5 Where the king went to spend the night in fasting..... 6:18
 S17 What Daniel requested to eat instead of the king’s food during the trial..... 1:12

Down:

- A4 Darius tried until this went down to figure out how to spare Daniel 6:14
 A12 The evil decree lasted for thirty of these 6:7
 A15 Darius had to admit to the evil men that the decree was this..... 6:12
 A18 Darius to Daniel: is your living God _____ to deliver you from the lions? 6:20
 A20 Darius found this spirit in Daniel 6:3
 B2 What God gave Daniel and his three friends..... 1:17
 B7 This king made Daniel the first of three presidents over his kingdom..... 6:1, 2, 28
 B9 Daniel determined to not do this to himself 1:8
 D5 How Daniel compared to the king’s magicians (three words) 1:20
 D16 Evil men plotted to have Daniel cast into a den of these 6:7, 16
 E11 The Babylonian king who captured Daniel 1:1
 E13 Daniel lived until this king was on the throne..... 1:21
 F18 Daniel had understanding of all these 1:17
 G3 Daniel prayed with his windows 6:10
 H15 The king went in this to check on Daniel..... 6:19
 I8 Darius’ new decree: everyone fear and _____ before Daniel’s God..... 6:26
 J2 He gave the “final test” by communing with Daniel and friends..... 1:19
 K16 Darius set this to deliver Daniel 6:14



Answer Key:



- L21 Darius admitted that Daniel's God's kingdom would never be this 6:26
 N3 What the king did early in the morning to check on Daniel 6:19
 P7 The evil men tried but failed to find this in Daniel 6:4
 P13 In calling to Daniel in the den Darius had a lamentable 6:20
 P15 These, of the evil men, were broken before hitting the bottom of the pit 6:24

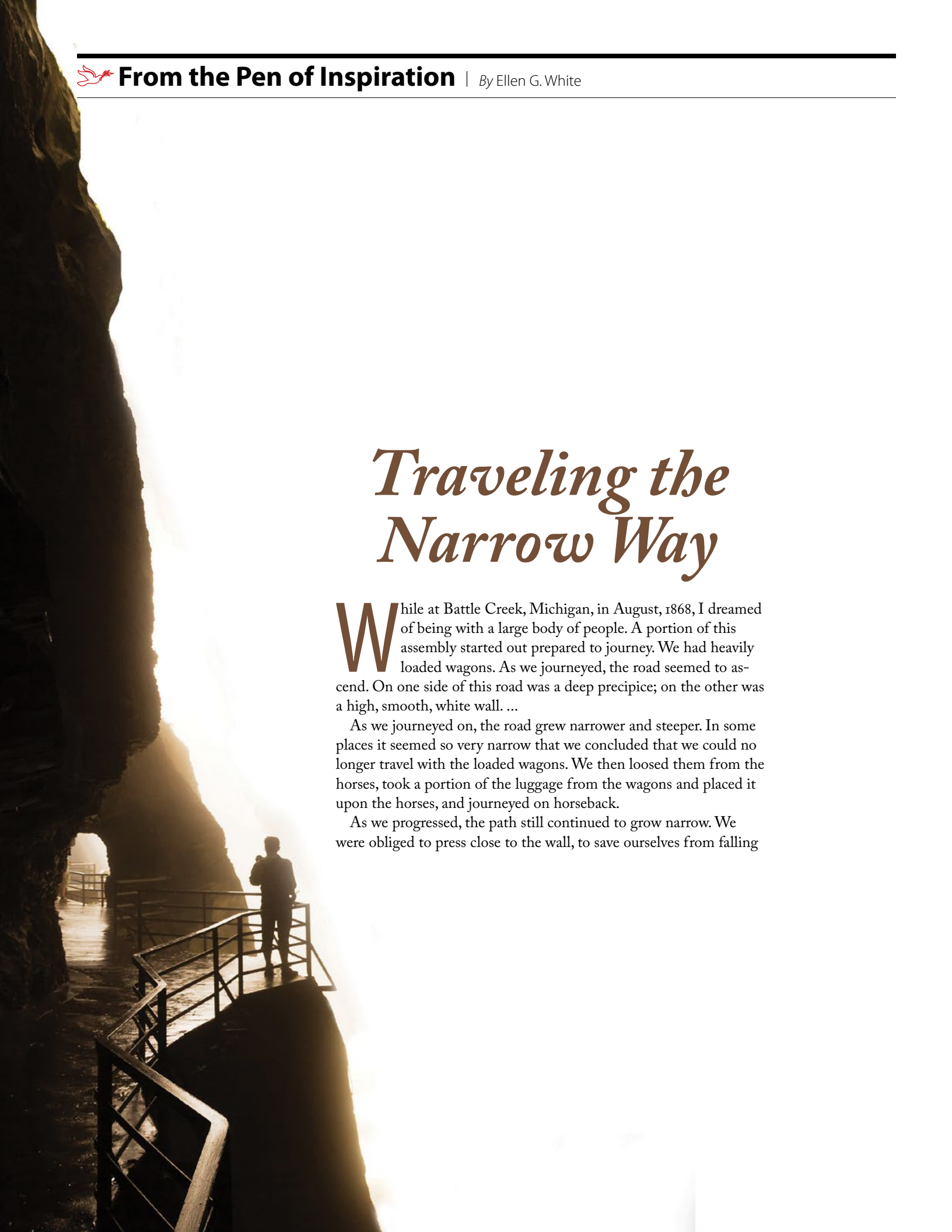


Traveling the Narrow Way

While at Battle Creek, Michigan, in August, 1868, I dreamed of being with a large body of people. A portion of this assembly started out prepared to journey. We had heavily loaded wagons. As we journeyed, the road seemed to ascend. On one side of this road was a deep precipice; on the other was a high, smooth, white wall. ...

As we journeyed on, the road grew narrower and steeper. In some places it seemed so very narrow that we concluded that we could no longer travel with the loaded wagons. We then loosed them from the horses, took a portion of the luggage from the wagons and placed it upon the horses, and journeyed on horseback.

As we progressed, the path still continued to grow narrow. We were obliged to press close to the wall, to save ourselves from falling



off the narrow road down the steep precipice. As we did this, the luggage on the horses pressed against the wall, and caused us to sway toward the precipice. We feared that we should fall, and be dashed in pieces on the rocks. We then cut the luggage from the horses, and it fell over the precipice. We continued on horseback, greatly fearing, as we came to the narrower places in the road, that we should lose our balance and fall. At such times, a hand seemed to take the bridle, and guide us over the perilous way.

As the path grew more narrow, we decided that we could no longer go with safety on horseback, and we left the horses and went on foot, in single file, one following in the footsteps of another. At this point small cords were let down from the top of the pure white wall; these we eagerly grasped, to aid us in keeping our balance upon the path. As we traveled, the cord moved along with us. The path finally became so narrow that we concluded that we could travel more safely without our shoes; so we slipped them from our feet, and went on some distance without them. Soon it was decided that we could travel more safely without our stockings; these were removed, and we journeyed on with bare feet.

We then thought of those who had not accustomed themselves to privations and hardships. Where were such now? They were not in the company. At every change, some were left behind, and those only remained who had accustomed themselves to endure hardships. The privations of the way only made these more eager to press on to the end.

Our danger of falling from the pathway increased. We pressed close to the white wall, yet could not place our feet fully upon the path; for it was too narrow. We then suspended nearly our whole weight upon the cords, exclaiming: "We have hold from above! We have hold from above!" The same words were uttered by all the company in the narrow pathway.

As we heard the sounds of mirth and revelry that seemed to come from the abyss below, we shuddered. We heard the profane oath, the vulgar jest, and low, vile songs. We heard the war song and the dance song. We heard instrumental music, and loud laughter, mingled with cursing and cries of anguish and bitter wailing, and were more anxious than ever to keep upon the narrow, difficult pathway. Much of the time we were compelled to suspend our whole weight upon the cords, which increased in size as we progressed.

I noticed that the beautiful white wall was stained with blood. It caused a feeling of regret to see the wall thus stained. This feeling, however, lasted but for a moment, as I soon thought that it was all as it should be. Those who are following after will know that others have passed the narrow, difficult way before them, and will conclude that if others were able to pursue their onward course, they can do the same. And as the blood shall be pressed from their aching feet, they will not faint with discouragement; but seeing the blood upon the wall, they will know that others have endured the same pain.

At length we came to a large chasm, at which our path ended. There was nothing now to guide the feet, nothing upon which to rest them. Our whole reliance must be upon the cords, which had increased in size, until they were as large as our bodies. Here we were for a time thrown into perplexity and distress. We inquired in fearful whispers, "To what is the cord attached?" My husband was just before me. Large drops of sweat

were falling from his brow, the veins in his neck and temples were increased to double their usual size, and suppressed, agonizing groans came from his lips. The sweat was dropping from my face, and I felt such anguish as I had never felt before. A fearful struggle was

before us. Should we fail here, all the difficulties of our journey had been experienced for nought.

Before us, on the other side of the chasm, was a beautiful field of green grass, about six inches high. I could not see the sun, but bright soft beams of light, resembling fine gold

and silver, were resting upon this field. Nothing I had seen upon earth could compare in beauty and glory with this field. But could we succeed in reaching it? was the anxious inquiry. Should the cord break, we must perish. Again, in whispered anguish, the words were breathed, "What holds the cord?"

For a moment we hesitated to venture. Then we exclaimed: "Our only hope is to trust wholly to the cord. It has been our dependence all the difficult way. It will not fail us now." Still we were hesitating and distressed. The words were then spoken: "God holds the cord. We need not fear." These words were then repeated by those behind us, accompanied with: "He will not fail us now. He has brought us thus far in safety."

My husband then swung himself over the fearful abyss into the beautiful field beyond. I immediately followed. And oh, what a sense of relief and gratitude to God we felt! I heard voices raised in triumphant praise to God. I was happy, perfectly happy.

Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White, 179–184. LM

“
*Nothing I had seen upon
earth could compare in
beauty and glory with this
field. But could we succeed
in reaching it?*”

Thanksgiving Day



Every year, for many years, the good people of our land have kept Thanksgiving Day. It comes in the month of November, after the corn, the apples, and the pumpkins are gathered, and after the farmers have cut a pile of wood big enough to last all winter.

By that time, too, the boys and girls who live in the country have had a chance to gather the hickory nuts and walnuts, and the squirrels out in the woods have filled the hollow trees with nuts and acorns.

Then people remember that God has been very good. He has sent the rain and the sunshine, and has made the corn and the apples and the nuts grow. So, we have Thanksgiving Day.

Sometimes a snow comes around Thanksgiving time. Then we may remember the little birds, and put out something for them to eat. We ought also to remember poor people and try to make them happy.

Do you know why they had pumpkin pies at the first Thanksgiving, long ago?

It was because they had no apples. So they took the big orange pumpkins and made pies of them. Now we have

had pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving so many times that we do not want to do without them.

The first Thanksgiving was at a place called Plymouth. For almost a year the people there had been very hungry. But God heard their prayers. One day two strangers called Samoset and Squanto visited the settlement. They were native Indians who lived on the land. They taught the settlers how to grow food on their new soil. So the pilgrims made new friends and learned how to grow food in their new home. With the help of Squanto and the other members of his tribe, by the end of the season the Pilgrims had an abundant harvest.


To celebrate the harvest, the Pilgrims invited the Indian tribes to the feast. The Indians helped the settlers hunt for the feast. And a large feast of corn, roasted meat, pumpkin pie, and fruits was shared. The Pilgrims dedicated this day to getting together with friends and family and thanking God for the abundance of good food and for those they love.

And so began the tradition of Thanksgiving.

Night and morn
Shocks of corn
Stood 'round Plymouth Town;
Then freeze
Nipped the trees
And the nuts came down.

Late that fall
Indians tall
Came to Plymouth Town,
There to eat
Corn bread sweet
And turkey roasted brown.

All the men
Quickly then
To the feast sat down;
Three whole days
Thanks and praise
Rose to God on high.

History Stories for Children, John W. Wayland, ©1991, 23–26. 

Lukewarm! Me?

Out of curiosity, I decided to do a little research to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is a cold and lifeless condition?
2. What is it to be spiritually cold?
3. What is it to be lukewarm?

I don't know of anybody who considers themselves lukewarm, including me, but I was surprised at what I discovered.

"Some have fallen into a cold and lifeless condition spiritually because they are unfaithful servants.

- The love of the world has filled their hearts
- They have lost their relish for heavenly things
- They have become dwarfs in spiritual attainments." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 669.

I thought upon these things for a little while and then decided to go a little further in my research. As I read the following, I really became heartsick, because I knew the majority of us fall into many of these categories, even though we do not want to admit it.

"Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are

- Becoming conformed to this world and
- Seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God.
- They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches." *Early Writings*, 107.

The devil does not care how he gets us, but he does it in a very sneaky way so that we do not notice until we are asleep.

"Love of self excludes the love of Christ. Those who live for self are ranged under the head of the Laodicean church who are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. The ardor of the first love has lapsed into a selfish egotism. The love of Christ in the heart is expressed in the actions. If love for Christ is dull, the love for those for whom Christ has died will degenerate. There may be a wonderful appearance for zeal and ceremonies, but this is the substance of their self-inflated religion. Christ represents them as nauseating to His taste." *Our High Calling*, 348.

These things were eye-openers for me. I hope you are as concerned as I am for our spiritual condition for it is either for life or for death. Ask yourself: "Am I lukewarm?" "Am I in a cold, lifeless condition spiritually?" Be honest!

Heavenly Father: Thank You for warning us through these writings of our danger. We can slip away so gradually into Laodicean slumber without even realizing it until it will be too late. Please let the Holy Spirit arouse us from our slumbers that we may walk in step with You. Wake us up Lord! Amen. **LM**



Your Letters

"We continue to bless you all. Love the DVDs and *LandMarks* magazine each month. Your brother & sister in Christ,"
—D&LF, Florida

"Long time ago I remember a meeting and there was a man there that gave a talk on whitecoats. (See *LandMarks* article August, 2020.) He had been one of them and had been sick ever since. I wish I remembered all he said, but he told of all his health problems. Also said there were very few left that were in the whitecoats program. Probably none now. Was very sad."

—BS, Arkansas

November Sermon of the Month

The Covenants

By John J. Grosboll

When God created intelligent beings, He made an agreement between Himself and the parties. If they would obey, they would live forever. It was never God's intention for man to know evil.

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

November 2020

Dear Friend,

The Bible tells us that we are to redeem the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). This is suggestive of the idea that we are behind in our work. Perhaps we should ask ourselves the question, "Am I behind where I should be in doing the Lord's work?" Jesus said that "the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch" (Mark 13:34). That means all have been appointed a certain work to do in this world.

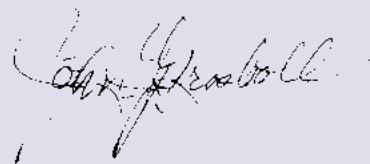
Only the Lord knows just how long we have to work, but He never appoints to anyone a work which they will not have time to finish before their probation closes in this world. If we discover that we are behind in our work, then we need to "redeem the time."

Shortly before Robert Harmon died, he was impressed that there was a duty he had not performed, and he requested the Methodist minister to come to him that he might discharge this duty. (His efforts were successful.)

Is there anybody in your circle of influence that you want to witness to but have not yet gotten around to it? If you should die tonight would you want to arise in the judgment to meet them without having warned them of what is coming in the future?

Don't wait until you are on your deathbed concerned that you have not finished your work. Redeem the time now.

Your brother praying for a finished work,



"Time is short, and what you do must be done quickly. Resolve to redeem the time. Seek not your own pleasure. Rouse yourself! Take hold of the work with a new purpose of heart. The Lord will open the way before you. Make every possible effort to work in Christ's lines, in meekness and lowliness, relying upon Him for strength. Understand the work the Lord gives you to do, and, trusting in God, you will be enabled to go on from strength to strength, from grace to grace. You will be enabled to work diligently, perseveringly, for your people while the day lasts; for the night cometh in which no man shall work" (John 9:4).

Testimonies, vol. 9, 200.

13th Sabbath Offering

The Press is Rolling *in Eastern Nigeria*



Thanks to the support we received for a recent Thirteenth Sabbath appeal, we were able to supply a computer and printer for the faithful souls in eastern Nigeria. Brother Michael Ugorji, a volunteer Bible worker there, has dedicated a room in his home as an interim workplace until enough funds are received to acquire appropriate office and workspace. In the meantime, he and his coworkers have wasted no time in making *LandMarks* available to eager seekers in Imo State, Abia State, and Enugu State.

Prior to the effects of the corona pandemic, we would mail large flat-rate boxes of *LandMarks* to eastern Nigeria as well as to other countries in Africa, sometimes taking up to two months from the time shipped to the receipt in the destination country. However, one of the many negative effects of the pandemic was the complete cessation of mail deliveries from the United States to most of Africa. Thus, there was no way for interested individuals to receive this spiritually uplifting publication.

The accompanying photos show his team at work producing a recent issue and joy on the faces of the recipients.

It is our hope to be able to fund printing equipment in several other locations as well so that *LandMarks* can be printed locally and on a timely basis.

To support this effort for local production of *LandMarks*, please mark your donations *Evangelism*.



from the
Mission Fields



Mission in Action *Kenya*

About the author:

The small organization Mission in Action needed an Australian office, so an advertisement was placed on Facebook. Sandie Stirgess answered that ad and has volunteered for the past ten years as a local contact and correspondent and organizes fund raising for the orphanage. Making many visits over the years, she is heavily involved with the mission.



Opposite page: *Two of our children – Michelle and baby Sandie*

Left: *Ivan greets a friend in our local community*

Right: *Mission in Action started a community project which empowers vulnerable single mamas by teaching them business skills. Meet Mercy – she is employed and can now support her family!*

By Sandie Stirgess

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself from being polluted in the world. (See James 1:27.)

Even though the Budulica family was comfortable in Australia, when Ivan visited a Kenyan orphanage, his heart was touched. For the next nine years, Ivan inquired of the Lord what was His will for his family. After putting out a fleece that if his three properties would sell within two weeks he would move his family to Kenya, miraculously, within a week and a half, all his properties had sold. So in 2004 Mission in Action Kenya was founded on a small rented property as the first babies' home in Nakuru. Since then, the orphanage has been working with the local community.

Because there is no welfare system and no support network in Kenya, there is a huge poverty crisis here. Our project concentrates on orphan prevention, family reunification, and family strengthening.

Mission in Action is currently home to 86 children. When a child is received, we immediately start a search for his or her family. Sometimes we find family members quite quickly and other times it may take years.

Sometimes a child's family is never found, but we will never stop searching. We believe the best place for every child is within their birth family – if it is safe

to be there. Over the years, one hundred children have been returned to their birth families.

Here is the story of one of our children:

Noah was born to a teen mother and father. His mother abandoned him and left him in the care of his young alcoholic father and alcoholic uncle.

Noah's father wasn't a constant in his life, as he was young and not interested in the commitment of raising a baby.

Noah's uncle was disabled. He was too poor for a wheelchair so he would shuffle around on his crippled legs with his arms moving him around. He would drink alcohol whenever he could get it.

Noah was neglected. He was never taught to walk. He taught himself everything from what he saw. So, when it was nature's time for Noah to learn to move, he learnt to shuffle around on his bottom with his arms pulling him just like his disabled uncle. As a toddler, he would shuffle himself out to the road in front of their hut to beg people for food.

When Children's Services referred Noah to us when he was 4 years old, we received this wretched tiny little boy. We didn't know whether he had a physical disability or not. We weren't medically trained, but after hearing more of his story we thought it was worth a chance to try and save his legs.

We sought advice from a physiotherapist in Australia who gave us a series of exercises to do. We worked with Noah on these exercises daily. It wasn't easy,

as Noah fought us the whole way. Noah was happy with the way he was moving around. He didn't want to change, and it was uncomfortable for him to do the exercises. He was still a baby at four years old. Ivan and his family worked so hard with this child always having faith and believing that he did not have a physical disability.

Noah's legs straightened and he learnt to walk. Today, he is a beautiful young man and walks tall and proud. Today, he has finished his schooling. He was not a particularly academic boy, but he always loved mechanics. He loved to know how things worked. He would be forever pulling things apart and putting them back together. We were successful in getting him an apprenticeship with a local mechanic and he is now working in Nairobi. He is 19 years old. We are very proud of Noah and the beautiful young man he has turned out to be.

Mission in Action Kenya is a small organization and every supporter matters and makes a real difference to us and the lives of our children as well as to the community. We receive no Government support and all of the work we do is thanks to individual supporters with a heart to help us help others.

We'd love you to join our family and help us continue the work we are doing here in Kenya.

To provide assistance to the work of Mission in Action, mark your donations **MLA. £M**

Be Not Afraid

Fear is an emotion induced by perceived danger or threat, which causes physiological changes and ultimately behavioral changes. These responses may include fleeing or hiding from perceived traumatic events or freezing—losing all ability to react in any way. An irrational fear is called a phobia.

Has fear ever caused your heart to pound, the blood to drain from your face, and your knees to knock?

Years ago, working night shift on a psychiatric unit, I heard a lady arguing loudly. Entering her room to see if I could be of assistance, she looked at me afraid and said, “He is right behind you, look!” I had no desire to turn around for fear I would witness her tormentor; instead I prayed, “Dear Lord, please remove whatever is troubling her.”

Fear can be paralyzing, altering our perception, causing loss of motor control and also insane thoughts, leading to depression and anxiety. There is so much in this world that fosters insecurity and apprehension that it is hard to know who and what is trustworthy.

If ever the world needed Jesus, it is now. Yet how many seek Him? How many realize that Jesus is the answer to all our fears?

“For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

Consider one of God’s little creatures, the grasshopper mouse, which is fearless as can be. This critter lives in one of

America’s hottest deserts, the Sonoran Desert, which is home to more venomous creatures than anywhere else in the U.S. This desert is no place for the fearful. With a height of 4.1 inches, what the mouse lacks in stature, it sure makes up for in attitude and courage. Displaying bravery against the odds, as night falls it emerges to track down deadly scorpions. Incredibly, the mouse is immune to the



venom, and as it gets stung it shakes off the neurotoxins and converts it into a painkiller. Amazing!

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could brush off every sting we receive and convert it into a pain killer?

Grasshopper mice have an unusual way of staking claim to their territory and warning other creatures of their presence. Standing on their hind legs, they throw back their heads and howl, a mousy howl, at the night’s sky, like a miniature wolf.

If God gives a four-inch mouse the ability to survive in a hostile environment, can He not take care of you?

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine” (Isaiah 43:1).

“In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord

has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” *Last Day Events*, 72.

“And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Stay close to Jesus by prayer, seek Him in His word, tell others of what Jesus has done for you. Your faith will increase, and your fear will disappear. **LM**

Q:

*Is it safe
to trust
feelings?*

A:

Ones “feelings” are not a safe guide for spiritual progress.

The Bible says that “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9)?

“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered” (Proverbs 28:26 MEV).

“Satan ... exerted all his power to make the hearts of the people hard and their feelings bitter against Jesus. He hoped that so few would receive Him as the Son of God that He would consider His sufferings and sacrifice too great to make for so small a company.” *Early Writings*, 159.

“Satan leads people to think that because they have felt a rapture of feeling they are converted. But their experience does not change. Their actions are the

same as before. Their lives show no good fruit. They pray often and long, and are constantly referring to the feelings they had at such and such a time. But they do not live the new life. They are deceived. Their experience goes no deeper than feeling. They build upon the sand, and when adverse winds come their house is swept away.” *Messages to Young People*, 71.

“You should keep off from Satan’s enchanted ground, and not allow your minds to be swayed from allegiance to God. ... If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings, you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 310.

“When persons begin to draw nigh to God, Satan is always ready to press in his darkness. As they look back over their past life, he causes every defect to be so exaggerated in their minds that they become discouraged, and begin to doubt the power and willingness of Jesus to save. Their faith wavers, and they say, ‘I do not believe that Jesus will forgive my sins.’ Let not such expect to receive anything from the Lord. If they would only exercise true repentance toward God, at the same time possessing a firm faith in Christ, He would cover their sins and pardon their transgressions. But, instead of this, they too often allow themselves to be controlled by impulse and feeling.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 135. **LM**





It's Not “Slaughter”

To slaughter or process meat? That was the question put to New South Wales (Australia) Farmers’ delegates at its annual conference when they made the decision to change the use of the word *slaughter* when referring to the livestock industry.

“In the interest of community engagement and public image, farmers passed the motion that all relevant parties in livestock industries use the term *processing* in lieu of, and to the complete exclusion of the term *slaughter*.

“The word *slaughter* is not appropriate for our industry as we are processing animals through the various stages that end up for food. It’s not a mass murder,” states the livestock industry.

Large animals in the United States are also no longer slaughtered. They're now disassembled. And chickens are harvested.

While Adventist Christians have focused on the health benefits of the vegetarian diet, the young generation of today has focused on a far worse problem with meat consumption – animal cruelty on a scale unimaginable to previous generations.

The science has demonstrated in the past few decades that animals have emotional lives. They feel not only physical, but also emotional pain. They have social behaviors and community structures. For example, cows and many other animals are known to babysit for each other. Animals mourn the loss of their loved ones.

The paradox of the situation is that while we know more than ever about the emotional lives of animals, we treat them worse than at any previous time in history.

Someone could say that this is not true. Our pets are treated better than ever. We spend jaw-dropping amounts of money on their toys, organic food, cosmetics, healthcare, to name a few. What about farm animals? Not only are they not afforded the same luxuries as our pets, but they are not even treated as living beings. They are just industrial objects destined for later “disassembly.” They're kept in such appalling conditions that they have to be fed antibiotics their whole lives to prevent the spread of disease. Male piglets have their testicles ripped out without anesthetics. Calves are removed from their mothers almost immediately because we need the cow's milk. Male calves are killed within a few days, as the dairy industry has no need for them and they're not the right breed for meat. Cows mourn the loss of their babies with tears in their eyes for weeks until many are driven to insanity. One would wonder what effect this milk has on the health of those consuming dairy products.

So what's the difference between a dog that we treat as a family member and a cow or sheep which

we don't even treat as a living being? The science now has a term for it – carnism. It is a belief system supported by cultural conditioning where one animal can be afforded a human-like status, while another is a worth-

less object that can be tortured for profit. Dogs, for example, are animals destined for human consumption in some countries, while cows are treated as divine, afforded the best welfare, and hurting one bears a prison sentence in other countries. We all know which animals fit each category in the western world. The western society is guilty of carnism more than any other culture.

It is now not socially acceptable to raise certain animals for fur. According to some activists, it's not okay to train animals for circus performances, while the most massive abuse and torture of animals destined for meat production goes unnoticed.

We have to acknowledge that we have consumed meat for thousands of years. Often it was a matter of survival of the human race. The Biblical story of Noah tells us that when Noah's ark landed on dry land, there were no edible plants after the flood, therefore God permitted people to consume animals. One of the consequences was a sharp decline in human longevity.



Today, we no longer have any justification for meat consumption, especially if the science has proven

that meat consumption causes diseases and shortens our lifespan. Yet, so many are unwilling to give up this practice.

It is also true that generations as recent as our parents and grandparents considered meat eating normal. Yet, farm animals were

still treated as living beings with respect, care, and love during those times. Animals were given happy lives in their natural outdoor surroundings. Their meat was not tainted by the excessive use of drugs and hormones. Perhaps the following quote wasn't clear to our parents, but this prediction has been fulfilled in our generation and secular sources confirm it: “There is no safety in eating of the flesh of dead animals, and in a short time the milk of the cows will also be excluded from the diet of God's commandment-keeping people. In a short time it will not be safe to use anything that comes from the animal creation.” *Unpublished Testimony*, July 26, 1898. {PUR November 7, 1901, Art. B, par. 1}

Jesus said: “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12 NIV). How can we possibly extend love to each other and treat animals with the harshest cruelty? It is not a coincidence that people who are cruel to animals have often experienced violence as children and also are not kind to others.



The industry's humane way of pig slaughter is gas chambers. Many pigs survive it and consequently get cut up and cooked alive.



Cows cry for weeks after their new-borns are removed from them. Many are driven to insanity.



A chick needs six months to grow to an adult in the natural world. On commercial farms it's 45 days. Imagine the health effects of the meat on humans.



On egg farms, chicks are sorted by gender. Male chicks are ground up alive.

We have animal welfare laws designed to protect animals, but get this: farm animals are exempt! "It is estimated that nine billion land animals are raised and killed for food every year in the U.S. We don't even have an estimate for how many aquatic animals are killed in the U.S. every year, because the statistics kept are in tonnages, not individual beings. Many of these animals are subjected to near-unimaginable cruelty – much of which is perfectly legal, under current law."²

Abuses on commercial farms and in slaughterhouses are so horrific, most of us couldn't bear to witness them. "Animals can have their testicles, tails, horns, beaks, or toes removed without anesthesia. Male chicks are ground up alive, and piglets are killed by slamming their heads on the ground."³ Yet, we feel completely comfortable to purchase parts of these animals in the grocery store. Every consumer partaking in the system is guilty of cruelty. Farmed animals are

every bit as capable of feeling pain and pleasure as the animals who live with us as family members.

If such treatment of animals is the industry standard, why are not people protesting in the streets? The reason is simple: The meat industry has developed a system concealing the reality from the public eye. Commercial farms have heavy security; no one can come near them. If a private vehicle pulls on a side of a public road anywhere within sight of these farms, security personnel will arrive within minutes. No photos are allowed even from a distance. Where are the 9 billion animals slaughtered annually in the United States? Why is it we never see them? They're transported to their deaths on the interstates while we sleep. Transport of animals to slaughterhouses is often seen after dark.

Most of these crimes against animals are happening in the so-called civilized west. It is very easy for the media

in non-Christian countries to portray western Christians as barbaric, cruel, and evil. And it is only our own fault.

As the meat industry pushes to exclude the term *slaughter*, we have further redefined living beings into just "things." Unlike our previous generations, we are not even willing to acknowledge that death is a part of our diet. Unlike our supposedly barbaric ancestors, we don't even want to acknowledge that animals are living beings. We have lost compassion. Unlike our parents and grandparents, we teach our children we are not slaughtering animals, we are just processing them. No! It is slaughter! More barbaric than the world has ever seen. As Christians, we can't look the other way.

¹ www.theland.com.au/story/6291345/farmers-ditch-slaughter-for-public-image/

^{2,3} <https://aldf.org/article/student-animal-legal-defense-fund-saldf-program-guides/2018-2020-farmed-animals-the-law/> **LM**

Thanksgiving

"Have you cut the wheat in the blowing fields,
The barley, the oats, and the rye,
The golden corn and the pearly rice?
For the winter days are nigh."

"We have reaped them all from shore to shore,
And the grain is safe on the threshing floor."

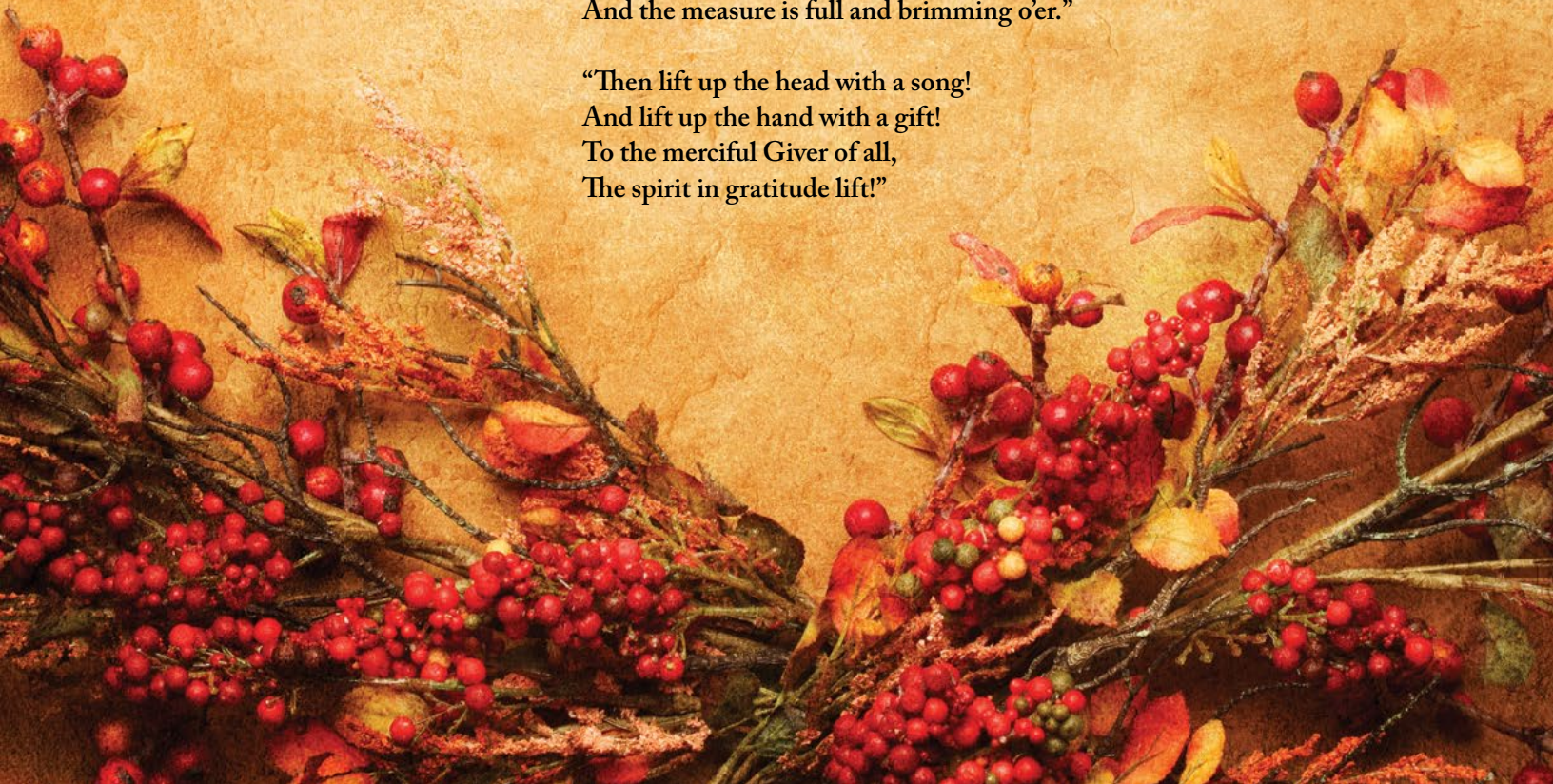
"Have you gathered the berries from the vine,
And the fruit from the orchard trees?
The dew and the scent from the roses and thyme,
In the hive of the honeybees?"

"The peach and the plum and the apple are ours,
And the honeycomb from the scented flowers."

"The wealth of the snowy cotton field
And the gift of the sugar cane,
The savory herb and the nourishing root—
There has nothing been given in vain."

"We have gathered the harvest from shore to shore,
And the measure is full and brimming o'er."

"Then lift up the head with a song!
And lift up the hand with a gift!
To the merciful Giver of all,
The spirit in gratitude lift!"





Convicting Testimony

By John J. Grosboll

What would you expect to happen if those who were guilty were to pass judgment and determine the sentence of the innocent? This is not a foreign occurrence and has happened many times in this world. The Bible records several famous instances of this happening in the life of Jesus and also in the life of Paul.

When Paul was set free after his first imprisonment in Rome, the Jews were still determined to rid themselves of what they considered a nuisance. Everything that they had tried had failed. More than once they had plotted to assassinate him, but their efforts had always come to naught. They had tried to get him convicted in Jerusalem,

in Caesarea, and in Rome, and every attempt had failed. However, they never ceased trying to find a way that they could end his life because of their hatred against the gospel of Jesus Christ that he proclaimed wherever he went resulting in many people, both Jews and Gentiles becoming Christians.

The story that he would tell of his encounter with Jesus Christ in person on the Damascus road was convincing. It was an eyewitness testimony backed up by a change in his life that nobody could contradict. Those who did not accept this testimony became furious with rage because of the effect that it was having all over the world and resulted in the Jews' determination to find some

pretext by which they could cause him to be killed.

Rome, at that time, was involved in a terrible fire, for which Nero was blamed. Deciding to clear himself, he caused the Christians to be blamed for instigating the burning of the city. This gave opportunity for the Jews to lay a plot by which the apostle Paul was blamed for instigating the burning of the city of Rome. Again, he was to appear before Nero on trial for his life.

At this time, Paul had the prospect of almost certain death. First because of the aggravated nature of the crime charged against him. Second, because of the prevailing animosity toward the Christians which had resulted

from their being blamed for burning the city. Then last, because of the very character of Nero himself, who was attempting to relieve himself of the real blame for the fire for which he certainly was responsible.

It was customary among both the Greeks and the Romans to allow a person in this situation who was accused to have an advocate, an attorney, present his case in a court of justice to plead in his behalf. By force of argument or impassioned eloquence, and appeal, entreaties, or even tears, such an advocate could often secure a reversal of the sentence, or if he failed in that, at least have the sentence mitigated to avoid a severe judgment.

But in this case there was no man who ventured to act as Paul's counsel or advocate. He had no legal counsel. He had no friend at hand, even to preserve a record of the charges that were leveled against him. There is no written human record of the arguments that he urged in his own defense. Among the Christians who lived in the city of Rome, there was not one who came forward to stand by him at this time.

Down through the centuries, thousands, probably more accurately, millions of Christians have been in similar situations with no legal counsel and all manner of accusations being made against them. There have been many courts in which a person needed to prove their innocence, but how do you prove that the accusations are false? How do you prove your innocence? Now it's one thing if you are considered innocent until you are proved guilty. It is entirely something else if you are considered guilty unless you can prove your innocence. Even if you are innocent, it may be very difficult to prove it.

However, if you are a Christian and find yourself in a situation like this, you do have Someone who has promised to never leave you or forsake you and to help you. For the apostle Paul, though all humans had forsaken him, he was



aware that Somebody had stood by him. Writing to Timothy he said, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also, I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Timothy 4:17).

Here we see the faithful apostle standing before Nero with no counsel, no human help, standing all alone accused of an aggravated crime in a pagan court having to defend himself. But, unseen by his accusers, there was One who stood with him and strengthened him that the preaching might be fully known.

Here was Paul standing before Nero. How striking would be the contest and the contrast. Nero was a person who had the very height of earthly power, wealth, and authority and had also participated in the lowest depths of crime and iniquity. This man, Nero, before whom Paul was answering for his faith, stood unrivaled and unapproached in the world. There was no one in this world to question his authority or resist his will. The kings of the earth laid their crowns at his feet. The most powerful armies marched at his command. The ensigns of his navies betokened victory. His statue was set up in courts of justice and the decrees of senators and the decisions of judges were but the echo of his will.

Over a hundred million subjects bowed in obedience to his mandates. The name of Nero made the world tremble. To incur his displeasure was to lose property, liberty, and life. His frown was to be dreaded more than the pestilence, and yet while he was surrounded by all this earthly pomp, wealth, and authority, and revered as a god in human form, he had the heart of a demon.

Before this man seated on his throne, stood the apostle Paul, a calm, aged prisoner, whose face told of the peace of God that reigned within. He was without money, without friends, without legal counsel, brought from a loathsome dungeon to be tried for his life. The apostle Paul had lived a life of poverty, of self-denial, and of suffering. He had a sensitive nature which thirsted for love and sympathy, but all he had was grave misrepresentation, reproach, hatred, and abuse, like his Master. He had been a homeless wanderer in this world. He had lived and suffered for the truth's sake. He had sought to relieve the burdens of others around him. He had sought to exemplify the life of Christ in his life. Who can imagine the contrast between these two people, Paul and Nero, face to face, the youthful monarch bearing upon his countenance the shameful record of the passions that surged within?

“

*For the apostle Paul,
though all humans had
forsaken him, he was aware
that Somebody had stood
by him.*

We see in this picture the result of opposite systems: opposite systems of education, opposite systems of philosophy, opposite systems of training. On one hand you have the life of unbounded self-indulgence, and on the other you have a life of utter self-sacrifice. Here were the representatives of the two religions, Christianity and paganism – the representatives of two theories of life – the simplicity of self-denying endurance, ready to give up life itself if necessary for the good of others, and on the other hand, the luxury of all-absorbing selfishness that counts nothing too valuable to sacrifice for momentary gratification.

Here also were the representatives of two spiritual powers – the ambassador of Christ and the slave of Satan. Their relative positions showed to what extent the course of this world was under the rule of the prince of darkness. The wretch who sat upon the throne, his soul stained with the crime of incest and matricide robed in purple. Before him stood the purest and noblest of human beings, to be judged for his life, a man who is despised, hated, and fettered. Around them was a vast throng gathered to witness the judgment scene. Again, the Jews urge against the prisoner their old charges of sedition against the government and heresy, and both Jews and Romans accuse him of instigating the burning of the city.

While they vehemently urged their accusations, Paul stood there with no shade of fear or anger. The judges beheld this man with surprise. They had been present at many trials and had looked upon many criminals, but never had they seen a man who had such a look of holy calmness as did this prisoner before them. The keen eyes of the judges, accustomed to searching for character in the human face, search the face of Paul for some evidence of crime, but in vain.

Finally, the apostle Paul, after he had received all of the accusations, was allowed to speak for himself.

As he looked, not just at Nero and his accusers, but also at the large crowd of people that had gathered to watch his trial, he decided to lift once more before the wondering multitude, the banner of the cross of Christ. And with more than human eloquence and power, he began to explain to them the truths of the gospel. His words were true, clear, and convincing, overthrowing error and falsehood, and the people in that company had never before heard anything like this.

They had come to hear the utterance of a feeble and aged prisoner, but they heard words that were destined to shake nations. Paul's speech on this occasion, was endowed with power that would through all time influence the hearts and lives of men. He later wrote to Timothy, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Timothy 4:17). Paul was stirred with a longing to see these people receive the truth of salvation, and he had an intense desire that they would not perish. He lost sight of the occasion and of the perils that were surrounding him, and of the terrible fate which seemed so near, and he looked to Jesus, his Advocate, his Intercessor in the courts above.

He pled with them and showed them that there was an Advocate that they had at the throne of God and pointed his hearers to the fact that an infinite sacrifice had been made on behalf of the fallen race. He presented before them man in his true dignity and value, because an infinite price had been paid for his redemption. Provision had been made that every human being might finally be exalted to share the throne of God and to become an heir of immortal riches. Not only this, but by angel messengers, earth and heaven were connected, and all the deeds of men, both good and evil, were open before the eye of infinite justice. As he was explaining this to them, there was no trace of fear. There was no sadness or discouragement on his countenance. He was strong in his conscious innocence. He was clothed with the panoply of truth, and rejoiced that he was a son of God. His words were like a shout of victory above the noise of the battle.



*Over
a hundred
million subjects
bowed in obedience
to Nero. His name
made the world
tremble.*

He told them that the cause of truth to which he had dedicated his life is the only cause that can never fail. He may perish for the truth's sake, as would millions of human beings, but the gospel will not perish, because God lives and reigns, and eventually the truth will triumph. As he speaks to them, his countenance is lighted up. They see that he is not afraid of anything, perhaps realizing now that he is on God's side of the question. Through this trial, the gospel message found its way into minds that had never before heard the truth. Never had Nero listened to any speech like this. Never before had the enormous guilt of his life been revealed to him as it was revealed that day, because the light of heaven pierced the sin polluted chambers of his mind and soul. He was terrified. He quaked with terror at the thought that there was a tribunal before which he, the ruler of the world, should be arraigned, and where his deeds would meet a just reward. He was afraid of the apostle's God, and he dared not pass a sentence on Paul, against whom no crime, no accusation, had been sustained.

Nero had a sense of awe and as he was thinking about it, heaven opened before his mind, the truth of what the apostle Paul had been saying, and for a moment it seemed that the peace and purity of heaven would be something desirable. That was his moment of mercy. That was the moment, when, if he had made the decision, he could have turned his life around and chosen to repent and confess his sins and follow Jesus.

For a moment, the hope of eternal life was offered to probably the most wicked man in the world at that time, but the offer was only for a moment. Catching his composure, he gave orders for Paul to be returned to his dungeon. When the dungeon door was closed, that was the end of the opportunity for the emperor of Rome to have eternal life. Never again would there be a ray of light or mercy from God that would shine into his darkened soul.

It was not long after this that Nero sailed on his expedition to Greece, and there he disgraced himself and his kingdom by the most contemptible and debasing crimes and frivolity. He returned to Rome with great pomp and engaged in scenes of revolting debauchery, but in the midst of the revelry, a voice was heard out in the streets and a messenger was dispelled to enquire of the matter. The messenger returned with the appalling news that Galba, at the head of an army, was marching rapidly upon Rome. Insurrection had already broken out in the city and the streets were filled with an enraged mob, threatening death to the emperor.

The wretched tyrant, who was just as cowardly as he was cruel, was completely unmanned. He sprang up from the table at which he had been feasting and drinking and overturning it in his blind terror, he sent the costly wares to the floor, dashed to fragments. Like one beside himself, he ran here and there, saying, "I am lost. I am lost." He did not have, like the faithful Paul, a compassionate God to rely upon in his hour of peril.

He knew that if he was taken prisoner, he would be subjected to torture. So considering how he might end his miserable life with as little pain as possible, he asked for poison. When the poison was brought, he was afraid to take it and

called for a sword, but he was also afraid to use it on himself. Then, disguised in women's clothing, he rushed from the palace and dashed through the dark, narrow streets to the Tiber River. But as he looked into its depths, his courage failed again.

One of Nero's friends that was with him, suggested that he escape to a country seat a few miles away where he might find safety. So, concealing his face, he leaped on a horse and succeeded in making his escape, but the senate had passed a decree declaring Nero to be the enemy of his country and condemning him to death. The sentence that was passed against him was that he was to be stripped naked, fastened by his head to the pillory, and scourged to death. When he found this out, the monster, who had delighted to inflict death upon Christians by most inhuman torture, shrank with horror at the mere thought of enduring like torture himself. In a groan of despair he said, "What shall I do?" In a few moments he knew he would be under the power of his enemies. Terrified alike by the thought of suicide or torture, he at last let a slave help his trembling hand force a dagger into his throat and perished at the age of 32.

God in his infinite mercy bears long with the transgressors of His law, but He keeps a record of the impiety of nations and individuals. Long is mercy tendered toward us, but when our guilt reaches a certain limit, which God has fixed, then mercy ceases her pleading and the ministration of wrath begins.

Friend, every one of us has a case at the bar of God. What will the sentence be when your number comes up?

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

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November 29 – December 5, 2020

God Provides for His People

Key Text

“But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun” (Exodus 17:12).

Study Help: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 297–300.

Introduction

“Happy the minister who has a faithful Aaron and Hur to strengthen his hands when they become weary and to hold them up by faith and prayer. Such a support is a powerful aid to the servant of Christ in his work and will often make the cause of truth to triumph gloriously.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 531.

Sunday

1. THE PEOPLE MURMUR AGAIN

1. How did the children of Israel murmur against Moses when they arrived at Rephidim?

Note: “The Lord directed their course where there was no water, to prove them, to see if, after receiving so many evidences of His power, they had learned to turn to Him in their affliction, and had repented of their past rebellious murmurings against Him. They had charged Moses and Aaron with selfish motives in bringing them from Egypt to kill them and their children with hunger, that they might be enriched with their possessions. In doing this the Israelites ascribed to man that which they had received unmistakable evidence was from God alone, whose power is unlimited. These wonderful manifestations of the power of God He would have them ascribe to Him alone, and magnify His name upon the earth. ... If they would not glorify God in their trials and adversity, in their travels through the wilderness to the Canaan in prospect, while God was continu-

ally giving them unmistakable evidence of His power and glory, and His care for them, they would not magnify His name and glorify Him when established in the land of Canaan, surrounded with blessings and prosperity.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 107.

Monday

2. GOD PROVIDES

- 2.a. What did Moses do after he had heard their complaints? Exodus 17:4; Jeremiah 29:12.

Note: “The Lord says, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble’ (Psalm 50:15). He invites us to present to Him our perplexities and necessities, and our need of divine help. He bids us be instant in prayer. As soon as difficulties arise, we are to offer to Him our sincere, earnest petitions. By our importunate prayers we give evidence of our strong confidence in God. The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 172.

- 2.b. To what place, and with what specific instructions, did God send Moses for water? How was water miraculously provided? Exodus 17:5, 6.

Note: “In distress Moses cried to the Lord, ‘What shall I do unto this people’ (Exodus 17:4)? He was directed to take the elders of Israel and the rod wherewith he had wrought wonders in Egypt, and to go on before the people. And the Lord said unto him, ‘Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink’ (verse 6). He obeyed, and the waters burst forth in a living stream that abundantly supplied the encampment. Instead of commanding Moses to lift up his rod and call down some terrible plague, like those on Egypt, upon the leaders in this wicked murmuring, the Lord in His great mercy made the rod His instrument to work their deliverance.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 298.

2.c. What other names did Moses give to that place, and why did he rename it? Exodus 17:7, *margin*.

Note: “In their thirst the people had tempted God, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us, or not?’ (Exodus 17:7, *last part*). ‘If God has brought us here, why does He not give us water as well as bread?’ The unbelief thus manifested was criminal, and Moses feared that the judgments of God would rest upon them. And he called the name of the place Massah, ‘temptation,’ and Meribah, ‘chiding,’ as a memorial of their sin.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 298.

Tuesday

3. SYMBOLS OF CHRIST

3.a. Of whom is the smitten rock a type? 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Note: “Moses smote the rock, but it was the Son of God who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, stood beside Moses, and caused the life-giving water to flow. Not only Moses and the elders, but all the congregation who stood at a distance, beheld the glory of the Lord; but had the cloud been removed, they would have been slain by the terrible brightness of Him who abode therein.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 298.

3.b. In what other sense is Jesus referred to as a rock? Psalm 94:22; Mark 12:10.

Note: “In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone, and laid it Himself. He called it ‘a sure foundation’ (Isaiah 28:16, *last part*). The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and



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griefs; it can endure them all. With perfect safety they may build upon it. Christ is a ‘tried stone’ (Isaiah 28:16, *second part*). Those who trust in Him, He never disappoints. He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam’s guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security. ...

“By connection with Christ, the living stone, all who build upon this foundation become living stones. Many persons are by their own endeavors hewn, polished, and beautified; but they cannot become ‘living stones,’ because they are not connected with Christ. Without this connection, no man can be saved. Without the life of Christ in us, we cannot withstand the storms of temptation.” *The Desire of Ages*, 598, 599.

3.c. What symbolized the water that flowed from the smitten rock? John 4:10:10-14; 7:37-39.

Note: “He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 195.

Wednesday

4. THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK

- 4.a. What danger next threatened the people of Israel?
Exodus 17:8.

Note: “Because of Israel’s disobedience and departure from God, they were allowed to be brought into close places and to suffer adversity; their enemies were permitted to make war with them, to humble them and lead them to seek God in their trouble and distress. ‘Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim’ (Exodus 17:8). This took place immediately after the children of Israel had given themselves up to their rebellious murmurings and to unjust, unreasonable complaints against their leaders whom God had qualified and appointed to lead them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 106, 107.

- 4.b. How did God defeat the Amalekites? Exodus
17:9–12.

Note: “When the Amalekites came to attack the camp of Israel in the wilderness, Moses knew that his people were not prepared for the encounter. He sent Joshua with a band of soldiers to meet the enemy, while he himself, with Aaron and Hur, took his position on a hill overlooking the battlefield. There the man of God laid the case before Him who alone was able to give them the victory. With hands outstretched toward heaven, Moses prayed earnestly for the success of the armies of Israel. It was observed that while his hands were reaching upward, Israel prevailed against the foe; but when through fatigue they were allowed to fall, Amalek prevailed. Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses until victory, full and complete, turned upon the side of Israel and their enemies were driven from the field.

“This instance was to be a lesson to all Israel to the close of time that God is the strength of His people. When Israel triumphed, Moses was reaching his hands toward heaven and interceding in their behalf; so when all the Israel of God prevail, it is because the Mighty One undertakes their case and fights their battles for them. Moses did not ask or believe that God would overcome their foes while Israel remained inactive. He marshals all his forces and sends them out as well prepared as their facilities can make them, and then he takes the whole matter to God in prayer. Moses on the mount is pleading with the Lord, while Joshua with his brave followers is below, doing his best to meet and repulse the enemies of Israel and of God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 530, 531.

Thursday

5. AMALEK IS OVERCOME

- 5.a. After the Amalekites had been defeated, what sentence was pronounced upon them? Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 25:17–19.

Note: “The wonders wrought by Moses before the Egyptians were made a subject of mockery by the people of Amalek, and the fears of surrounding nations were ridiculed. They had taken oath by their gods that they would destroy the Hebrews, so that not one should escape, and they boasted that Israel’s God would be powerless to resist them. They had not been injured or threatened by the Israelites. Their assault was wholly unprovoked. It was to manifest their hatred and defiance of God that they sought to destroy His people. . . . When the men of Amalek fell upon the wearied and defenseless ranks of Israel, they sealed their nation’s doom. The care of God is over the weakest of His children. No act of cruelty or oppression toward them is unmarked by Heaven. Over all who love and fear Him, His hand extends as a shield; let men beware that they smite not that hand; for it wields the sword of justice.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 300.

- 5.b. What should we remember when we are persecuted in a similar manner today as was Israel by the Amalekites? Matthew 5:11, 12. How does God regard those who persecute their own brethren?

Note: “If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must He regard those who, professing to be His people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in His cause?” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 245.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How is trial and adversity a test for us today, as it was for the Israelites?
- 2 When we pray earnestly in difficult situations, what does this reveal?
- 3 What is the key to becoming a living stone?
- 4 What is sometimes the cause of us being brought into difficult places?
- 5 What sin sealed Amalek’s doom? How are we sometimes guilty of the same sin?

December 6 – 12, 2002

The Visit of Jethro

Key Text

“And Moses’ father in law said unto him, ... Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” (Exodus 18:17, 21).

Study Help: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 13–18.

Introduction

“In His instruction to Moses the Lord very plainly set forth the character of those who were to fill important positions as counselors.” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 341.

Sunday

1. A HAPPY REUNION

1.a. After the battle with the Amalekites, who came to visit Moses, and whom did he bring with him? Exodus 18:1–5.

Note: “Not far distant from where the Israelites were now encamped was the home of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. Jethro had heard of the deliverance of the Hebrews, and he now set out to visit them, and restore to Moses his wife and two sons.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 300.

1.b. When Jethro sent word to Moses that he was coming, what did Moses do at once? Exodus 18:6, 7.

Note: “The great leader was informed by messengers of their approach, and he went out with joy to meet them, and, the first greetings over, conducted them to his tent. He had sent back his family when on his way to the perils of leading Israel from Egypt, but now he could again enjoy the relief and comfort of their society.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 300.

Monday

2. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

2.a. What did Moses tell his father-in-law? Exodus 18:8.

2.b. How did Jethro react to the good news? Exodus 18:9–12.

Note: “To Jethro he [Moses] recounted the wonderful dealings of God with Israel, and the patriarch rejoiced and blessed the Lord, and with Moses and the elders he united in offering sacrifice and holding a solemn feast in commemoration of God’s mercy.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 300.

2.c. What should we remember as we come in contact with others both within and without the church? Psalm 105:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

Note: “The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. ... For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. ... We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works. ...

“Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage.” *Conflict and Courage*, 364.

“We are the constant recipients of God’s mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us.” *Steps to Christ*, 103.

Tuesday

3. JETHRO GIVES ADVICE

- 3.a. What did Jethro observe concerning the judicial work of Moses, and what was Moses’ response? Exodus 18:13–16.

Note: “As Jethro remained in the camp, he soon saw how heavy were the burdens that rested upon Moses. To maintain order and discipline among that vast, ignorant, and untrained multitude was indeed a stupendous task. Moses was their recognized leader and magistrate, and not only the general interests and duties of the people, but the controversies that arose among them, were referred to him. He had permitted this, for it gave him an opportunity to instruct them; as he said, ‘I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws’ (Exodus 18:16). But Jethro remonstrated against this.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 300, 301.

- 3.b. What advice did the godly priest then give to his son-in-law? Exodus 18:17–23.

- 3.c. What were the four main qualifications that the visitor emphasized in the selections of the men who were to share Moses’ burdens? Exodus 18:21, *first part*. What counsel, given to those selecting managers for schools, is just as applicable in the various departments of the work today?

Note: “Wherever schools are established, wise managers must be provided, ‘able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness’ (Exodus 18:21) men who will do their very best in the various responsibilities of their positions. Business ability they should have, but it is of still greater importance that they walk humbly with God and are guided by the Holy Spirit. Such men will be taught of God, and they will seek counsel of their brethren who are men of prayer.

“The managers of our schools must labor with pure motives. In their unselfishness they will remember that other parts of the great harvest field will require the same facilities that are provided for the school under their care.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 215.

Wednesday

4. FOLLOWING THE ADVICE

- 4.a. How did Moses respond to the wise counsel of his father-in-law? Exodus 18:24, 25.

Note: “The Lord had greatly honored Moses, and had wrought wonders by His hand; but the fact that he had been chosen to instruct others did not lead him to conclude that he himself needed no instruction. The chosen leader of Israel listened gladly to the suggestions of the godly priest of Midian, and adopted his plan as a wise arrangement.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 301.

- 4.b. What does this teach us about how we should treat those who are older and more experienced than we are? What makes their advice valuable? Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31.

Note: “Reverence should be shown for God’s representatives—for ministers, teachers, and parents who are called to speak and act in His stead. In the respect shown to them He is honored.

“And God has especially enjoined tender respect toward the aged. He says, ‘The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness’ (Proverbs 16:31). It tells of battles fought, and victories gained; of burdens borne, and temptations

resisted. It tells of weary feet nearing their rest, of places soon to be vacant. Help the children to think of this, and they will smooth the path of the aged by their courtesy and respect, and will bring grace and beauty into their young lives as they heed the command to 'rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man' (Leviticus 19:32)." *Education*, 244.

4.c. What was the result of the recommended delegation of authority? Exodus 18:26.

Note: "This counsel was accepted, and it not only brought relief to Moses, but resulted in establishing more perfect order among the people." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 301.

Thursday

5. MOSES' QUALIFICATION FOR LEADERSHIP

5.a. Just as God required those under Moses to have certain qualities, what were Moses' special qualifications? What important attribute did he possess? Numbers 12:3.

Note: "Moses was a humble man; God called him the meekest man on earth. He was generous, noble, well-balanced; he was not defective, and his qualities were not merely half developed. He could successfully exhort his fellow-men, because his life itself was a living representation of what man can become and accomplish with God as his helper, of what he taught to others, of what he desired them to be, and of what God required of him. He spoke from the heart and it reached the heart. He was accomplished in knowledge and yet simple as a child in the manifestation of his deep sympathies. Endowed with a remarkable instinct, he could judge instantly of the needs of all who surrounded him, and of the things which were in bad condition and required attention, and he did not neglect them." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1113.



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tears He has wiped
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5.b. What special promise was given by Jesus to the meek? Matthew 5:5.

Note: "Meekness is a precious, Christian attribute. The meekness and lowliness of Christ are only learned by wearing Christ's yoke. ... That yoke signifies entire submission." *In Heavenly Places*, 236.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What qualities should we look for in choosing leaders in the work today? Should those who lack these qualities be chosen?
- 2 What is of greater importance than business ability when choosing men for responsible positions?
- 3 What should we often speak about in our contact with others? Why?
- 4 How should we treat our ministers, parents, and teachers in the faith?
- 5 Why were Moses' exhortations so powerful? What does this teach me?

December 13 – 19, 2002

God Speaks to His People

Key Text

“The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount of the midst of the fire” (Deuteronomy 5:4).

Study Help: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 301–305.

Introduction

“When the law was spoken, the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, stood by the side of His Son, enshrouded in the fire and the smoke on the mount.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1103.

Sunday

1. ARRIVING AT SINAI

1.a. How long after they had left Egypt did the Israelites come to Mount Sinai? Exodus 19:1, 2. What revelation was God about to make to them?

Note: “On every hand vast, rugged heights seemed in their solitary grandeur to speak of eternal endurance and majesty. Here the mind was impressed with solemnity and awe. Man was made to feel his ignorance and weakness in the presence of Him who ‘weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance’ (Isaiah 40:12). Here Israel was to receive the most wonderful revelation ever made by God to men. Here the Lord had gathered His people that He might impress upon them the sacredness of His requirements by declaring with His own voice His holy law. Great and radical changes were to be wrought in them; for the degrading influences of servitude and a long-continued association with idolatry had left their mark upon habits and character. God was working to lift them to a higher moral level by giving them a knowledge of Himself.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 302.

1.b. What beautiful words did God speak to Moses in the Mount, sharing His desire for the Israelites as well as His people in all ages? Exodus 19:3–6.

Monday

2. PREPARING TO MEET GOD

2.a. After Moses shared with the people what God had spoken to him, how did the people respond? Exodus 19:7–9.

Note: “Moses returned to the camp, and having summoned the elders of Israel, he repeated to them the divine message. Their answer was, ‘All that the Lord hath spoken we will do’ (Exodus 19:8). Thus they entered into a solemn covenant with God, pledging themselves to accept Him as their ruler, by which they became, in a special sense, the subjects of His authority.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 303.

“This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days. Their acceptance with God depends on a faithful fulfilment of the terms of their agreement with Him. God includes in His covenant all who will obey Him.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1103.

2.b. What preparation was required of the people in order to appear in God’s presence when He presented His law? Exodus 19:10–15. What care should we take before we appear in the presence of God at church?

Note: “That great and mighty God who created the beautiful Eden and everything lovely in it is a God of order, and He wants order and cleanliness with His people. ...

“There was to be nothing slack and untidy about those who appeared before Him when they came into His holy presence. And why was this? What was the object of all this carefulness? Was it merely to recommend the people to God? Was it merely to gain His approbation? The reason that was given me was this, that a right impression might be made upon the people. If those who ministered in sacred office should fail to manifest care, and reverence for God, in their apparel and their deportment, the people would lose their awe and their reverence for God and His sacred service. If the priests showed great reverence for God by being very careful and very particular as they came into His presence, it gave the people an exalted idea of God and His requirements. It showed them that God was holy, that His work was sacred, and that everything in connection with His work must be holy; that it must be free from everything like impurity and uncleanness; and that all defilement must be put away from those who approach nigh to God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 611, 612.

Tuesday

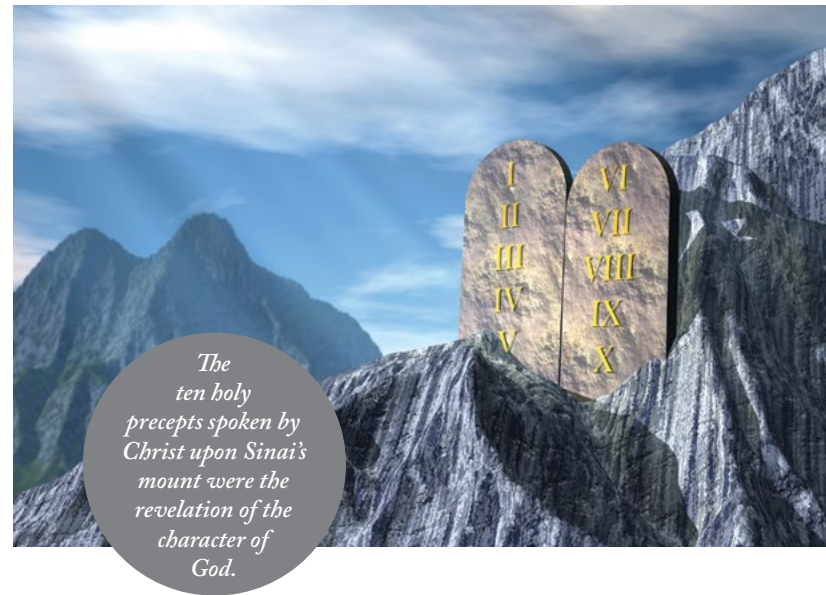
3. IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

3.a. Describe the majesty and solemnity of the scene when God descended from heaven to speak to His people. Exodus 19:16–20; Deuteronomy 33:2, 3.

Note: “On the morning of the third day, as the eyes of all the people were turned toward the mount, its summit was covered with a thick cloud, which grew more black and dense, sweeping downward until the entire mountain was wrapped in darkness and awful mystery. Then a sound as of a trumpet was heard, summoning the people to meet with God; and Moses led them forth to the base of the mountain. From the thick darkness flashed vivid lightnings, while peals of thunder echoed and re-echoed among the surrounding heights. ...

“And now the thunders ceased; the trumpet was no longer heard; the earth was still. There was a period of solemn silence, and then the voice of God was heard. Speaking out of the thick darkness that enshrouded Him, as He stood upon the mount, surrounded by a retinue of angels, the Lord made known His law.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 304.

“By proclaiming the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel with His own voice, God demonstrated their importance. In awful grandeur He made known His majesty and authority as Ruler of the world. This He did to impress the people with the sacredness of His law and the importance of obeying it.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 198.



3.b. When Moses was again called to the top of the mountain, what did the Lord say to him? Exodus 19:21–25.

Note: “When the divine Presence was manifested upon Sinai, the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the sight of all Israel.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 339.

“God is a being of infinite love and compassion, but He also declares Himself to be a ‘consuming fire, even a jealous God’ (Deuteronomy 4:24).” *The Review and Herald*, August 14, 1900.

“To sin, wherever found, ‘our God is a consuming fire’ (Hebrews 12:29). In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.” *The Desire of Ages*, 107.

Wednesday

4. THE LAW OF LOVE

4.a. Who spoke the law on Mount Sinai? What did He later do with the law? Deuteronomy 5:4, 5; 9:10.

Note: “The law, which is the transcript of His character, no one need fail to understand. The words written by the finger of God on tables of stone so perfectly reveal His will concerning His people that none need make any mistake.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 225.

4.b. What is the basic principle behind the law? Matthew 22:37–39.

Note: “The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments’ (John 14:15). Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined.

“The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai’s mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, ‘This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.’ There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1105.

4.c. How do genuine Christians show that they have the love of God in their hearts? 1 John 5:2, 3; Romans 13:10.

Note: “The love of Jesus in the soul will banish all hatred, selfishness, and envy; for the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. There is health in obedience to God’s law. The affections of the obedient are drawn out after God. Looking unto the Lord Jesus, we may encourage and serve one another. The love of Christ is shed abroad in our souls, and there is no dissension and strife among us.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1105.

“The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves.” *Education*, 16.

Thursday

5. AN UNCHANGING LAW

5.a. What effect did the proclamation of the law have upon the people? Exodus 20:18–20. What effect did it have upon Moses? Hebrews 12:20, 21.

Note: “The people of Israel were overwhelmed with terror. The awful power of God’s utterances seemed more than their trembling hearts could bear. For as God’s great rule of right was presented before them, they realized as never before the offensive character of sin, and their own guilt in the sight of a holy God. They shrank away from the mountain in fear and awe.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 309, 310.

5.b. Was there a need to change this law? Did Jesus change it? Psalm 111:7, 8; Matthew 5:17–19.

Note: “The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. ... The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, ‘as a faithful witness in heaven’ (Psalm 89:37). Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist: ‘Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.’ ‘All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever’ (Psalm 119:89; 111:7, 8).” *The Great Controversy*, 434.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How did the natural beauty surrounding Mount Sinai affect the Israelites? Why is it so important to regularly spend time in nature?
- 2 What pledge does God want me to make with Him daily?
- 3 Why did God speak with His own voice when proclaiming the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel?
- 4 What is the result of having the law of love, the love of Jesus, in the soul?
- 5 Explain why the law is unchanging.

December 20 – 26, 2020

A Wall of Protection

Key Text

“Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD” (Psalm 119:1).

Study Help: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 305–310.

Introduction

“He who has an understanding of the far-reaching claims of God’s law can understand something of the heinousness of sin. And the more exalted his ideas of God’s requirements, the greater will be his gratitude of the pardon granted him.” *Our High Calling*, 137.

Sunday

1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE CREATOR

1.a. When was the Sabbath given to mankind? What was the purpose of the Sabbath? Genesis 2:1–3.

Note: “The Sabbath ... is to be remembered and observed as the memorial of the Creator’s work. Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it distinguishes the true God from all false gods.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 307.

1.b. What are some general guidelines in true Sabbath keeping? Isaiah 58:13.

1.c. Why do we often fail to guard our words upon the Sabbath? Matthew 12:34.

Note: “To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 307.

“But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy. Through faith they must become partakers of the righteousness of Christ.” *The Desire of Ages*, 283.

2. PUTTING GOD FIRST

2.a. What does God express right at the beginning of the law, showing its importance? Exodus 20:3. How do we show that we have given something first preference in our life? What types of other gods do we sometimes serve?

Note: “Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 305.

2.b. What should our attitude be toward God? Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 10:12.

Note: “Christ’s service requires the whole man—the heart, the mind, the soul, the strength. He will not accept a divided heart. He expects us to do our best.” *This Day With God*, 161.

2.c. Which attribute is vital if we are to enter into a relationship with God where He holds first place? Galatians 5:6.

Note: “The faith which avails to bring us in vital contact with Christ expresses on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. ... It works in the life of the follower of Christ true obedience to God’s commandments, for love to God and love to man will be the result of vital connection with Christ.” *In Heavenly Places*, 108.

“He [the true believer] abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from Him.

“This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will; our feelings, desires, interests, and honor, identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.” *My Life Today*, 11.

Tuesday

3. PUTTING AWAY SELFISH DESIRES

- 3.a. Where does the sinful desire originate which leads to grave sins such as covetousness and adultery? Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19; 22:37.

Note: “The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ.” *The Desire of Ages*, 125.

“The tenth commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act. He who in obedience to God’s law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for that which belongs to another will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 309.

- 3.b. As we realize that the battleground is within the mind, what should we do? Philippians 3:5–8; Revelation 3:20.

Note: “Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God ... that He might restore to man the original mind which he lost in Eden through Satan’s alluring temptation.” *That I May Know Him*, 291.

“By conversion and transformation men are to receive the mind of Christ.” *Ibid.*, 134.

- 3.c. How far-reaching is obedience to the seventh commandment? Matthew 5:27, 28.

Note: “This commandment forbids not only acts of impurity, but sensual thoughts and desires, or any practice that tends to excite them. Purity is demanded not only in the outward life but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart. Christ, who taught the far-reaching obligation of the law of God, declared the evil thought or look to be as truly sin as is the unlawful deed.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 308.

4. REJECTING DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS

- 4.a. What is the root from which murder springs? 1 John 3:15. What else is involved in keeping the sixth commandment?

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’ [1 John 3:15]); 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.

- 4.b. What characteristic of the carnal heart leads to hatred, and how does this evil trait affect those who harbor it? 1 Corinthians 3:3; Proverbs 14:30.

Note: “Envy is the offspring of pride, and if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to hatred, and eventually to revenge and murder.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 651.

“Envy is one of the most despicable traits of Satanic character. It is constantly seeking the lifting up of self, by casting slurs upon others. A man who is envious will belittle his neighbor, thinking to exalt himself.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, 1159.



The
tenth
commandment
strikes at the very
root of all sins,
prohibiting the
selfish desire.

“Envy, jealousy, and evil surmising is a hellish shadow by which Satan seeks to intercept your views of the character of Christ, so that by beholding the evil you may be fully changed into its likeness.” *Ibid.*, 1163.

4.c. How far should our honesty extend, if we truly desire to keep the eighth commandment? 2 Corinthians 8:21; Romans 12:17.

Note: “It [the eighth commandment] condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 309.

5. THE HIGHEST EARTHLY HONOR

5. What is special about the fifth commandment? Ephesians 6:2; Exodus 20:12.

Note: “Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children

not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 308.

“Our obligation to our parents never ceases. Our love for them, and theirs for us, is not measured by years or distance, and our responsibility can never be set aside.” *My Life Today*, 278.

“Those who would truly follow Christ must let Him abide in the heart, and enthrone Him there as supreme. They must represent His spirit and character in their home life, and show courtesy and kindness to those with whom they come in contact. There are many children who profess to know the truth, who do not render to their parents the honor and affection that are due to them, who manifest but little love to father and mother, and fail to honor them in deferring to their wishes, or in seeking to relieve them of anxiety.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 60.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How only can I keep the Sabbath holy? What will my words and actions reveal?
- 2 If I have a vital connection with Christ, what will be the result?
- 3 What happens when a sinful desire is cherished, a sinful thought dwelt upon?
- 4 What is envy? What is the result of cherishing this sinful trait?
- 5 Why are parents entitled to love and respect more than any other person?

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Mushrooms

While enjoying a plant-based diet, some people are reluctant to place a fungus on the menu but let me encourage you to take a second look at the benefits of including this “ill repute.”

Although it is impossible to discuss every kind of mushroom that there is, after all, there are 10,000 varieties, but here we will consider the most common ones: Portabella (the oldest variety and has a hearty flavor), Cremini, Maitake (fan shaped), Button, Hedgehog, Morel, Shiitake, Porcini, Lobster, Enoki, Chanterelle and Clamshell.

Mushrooms are low in calories, fat and sodium, free from cholesterol,

full of vitamins, protein, minerals and antioxidants. Each variety of mushroom is used in a different cultural cuisine, from Italian, Chinese, Thai, Russian, Haitian, Romanian, United Kingdom, Macedonian and many more.

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- **Riboflavin, B-2:** Aids in hormone production and proper nervous system function
- **Niacin, B-3:** Helps maintain healthy red blood cells
- **Pantothenic Acid, B-5:** Promotes healthy skin, digestive and nervous system function
- **Folate, B-9:** Produces DNA and RNA: produces red and white blood cells in the bone marrow
- **Thiamin, B-1:** Produces energy and the growth and development of cells
- **Selenium:** Protects the body cells from damage
- **Copper:** Produces red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout the body and keeps the bones and nerves healthy
- **Potassium:** Maintains normal fluid and mineral balance, stabilizes blood pressure, maintains the proper function of muscles including the heart muscle.

The benefits are enormous. **LM**

Fruit

Vegetables

Fungi

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



FAVORITE MUSHROOM GRAVY

Ingredients

1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 dry pint shitake mushrooms – any mushroom will work
2 Tbsp. olive oil or avocado oil
2 Tbsp. unbleached flour
1 carton vegetable stock or broth
1 Tbsp. “chicken” seasoning, or more to taste
1 tsp. each – sage, basil, parsley

Process

Sauté the onion and garlic in a little oil until light brown, then set aside. Sauté the mushrooms until light brown and set aside. Place the flour and the rest of the oil in the pan to brown the flour. Add the broth or stock, seasoning and herbs on medium heat until the gravy starts to thicken. Then add the cooked onion, garlic and mushrooms; simmer for 30 minutes. Serve hot. Enjoy!





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