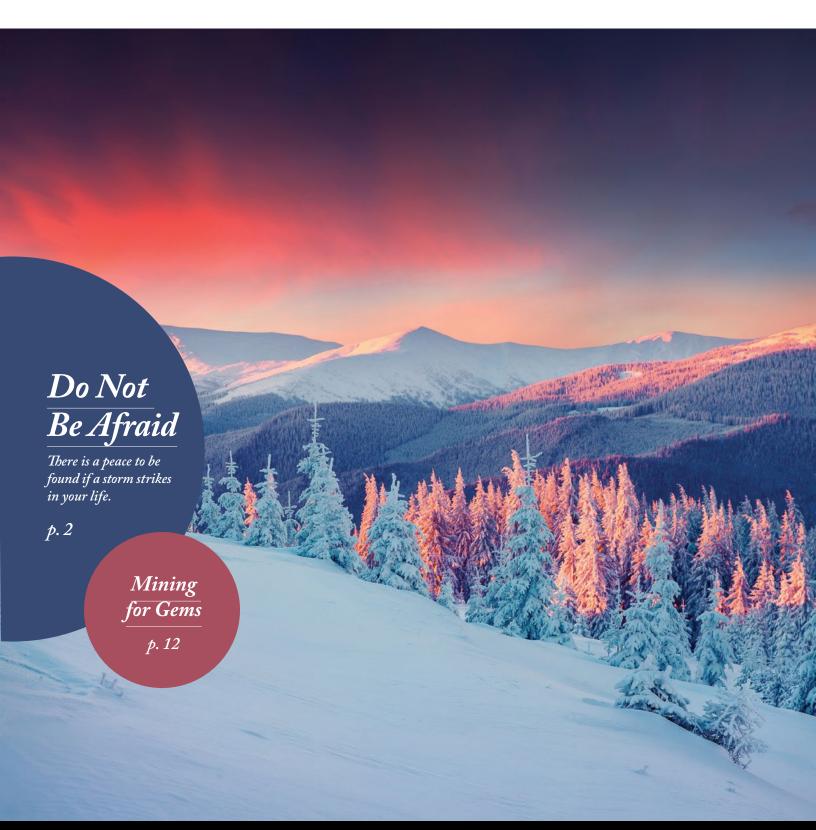
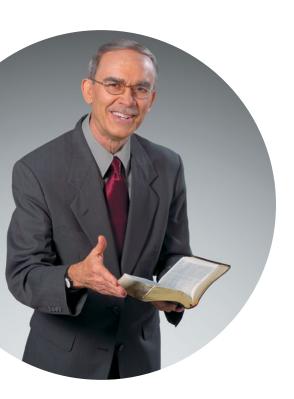
### **HISTORIC**

# LANDMARKS

**OF ADVENTISM** 





#### From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

n Revelation 10 there is a prophecy of a great prophetic movement encompassing both sea and land (Revelation 10:2)—in other words, all the world—that would occur at the end of the times (compare Revelation 10:6 and Daniel 12:7). This prophetic movement would go through a great disappointment (verses 8—10) and then, a divine commission would be given to it that they must prophesy again to all the world (verse 11).

## Revelation 10811

When the Bible was written there were no chapter divisions such as we have in our Bibles today. There was no break in the continuity of thought between the tenth and the eleventh chapters of Revelation, as a chapter break seems to imply.

Immediately after the divine command to prophesy again to all the world, there is given to the prophet a reed (rod) to measure the temple. (The words *temple* and *sanctuary* are equivalents and can be used interchangeably. Compare with Daniel 8:14.) The "holy city" (Revelation 11:2) refers to the true church and the 1260 years of persecution from an antichrist power that it would endure. Notice that the great prophetic movement described in Revelation 10 comes at the end of the times (compare Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; Revelation 12:6 and Revelation 13:5 with Revelation 10:6).

It was at the end of these prophetic times that a new satanic power, described in Revelation 11:7–13, was to be unleashed on the world. This prophecy was fulfilled by the socialist or communist government that overflooded France in the 1790s. But the French Revolution was only the beginning of the communist socialist experiment. It was attempted again in 1848, but was stopped by an edict from heaven at that time for about

70 years. It developed again in Russia in 1917, took over China in 1949, and has taken over many governments in Asia, Central and South America.

The communist socialist experiment that began in earnest in 1789 is not over yet. Ellen White wrote in 1903 the following: "Anarchy is seeking to sweep away all law, not only divine, but human. The centralizing of wealth and power; the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interests and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; the world-wide dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution—all are tending to involve the whole world in a struggle similar to that which convulsed France." Education, 228.

In other words, what occurred in the French Revolution on a local scale is to be repeated on a worldwide scale. We are entering that development right now.

This same writer has given warning about the future of the cities which we hope to investigate later. She wrote, "... read the eleventh chapter of Revelation. Read every verse, and learn the things that are yet to take place in the cities. Read also the scenes portrayed in the eighteenth chapter of the same book." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 91.

# LANDMARKS

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

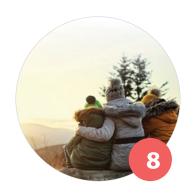
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The devil is the troublemaker who sends the storms into our lives. Jesus offers perfect peace as we put our trust in Him allowing Him to direct our lives.

By John J. Grosboll



#### **The Christian Experience**

Through their association with Jesus, the disciples came to see the beauty of His character and desired to follow Him. But like most people, it took time for them to fully grasp the great need of a change to be made in their lives.



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he time is coming when all the inhabitants of the earth will have decided whom they will follow. Some will be inside the holy city looking out, while others are on the outside looking in. Some, perhaps many of the latter group may desire to be inside, but realize that it is too late.

Many of us have loved ones who have little interest in spiritual things and our hearts ache for them. The sadness you see manifested at the funeral of a loved one will in no way compare with the loss and eternal separation from loved ones that will occur at the end of time. So, cry out and ask the Lord, How can I witness to my family? What can I say and do so they can find out about the love of Jesus?

The sin problem began when Lucifer came to doubt the love of God. Today, there is much resistance to the gospel. People are becoming hard hearted because they don't understand the love of God. Sometimes, when we have tried to show people the prophecies and end time events which almost scare them to death, we realize that nothing is going to make sense to them if they don't understand the love of God. In fact, what is the point of having eternal life if you don't have a love relationship with the Creator of all things?

We find in the New Testament both the reason why people get scared when they are in trouble as well as the remedy. It is a fact that troublous times are coming before Jesus returns. The devil would like to get us so terrified that we give up. But we can be just the opposite and experience perfect peace in the midst of everything that goes on.

The Bible speaks of a time when the apostles became really terrified.

"He [Jesus] said to them [His disciples], 'Let us cross over to the other side.' Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him'" (Mark 4:35-41)!

The ship was full of water and about to sink. Jesus awoke, not as the Master of sea and sky and nature, but as a man. However, He ever trusted in His Father's might and knew that His Father had control of it. He knew that the devil



had sent the storm in an attempt to drown Him and His disciples.

It is the devil who sends a lot of storms into our lives. He is a trouble-maker, and as long as he is around there will be trouble. Jesus had peace. He knew that it was not the time for them to die. His work was not yet complete, nor was that of the disciples who would take the gospel to all the world.

One time, Ellen White was on a boat in a terrible storm and many people were terrified and screaming. Someone turned to her and asked, "'Are you not terrified? I suppose it is a fact that we may never reach land.' I told her I had made Christ my refuge ... if my work was not done, all the waters of the ocean could not drown me." Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, 85, 86. The devil cannot kill you if God still has a work for you to do in the world.

Luke describes the scene this way: "It happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.' And they launched out. But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with

water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!'Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him'" (Luke 8:22–25)! According to the words of Jesus, the disciples were afraid because they didn't have faith.

The opposite of being terrified is to be at perfect peace. In every situation, Jesus had the peace of heaven. Paul had that same peace, which enabled him to stand unflappable amid the constant opposition of the Jews. Some wonder why the Lord allowed there to be so many millions of martyrs. By witnessing the peace that their faith gave them, many people were won to the Gospel that may not have been otherwise.

John Calvin, a devout Roman Catholic, was one who watched the martyrdom of a Protestant. Looking at the martyr's face, he saw no fear, for he had perfect peace. It was the practice of the

church to martyr people in public to induce fear in the spectators. However, the Lord gave them peace and those spectacles had the opposite effect. John Calvin saw in the martyr a peace that he didn't have. He went back and studied his Bible and became a Protestant believer.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "And having your feet shod with the preparation of

the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). Let your mind take this in. If you have peace in your heart, it will

show on your face; if you have terror in your heart, those emotions are reflected on your face.

Paul lists the fruits of the Spirit in his book to the Galatians. He says that among the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, and peace. If these fruits are not manifested as we witness, the gospel will fall on deaf ears. (See Galatians 5:22, 23.)

Those who have faith have peace, but you cannot have faith until you know that you are a child of God. Paul wrote, "And you ... who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others" (Ephesians 2:1–3). This describes a person who has not experienced the gospel. They are by nature the children of wrath under the control of the devil.

John 9 tells of a blind man that Jesus healed. The Pharisees began to investigate the healing. Beginning in verse 24 they ask Jesus again about it saying, "So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, 'Give God the glory! We know that this Man [Jesus] is a sinner.'" Then "He answered and said, 'Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.' Then they said to him again, 'What did He do to you? How did He

open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?' Then they reviled Him and said, 'You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.' The man answered and said to them, 'Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears Him'" (verses 25–31).

Notice, the blind man understood theology better than the Pharisees. He said, if a man is a sinner he can't go to God; he can't exercise faith in God. God is not going to listen to him, but if a man fears Him and does His will, then He can have faith in Him. A person living in sin, does not experience the gospel and by nature is the child of the devil. It is impossible for that person to have faith in God, because he or she is not His child and does not have the privileges of a child. In order to have faith in God, you need to experience the gospel so that you can be adopted and experience what Paul calls the "adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:5, *last part*).

There are two kinds of children in the world. In Genesis 3:15 God said to the devil, "I will put enmity [hatred] between you and the woman, and between your seed [descendants] and her Seed [descendants]." Some people are the seed of the woman; some people are the seed of the devil. The seed of the woman are the ones who have experienced the gospel and have experienced the adoption of sons. You cannot have faith until you know that you are a child of God. Those who have not experienced that are by nature the children of wrath and the children of the devil.

The gospel, simply explained, needs to be preached over and over again. There are Christians who have attended church for years who do not have a clear understanding of the gospel and do not have peace. Many people are terrified about a possible economic collapse or impending war and all sorts of things. Somehow, we have to explain to them

6

One of the biggest
problems evangelists face
today in the United States is
that people believe they are
rich, in need of nothing,
and are satisfied.

what the gospel is, because only by experiencing it will you have internal peace, no matter how much trouble there is in the world.

Jesus said, "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer [courage], I have overcome the world" (John 16:32, 33). In other words, there is going to be trouble on the outside, but in Him you will have peace on the inside. When that happens, it will be visible and show on your face.

How does a person experience the gospel and have peace in our troubled world?

First, a sinner needs to understand that he needs help, which is contrary to the modern teachings of many psychologists and sociologists. Maybe you've heard of books like "I'm Ok—You're Ok." By the way, that is a lie. In fact, I'm not okay and you're not okay either. This is not a criticism, but a fact. A sinner must first recognize that he is lost and that he needs someone to save him or he will never get out from the problem he is in. He needs to realize that he is in a pit and he cannot get out without help. Without this realization the gospel can do nothing for him.

One of the biggest problems evangelists in the United States face today is that people believe they are rich, increased with goods and in need of nothing and are therefore satisfied. In that case, there is nothing a preacher, teacher, or Christian can do to help them. But when a person is susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit, they begin to realize that one ray of light from the throne of God makes painfully distinct the destitution and sinfulness of their soul.

Jeremiah said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are



accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23). He also said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). *Desperately wicked* in the original Hebrew means literally *incurable*. The heart is deceitful above all things and it is incurable. It is just as incurable as any physical disease and leads to eternal death without divine help.

There are moralists who have been trying to "help" themselves for years. They study psychology and take educational courses to learn how to be better people or how to train people to help themselves. For example, consider the problem many face with overeating. National surveys reveal that it is harder to overcome overeating than to overcome either smoking or tobacco. The reason is that with smoking and tobacco you can just plain quit, but you have to eat to live. Therefore, eating must be controlled and that is a lot harder than just quitting something. You must recognize your need of help to receive help from the Lord.

When you recognize your need and come to the cross, you will experience what the Bible calls repentance. Many Christians, failing to recognize their need of help in overcoming, have a whole array of darling sins, the sins that they are in love with. Darling sins are

really hard to overcome because you love doing them. I Corinthians 15:3 says that "Christ died for your sins," and John wrote that "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4 KJV).

Know that Jesus died the awful death on the cross because of each one of our darling sins. Think about it – how can partaking in my darling sin be enjoyable when it caused so much suffering to Jesus? That is what the Bible calls repentance. Repentance means the sin is no longer darling to me anymore, but heinous. I am sorry I ever did it and I don't want to do it again.

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance" (Romans 2:4)?

The basic meaning of the Greek word that is translated *repentance* means to *change your mind*. The sin that you once loved you now hate. You now see how much Jesus, whom you once hated loves you, and you want to change. When you begin to love Jesus, you will hate your sins. That is repentance. It involves not only being sorry for your sins but turning away from them.

The Bible says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18). Think seriously about those darling little sins that never seemed that

bad. Repentance increases and deepens as we go through the Christian life (see *Christ's Object Lessons*, 160). It is not just something you experience once before you are baptized; it is something you continue to experience throughout your life.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John

1:9). "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever con-

fesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). If my sin involves something that I did that injured somebody else, in addition to telling the Lord I'm sorry, I must go and tell that person that I am sorry.

Some people, because of death, will even have to make confessions in heaven. David will have to confess to Uriah the Hittite

in heaven. The apostle Paul will need to have a conversation with Stephen about the part he played in his martyrdom as well as all the other deaths he was responsible for before his conversion. Repentance is not only making our peace with God; it is making peace with the one we have injured. That includes making restitution if there is something we can restore. If we kill somebody, we can't make restitution, but if we've stolen goods, we can make restitution. Confession involves confessing to God and making restitution if it's possible and determining not to do it again. This is our work before the close of probation.

Sin must be confessed whatever the consequences. There are people who have to decide whether they want to confess what they have done and even go to jail and be clear before God, or whether they want to cover it up and then answer to the Lord when He comes. The Christian religion involves making things right as soon as you realize the wrong.

Jeremiah says, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). After the resurrection Jesus asked Peter one question, repeating it three times. The question was, "Do you love

Me?" (See John 21:15—17.) Do you really love Me? Have you made a commitment? That's what faith is all about; in fact, in Greek the word that is translated to have *faith* or to *believe* means to *believe something enough to make a commitment*. For example, John 2:24, 25 says, "Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." The word translated in this passage as *commit* is translated *faith* or *belief* elsewhere. Faith means to acknowledge Jesus as your Lord and Savior and make a full commitment to God.

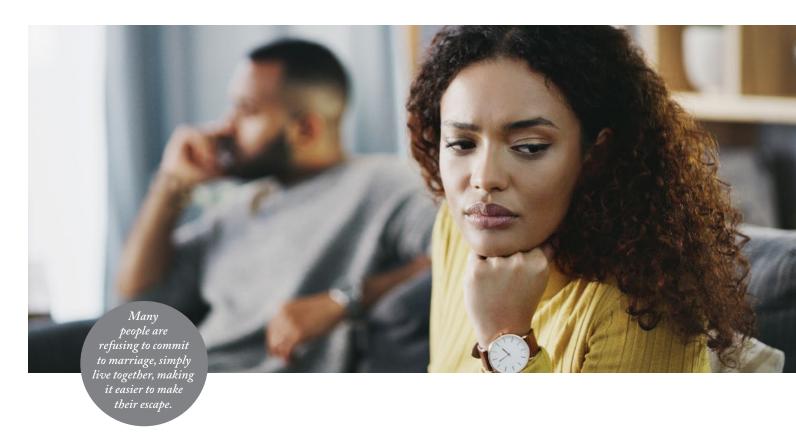
Commitment is one of the most important things in life. One of the greatest tragedies of our modern-day society is that we have lost the ability to commit. When people get married, they verbally make a commitment, yet a big percentage of those relationships end in divorce. Many more, refusing to commit to marriage, simply live together, making it easier to make their escape when the relationship sours. With no commitment there is no security; there is no peace or joy or trusting happiness, for you never know if your partner is going to walk out on you when something better shows up.

Marriage is an illustration of the relationship that God's people have with the Lord (Ephesians 5, Revelation 19, Song of Solomon, Ezekiel 23, Hosea). In Jeremiah 3:14, the Lord says, "I am married to you." You cannot marry someone if they don't commit, and you cannot be a child of God until you are ready to commit to Him. Confession and repentance must be followed up with a commitment if you are to be adopted into the family of God. Jesus said, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say" (Luke 6:46)?

The thief on the cross got it. Addressing Jesus, he said, "'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom'" (Luke 23:42). He knew he was a sinner and needed salvation. When he addressed Jesus as his Lord and Savior, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise" (verse 43). The gospel is not complicated. He made a commitment and was saved. Won't you do the same and receive the gift of the

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One of the greatest tragedies of our modern-day society is that we have lost the ability to commit.



Holy Spirit (John 3) and experience the peace that passes understanding?

The Roman Catholic Church states that "The reason for the uncertainty of the state of grace lies in this: that without a special revelation nobody can with certainty of faith know whether or not he has fulfilled all the conditions that are necessary for achieving justification." Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, ©1974, 262. Under that system there is no peace, but a continual trying to do more in order to fulfill the conditions, never sure whether you have done enough. That was the problem Martin Luther faced. He climbed the Holy Stairs of the Lateran Palace on his knees, working and working and wondering if what he did was ever enough. Paul said salvation is only available by faith alone.

"We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds [works] of the law" (Romans 3:28).

"Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt [obligation]. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4, 5).

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). When your sins have been forgiven and you have made the commitment, you are a child of God, not because of what you have done, but because of what Jesus has done and is doing.

As we approach the end of the world, we have been warned that there will be trouble such as there has never been before Jesus returns. Seek to experience the gospel as never before so your faith will be strengthened. Know that Jesus is in charge even if it doesn't look like it right now. The devil can't do anything to you without the Lord allowing it and whatever He allows is for your good and often for somebody else's good as well.

Remember, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Whatever is going on in your life, you may be tempted to be terrified, but tell the Lord you want faith to not be afraid and to experience the gospel and receive the Holy Spirit and experience perfect peace.

The peace you experience will be noticed and desired by others, opening the door for you to witness. Jesus said that the harvest is ripe. People are looking for answers to this world's problems and we can be used to help them find the Saviour. We can be reflectors of His image. When they see that we have the joy of the Lord and have perfect peace amongst turmoil that even the devil cannot take away, they will desire Him too.

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

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# The Christian Experience

By Mike Wells

n apostolic times the early church was a force to be reckoned with. The new converts were full of grace and the Holy Spirit. The word of God was preached with the fullness of the Spirit and people were added to the church daily. The message that Jesus was the Messiah was "preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). The men and women that Christ drew to Himself were not well educated, were corrupted by sin, and their minds were fixed on temporal things. They were just the kind of people that Jesus had come to save.



"For the carrying on of His work, Christ did not choose the learning or eloquence of the Jewish Sanhedrin or the power of Rome. Passing by the self-righteous Jewish teachers, the Master Worker chose humble, unlearned men to proclaim the truths that were to move the world. These men He purposed to train and educate as the leaders of His church. They in turn were to educate others and send them out with the gospel message. That they might have success in their work they were to be given the power of the Holy Spirit. Not by human might or human wisdom was the gospel to be proclaimed, but by the power of God." The Acts of the Apostles, 17.

Through their association with Jesus, they came to see the beauty of His character and desired to follow Him. Like most people, it took time for them to fully grasp His mission and the great need of a change to be made in their lives. Jesus is a patient teacher, willing to go the extra mile to shape the minds of His people so they can understand more fully the difference between His character and the character of Satan. In the beginning, the disciples did not fully understand the depths of sin. They were blinded by their own ideas of the world and how they should be saved. It took forty days of instruction after the resurrection of Jesus for them to understand the scriptures of the prophets. Preconceived ideas and worldly politics were set aside. Their only focus was on the kingdom of heaven.

"The disciples were to go forth as Christ's witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of men. As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles stand as representatives of the gospel church." Ibid., 19.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and they went forth preaching repentance to all men. Peter proclaimed, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses." "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus

Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:32, 38). In a few years, the message of the crucified and resurrected Messiah was given to the world. People perceived the truth and embraced it.

Love for one another in Christ was their theme and the fruit of their labor. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (verses 46, 47).

This is the Christian experience that Jesus came to bring to all people who would forsake the world and follow Him. He had laid out before the disciples the keys to the kingdom of God-righteousness, goodness, and longsuffering. He gave as an example a life of toil and struggle and a deep love for others. He said to His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" and "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 14:15; 15:12). As it was for the early disciples, so it is for us today. We must also have this experience in love and faith in Jesus.

"The apostle prayed that love might abound more and more. There must be a living faith, before there can be a living experience. There are many who have a certain formal knowledge of Christ, and an indefinite faith that does not have an active influence upon the life and character. This faith is not a saving

There must be a living

faith, before there can be a

living experience.

faith. Our love for Jesus must commence here, if we expect to love

Him through the

ages of eternity.
All who love
Christ will
talk of Him.
How shall the
world know
of the blessed
hope, and the
glorious appearing of your Lord
and Saviour, unless
you make it the theme
of your thought and conver-

sation? If our hearts are rejoicing in the hope of beholding our coming Saviour, shall we not speak of it to others? 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' (Matthew 12:34). We shall have the Spirit of Christ, if we are in union with Him; and with the same untiring love and patience, we shall seek that which is lost. One soul is worth the world. It is the purchase of the blood of Christ, and those who really love Christ will feel the value of the souls for whom He shed His precious blood." *The Signs of the Times*, July 27, 1888.

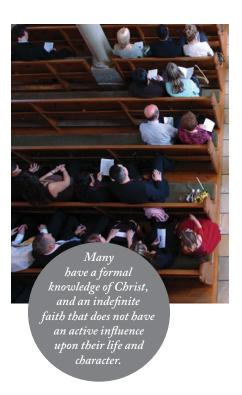
These early disciples did not have a life of leisure, but of hardship. They were hated for Christ's sake and persecuted, but they continued to deliver the message that He gave them to proclaim. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19), Peter said to a dying sinful world that needed to be justified through the blood of Jesus so they might stand before the

Lord of Hosts. Many died to self and took on the yoke of Christ. They loved not their lives unto death but freely gave themselves for His cause. With joy in their hearts and words of forgiveness on their lips, they held nothing against any man. Instead, they reached out in love to those who were marred by sin, to uplift them from the mire of the world.

"When Christ sent forth the disciples with the gospel message, faith in God and His word had well-nigh departed from the world. Among the Jewish people, who professed to have a knowledge of Jehovah, His word had been set aside for tradition and human speculation. Selfish ambition, love of ostentation, greed of gain, absorbed men's thoughts. As reverence for God departed, so also departed compassion toward men. Selfishness was the ruling principle, and Satan worked his will in the misery and degradation of mankind." *The Ministry of Healing*, 142.

"Under the fiercest persecution these witnesses for Jesus kept their faith unsullied. Though deprived of every comfort, shut away from the light of the sun, making their home in the dark but friendly bosom of the earth, they uttered no complaint. With words of faith, patience, and hope they encouraged one another to endure privation and distress. The loss of every earthly blessing could not force them to renounce their belief in Christ. Trials and persecution were but steps bringing them nearer their rest and their reward." The Great Controversy, 41.

What a sharp contrast to the Christian experience of today. Many believe that if they attend church once a week and profess to love God, they have a place in heaven. They believe there is nothing else required of them to be saved. Yet, Jesus gives us a much different view of what it means to be saved. When Mary Magdalene anointed the Savior's feet with her tears, she found forgiveness in His voice, "Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And



those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace'" (Luke 7:48–50). And when the poor woman who had been bleeding for 12 years reached out to touch the hem of His garment, He said, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace" (Luke 8:48). What did each of these women have in common that Jesus found worthy of salvation? Faith!

"True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt." Early Writings, 72. "Faith is trusting in God—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership, and accepts its blessings. Truth, uprightness, purity, are pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in

possession of these. Every good impulse or aspiration is the gift of God; faith receives from God the life that alone can produce true growth and efficiency." *Gospel Workers*, 259.

To have the experience of the early church, we must claim the promises of God. It is imperative that we relinquish our will to His will to create the change from sinful selfishness to perfect righteousness. Self must be sacrificed on the altar of God so that the purity of the Holy Spirit will have a fit temple to dwell in. Faith in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God is essential to receive His blessings and prepare for the great work ahead. Jesus said that the last days would be as in the times of Noah and Lot, with great evil at every corner. Temptations and trials will be against God's people, but the most deceptive test will come from within the church itself.

"Satan therefore laid his plans to war more successfully against the government of God by planting his banner in the Christian church. If the followers of Christ could be deceived and led to displease God, then their strength, fortitude, and firmness would fail, and they would fall an easy prey." *The Great Controversy*, 42.

Satan knew that persecution was not having the desired results, so he changed his tactics and started weaving in false doctrines. He insinuated that God's people could not overcome sin, therefore, they must just keep their sins confessed. Once he established this false doctrine, it was then easy for him to sow strife, jealousy, and evil speaking amongst the good church members. Fault finding became commonplace, unforgiveness grew out of fault finding, and the result was a prideful fallen church.

"The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters were led to receive a part of the Christian faith,

while they rejected other essential truths. They professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God and to believe in His death and resurrection, but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. With some concessions on their part they proposed that Christians should make concessions, that all might unite on the platform of belief in Christ." Ibid.

Professed Christians will proclaim that they are keeping all God's laws and that they believe in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, yet there will be something missing. Outwardly, they will be formally keeping His Sabbath, attending church regularly, but the inward change has not been wrought. Selfishness, selfwill, pride, and the love of this world will still be hidden in the heart. The unsanctified among God's people will take leadership roles just as they did in the early church and drive the Holy Spirit away. Complacency will begin to appear, the work will stop, and the love of Christ will wane. We are seeing the result of these very conditions in the church today.

Jesus foresaw this happening in the early church and warns us that it will happen in the last church. "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent." "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (Revelation 2:5; 3:18).

Christ is gathering His angels for the last battle, but He is wondering if there will be any faith left on earth when He comes. He is looking for a people to stand up like the early apostolic church and proclaim His love for the world, to warn them of the impending doom that is about to fall upon it. "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears



long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth" (Luke 18:7, 8)?

"What is the condition in the world today? Is not faith in the Bible as effectually destroyed by the higher criticism and speculation of today as it was by tradition and rabbinism in the days of Christ? Have not greed and ambition and love of pleasure as strong a hold on men's hearts now as they had then? In the professedly Christian world, even in the professed churches of Christ, how few are governed by Christian principles. In business, social, domestic, even religious circles, how few make the teachings of Christ the rule of daily living. Is it not true that 'justice standeth afar off: ... equity cannot enter. ... And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey' (Isaiah 59:14, 15)"? The Ministry of Healing, 142.

As we look at the experience of God's early church, we must ask ourselves: What is our experience today? Are we tirelessly working for the souls of others? Do we have the fervent love for our brothers and sisters in the

church? Are we fulfilling the great commission that Jesus gave us to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20)? Time is shorter now than in 1844 when Jesus started His ministry to cleanse the sanctuary of the sins of God's people. He is waiting for a people who will stand up and be counted, with a pure doctrine of righteousness and a mouth that speaks saving truth to this fallen world. Jesus is at the door now, knocking on each heart to see if we will open the door so that He can make His home with us. Soon our time will be finished, and we will give an answer for what we have accomplished in His name. Let each one of us pray that we will be found ready at the great Day of Jesus.

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

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# Mining for Gems

An Inexhaustible Source of Strength, Power, and Grace

By John R. Pearson

here is a passage in the book *Education* which deserves contemplation. It reads, "The most valuable teaching of the Bible is not to be gained by occasional or disconnected study. Its great system of truth is not so presented as to be discerned by the hasty or careless reader. Many of its treasures lie far beneath the surface, and can be obtained only by diligent research and continuous effort. The truths that go to make up the great whole must be searched out and gathered up, 'here a little, and there a little' (Isaiah 28:10)." *Education*, 123.

Scripture and inspired writings often present critical points of faith and sources of strength that are not readily apparent to the surface reader—"the hasty or careless reader." These hidden gems need to be ferreted out by diligent searching and critical reasoning. Inspiration equates this effort with mining. By this diligent effort, "the intellect will find themes of the most elevated character to call out its powers. There is nothing that will so endow with vigor all our faculties as bringing them in contact with the stupendous truths of revelation. The effort to grasp and measure these great thoughts expands the mind. We may dig down deep into the mine of truth, and gather precious treasures with which to enrich the soul. Here we may learn the true way to live, the safe way to die." The Review and Herald, January 4, 1881.

Note that our study of Scripture and inspired writings not only teach us "the true way to live," but also "the safe way to die," the latter being perhaps a seldom considered blessing.

An example of a hidden gem in Scripture—and there are many—occurs in Paul's letter to the Hebrews. In chapter 3, Paul spends a good bit of time explaining to them that Jesus is greater than Moses. To ensure that his readers understand why this is true and to help them understand the importance of faith in Christ as their Redeemer—and to comprehend that which makes Him greater than Moses, he provides some strong words of caution: "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

It should be recognized that here Paul equates unbelief with having an evil heart. We can conclude therefore that if we believe in and accept Christ Jesus as "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Hebrews 3:1), we have a good heart, which, according to Jesus, is essential to achieving behavioral compliance with His word.



#### **A Good Heart**

When Christ was explaining the meaning of the Parable of the Sower to His disciples, He said, "But the ones [seeds] that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

The importance of having a good heart cannot be underestimated. Those with a good heart readily accept the word of God, "keep it and bear fruit." God expects nothing more—and nothing less—of His followers.

When we possess a good heart, we naturally possess a good character. The result is an assurance of victory.

"Young men and women should regard a good character as a capital of more value than gold or silver or stocks. It will be unaffected by panics and failures, and will bring rich returns when earthly possessions shall be swept away. ... Integrity, firmness, and perseverance are qualities which all should seek earnestly to cultivate; for they clothe the possessor with a power which is irresistible, a power which makes him strong to do good, strong to resist evil, strong to bear adversity." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 656.

Inspired writings as well as Scripture contain these hidden gems. An interesting example occurs in a passage from a manuscript Sister White wrote in 1912, just a few years before her death.

"God's children are always being tested in the furnace of affliction. If they endure the first trial, it is not necessary for them to pass through a similar ordeal the second time; but if they fail, the trial is brought to them again and again, each time being still more trying and severe. Thus opportunity after opportunity is placed before them of gaining the victory and proving themselves true to God. But if they continue to manifest rebellion, God is compelled at last to remove His Spirit and light from them." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1146.

A careful analysis of this passage reveals that failure to successfully endure our trials is a manifestation of rebellion. While some might consider that a rather bold and severe conclusion, its truth can be confirmed with some further "mining" of scripture and Inspiration.

There are unnumbered promises in God's word in which divine assistance is assured to enable us to persevere when we are engaged in our daily battle with the enemy. One of the strongest is given in the first few verses of Peter's second epistle.

"Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who

have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who

called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceeding-

ly great and precious promises, that through these you may be

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:1-4).

If Jesus Christ "has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness," there remains nothing more that we could require to successfully overcome every encounter with the temptations that Satan daily throws across our path. The problem, therefore, lies with "an evil

heart of unbelief," which causes us to fail to grasp the grace freely provided that enables us to overcome every effort of the enemy of souls to lead us astray. Failure to accept as absolute truth the promise of divine aid, and therefore fail to act on that promise, is indeed an act of rebellion.

It should be recognized that in all cases, when we fail to resist Satan's efforts to lead us astray, we are committing a transgression of the divine will and are reckoned as a rebel in the books of heaven.

It should also be recognized that the power to resist temptation is provided in all its fullness in the grace so freely dispensed at our command and reception. Confirmation of the liberal dispensation of the power to overcome is provided in the following passage.

"'Grace and peace' will be multiplied 'through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.' Here is the Source of all spiritual power, and faith must be in constant exercise, for all spiritual life is from Christ. Knowledge of God inspires faith in Him as the only channel to convey heaven's blessing to the soul, elevating, ennobling, refining the soul, as—through the knowledge of God—it

is brought up to the high attainment of glory and virtue. 'According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.'" *Our High Calling*, 67.

That "high attainment of glory and virtue" is—or should be—the objective of every Christian. By taking advantage of the grace and power so freely provided by Christ's sacrifice, that attainment is indeed possible. Failure to take that advantage, failure to grasp that Mighty Arm in times of temptation and successfully overcome, according to the previously cited passage from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, is indeed rebellion.

Acknowledgment that we need divine assistance in our daily battle with the powers of evil is an essential step in overcoming self, in the crucifixion of the old man and becoming a new man in Christ Jesus.

Paul addresses this issue fairly directly in the third chapter of Colossians, a chapter that is loaded with hidden gems, and a chapter that repeats a concept that Paul expresses in different words in his second letter to the Corinthians.

In Colossians 3:2, Paul says to "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." In 2 Corinthians 10:5, he pleads that his readers should be "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." The consistency of these two passages should be evident, and the fact that Paul provides this counsel twice to two different churches should give us some indication of its importance.

It should also be evident why, very early in holy writ, we are advised, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:10). This is the technique that reveals those hidden gems that, once discovered, increase our faith, smooth the rough places, and straighten the crooked paths.

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When we possess a good

heart, we naturally possess a

good character.

# "Down Under"

By Carol Balsiger





I am with Tania, Serhii and baby Nicolaus from the Ukraine.

eptember to November is springtime in New Zealand and I had the privilege of visiting there during part of September and October 2019, through an invitation from Brother Evan Sadler.

My flight landed in Auckland that morning and I was picked up at 11:00 AM by Brother Bretton from Hope International. It was very interesting to see the countryside, all those rolling green hills and the wild sheep and goats. Of course, you know New Zealanders drive on the "wrong" side of the road. The driver side is on our passenger side as well. The trip from the airport took four hours to arrive in a little town called Ohura, where Hope International is situated.

I had always thought that New Zealand was one long island, but it is two separate islands: North Island and South Island, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean.

"New Zealand sits on two tectonic plates - the Pacific and the Australian. Fifteen of these gigantic moving chunks of crust make up the Earth's surface. The North Island and some parts of the South Island sit on the Australian Plate, while the rest of the South Island sits



One of the builders Jayd with his wife Shirley.

on the Pacific. Because these plates are constantly shifting and grinding into each other, New Zealand gets a lot of geological action."

www.newzealand.com/us/feature/ new-zealand-geography-and-geology/

I learned a little more of its geology while visiting and it amazed me how those islands just sit there above water and are not overrun by the ocean. Then I have to stop, recalling this verse: "And [the LORD] said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11), and realize that God is not only in control of our world, but of the entire universe!

Hope International, New Zealand, now provides health evangelism, not only to the surrounding villagers, but to others outside of that area who want to change their lifestyle and receive help for their medical conditions. While I was visiting, Hope was revising one area of their buildings to accommodate more solid guest rooms and treatment rooms to adequately serve the public. This complex was previously a minimum-security prison and when Ohura's economy died down and the prison was moved, it was



Health presentation for the community.

no longer being used for that purpose. By God's grace, when it became available, Brother Sadler was able to purchase it. The complex is ideally situated where the surrounding hillsides and peaceful neighborhood far from the hustle and bustle of city life, allows patients to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

Along with health lectures, some of the treatments provided by the clinic are massage, sweat baths, detox, and colon cleansing. The faithful staff who provide the lectures are Sala & Akapusi (from Fiji) and Natalie (Great Britain) just to name a few, and there are others who provide meals for the guests, clean the rooms on their departure and look after the comfort of the guests. Just this past week I received a text from Sala who said the team was preparing for about 20 people who were coming to do their program.

Praise God for His faithful workers who are doing their part in the medical missionary field. Let us remember to keep these brothers and sisters in prayer, because the enemy is sure to do his utmost to prevent this health message from being preached even in New Zealand. LM



# God's Plan of Tithing

### Clues – KJV

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#### Across:

B12	For returning a faithful tithe, God promises to do this to Satan M	Ialachi 3:11
$D_4$	Tithe on our increase should be figured N	lumbers 18:13
$G_3$	Today our tithe should support those who " the" 1	Corinthians 9:13, 14
$J_2$	Jesus said tithe on even little things to be done M	Iatthew 23:23
K7	Tithe should be figured from the of our increase N	lumbers 18:12
$M_{\rm I}$	Our correct tithe is one of our increaseLo	eviticus 27:32
${\rm Mio}$	For returning a faithful tithe, God promises to give us this M	Ialachi 3:10

#### Down:

A <sub>13</sub>	Anciently the tithe supported "God's workmen" for their	Numbers 18:21
A15	When we do not return our tithes, we are this	Malachi 3:9
B6	Old Testament patriarch who returned his tithes	Hebrews 7:2
$C_4$	We also rob God when we do not return even these	Malachi 3:8
D8	God specifically requests these be returned to Him	Malachi 3:10
Ею	God brought this on the Jews for not returning their tithes	Haggai 1:11
$G_{I4}$	These correspond to our ministers and pastors today	Numbers 18:23
	Those who do not return tithes to God have Him	

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## The Ministry of Silence

"Be still, and know that I am God." *Psalm 46:1*0

Within the depths of silence rings a voice with message clear. For in the calm, a hallowed psalm Delivers weary souls the balm: Be still for Christ is near. Be still for Christ is near.

Be still, the voice of God is heard but in the silent hour. Revealing grace to Adam's race, Redeeming souls from sin's disgrace, The voice of truth and power. The voice of truth and power.

The power of silent suffering peals through the midnight air. In blood and tears, while wrestling fears Our sin is borne by grief He wears While angels grace the prayer. While angels grace the prayer.

In quietness He bore the cross their fury to release. Amidst the blows from wrathful foes The silent lamb in triumph rose With confidence and peace. With confidence and peace.

Amassed, the countless hurried throng moves on in dismal gloom.

The clanging beat, the rampant street,
The raging pulse and hurried feet,
At last will meet its doom.

At last will meet its doom.

With quietness and confidence from thrashing din resign. Arise fair things that stillness brings, The melody that silence sings, Oh joy, that He is mine. Oh joy, that He is mine.

—Lee Rufener







# Walk in the Light

was shown that God's people dwell too much under a cloud. It is not His will that they should live in unbelief. Jesus is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His children are the children of light. They are renewed in His image, and called out of darkness into His marvelous light. He is the light of the world, and so also are they that follow Him. They shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The more closely the people of God strive to imitate Christ, the more perseveringly will they be pursued by the enemy; but their nearness to Christ strengthens them to resist the efforts of our wily foe to draw them from Christ.

I was shown that there was too much comparing ourselves among ourselves, taking fallible mortals for a pattern, when we have a sure, unerring pattern. We should not measure ourselves by the world, nor by the opinions of men, nor by what we were before we embraced the truth. But our faith and position in the world, as they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if our course had been continually onward and upward since we professed to be followers of Christ. This is the only safe comparison that can be made. In every other there will be self-deception. If the moral character and spiritual state of God's people do not correspond with the blessings, privileges, and light which have been conferred upon them, they are weighed in the balance, and angels make the report, Wanting.

With some the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not fully understand it, because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it. And yet they rest as unconcerned and well satisfied as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, as token of God's favor, went before them. They profess to know God, but in works deny Him. They reckon themselves His chosen, peculiar people, yet His presence and power to save to the uttermost are seldom manifested among them. How great is the darkness of such! yet they know it not. The light shines, but they do not comprehend it. No stronger delusion can deceive the human mind than that which makes them believe that they are right, and that God accepts their works, when they are sinning against Him. They mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof. They suppose that they are rich, and have need of nothing, when they are poor, wretched, blind, and naked, and need all things.

There are some who profess to be Christ's followers, yet put forth no effort in spiritual things. In any worldly enterprise they put forth effort, and manifest ambition to accomplish their object, and bring about the desired end; but in the enterprise of everlasting life, where all is at stake, and their eternal happiness depends upon their success, they act as indifferent as though they were not moral agents, as though another were playing the game of life for them, and they had nothing to do but wait the result. Oh, what folly! what madness! If all will only manifest that degree of ambition, zeal, and earnestness for everlasting life that they manifest in their worldly pursuits, they will be victorious overcomers. Everyone, I saw, must obtain an experience for

himself, each must act well and faithfully his part in the game of life. Satan watches his opportunity to seize the precious graces when we are unguarded, and we shall have a severe conflict with the powers of darkness to retain them, or to regain a heavenly grace if through lack of watchfulness we lose it.

But I was shown that it is the privilege of Chris-There is too much tians to obtain comparing ourselves strength from among ourselves. The life God to hold every precious and spirit of Christ is the gift. Fervent and effectual only standard of excellence prayer will and perfection. be regarded in heaven. When the servants of Christ take the shield of faith for their defense, and the sword of the Spirit for war, there is danger in the enemy's camp, and something must be done. Persecution and reproach only wait for those who are endowed with power from on high to call them into action. When the truth in its simplicity and strength prevails among believers, and is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, it will be evident that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. The disciples

Young and old have a conflict, a warfare, before them. They should not sleep for a moment. A wily foe is constantly on the alert to lead them astray and overcome them. Believers in present truth must be as watchful as their enemy and manifest wisdom in resisting Satan. Will they do this? Will they persevere in this warfare? Will they be careful to depart from all iniquity? Christ is denied in many ways. We may deny Him by speaking contrary to truth, by speaking evil of others, by foolish talking or jest-

of Christ must be living examples of the

life and spirit of their Master.

ing, or by words that are idle. In these things we manifest but little shrewdness or wisdom. We make ourselves weak; our efforts are feeble to resist our great enemy, and we are conquered. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34), and

through lack of watchfulness we confess that Christ is not in us. Those who

hesitate to de-

vote themselves
unreservedly to
God make poor
work of following Christ.
They follow
Him at so great
a distance that
half the time they
do not really know
whether they are
following His footprints
or the footsteps of their

great enemy. Why are we so slow to give up our interest in the things of this world and take Christ for our only portion? Why should we wish to keep the friendship of our Lord's enemies, and follow their customs, and be led by their opinions? There must be an entire, unreserved surrender to God, a forsaking and turning away from the love of the world and earthly things, or we cannot be Christ's disciples.

The life and spirit of Christ is the only standard of excellence and perfection, and our only safe course is to follow His example. If we do this He will guide us by His counsel and afterward receive us to glory. We must strive diligently and be willing to suffer much in order to walk in the footsteps of our Redeemer. God is willing to work for us, to give us of His free Spirit, if we will strive for it, live for it, believe for it; and then we can walk in the light as He is in the light. We can feast upon His love and drink in of His rich fullness.

Testimonies, vol. 1, 405-409. LM

# The Wanderer's Prayer

n a cold, dreary evening in autumn, a small boy, poorly clad, yet cleanly and tidy, with a pack upon his back, knocked at the door of an old Quaker and inquired, "Is Mr. Lanman at home?"

"Yes."

The boy wished to see him, and was speedily ushered into the host's presence.

Friend Lanman was one of the wealthiest men in the country, and President of the railroad. The boy had come to see if he could obtain a situation [job] on the road. He said that he was an orphan—his mother had been dead only two months, and he was now a homeless wanderer. But the lad was too small for the filling of any place within the Quaker's gift [employment], and he was forced to deny him. Still he liked the looks of the boy, and said to him:

"You may stop in my house tonight, and tomorrow I will give the names of two or three good men of Philadelphia, to whom you may apply with assurance of kind reception at least. I am sorry that I have no employment for you."

Later in the evening the old Quaker went the rounds of his spacious mansion, lantern in hand, as was his custom, to see that all was safe, before retiring for the night. As he passed the door of the little chamber where the poor, wandering orphan had been placed to

sleep, he heard a voice. He stopped and listened, and distinguished the tones of a simple, earnest prayer. He bent his ear nearer, and heard these words from the boy's lips:

"Oh, good Father in heaven! help me to help myself. Watch over me as I watch over my own conduct, and care for me as my deeds merit! Bless the good man in whose house I am sheltered for the night, and spare him long, that he may continue sharing his bounty to the suffering ones.

Amen."

And the Quaker responded another amen as he moved on; and as he went, he meditated. The boy has a true idea of the duties of life. I verily think that the lad will be a treasure to his employer, he concluded.

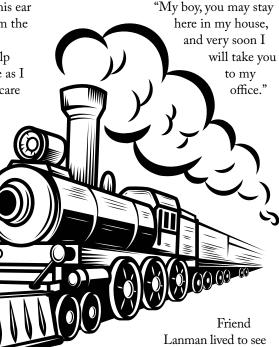
When the morning came, the old Quaker changed his mind concerning his answer to the boy's application.

"Who taught you to pray?" inquired Friend Lanman.

"My mother, sir," was the soft reply. And the rich brown eyes grew moist.

"And you will not forget your mother's counsels?"

"I cannot, for I know that my success in life is dependent upon them."



the poor boy he had adopted rise step by step until he finally assumed the responsible office which the failing guardian could no longer hold. And today there is no man more honored and respected by his friends, and none more feared by gamblers and spectators in irresponsible stock, than is the once poor wanderer—now president of the best managed and most productive railway in the United States.

Choice Stories for Children, selected by Earnest Lloyd, ©1993, 132, 133.



# Garments of Praise

"Put on garments of praise for a spirit of heaviness." Isaiah 61:3

art of Jesus' mission on earth was "To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3 NKJV).

With such instability in our world at present, many people struggle with a feeling of heaviness and sadness. Often our prayers begin with "I feel ...." Fill in the blank - it may be confused, lonely, discouraged!

Someone once suggested: "Don't start with 'I feel'; start with 'You are."

Often the root of our tumultuous feelings is that we forget who God is and our choice of sin is usually anxiety - a failure to remember that God is sovereign and that He is good. If we pray and say, "You are a good and all-powerful Father," we are simply reminded that He is just and that He does provide for our every need. So what then do we have to be anxious about?

In David's much-loved Psalm he said, "The LORD is my shepherd; ..." a declaration of who God is. "I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). This should be our response to this character trait of God.

It is when we take our eyes off ourselves and take a deep look at the eternal, unchanging One that we find our problems and feelings will lose their significance in light of all He is.

**Lord, You are great** – David asked, "Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle" (Psalm 24:8).

#### Lord, you are gentle and humble

- Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29 NKJV). Lord, you are near the brokenhearted - David tells us, "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit"

**Lord, you are tender** – "He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth" (Isaiah 42:2, 3 NIV).

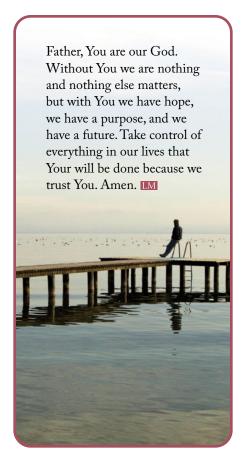
(Psalm 34:18).

The praise goes on and on. The Lord is our Provider, our Healer, our Righteous Judge, our Loving Bridegroom, our Creator.

So whatever trouble you are facing-look up! The great galaxy-creating God is merciful and gracious, He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Tell the great I AM who He is and remind your own fragile soul in the process.

Make this a constant discipline: whenever you feel overburdened and

discouraged, set your heart to adore God. You will find that burdens lift. He has exchanged the spirit of heaviness for garments of praise. And we can be sure that one day, wearing those very garments, we will dance for joy in the presence of our Savior.



#### Your Letters

"It has been some time since I've received *LandMarks*. ... Your subjects are so timely. I am 93 and looking for Jesus to come."

-LL, Wisconsin

"We are renewing our subscription to *LandMarks* and for someone else you might know who is unable to pay for their subscription."

-M&JS, Tennessee

"We so much enjoy the *LandMarks* magazine. Thank you to everyone on your team who help spread God's Word. May the Lord continue to bless each one of you."

**—E&SS, New York** 

#### **February Sermon of the Month**

#### The Time of Trouble

By John J. Grosboll

God allows His children to experience all sorts of trouble now to strengthen their faith and be prepared for the big time of trouble predicted before Jesus returns.

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

### From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

#### February 2021

Dear friend,

Our mission is to take God's last warning message of mercy to a lost and dying world. Soon the judgments of God are going to fall. "Oh, that God's people had a sense of the impending destruction of thousands of cities, now almost wholly given to idolatry! But many of those who are acquainted with the truth are busy about things here and there. Their first work is to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples prayed for it after the ascension of Christ." The General Conference Bulletin, March 30, 1903.

"The time is near when large cities will be swept away, and all should be warned of these coming judgments." *Evangelism*, 29.

"Not long ago a very impressive scene passed before me. I saw an immense ball of fire falling among some beautiful mansions, causing their instant destruction. I heard some one say, 'We knew that the judgments of God were coming upon the earth, but we did not know that they would come so soon.' Others said, 'You knew? Why then did you not tell us. We did not know.' On every side I heard such words spoken." *The Review and Herald*, November 24, 1904. Don't let this be your experience.

Consider these suggestions how you can warn your acquaintances who are in spiritual darkness about the great spiritual war that is in progress.

- I. On their birthday, Christmas, anniversary, or any other special day, give them a nicely wrapped gift of a book that will enlighten them about the signs of the times. This will show your regard for them. Place a note about how this book has been a blessing to you.
- 2. Give them a tract or booklet about the startling events taking place in the world today, where and how it is going to end.
- 3. Write a personal letter, mail or deliver personally, or email stating your care for them and share some of the information you have found about what is taking place in the world.
- 4. Some people are adept at talking to people on the phone or texting information to them.

Tell the Lord you want to witness to your associates so they can get ready for the day of final judgment. Ask what to write and how to approach them. The Lord is even more interested in their salvation and He is sure to answer such a prayer.

Your brother praying for a finished work,

John J. Grosboll

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

# Significant Developments in Panama

## An Increased Evangelist Effort

ver the past decade or so, Pastor Domingo Nunez, the Director of Outreach for Steps to Life Ministries, has been working very closely with brethren in the faith in Panama, especially in the City of David in Chiriquí, the province located on the southern border of Panama, adjacent to Costa Rica.

These faithful brethren have demonstrated sincere dedication for growing the Lord's work in Central America and have made the significant commitment of assuming responsibility for developing a training center and publishing program.

This program will oversee the development of a training program for gospel workers and a printing program to produce a Sabbath school quarterly, tracts, and small booklets for evangelistic outreach.

Pr. Domingo has been working with these brethren to put everything in place—logistics, protocols, and guidelines—to make this a successful endeavor for the honor and glory of God.

Please pray that this effort will be a success in Panama for the work of God in Central America.

To support this endeavor, please mark your offerings *Panama*.



# from the Mission Fields

# Coping with CWVID-19







**Left:** Opening song service - prepandemic. **Right:** Little flock Sabbath school.

#### December, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the Pacific Northwest. We live in a rather isolated area out here on the Olympic Peninsula. The county in which we live has only one road in and one road out. It is a comfortable and beautiful place to live where time travels at a much slower pace than the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, that road that goes in and out of our area also brought the coronavirus into our community. It has been my privilege to pastor our little church for the past eight years, but because of my wife's fragile health I have been unable to attend church since the end of March. Were I to bring this virus into our home it would likely be fatal to her.

I continued to prepare sermons for the Sabbath and one of the members would read it for church service. But eventually, since our meeting place is a rented hall, the COVID-19 restrictions for Washington state made it impossible for us to continue to meet together. We thought it would only be a matter of months before we could begin to have church services again, but as we are all aware, this virus soon became a pandemic. It has now been almost nine months since we have met together for a regular church service, although we have met for a couple of outdoor services before the weather got cold, as well as a garage service to celebrate communion.

In order to maintain the family bond of our church, I try to call every member of our church on Friday evening just to check in to see how everyone is doing and to share the blessings received during the week, as well as prayer concerns. I still prepare a sermon for each Sabbath in written form and email it out also on Friday evening.

It also goes out to a few members of the local conference church, as well as a couple of pastors that we love in the Philippines. This week Pastor Nunez called me to see how we were coping with the virus. He offered to link us up with Zoom and meet with us live via Internet on Sabbath morning. It is so wonderful to have support from Steps to Life that is sincere, loving, and personal.

As of this writing it appears that a vaccine is soon to be released to frontline caregivers, as well as high risk care facilities. There seems to be mixed emotions about the risk of vaccination, but I am sure that everyone is ready for this stressful time to come to an end. We are not sure what the new "normal" will be. It is not likely to be like it used to be. And, there are likely prophetic implications involved, as well, but that remains to be seen.

But each day brings us another day closer to the return of our beloved Saviour. And each day that passes is another reminder that our probation is one day closer to closing. May each of us take this time to reflect on where we stand in our spiritual journey. May we honestly examine ourselves, asking the Holy Spirit to bring clearly to our minds those wrongs that need to be righted, as well as those sins that do so easily beset us. May the Lord strengthen us in this battle, so that He can cleanse us from all unrighteousness and perfectly reproduce His character in us, so that He can come to take us home (see *Christ's Object Lessons*, 69). Until then, be safe, love one another, and pray without ceasing.

In His Love, All-ways,



Pastor Dallas Campbell
Little Flock Free Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Port Angeles, Washington





oneybees are approximately 11/2 inches long and have a short life span of approximately six weeks. These bees can be found throughout the world, living in colonies or cities called hives. They can be found in tree hollows, on limbs, under eaves of houses or in man-made containers. Bees have been called the most important insects in the world and have been studied extensively. More than 30,000 books and articles have been written about them and their culture. Their society works mutually for the welfare of the hive and is successful because of the bee's ability to communicate accurately and work cooperatively and efficiently with each other.

Honeybees are social creatures living in close proximity to each other. Sanitation squads are responsible for keeping the hive clean. After each one of the thousands of cells is cleaned, the squads discard all foreign material and varnish the walls.

To maintain the narrow range of temperature, 90° to 97° F, in which the larvae are nurtured, bees collect and store water. In order to cool the hive, the bees aggressively fan their wings, using the water as a source of evaporative cooling. The area is heated by the bees filling their bodies with excess honey, thus increasing their metabolism and creating excess heat to warm the brood area.

The population of each hive fluctuates between 15,000 and 80,000 and is controlled by nurse bees that "make"

a queen bee by feeding her larger amounts of select larvae. The number of eggs she lays determines whether a new queen is established. Thousands of eggs are laid and hatch within three days. The nurse bees then feed the larvae in the cells for six days making many trips to each cell daily.

Guard bees stationed at the entrance to the hive keep all intruders out. Each hive has a distinct odor, and the guards know immediately from sensors in their antenna if an approaching bee is not of its hive.

Bees work together to make their

hexagon shaped honeycomb nursery by consuming large amounts of honey and forming a chain with each bee clinging to the bee above it. This chain remains intact for about 24 hours while wax is formed on their abdomens. The wax is then removed, shaped and molded into the honeycomb, which is the strongest shape, uses the least material, and allows the most room for larva and honey storage. Man, despite his great intellect has not found a stronger structure than the hexagonal

Intricate and accurate communication is vital in the collection of nectar. Scout bees locate nectar and give samples to the other bees. Then the scout does his dance, typically in a figure eight pattern and a "waggle" from the center of his

shape of the little bee's honeycomb.

body. The vigor, sound and vibration of the waggle inform the other bees about the nectar and its location. If the bee moves north in its dance, the source is straight toward the sun. If the dance is 45 degrees left of north, the source is 45 degrees left of the sun.

Honeybees are wonderfully complex creatures. Man's creation shows even more complexity than the honeybee that was spoken into existence. When God formed man, He stooped down and formed him out of the dust of the

earth with His own hands and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Oh what

praise He deserves for His love of His creation. "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:4).

Adapted from the Moody Institute of Science DVD, City of Bees and from Character Sketches, Volume One, Living Lessons on Loyalty.



"LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?" "... He who swears to his own hurt and

does not change." Psalm 15:1, 4 NKJV



n every business transaction be rigidly honest. However tempted, never deceive or prevaricate in the least matter. At times a natural impulse may bring temptation to diverge from the straightforward path of honesty, but do not vary one hairsbreadth. If in any matter you make a statement as to what you will do, and afterward find that you have favored others to your own loss, do not vary a hairsbreadth from principle. Carry out your agreement. By seeking to change your plans you would show that you could not be depended on. And should you draw back in little transactions, you would draw back in larger ones. Under such circumstances some are tempted to deceive, saying, I was not understood. My words have been taken to mean more than I intended. The fact is, they meant just what they

said, but lost the good impulse, and then wanted to draw back from their agreement, lest it prove a loss to them. The Lord requires us to do justice, to love mercy, and truth, and righteousness." Child Guidance, 154.

"The obligation to which one's word is pledged—if it does not bind him to perform a wrong act—should be held sacred. No consideration of gain, of revenge, or of self-interest can in any way affect the inviolability of an oath or pledge. 'Lying lips are abomination to the Lord' (Proverbs 12:22). He that 'shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,' and 'stand in His holy place,' is 'he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not' (Psalms 24:3; 15:4)." Patriarchs and Prophets, 506.

"Better not to vow than to vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:5 NKJV).







# Your Brain Thrives on Optimism

hen the brain is subjected to a heavy dose of sadness, anxiety, loneliness or depression, our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health is impaired. Trauma takes a toll on our ability to function, even simple tasks such as brushing our teeth or getting dressed can feel overwhelming.

Given the rise of negativity in our world today, it's easy to feel drawn into that cave of darkness. But prolonged bouts of negative thoughts and emotions can absolutely threaten our overall health. Recent studies have even shown how a broken heart can contribute to actual heart disease and even cancer.

## **Understanding the Brain's Negativity Bias**

After many years of research and interviews, I had amassed a stockpile of information on the human brain, including learning about the brain's "negativity bias." This refers to the brain's predilection [a preference or bias in favor of something] for retaining and recycling negative experiences over positive ones. Once we are caught up in negative thoughts and images, they are self-perpetuating to an alarming degree because of negativity predilection.

Research has shown that out of the 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts we have per day, 80 percent are negative. Once I learned this information, I understood why painful memories from my childhood could be retrieved with photographic detail, whereas happy times were more generic memories. Even minor issues such as critical remarks tend to stick with us.

## The Brilliant Benefits of an Optimistic Mindset

Many people believe that they are stuck with their thoughts. That old familiar expression, *you can't teach an old dog new tricks*, has been disproven by science. Through neuroplasticity or brain plasticity, we know that the brain can change at any age or stage of life.

When the brain consciously engages in new ways of thinking, it forms new neural pathways and connections. Even after traumatic events, the brain has the capacity to generate new neurons. Neuroplasticity is proof that the brain thrives on absorbing new information. Another remarkable fact is that our brains have the ability to delete neural pathways that are no longer useful through a process called synaptic pruning. With time and repetition, the brain can release toxic thoughts and develop new ways of thinking and feeling.

#### **The Hazards of a Negative Mindset**

Abundant research correlates a negative frame of mind with harmful psychological and physiological symptoms. A negative mindset can actually change the physical structure of your brain. The nervous system

responds through inflammation and oxygen restriction. The hippocampus, or memory part of our brain, releases cortisol, which can inhibit the growth of new neurons and, thereby, shrink the brain. Other parts of the brain are also impacted, leading to lack of focus and concentration, loss of energy, reduced productivity, memory loss, disinterest, diminished sexual drive, When irritability, poor the brain sleep patterns, loss of appetite, lethargy and negativity, our confusion. physical and spiritual Physical symptoms also accomhealth is impaired.

Physical symptoms also accompany a negative or pessimistic mindset: headaches, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, chronic pain, joint tenderness, stomach aches, indigestion, nausea, cramping, chronic fatigue, problems with the digestive system, weight gain and osteoporosis.

These symptoms are far too serious to not treat medically. How many doctors, however, understand enough about the mind-body connection to prescribe intensive, even radical, optimistic practices to replace habitually negative thoughts?

## Retrain Your Brain to Think Optimistically

You make thousands of decisions every day. Why not shift your attitude by retraining your brain? The wonderful mental, educational, physical and spiritual benefits of a cheery attitude may inspire you to give optimism a try!

Optimists approach each day with fervor, even if they are aware of potential roadblocks. A few of the wonderful attributes include the following:



## Psychological, Emotional and Spiritual Benefits

- Hopefulness
- Resilience
- Heightened cognitive functioning
- Innovative/creative thoughts
- Increased focus and productivity
- Ability to manage stress
- · Clarity of thought
- Heightened problem-solving capacity/ solutions-oriented
- Higher levels of energy
- Flexibility
- Motivation
- Compassion
- Gratitude
- Openness to experiences
- Desire to self-actualize
- Trustworthiness
- · Tenacity and persistence
- Ability to flip the script from negative to positive
- Healthy lifestyle choices, including nutrition and exercise

#### **Physiological Benefits**

- Boosted immune system
- Enhanced ability to heal from illness and surgery
- Improved oxygen flow
- Lowered cortisol secretion
- Long-term sustenance and longevity
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduced risk of hypertension
- Reduced cardiovascular disease
- Improved cholesterol
- Lower risk of dementia/Alzheimer's

These physiological health benefits are ones that have been studied through research. Every day there is new and exciting information on how the brain changes with intentional, focused optimistic thinking.

Unless you know what you are thinking, how can you change? Pay attention to what you are thinking and how it is affecting you, without forcing the thoughts away.

Make a habit to "take your temperature" throughout the day to adjust your thinking. Changing your brain is a conscious and

conscientious process. In the beginning, it might feel difficult; however, with time and repetition, your brain will develop new neural pathways. Just as you learned to brush your teeth and tie your shoes, your positive thoughts will, with time, become second nature.

#### **Be Mindful of Negative Triggers**

A trigger is a stimulus that evokes a particular thought or emotion from the past. A trigger can derail the best of intentions. This can be a specific word, song, location, person, season, or any cue in the environment that induces a specific feeling within you. As you gain familiarity with the issues that cause you distress, you will be able to adjust them.

#### **Do the Opposite**

There are instances when it is in our best interest to simply stop thinking and behaving in a manner that causes distress. Stop, pause, take a deep breath, and eliminate those negative thoughts as soon as they appear.

Challenge yourself to spring into an optimistic mindset. The extraordinary life force will enable you to find joy in your life and also afford you the numerous health benefits along the way.

When you reflect upon all of the meaningful benefits of an optimistic mindset, I think you will agree that it is well worth investing the time to retrain your brain.

Thrive, Anne Boudreau, vol. 27, 53, 54.

"Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray." *The Ministry of Healing*, 251.

"Let your thoughts be directed to the evidences of the great love of God for you." Ibid., 286.

"Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute ... dwell on these things" (2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV; Philippians 4:8 NASB).

# The Law Magnified

By John J. Grosboll

ost people who have read the first two books of the Bible know of a famous mountain called Mount Sinai where the ten commandments were spoken and written by the finger of God on tables of stone.



The Sermon on

the Mount has been

called the Decalogue of

the New Testament or the

Mount Sinai of the New

Testament.

In Isaiah 42:21 KJV it is predicted concerning the Messiah, "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." In other words, the law would be seen as if viewed under a magnifying glass. Jesus did that very thing when He spoke the Sermon on the Mount.

This sermon has been called the Decalogue of the New Testament or the Mount

Sinai of the New Testament,

because in this sermon delivered by Jesus we look at the law

under the magnifying glass of the Lawgiver to understand in detail the true spirit and nature of the law of God.

Jesus' sermon, found in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, is a statement of eternal truths by Him who is the truth and therefore the author of all truth. It is a proclamation of the eternal realities of the kingdom of heaven.

This sermon has been studied because of its matchless beauty, but more important than the beauty of it are the basic, fundamental principles that it contains. It is an unabridged edition of the law and contains a summary of all truth and has been called a miniature Bible. It is made up of quotations and restatements of the truths of the Old Testament or restatements of its truths. It seems that Jesus selected the most priceless gems out of the writings of all the prophets and set them down in a way that even children can easily understand.

This sermon has also been appropriately called Christ's inaugural address because in it, Jesus enunciated the principles which are to control the administration of His eternal kingdom, the kingdom of glory. In His sermon, Jesus outlines the qualifications for heavenly citizenship. He points out very clearly who will be in heaven and who will not be there, laying down the conditions by which we can expect to enter the kingdom of heaven. All the citizens of the heavenly kingdom will live in harmony with these eternal principles.

Consider the setting of this sermon and the significance of the occasion, because this was the very same day when Jesus ordained His twelve disciples as the twelve apostles (see Luke 6). Jesus had spent the entire night before in prayer, and in the morning He had selected and ordained the twelve apostles who were to constitute a cabinet to help Him administer the affairs of this spiritual kingdom. They were to be His special ministers or ambassadors.

This particular sermon was not only the greatest of all sermons, but it was preached to a very large audience, a very interesting audience that the Bible says was composed of people from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond Jordan (Matthew 4:25).

The congregation that listened to this sermon when it was first preached was made up of all classes of men, women, and children, representing every condition of life. There were proud Pharisees there as well as poor fishermen. There were rich rulers from the palace and poor peasants. There were the wise and there were those who were uneducated and ignorant. There were those who were believers and there were those who were doubters. There were many races of men and various religious creeds represented in the audience. So, it was a cross section of humanity listening to this sermon and all had gathered there because they had feelings of great expectancy. This gathering had a special atmosphere because the fame of Jesus had filled the people with new hopes and aspirations.

The people hoped that He was the Messiah and they expected Him on this occasion to proclaim His mission as the Messiah, to make an announcement regarding the setting up of His kingdom. In fact, they were looking for the least excuse to proclaim and crown Him king. Jesus' disciples shared these feelings of expectancy. Their thoughts were also filled with visions of future glory, power, and wealth, because they believed that the nation of Israel would become the central power of the world and that they would be the center of a world-wide kingdom.

The expectation of His audience gave to Jesus the subject or the theme for His sermon, which was the kingdom of heaven. It was His purpose to correct the popular



conception concerning the nature of His kingdom that He had come to establish, for the conception that the people had formed completely unfitted them to receive Him and His teachings. The only kingdom that the Jews seemed to know anything about was an earthly temporal kingdom. The disciples had the same conception of Christ's mission. In fact, they never lost it during the whole time He was on earth until after Pentecost when they finally got their thinking partially straightened out.

There is danger today that modern Israel, the Christians of today, will become so thrilled over the prospects of the coming kingdom of glory to be established at the Second Advent of Christ that they will lose sight of the spiritual phase of His kingdom, which must be first established in the individual's heart.

None of us can ever enter the kingdom of glory until the kingdom of grace has entered our heart. Until the first phase of the kingdom of heaven is accomplished in our lives, we can never enter into the second phase. The first phase of God's kingdom is the kingdom of grace that Jesus established by dying on the cross. The second phase of

God's kingdom will be the kingdom of glory that will be established when He comes again.

The Sermon on the Mount, then, is a summary of the Bible. The beatitudes constitute a prologue to Jesus' sermon and like the ten commandments or Lord's prayer, they are of universal application. They appeal and apply to all races and to all ages.

One time in India, there was a large crowd who gathered at a railway station to see Mahatma Ghandi and to hear him speak. After greeting the people, he opened a New Testament and he read to them the beatitudes and then he said, "This is my message to you. Act upon it." That was all the speech he made on that occasion, but that was enough.

The eight beatitudes constitute a ladder, an advancing road of Christian experience. They contain natural and logical steps in spiritual growth and development that take us into the kingdom of God. The word *beatitude* comes from a Latin word which means *blessed* or *happy*. So the beatitude ladder is a blessed ladder – a blessed or happy experience. It is similar or synonymous with the words *consecrated*,

or hallowed, or happy, or sacred, or holy. Only a consecrated, holy people can enter the kingdom of heaven. And the journey must be made by way of the beatitude ladder. You start on the first rung, and then advance up the road. Each beatitude leads to an advanced step. It is called the way of holiness (Isaiah 35) and it leads eventually to Zion. The result is that those who travel this ladder will obtain joy and gladness. They will return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing will flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

This way, however, as Jesus pointed out in His sermon, is a narrow way. In fact, Jesus said that there will be few people compared to the world population who find it. The great majority will go down a broad way which leads to destruction. (See Matthew 7:14.)

It is a narrow way that leads to eternal life and Jesus points out exactly what that way is. It excludes all evil and all evil doers. It is a path, a narrow way, for the righteous or the just and it has ever-increasing illumination until those who walk in it reach the perfect day of spiritual light and experience.



Blessed is a word that Jesus used many times in His Sermon on the Mount. This does not refer alone to joy and happiness, but to that higher joy which is the result of divine favor. What Jesus came to give us is infinitely greater than that which we had been seeking for ourselves.

One of the first things that we notice when we read the beatitudes is that true happiness is the result of a holy character rather than that of outward conditions or circumstances. Remember, the word translated blessed could be translated happy. It says in Matthew 5:2, 3, "Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." God has always had a special regard for the poor in this world. Notice what the mother of Jesus said in Luke 1:46, 47: "And Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant." The mother of Jesus and His earthly father, were poor people.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Friend, until we recognize our need and acknowledge how spiritually poor we are, we will never come to the Lord for the help that we need. In verses 52 and 53 Mary said, "He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and ex-

alted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty."

The rich went away empty because they didn't feel need of anything. One of the first requirements to be saved is that you feel your need of salvation. As long as you are proud and self-sufficient, there's not very much that God can do for you. But when you feel your need and ask for His help, the Holy Spirit will come into your life and start to recreate within you a new heart and a new spirit.

In the second beatitude Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5:4). We may wonder how a person can be happy if they are mourning.

But notice what Paul wrote: "Even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:8, 9, first part). Repentance is sorrow for sin and turning away from it. This concept is misunderstood today. Those who are not sorry enough to turn away from their sin have not yet really repented.

"I [Paul] rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (verses 9, 10).

The difference is that people in this world are sorry when they get caught in their sins, but godly sorrow is when a person is sorry because they have committed the sin and realize that they have done something against their heavenly Father and have done something that caused Jesus Christ to go to the cross. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. When you understand the consequence of sin and the price Jesus Christ paid for your sin, you will never be able to enjoy sin again. You will then have godly sorrow for sin and will not want to have anything to do with it. You will not just be sorry that you got caught.

"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (verse II). There are many people today who have never been sorry for their sins. They have never really mourned or repented for their sins, and yet, they somehow think they are going to the kingdom of heaven.

This is a second step in the plan of salvation. Those who walk up the narrow road must not only feel their need, but must come to the place where they mourn, repent for their sins. But they do not remain there, for there is another step. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Now the meek people do not inherit the earth as it is today. Today, we live in a world that is controlled by force, a world where the strongest become the richest and the most powerful. But the time is coming when there will no longer be proud people. Malachi 4:1 says, "'Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all



who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,' says the Lord of hosts."

The day is coming when the meek will inherit the earth. A meek person is one who is gentle and humble.

Jesus does not ask of us anything that He has not demonstrated Himself in His own life. He says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew II:28–30).

Jesus wants to deliver us from all pride and from all self-importance. He wants to help us to become meek. Through His Holy Spirit He wants to recreate within us a new heart and a new spirit so that we will be gentle, meek, and humble as He is. Then we will be in a spiritual condition, where, when the world is made again and the kingdom of glory is set up, we will be able to inhabit the earth made new.

The fourth beatitude says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? In

Ist John, the apostle talks about how righteousness defines and demonstrates which people are really children of God and which people are children of the devil. It is not our profession that determines whose children we are; it's the life we live. Notice what John says in I John 3:4–Io, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother." However wicked a person may have been, if they hunger and thirst for righteousness and desire to be recreated and born again, the Lord Jesus promises that their desire will be filled and they will be satisfied.

Jesus then said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). James says that there will be no mercy for the person that doesn't show mercy (James 2:13). Are you merciful? That is the next step in the road that leads to heaven.

Friend, follow these beatitudes that will take you up the narrow road that leads to the kingdom of heaven. If you are willing to walk that narrow road, when Jesus comes back your journey to the kingdom of heaven will be complete. If that is what you want, if that is what you choose, that will be your destiny.

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

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# The Journey Around Edom

#### **Key Text**

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14).

Study Help: Patriarchs and Prophets, 422, 432.

#### Introduction

"The brazen serpent was uplifted in the wilderness that those who looked in faith might be made whole. In like manner God sends a restoring, healing message to men, calling upon them to look away from man and earthly things, and place their trust in God." Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, 1116.

# **Sunday**

#### 1 PASSAGE THROUGH EDOM REFUSED

ı.a.	What message did Moses send to the king of Edom, and what answer was received? Numbers 20:14–18.				
	te: "The Edomites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac,				

Note: "The Edomites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac, and for the sake of these His servants, God had shown favor to the children of Esau. He had given them Mount Seir for a possession, and they were not to be disturbed unless by their sins they should place themselves beyond the reach of His mercy." Patriarchs and Prophets, 423.

1.b. How did the leaders of Israel renew their appeal to the king of Edom, and what was his answer? Numbers 20:19, 20. What failure on the part of the people gave Satan a decided advantage in this negative experience?

**Note:** "The Israelites did not act promptly upon God's word, and while they were complaining and murmuring, the golden opportunity passed. When they were at last ready to present their request to the king, it was refused." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 423.

# Monday

#### **2 THE DEATH OF AARON**

2.a. Instead of going through the land of Edom, what route did the children of Israel take? Numbers 20:21 22; 21:4.			
2.b. When Israel came to Mount Hor, what did the Lor say to Moses and Aaron? Numbers 20:23–26.	d		
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Note: "Many years Moses and Aaron had stood side by side in their cares and labors. Together they had breasted unnumbered dangers, and had shared together the signal blessing of God; but the time was at hand when they must be separated. They moved on very slowly, for every moment in each other's society was precious. The ascent was steep and toilsome; and a they often paused to rest, they communed together of the pass and the future No rebellious feelings found a place in their hearts, no expression of murmuring escaped their lips; yet a solemn sadness rested upon their countenances as they remembered what had debarred them from the inheritance of their fathers." <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , 425.  2.c. What solemnity attended the transfer of the high-priestly responsibilities for Aaron to Eleazar, and how long did Israel mourn for Aaron? Number 20:27–29.	t r n-		
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Note: "With deep sorrow Moses removed from Aaron the holy vestments, and placed them upon Eleazar, who thus became his successor by divine appointment. For his sin at Kadesh, Aaron was denied the privilege of officiating as God's high priest in Canaan—of offering the first sacrifice in the goodly land, and thus consecrating the inheritance of Israel. Moses was to continue to bear his burden in leading the people to the very borders of Canaan. He was to come within sight of the Promised Land, but was not to enter it. Had these servants of God, when they stood before the rock at Kadesh, borne unmurmuringly the test there brought upon them, how different would have been their future! A wrong act can never be undone. It may be that the work of a lifetime will not recover what has been lost in a single moment of temptation or even thoughtlessness." Patriarchs and Prophets, 426.

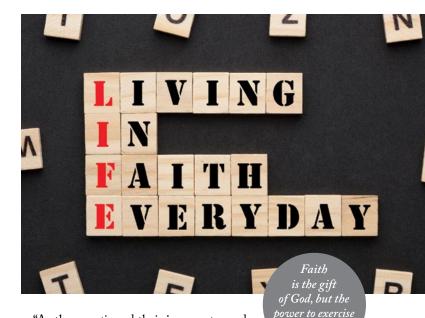
# Tuesday 3 DEFEAT OF KING ARAD

3.a. Who attacked Israel soon after the death of Aaron,				
and what was the result? Numbers 21:1–3.				
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**Note:** "Soon after leaving Mount Hor the Israelites suffered defeat in an engagement with Arad, one of the Canaanite kings. But as they earnestly sought help from God, divine aid was granted them, and their enemies were routed. This victory, instead of inspiring gratitude and leading the people to feel their dependence upon God, made them boastful and self-confident." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 427, 428.

3.b. Instead of being thankful to the Lord, into what practice did the people again relapse? Numbers 21:4, *last part*, 5.

**Note:** "Soon they fell into the old habit of murmuring. They were now dissatisfied because the armies of Israel had not been permitted to advance upon Canaan immediately after their rebellion at the report of the spies nearly forty years before. They pronounced their long sojourn in the wilderness an unnecessary delay, reasoning that they might have conquered their enemies as easily heretofore as now.



"As they continued their journey toward it is ours. the south, their route lay through a hot, sandy valley, destitute of shade or vegetation. The way seemed long and difficult, and they suffered from weariness and thirst. Again they failed to endure the test of their faith and patience. By continually dwelling on the dark side of their experiences, they separated themselves farther and farther from God. They lost sight of the fact that but for their murmuring when the water ceased at Kadesh, they would have been spared the journey around Edom. God had purposed better things for them. Their hearts should have been filled with gratitude to Him that He had punished their sin so lightly. But instead of this, they flattered themselves that if God and Moses had not interfered, they might now have been in possession of the Promised Land. After bringing trouble upon themselves, making their lot altogether harder than God designed, they charged all their misfortunes upon Him. Thus they cherished bitter thoughts concerning His dealings with them, and finally they became discontented with everything. Egypt looked brighter and more desirable than liberty and the land to which God was leading them." Patriarchs and Prophets, 428.

# Wednesday

#### **4 STUNG BY THE SERPENTS**

4.a	ple, what did the Lord permit to come into the camp of Israel? Numbers 21:6.					

**Note:** "Because they had been shielded by divine power they had not realized the countless dangers by which they were continually surrounded. In their ingratitude and unbelief they had anticipated death, and now the Lord permitted death to come upon them. The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called fiery serpents, on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting, it causing violent inflammation and speedy death. As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures.

"Now there was terror and confusion throughout the encampment. In almost every tent were the dying or the dead. None were secure. Often the silence of night was broken by piercing cries that told of fresh victims. All were busy in ministering to the sufferers, or with agonizing care endeavoring to protect those who were not yet stricken. No murmuring now escaped their lips. When compared with the present suffering, their former difficulties and trials seemed unworthy of a thought." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 429.

4.b. What did the people do when they realized that the Lord was punishing them for their rebellious behavior, and what remedy was provided? Numbers 21:7–9.

**Note:** "Moses was divinely commanded to make a serpent of brass resembling the living ones, and to elevate it among the people. To this, all who had been bitten were to look, and they would find relief. ...

"The people well knew that there was no power in the serpent of brass to cause such a change in those who looked upon it. The healing virtue was from God alone. In His wisdom He chose this way of displaying His power. By this simple means the people were made to realize that this affliction had been brought upon them by their sins. They were also assured that while obeying God they had no reason to fear, for He would preserve them." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 430.

# Thursday 5 THE REMEDY FOR SIN

5.a. Of whom was the brazen serpent a type? John 3:14, 15.

**Note:** "The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God's word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. Unlike the inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 431.

5.b. By whom and how only can we be healed? Psalm

	103:2, 3; 1	03:2, 3; 1 Peter 2:21, 24.				
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**Note:** "While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we are not to yield to discouragement, but rely upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Look and live. Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him. Though millions who need to be healed will reject His offered mercy, not one who trusts in His merits will be left to perish." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 432.

"While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. 'Him that cometh to Me,' says Christ, 'I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37). But we must come to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours." Ibid., 431.

# **Friday**

#### PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why were the Edomites not destroyed at this time?
- 2 What can we learn from the experience of Moses and Aaron about the far-reaching consequences of just one action?
- What thought pattern leads to murmuring? How can we avoid this?
- What simple remedy was provided for the snake bites? Where was the healing virtue in the brass serpent?
- Where do we need to look to be saved from sin? What is involved in looking?

March 7 - 13, 2021

# Victory over Sihon and Og

#### **Key Text**

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

**Study Help:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 433–437.

#### Introduction

"The calm faith of their leader inspired the people with confidence in God. They trusted all to His omnipotent arm, and He did not fail them. Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord's host." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 436.

### Sunday

#### 1 ISRAEL THREATENED WITH DESTRUCTION

ı.a.	What directions did the Israelites receive concerning the Moabites and the Ammonites? Deuteronomy
	2:9, 19.
1.b.	When Israel reached the land of the Amorites, what message did Moses send to Sihon, their king, and what was his answer? Deuteronomy 2:26–30; Numbers 21:21–23.

**Note:** "The answer [of Sihon] was a decided refusal, and all the hosts of the Amorites were summoned to oppose the progress of the invaders. This formidable army struck terror to the Israelites, who were poorly prepared for an encounter with well-armed and well-disciplined forces. So

far as skill in warfare was concerned, their enemies had the advantage. To all human appearance, a speedy end would be made of Israel.

"But Moses kept his gaze fixed upon the cloudy pillar, and encouraged the people with the thought that the token of God's presence was still with them. At the same time he directed them to do all that human power could do in preparing for war. Their enemies were eager for battle, and confident that they would blot out the unprepared Israelites from the land." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 433, 434.

### **Monday**

#### **2 THE AMORITES ARE CONQUERED**

2.a.	What in	struction	came fro	m the	Possessor	of all
	lands to	the leader	of Israel	? Deut	teronomy	2:31.

2.b. What had been prophesied concerning the Amorites in the time of Abraham? Genesis 15:16.

Note: "Although the Amorites were idolaters, whose life was justly forfeited by their great wickedness, God spared them four hundred years to give them unmistakable evidence that He was the only true God, the Maker of heaven and earth. All His wonders in bringing Israel from Egypt were known to them. Sufficient evidence was given; they might have known the truth, had they been willing to turn from their idolatry and licentiousness. But they rejected the light and clung to their idols.

"When the Lord brought His people a second time to the borders of Canaan, additional evidence of His power was granted to those heathen nations. They saw that God was with Israel in the victory gained over King Arad and the Canaanites, and in the miracle wrought to save those who were perishing from the sting of the serpents. ... In all their journeyings and encampments, past the land of Edom, of Moab and Ammon, they had shown no hostility, and had done no injury to the people or their possessions. On reaching the border of the Amorites, Israel had asked permission only to travel directly through the country, promising to observe the same rules that had governed their intercourse with other nations. When the Amorite king refused this courteous solicitation, and defiantly gathered his hosts for battle, their cup of iniquity was full, and God would now exercise His power for their overthrow." Patriarchs and Prophets, 434, 435.

2.c. What was the result of the battle? Deuteronomy 2:32-35; Numbers 21:24.	sition to the command of God. They had gone out without Moses, God's appointed leader, without the cloudy pillar, the symbol of the divine presence, and without the ark. But now Moses was with them, strengthening their hearts with words of hope and faith; the Son of God, enshrined in the cloudy pillar, led the way; and the sacred ark accompanied the host." <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , 437.
Note: "The Israelites crossed the river Arnon and advanced upon the foe. An engagement took place, in which the armies of Israel were victorious; and, following up the advantage gained, they were soon in possession of the country of the Amorites. It was the Captain of the Lord's host who vanquished the enemies of His people; and He would have done the same thirty-eight years before had Israel trusted in Him." <i>Patriarchs</i>	3.c. Of what can we be confident as we journey through life on this earth? Philippians 1:6.
Tuesday 3 HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD 3.a. How does David aptly describe the attitude of those who trust the Lord when facing enemies? Psalm 112:7, 8.	Note: "Those who live amid the perils of the last days may realize that just as at the beginning of their experience the truth united them to the Saviour, so He who is the author and finisher of their faith will perfect the work He has begun for them. God is faithful, by whom we are called to fellowship with His Son. As men and women cooperate with God in doing the work He has given them, they go forward from strength to greater strength. As they exercise simple faith, believing day by day that God will not fail to establish them in Christ, God says to them as He did to ancient Israel: 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth' (Deuteronomy 7:6)." Our High Calling, 24.
	Wednesday
<b>Note:</b> "Help and grace sufficient for every circumstance are promised by Him whose word is truth. His everlasting arms	4 OG, KING OF BASHAN, IS CONQUERED
encircle the soul that turns to Him for aid. In His care we may rest safely, saying, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee' (Psalm 56:3). To all who put their trust in Him, God will fulfill His promise." <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> , 467.	4.a. What was the next target of the Israelites after the victory over Sihon? Deuteronomy 3:1. Describe the land and the people of Bashan.
3.b. What could Moses confidently say after conquering Sihon, king of Heshbon? Deuteronomy 2:36. How were the people inspired?	
Note: "The Hebrews now remembered how once before, when their forces had gone to battle, they had been routed,	Note: "Filled with hope and courage, the army of Israel eagerly pressed forward, and, still journeying northward, they soon reached a country that might well test their courage and their faith in God. Before them lay the powerful and populous kingdom of Bashan, crowded with great stone cities that to this day excite the wonder of the world—'threescore cities with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many'

(Deuteronomy 3:4, 5)." Patriarchs and Prophets, 435.

and thousands slain. But they had then gone in direct oppo-

4.b. What message did the Lord send to Moses concerning Og and his army, and what was the result of the battle? Numbers 21:34, 35; Deuteronomy 3:2–7.	<b>Note:</b> "In comparison with the millions of the world, God's people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority." <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> , 590.  "Is not God a majority? If we are on the side of the God who made the heaven and the earth, are we not on the side of the majority? We have the angels that excel in strength on our side." <i>Temperance</i> , 258.
Note: "Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord's host. The Lord led the army; the Lord discomfited the enemy; the Lord conquered in behalf of Israel. The giant king and his army were destroyed, and the Israelites soon took possession of the whole country. Thus was blotted from the earth that strange people who had given themselves up to iniquity and abominable idolatry." Patriarchs and Prophets, 436.  4.c. How did the Lord help His people in the war against the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og? Joshua 24:12. How did the new generation of Israelites see the	5.b. What lesson does this event teach us? Psalm 37:1–3, 5.
mistake of their fathers?	Note: "This experience has a lesson for us. The mighty God of Israel is our God. In Him we may trust, and if we obey His requirements He will work for us in as signal a manner as He did for His ancient people. Everyone who seeks to follow the path of duty will at times be assailed by doubt and unbelief.
Note: "In the conquest of Gilead and Bashan there were many who recalled the events which nearly forty years before had, in Kadesh, doomed Israel to the long desert wandering. They saw that the report of the spies concerning the Promised Land was in many respects correct. The cities were walled and very great, and were inhabited by giants, in comparison with whom the Hebrews were mere pygmies. But they could now see that the	The way will sometimes be so barred by obstacles, apparently insurmountable, as to dishearten those who will yield to discouragement; but God is saying to such, Go forward. Do your duty at any cost. The difficulties that seem so formidable, that fill your soul with dread, will vanish as you move forward in the path of obedience, humbly trusting in God." <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , 437.
fatal mistake of their fathers had been in distrusting the power of God. This alone had prevented them from at once entering	Friday
the goodly land." Patriarchs and Prophets, 436.	PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS
Thursday	In preparing to fight against the Amorites, how did Israel show a faith that works?
5 I ESCONS EOD IIS	2 Why does God still spare the wicked inhabitants of

# **5 LESSONS FOR US**

5.a. What can we learn when seeing how Israel triumphed over their enemies? Exodus 17:11-13; Joshua 10:12-14.

Just as God wanted to establish Israel in Canaan, in what does He want to establish us today? What does this mean?

What did the next generation of Israelites realize about the focus of their fathers?

this world today?

What will happen when we do our duty regardless of the obstacles in our way?

March 14 - 20, 2021

# Apostasy at the Jordan

#### **Key Text**

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

Study Help: Patriarchs and Prophets, 453-461.

#### Introduction

"It is the special work of Satan in these last days to take possession of the minds of youth, to corrupt the thoughts and inflame the passions; for he knows that by so doing he can lead to impure actions, and thus all the noble faculties of the mind will become debased." *Child Guidance*, 440.

# **Sunday**

#### 1 GOD'S FAVOR IS OUR PROTECTION

- 1.a. What did Balak, king of Moab, seek to do? Why? Numbers 22:2, 3, 5-7.
- 1.b. Why couldn't Balaam curse Israel? Numbers 22:38; 23:8.
- 1.c. What fact about the spiritual state of Israel was another reason why they couldn't be cursed? Numbers 23:21. How is this so encouraging for us?

**Note:** "While they were under the divine protection, no people or nation, though aided by all the power of Satan, should be able to prevail against them. All the world should wonder at

the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people—that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel was to be an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God's people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 449.

### **Monday**

#### 2 BLESSINGS AND PROPHETIC PROMISES

- 2.a. What blessings did God inspire Balaam to pronounce upon Israel? First blessing: Numbers 23:7–10. Second blessing: Verses 18–24. Third blessing: Chapter 24:5–9.
- 2.b. What prophecy did Balaam then utter about Israel and the coming Messiah? Numbers 24:15–17.

**Note:** "The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism. As [the] magi studied the starry heavens, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, they beheld the glory of the Creator. Seeking clearer knowledge, they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures. In their own land were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher. Balaam belonged to the magicians, though at one time a prophet of God; by the Holy Spirit he had foretold the prosperity of Israel and the appearing of the Messiah; and his prophecies had been handed down by tradition from century to century. But in the Old Testament the Saviour's advent was more clearly revealed." *The Desire of Ages*, 59, 60.

2.c. What did Balaam prophesy about the fate of the nations then dwelling in the Promised Land? Numbers 24:17–23.

**Note:** "God gives nations a certain time of probation. He sends light and evidence, that, if received, will save them, but if refused as the Jews refused light, indignation and punishment will fall upon them. If men refuse to be benefited, and choose darkness rather than light, they will reap the results of their choice." "Ellen G. White Comments," *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1143, 1144.

"With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.

"The prophet [Ezekiel], looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of heaven's blessings have been given them, but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 208, 209.

### **Tuesday**

#### 3 THE CURSE CAUSELESS SHALL NOT COME

- 3.a. With what lures did Satan seek to entrap the children of Israel as they were just about to enter the Promised Land? Numbers 25:1.
- 3.b. What did the Moabites do to allure Israel still further away from God? Numbers 25:2, 3.

Note: "At Balaam's suggestion, a grand festival in honor of their gods was appointed by the king of Moab, and it was secretly arranged that Balaam should induce the Israelites to attend. He was regarded by them as a prophet of God, and hence had little difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Great numbers of the people joined him in witnessing the festivities. They ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, and allured by the beauty of heathen vestals, they cast off their fealty to Jehovah. As they united in mirth and feasting, indulgence in wine beclouded their senses and broke down the barriers of self-control. Passion had full sway; and having defiled their

consciences by lewdness, they were persuaded to bow down to idols. They offered sacrifice upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites.

"It was not long before the poison had spread, like a deadly infection, through the camp of Israel. Those who would have conquered their enemies in battle were overcome by the wiles of heathen women. The people seemed to be infatuated. The rulers and the leading men were among the first to transgress, and so many of the people were guilty that the apostasy became national. 'Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor' (Numbers 25:3, first part)." Patriarchs and Prophets, 454.

3.c. What swift punishment did God send upon the disobedient? Why? Numbers 25:4, 5, 9.

**Note:** "A terrible pestilence broke out in the camp, to which tens of thousands speedily fell a prey. God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God's abhorrence of their sin and the terror of His wrath against them." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 455.

# Wednesday

#### **4 THE SNARE OF SENSUALITY**

4.a. What sins are among the works of sinful human nature? Galatians 5:19. How prevalent is lasciviousness, or licentiousness, in our day?

**Note:** "Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. ... Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 346, 347.

4.b. As we stand today on the borders of the heavenly Canaan, what lesson can we learn from the apostasy of Israel at the Jordan? I Corinthians 10:8, 12.	Note: "It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean' (2 Corinthians 6:17). God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be			
<b>Note:</b> "All along through the ages there are strewn wrecks of character that have been stranded upon the rocks of sensual	otherwise. The warnings given to the Hebrews against assimilating with the heathen were not more direct or explicit than are those forbidding Christians to conform to the spirit and customs of the ungodly." <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , 458.			
indulgence. As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul. It is not the ignorant and uncultured merely that need to be guarded; he	5.b. What can we do to avoid licentiousness? 1 Peter 1:13; Philippians 4:8.			
will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their				
souls, he can through them destroy many. And he employs the				
same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seek-				
ing, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, he tempts to the violation				
of the seventh commandment." <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , 457, 458.  "Sensual indulgence weakens the mind and debases the soul.  The moral and intellectual powers are benumbed and paralyzed by the gratification of the animal propensities; and it is impossible for the slave of passion to realize the sacred obligation of the law of God, to appreciate the atonement, or to place a right value upon the soul. Goodness, purity, and truth, reverence for God, and love for sacred things—all those holy affections and noble desires that link men with the heavenly world—are consumed in the fires of lust." Ibid., 458.	Note: "Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest." <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> , 518.  "Every wrong tendency may be, through the grace of Christ, repressed, not in a languid, irresolute manner, but with firmness of purpose, with high resolves to make Christ the pattern. Let your love go out for those things that Jesus loved, and be withheld from those things that will give no strength to right			
Thursday	impulses." <i>That I May Know Him</i> , 135.			
5 AVOIDING THE SINS OF THIS AGE				
5.a. What warnings are calculated to protect us from apostasy especially today in our preparation for heaven? 2 Corinthians 6:17; James 4:4.	Friday PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS			
cii: 2 Communans 0.1/, james 4.4.	What should give us hope and courage as evildoers			
	plot against us?  How was Baalam used to enlighten heathen nations			
	in regard to Christ?			
	3 How did Israel forfeit God's protection on the bor- ders of Canaan?			
	4 Why should sensual indulgence be a major concern			

for us today?

How can we keep our thoughts pure?

#### March 21 - 27, 2021

# The Death of Moses

#### **Key Text**

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:5, 6).

Study Help: Patriarchs and Prophets, 469–480.

#### Introduction

"As a shepherd of sheep, Moses was taught to care for the afflicted, to nurse the sick, to seek patiently after the straying, to bear long with the unruly, to supply with loving solicitude the wants of the young lambs and the necessities of the old and feeble." Fundamentals of Christian Education, 343.

# **Sunday**

#### 1 MOSES ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE

1.a. As Moses' end was drawing near, with what encouraging words did he address first the people, and then Joshua? Deuteronomy 31:1–8.

**Note:** "As the people gazed upon the aged man, so soon to be taken from them, they recalled, with a new and deeper appreciation, his parental tenderness, his wise counsels, and his untiring labors. How often, when their sins had invited the just judgments of God, the prayers of Moses had prevailed with Him to spare them! Their grief was heightened by remorse. They bitterly remembered that their own perversity had provoked Moses to the sin for which he must die.

"The removal of their beloved leader would be a far stronger rebuke to Israel than any which they could have received had his life and mission been continued. God would lead them to feel that they were not to make the life of their future leader as trying as they had made that of Moses. God speaks to His people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, He speaks to them in blessings removed, that they may be led to see their sins, and return to Him with all the heart." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 470.

### **Monday**

#### **2 READING THE BOOK OF THE LAW**

2.a. How often were the people required to listen to the reading of the laws, and which groups of people were to do so? Why? Deuteronomy 31:9–13.

**Note:** "He [God] requires parents to train up their children and with unceasing diligence to educate them with regard to the claims of His law and to instruct them in the knowledge and fear of God. These injunctions which God laid upon the Jews with so much solemnity, rest with equal weight upon Christian parents." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 294.

2.b. What was the plan of God for Israel? What were the conditions upon which this promise was to be fulfilled? Deuteronomy 28:12–14.

**Note:** "These promises given to Israel are also for God's people today." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 351.

2.c. What was given to the Israelites as a continual reminder of their calling as God's special people? Numbers 15:38, 39. Of what then should every piece of clothing we put on today remind us?

Note: "The children of Israel, after they were brought out of Egypt, were commanded to have a simple ribbon of blue in the border of their garments, to distinguish them from the nations around them, and to signify that they were God's peculiar people. The people of God are not now required to have a special mark placed upon their garments. But in the New Testament we are often referred to ancient Israel for examples. If God gave such definite directions to His ancient people in regard to their dress, will not the dress of His people in this age come under His notice? Should there not be in their dress a distinction from that of the world? Should not the people of God,

who are His peculiar treasure, seek even in their dress to glorify God? And should they not be examples in point of dress, and by their simple style rebuke the pride, vanity, and extravagance of worldly, pleasure-loving professors? God requires this of His people. Pride is rebuked in His Word." *The Review and Herald*, January 23, 1900.

### **Tuesday**

#### **3 WRITING A NEW SONG**

- 3.a. What aspects of God's character are brought out in the song Moses wrote for the benefit of the people? Deuteronomy 32:3, 4, 6.
- 3.b. How is God's care for His people shown in this song? Deuteronomy 32:9–12.

**Note:** "God surrounded Israel with every facility, gave them every privilege, that would make them an honor to His name and a blessing to surrounding nations. If they would walk in the ways of obedience, He promised to make them 'high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor' (Deuteronomy 26:19)." *Education*, p. 40.

"He [God] rescued them from their servile state, that He might bring them to a good land, a land which in His providence He had prepared for them as a refuge from their enemies. He would bring them to Himself and encircle them in His everlasting arms; and in return for His goodness and mercy they were to exalt His name and make it glorious in the earth." *Prophets and Kings*, 16.

3.c. In what sense was this song calculated to be a help to the people? Deuteronomy 31:19-22. What can we learn from this?

**Note:** "The more deeply to impress these truths upon all minds, the great leader [Moses] embodied them in sacred verse. This song was not only historical, but prophetic. While it recounted the wonderful dealings of God with His people in

the past, it also foreshadowed the great events of the future, the final victory of the faithful when Christ shall come the second time in power and glory. The people were directed to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and children's children. It was to be chanted by the congregation when they assembled for worship, and to be repeated by the people as they went about their daily labors. It was the duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children that they might never be forgotten." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 467, 468.

# Wednesday

#### 4 THE COMING OF CHRIST PREDICTED

- 4.a. What did Moses say about the first coming of Jesus Christ? Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.
- 4.b. What rebuke did Jesus direct to the Jews in connection with this prophecy? John 5:45-47.

**Note:** "There are those who profess to believe and to teach the truths of the Old Testament, while they reject the New. But in refusing to receive the teachings of Christ, they show that they do not believe that which patriarchs and prophets have spoken. 'Had ye believed Moses,' Christ said, 'ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me' (John 5:46). Hence there is no real power in their teaching of even the Old Testament.

"Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, 'They are they which testify of Me' (John 5:39). In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 128.

4.c. In what sense was Moses a type of Christ? Hebrews 3:5, 6.

Note: "Moses was a type of Christ. He himself had declared to Israel, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken' (Deuteronomy 18:15). God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty before he could be prepared to lead the hosts of Israel to the earthly Canaan. The Israel of God, journeying to the heavenly Canaan, have a Captain who needed no human teaching to prepare Him for His mission as a divine leader; yet He was made perfect through sufferings; and 'in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted' (Hebrews 2:10, 18). Our Redeemer manifested no human weakness or imperfection; yet He died to obtain for us an entrance into the Promised Land." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 480.

# **Thursday**

#### **5 MOSES' DEATH AND RESURRECTION**

5.a. What command and assurance did Moses receive from the Lord when he had finished his work? Deuteronomy 32:49, 50, 52.

**Note:** "In solitude Moses reviewed his life of vicissitudes and hardships since he turned from courtly honors and from a prospective kingdom in Egypt, to cast in his lot with God's chosen people. ...

"He did not regret the burdens he had borne. He knew that his mission and work were of God's own appointing." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 471, 472.

5.b. How did God bring Moses back to life, and what classes of saints did Moses and Elijah each represent on the mount of transfiguration? Jude 9; Matthew 17:1-5.

**Note:** "Moses upon the mount of transfiguration was a witness to Christ's victory over sin and death. He represented those who shall come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the just.



Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ's second coming, and who will be 'changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;' when 'this mortal must put on immortality,' and 'this corruptible must put on incorruption' (I Corinthians 15:51–53)." The Desire of Ages, 421, 422.

# Friday PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- I. As Moses was about to die, how did the people now view him? Why?
- 2. How should our calling as children of the King, as God's special, peculiar treasure, affect the way we dress and the way we dress our children?
- 3. What is one way parents can deeply impress truth on the minds of their children? How does Satan fiendishly try to use this same tool in an opposite direction?
- 4. How are we rejecting Christ if we set aside the Old Testament?
- 5. As Moses considered the riches and fame he had left behind in exchange for a life of toil and hardship, why did he have no regrets?

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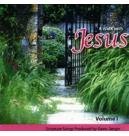
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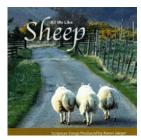
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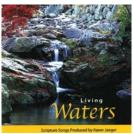
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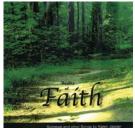
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**Keep the Word** is a music ministry based on the words found in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." The name *Keep the Word* came directly from Revelation 3:10, 11 which reads (in part), "Because thou hast *kept the word* of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." [Emphasis supplied.]

Music has proven to be one of the most effective ways of memorization and to lift the weary heart. *Keep the Word* is privileged to utilize this gift as a means for memorizing scripture.

#### **Sketchy beginning:**

One night in 1991, Karen Jaeger recalls a vivid dream, repeated identically the

following night. In these dreams a large number of children could be seen, standing on a platform in an unknown building, singing beautiful strains of Scripture music, harmoniously accompanied by various instruments.

While still wondering about the significance of the dream and casually opening a book she read, "As the children sang in the temple courts, 'Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord' (Mark II:9), so in these last days children's voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world." The words children sang struck a chord.

The work of composing began. Husband, Paul, took on the role of recording engineer, and the first singers were Kar-

en's young children and friends. Those first recordings have been used in many locations as part of a homeschooling program.

In August 2016, a way opened to produce high quality scripture music in the USA with a group of enthusiastic Christian young people and, more recently, an added blessing of working with artists in Australia. The goal of this music is to glorify God with the means supplied and, as much as is humanly possible, to bring the written words to life and embed them in heart, mind and soul.

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A well rounded, healthy diet will include sesame seeds because they are incredibly nutrient dense. Sesame seeds are rich in minerals which build and strengthen bones, promote healthy

thyroid and hormone function, boost immunity, revitalize skin and are a good source of iron, important for those suffering from iron deficiency anemia.

Sesame seeds can be considered a superfood because they are high in the nutrients our bodies need to maintain an optimal level of health. (Excerpted from www.nationalnutrition.ca/articles/supplements/supplement-articles-sesame-seeds/)

Sprinkle on salads, vegetables, use in stir-frys, breads, rice dishes, seasonings, grind for tahini.

**Nuts/Seeds** 



# SESAME-FLAX FRENCH TOAST

#### **Ingredients**

- 1 ½ cups organic soy, cashew, or almond milk
- 2 Tbsp. ground sesame and/or flax seeds
- 3-4 dates pitted, cut in half
- 2 tsp. whole wheat pastry flour, or other whole grain flour, or arrowroot
- ½ tsp. vanilla or maple flavoring
- ½ tsp. orange zest
- ¼ tsp. coriander
- ½ tsp. lecithin granules (optional)
- 6 slices whole grain bread

#### **Process**

- 1. Blend first 4 ingredients until very smooth, adding milk as needed until pancake batter consistency.
- 2. Add vanilla or maple flavoring, orange zest, coriander and lecithin granules; blend briefly again. Pour into a shallow dish/bowl.
- 3. Dip bread slices into batter, flipping to coat both sides well and allowing it to soak in, about 10-15 seconds.
- 4. Brown both sides in an oiled skillet. If baking in oven, preheat at 475° F, then place battered bread on a hot baking sheet that has been sprayed with nonstick spray.
- 5. Bake 5-7 minutes until bottoms are golden brown. Flip for an additional 2-3 minutes.
- 6. Pour a warm fruit compote, thickened with cornstarch or arrowroot powder, over toast; top with vegan yogurt, fresh berries and sliced bananas.





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