

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS
OF ADVENTISM

*Faith, Trust, and
Obedience*

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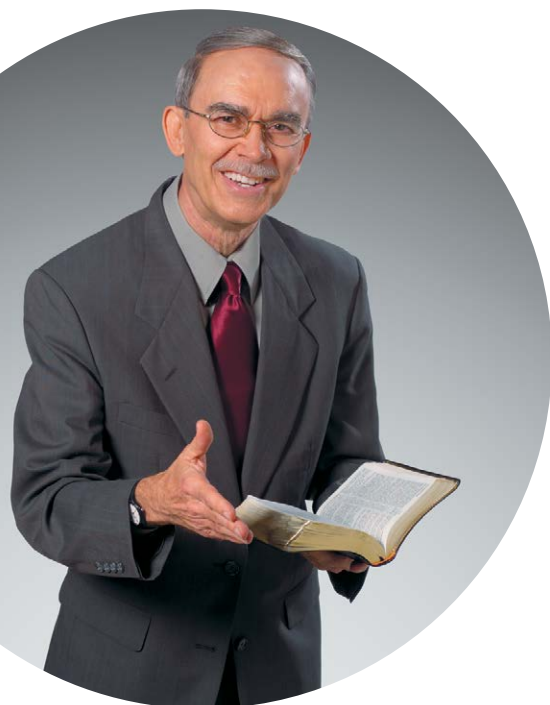
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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

What Is Your Attitude Toward Sin?

Sin is the breaking of God's law and your attitude toward sin is a revelation: (1) whether you are converted, (2) whether you are getting ready to go to heaven or hell, and (3) whether or not you are sanctified (Hebrews 12; 1 Peter 1).

"The world loves sin, and hates righteousness, and this was the cause of its hostility to Jesus. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a disturbing element. ... While those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit begin war with themselves, those who cling to sin war against the truth and its representatives." *The Desire of Ages*, 306

"Christ hated one thing only, and that was sin. But although He represented in His spotless character the character of His Father, yet the world hated and refused Him. ... The atmosphere that surrounded His soul was so pure, so elevated, that it placed the hypocritical rabbis, priests, and rulers in their true position, and revealed them in their real character as claiming sanctity, while misrepresenting God and His truth. ... when He reproved sin, made open war upon selfishness, oppression, hypocrisy,

pride, covetousness, and lust, they hunted Him down as a malefactor." *The Bible Echo*, April 9, 1894

"We are never alone. Whether we choose Him or not, we have a companion. Remember that wherever you are, whatever you do, God is there. Nothing that is said or done or thought can escape His attention. To your every word or deed you have a witness—the holy, sin-hating God. Before you speak or act, always think of this." *The Ministry of Healing*, 490

"A sin-hating God calls upon those who claim to keep His law to depart from all iniquity. A neglect to repent and to render willing obedience will bring upon men and women today as serious consequences as came upon ancient Israel." *Prophets and Kings*, 416

"Do you see the defects in your character, and are you compelled to admit that you have made no decided advance in overcoming these unholy traits? Remember that if not overcome, these will surely separate you from the presence of a pure, holy, sin-hating God, and close the doors of the heavenly mansions against you."

The Signs of the Times, January 4, 1883 **LM**

HISTORIC

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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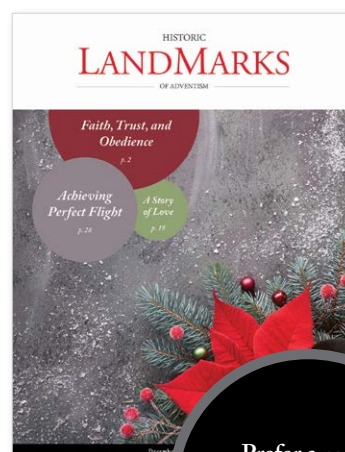
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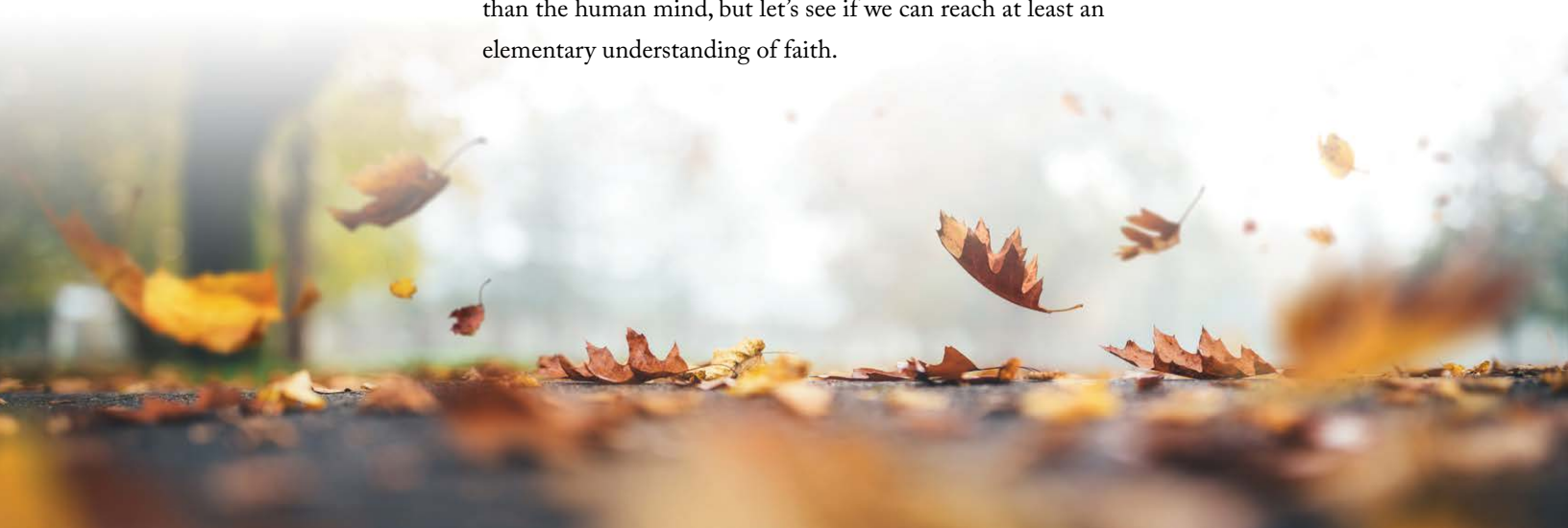


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Faith, Trust, and Obedience

By Michael C. Wells

In Romans 12:3, Paul makes this statement about faith: “... God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Faith is one of the main ingredients in the recipe for salvation, but do we really understand it and utilize it properly? Hebrews tells us what faith is: “Now faith is the substance [realization] of things hoped for, the evidence [confidence] of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. Like you, I have read this scripture many times and contemplated its meaning. The mysteries of God are far deeper than the human mind, but let’s see if we can reach at least an elementary understanding of faith.

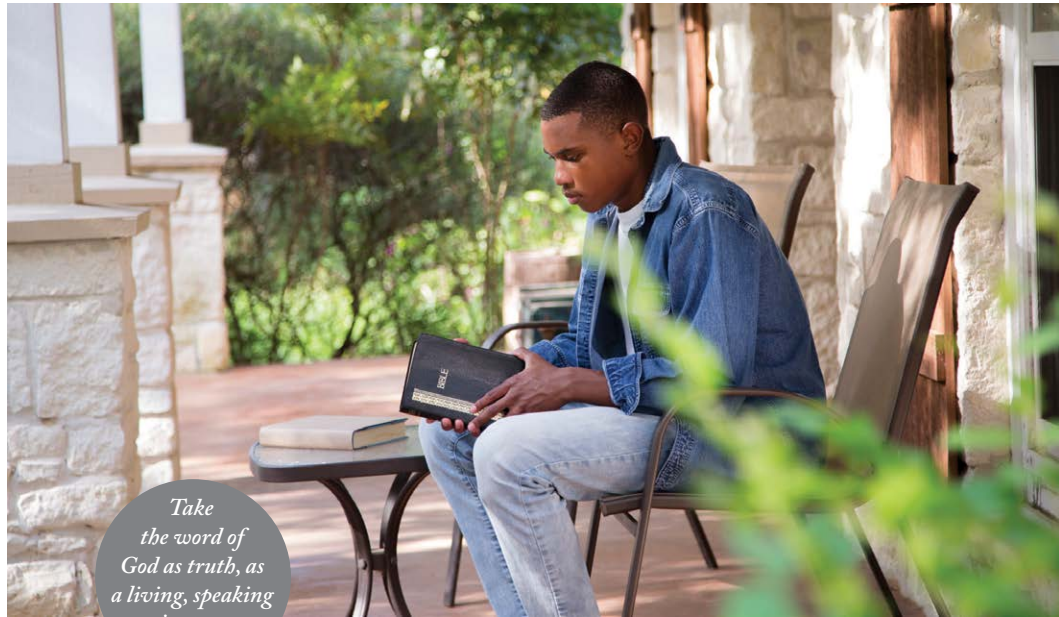


Faith, or a belief, in the secular world is based on what might be considered to be facts. There are many beliefs about the age of the earth and mankind that stem from faith in certain scientific criteria. People have faith that scientists are smart enough to figure out such things and know what they are talking about. So worldly faith is believing something to be true even with little or no proof.

Christians, on the other hand, believe in a Higher Being that has greater knowledge than mankind. They believe that God, through His Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, inspired the creation of the Bible so that we might know how to live a holy life. Most religious beliefs are based on faith in something or someone, but Christians are the only group that believe solely in the word of God as the source for their faith in Him.

When we talk about Christians, I do not mean every group of people that *professes* to be Christians, but those who strive to *live* by “... every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4. It is this group that chooses to live by faith in God’s word as the basis of their belief. Yet as a people, we sometimes have trouble with our own faith, because knowing and following are totally different things. The exercise of our faith becomes the problem, yet faith grows only by exercising it. The more we mistrust ourselves, the more faith in God’s word can work in our lives.

“We must have an increase of faith, else we cannot be renewed in the divine image, and love and obey the requirements of God. Let the prayer go forth from unfeigned lips, ‘Lord, increase my faith; give me divine enlightenment; for without help from Thee I can do nothing.’ Come in humility and bow before God; open before the Lord your Bibles, containing the divine promises; take your position upon them; make a covenant with God that you will answer His requirements; tell Him you will believe, without any other evidence except the



naked promise. This is not presumption; but unless you work with zeal, unless you are earnest and determined, Satan will obtain the advantage, and you will be left in unbelief and darkness. The words and promises of God are the only foundation of our faith. Take the word of God as truth, as a living, speaking voice to you, and obey faithfully every requirement. God is faithful, who hath promised. He will work with the efforts of superintendents and teachers. Our blessings are limited by the weakness of our faith. God is not unwilling to bestow; He is a reservoir of power. We must cherish meekness and lowliness of heart.” *Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, 28

Like the wind, faith cannot be seen or touched. But as the wind is felt as it blows across our skin, or seen as it plays in the leaves of the trees, we also can see the results of faith when it is exercised to do God’s will in our lives and the lives of others. The key is to exercise faith and to listen as God tells us how to use our faith according to His will.

In Genesis 6, we find the well-known story of Noah and the ark. In verses 13 and 14, the Bible tells us God talked

to Noah: “And God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.’” Noah exercised his faith in God by building a huge boat on dry ground, at a time when it had never rained on the earth before. Do you think we would have that kind of faith today?

We do not know how God talked to Noah, but I imagine that Noah was a man of prayer and that God talked to him during those prayerful moments. If we have faith in God, we will want to spend as much time as possible to know His will in our lives. I believe Noah was praying, discussing with Him the wickedness of the people around him and asking how he could witness to them and God showed Noah how beyond anything he could imagine—by building an ark.

God said, “And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die.” And then

“
... God has dealt to each
one a measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

He told Noah, “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.” Genesis 6:17–19

For 120 years Noah built his ark in the face of taunts and ridicule. He stood as a firm witness for God. As he built, he preached the coming destruction of the world and the only path of salvation. His faith sustained him through trial and hardship, through painstakingly-detailed work on the ark that would be the salvation of his family and anyone else who would accept God’s message. The ark was a representation of Jesus who shelters us under His wings of salvation. It also represents the protection that the people of the last days will receive when faced with unparalleled hardship and evil. Were it not for his faith in the soon-coming Saviour, promised to Adam and to the following generations, Noah would have failed in his endeavor, but God sustained him because he believed Him.

Faith is not only believing that God exists and created everything, but it is also trusting in all that He says. Abraham is another example of faith in God. The Bible says, “And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Genesis 15:6. Paul remarks on this scripture when addressing the Galatians to help them understand that the Holy Spirit worked miracles in their lives by their faith in God, and in the promise of the resurrection in Christ Jesus rather than in works of the law. By faith they came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and by faith they accepted Him as their Saviour. By faith they, like Abraham, walked away from the things of this world to embrace and trust in the faith that God had measured out to each of them.

Abraham walked out of the land of Ur and into a wilderness. He exercised his faith in God, not needing the details of what was

before him, being willing to leave his old life behind. Abraham led a most difficult life compared to us today. His home was a tent, and he had no country of his own. He was a true sojourner and pilgrim. His faith in God was so great that he followed wherever the Spirit led and did not complain about his plight. He let his works prove his faith in God’s word and believed in His promises. He not only professed belief in God, but showed his faith by his trust and obedience to His word.

“‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.’ James 2:23. And Paul says, ‘They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.’ Galatians 3:7. But Abraham’s faith was made manifest by his works. ‘Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?’ James 2:21, 22. There are many who fail to understand the relation of faith and works. They say, ‘Only believe in Christ, and you are safe. You have nothing to do with keeping the law.’ But genuine faith will be manifest in obedience. Said Christ to the unbelieving Jews, ‘If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.’ John 8:39. And concerning the father of the faithful the Lord declares, ‘Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’ Genesis 26:5. Says the apostle James, ‘Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.’ James 2:17. And John, who dwells so fully upon love, tells us, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 5:3.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 153, 154

If there is one thing that God’s remnant people can learn, it is how to exercise their faith in God. If we were honest with ourselves, how many times has the Spirit urged us to do something, but we did not listen? One of the hardest things in the Christian walk is to set our own desires aside to follow the voice of Jesus. If we truly have faith, we would be willing to trust His guidance. Sometimes that guidance goes directly against our own desires. Trusting God to

know what is best in our lives is the true meaning of being faithful. Stepping out in faith to do God's work is to demonstrate that trust. The measure of faith given to each of us is exactly what we need to do our part in His work and, through that work, our faith will grow and reproduce itself over and over.

"If we would be growing plants in the Lord's garden, we must have a constant supply of spiritual life and earnestness. Growth will then be seen in the faith and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no halfway house where we may throw off responsibility and rest by the way. We are to keep advancing heavenward, developing a solid religious character. The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it." *In Heavenly Places*, 336

"Our faith should lay hold upon God, and we should expect success. The great multitude was fed with a very meager supply. Let our scattered supply be placed in missionary work, and God will multiply it as we shall impart to others, so that all may eat and be filled. We are not to stop our work and measure our advance in the work by the means at hand. To do this is to show a very limited faith. As God said to Moses, so He says to us, 'Go forward.' We are to diffuse the gospel over the whole earth, and, be our means large or small, we are to plan and work in faith, realizing our responsibility as God's human agents to whom He has given this great work. Then stop fretting over the evils that you cannot help and do your work in sincerity and faith, that your characters may be formed after the divine pattern." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, 284

Many do not know how to exercise their faith. They have kept it safely hidden lest anyone might steal it. In Jesus' parable about the servants and the minas, we see that only those who use their faith will see an increase (Luke 19). The answer is quite simple, if we listen to the still, small voice of the Holy



Spirit as He guides us in doing the will of God, we will be exercising our faith in the way God wants us to use it. We must be willing to step out in faith, not worrying about the where or how, to be ready to follow where He leads.

Some are urged to hand out a pamphlet, others to minister to the needy by providing food or clothing, while others are called to leave their home to reach people of a far-away land. Some can work in their neighborhoods, others within their homes among their family members or children. But each must listen carefully to the urging of the Holy Spirit and not turn away because it seems too hard or uncomfortable. Jesus knows each heart and what is needed to fulfill His purpose in our lives. We must want to use our faith so that it will grow and influence others towards salvation and lead them to follow God's plan for their lives.

Revelation 14:12 says, "Here is the patience [perseverance] of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." What is the "faith of Jesus"? As His people, we must have this faith. Jesus said, "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." John 8:29.

Jesus had perfect trust that His Father would lead Him down a perfect path of righteousness. The essence of the faith of Jesus was obedience to His Father. Perfect faith works in conjunction with what we do.

If Jesus had not had this kind of faith, and I say this reverently, He would never have qualified as our sacrifice. He would have been blemished and unfit, and all would have been lost. Only the perfect, unblemished Lamb of God could be the ultimate sacrifice to save mankind. The faith of Jesus had to be expressed in perfect obedience to all of God's holy law. He added nothing nor did He take anything from it; He accepted it as it was written and obeyed even unto death. What a powerful example Jesus set for us. And like we must be, He was guided by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, Jesus laid aside His glory and power to be born a man, clothed with our nature. In this way He demonstrated the power of faith so that we could live a perfect life. I do not believe we fully appreciate the trust Jesus showed by setting aside all He had in heaven to come to this earth as a man. "But made Himself of no reputation [laying aside His divinity], taking the form of a bond-

“
*Now faith is the
 substance [realization]
 of things hoped for, the
 evidence [confidence] of
 things not seen.*

Hebrews 11:1

servant [slave/servant], and coming in the likeness of men [the nature of fallen man]. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:7, 8

God expects those who bear the name of Christ to represent Him in every way—pure in their thoughts and words, noble and uplifting in their actions and deeds. There will be nothing of self in the life of the true Christian, for self has died. And once they have reached this state of purity, they then are to draw those around them nearer to the Saviour.

There was no selfishness in the life of Christ. Bearing our nature, He lived a life wholly devoted to the service of others. God’s word to us is, “Be ye therefore perfect.” Matthew 5:48 KJV. And that we might obey this word, He sent His only-begotten Son to live a perfect life in our behalf. At our disposal, we have His example and the strength by which He lived this life. In thought, word, and act, Jesus was sinless. Perfection marked all that He did. He points us to the path that He trod, saying, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matthew 16:24 KJV

Is it any wonder Paul writes, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5. If we have the mind of Jesus, we will have perfect faith and trust. His perfect obedience is our example. Jesus was not presumptuous; He did not go further than His Father led. We must be on guard lest we overstep where God is leading us. Satan is always ready to pervert our faith, if possible. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, He was urged to use His faith to test God. But Jesus maintained His faith in the Father.

“The Redeemer of the world wavered not from His integrity and showed that He had perfect faith in His Father’s promised care. He would not put the faithfulness and love

of His Father to a needless trial, although He was in the hands of the enemy, and placed in a position of extreme difficulty and peril. He would not, at Satan’s suggestion, tempt God by presumptuously experimenting on His providence. Satan had brought in scripture which seemed appropriate for the occasion, hoping to accomplish his designs by making the application to our Saviour at this special time.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 282

Ancient Israel faced many trials, and perished in the desert because they lacked faith. Jesus told the parable of the wedding feast which addresses this lack of faith in His people, from ancient Israel of the wilderness to the Israel of Jesus’ day and finally spiritual Israel today. As God’s people, we will face many trials and be tested to see if our faith is great enough to see us through our own time.

“There are two classes in our world. The Lord has sent out the message to those who are represented by the first class, who have had great privileges and opportunities, who have had great light and innumerable blessings. They have been intrusted by the Lord with the living oracles. They are represented by the class to whom the king sent an invitation to the marriage feast. Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that are bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding



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was furnished with guests.” *The Review and Herald*, April 2, 1895

The wedding guests are those who have heard the message of salvation through Christ, some have accepted the message as truth while others scorned it. The wedding feast is the coming of Christ and all who have heard the message were called. Those who had been given great knowledge and the testimonies of the apostles and prophets, did not appreciate what was given to them. Their faith waned in the face of daily life and trials and they did not cherish the gift they were given. They squandered their time to prepare for the feast they knew was at hand, and in the end, rejected what had been given them as a testimony of God’s love for the world.

So, the King sent out His servants, who were few in these last days, to give out the final call to accept the invitation to become one of His true followers. They did not go to the people who had squandered the previous truth, but to those who had not yet heard the message. The call was to come out of Babylon and into His truth, and many heard the message. Some came out of curiosity, others out of firm belief. Those who had not developed faith, trust, and obedience

in God were cast out. They had a desire to follow, but, in the end, their faith was not exercised, and they lost salvation.

“How few respond to the gracious invitation of heaven. Christ is insulted when His messages are despised, and His gracious, winning, liberal invitation is rejected. Those that were bidden to the marriage feast at first, began to make excuses. They allowed minor things to occupy their attention, and lost their eternal interests out of their reckoning. While some made temporal interests their excuse, and were totally indifferent toward the messages and messengers, others manifested a spirit of determined hatred, and took the Lord’s servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. A power from beneath moved upon human agencies who were not under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. There are two distinct classes—those who are saved through faith in Christ and through obedience to His law, and those who refuse the truth as it is in Jesus. It will be impossible for those who refuse Christ through the period of probation to become justified after the record of their lives has passed into eternity. Now is the time to work for the salvation of men; for probation still continues.” Ibid.

God has been faithful to us in every way. He has endured our sinfulness with compassion and mercy, and in His perfect faithfulness sent His Son to us. His righteousness is without measure. “Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.” Isaiah 11:5. “Your testimonies, which You have commanded, are righteous and very faithful.” Psalm 119:138. Considering that God is faithful to us and to His word, we have nothing to fear if we in return give our will over to Him. We must exercise our faith by stepping out of our comfort zone and into a faithful walk with Jesus.

Faith, trust, and obedience is our only avenue to happiness in Christ Jesus. Obedience to His commandments, obedience to His Spirit’s leading, obedience in the face of no evidence except our faith in Him who promises to be faithful in all things. We must trust in the power of the Creator of all that exists. If He can create the wonders we see around us, we can trust, by faith, that He will lead us to do greater works in His name than we can imagine. We just have to trust and obey. **LM**

Michael C. Wells is director of Anointing Oil Ministries.



Achieving Perfect Flight

By John R. Pearson

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:48

We are all familiar with the statement Christ made in His Sermon on the Mount to be perfect. It is a verse that Adventists accept as an enabling command. In the nominal Christian world, there are some who try to ignore or explain it away, while many others expect that at some point in their life's journey, perhaps at the second coming or at the resurrection, Jesus will accomplish this act for them with a wave of His miracle-working hand.

Allow me to use a metaphor as a means of clarifying the challenge we face as Bible-believing Christians.

Suppose that instead of telling us to be perfect, God told us to fly. We know that He wouldn't tell us to do that with-

out also providing the means for us to fulfill the command.

We might be tempted to say, "I can't fly." Well, of course we cannot fly by ourselves, but God says, "I have an airplane, I have a pilot, and I have fuel."

The airplane is the Bible and the hope it so unfailingly supplies; the Pilot is Jesus and the faith we have in Him to fulfill His promises and His enablings; and the fuel is the working of the power of the Holy Spirit and our trust in the working of that power in response to our prayers of faith.

These elements are also exactly what we need to enable us to achieve perfection. Although God provides the means, it is up to us to use them correctly and faithfully. The Bible is our instruction

manual telling us how to fly—how to obey and overcome, thereby achieving the perfection that we seek in our sphere and the fulfilled hope that we harbor and yearn for so dearly.

Jesus is our Pilot, our Guide, who has trodden the narrow way before us. His life is clearly laid out as our example. As Adventists, we have been blessed not only with the description of Christ's character in the sacred canon of God's word, but we also have *The Desire of Ages*, an incredibly detailed and uplifting look into His daily life and faultless character. As fuel—the energy we need—we have the Holy Spirit to empower us as we seek to know and do God's will.

Most importantly, though, we have the privilege of prayer. Inspiration tells

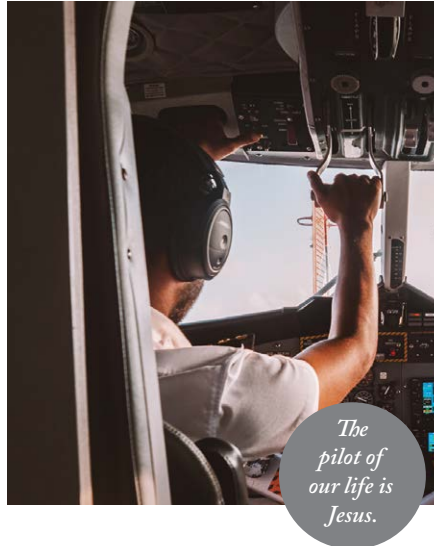
us that prayer is (1) “the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse.” *Steps to Christ*, 94, and (2) a means—“We cannot bring Christ down, but, through faith, we can lift ourselves up into unity and harmony with the perfect standard of righteousness.” *The Review and Herald*, October 30, 1888. What a privilege we have of beginning and ending each day’s activity in conversation with our Creator!

So, indeed, we can fly. We can achieve the obedience necessary to be awarded robes and crowns, palm leaves of victory, and golden harps!

Passages found in chapters 27 and 28 in *Messages to Young People* should provide us great encouragement as we seek to fly a straight course over the Jordan to the promised land.

“We have little idea of the strength that would be ours if we would connect with the source of all strength. We fall into sin again and again, and think it must always be so. We cling to our infirmities as if they were something to be proud of. Christ tells us that we must set our face as a flint if we would overcome. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree; and through the power He has given us, we may resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. Then let us not talk of our weakness and inefficiency, but of Christ and His strength. When we talk of Satan’s strength, the enemy fastens his power more firmly upon us. When we talk of the power of the Mighty One, the enemy is driven back. As we draw near to God, He draws near to us. ...

“Many of us fail to improve our privileges. We make a few feeble efforts to do right, and then go back to our old life of sin. *If we ever enter the kingdom of God, we must enter with perfect characters*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Satan works with increased activity as we near the close of time. He lays his snares, unperceived by us, that he may take possession of our minds. In every way he tries to eclipse the glory



of God from the soul. It rests with us to decide whether he shall control our hearts and minds, or whether we shall have a place in the new earth, a title to Abraham’s farm.” *Messages to Young People*, 105

“Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour, and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness. ...

“We dishonor Him by talking of our inefficiency. Instead of looking at ourselves, let us constantly behold Jesus, daily becoming more and more like Him, more and more able to talk of Him, better prepared to avail ourselves of His kindness and helpfulness, and to receive the blessings offered us.

“As we thus live in communion with Him, we grow strong in His strength, a help and a blessing to those around us. If we would only do as the Lord desires us to, our hearts would become as sacred harps, every chord of which would sound forth praise and gratitude to the Redeemer sent by God to take away the sin of the world.” *Ibid.*, 107

“While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works.” *The Review and Herald*, October 5, 1886

And faith is the element that brings together all of the components we need to be able to fly safely through this sin-filled world to the world beyond the Jordan.

There are several scriptures, when used together as we kneel before the throne of grace in conversation with our Maker that should give us great hope and encouragement as we recognize the love God has shown for us erring mortals by inspiring Paul to write them.

Through the inspiration and guidance these scriptures provide, we are privileged to pray that the Holy Spirit will enable us to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ so that we may set our minds, our affections, on things above and not on things of the earth, allowing us to be hid with Christ in God, thereby, by faith, quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one (2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:2, 3; Ephesians 6:16).

Thanks to inspiration, we know that Satan uses the avenues of the soul—our senses—in his efforts to dislodge us from the path of truth and righteousness. However, if, when Satan injects unholy thoughts into our consciousness, either by what we see, hear, or sense in any way, we can remember the promises and the enabling commands that these verses provide. Then by making the conscious effort to direct our thoughts to things above, we are able to thwart the enemy’s efforts and can abide safely under the shelter of the Almighty, taking safe refuge under His wings.

We can indeed achieve perfect flight! [Emphasis supplied.] **LM**

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

Why Doesn't God Show Up?

By Judy Rebarchek

Not long ago, I watched a video regarding the recent “deconversion” of a number of Christian celebrities. Many reasons were given by these individuals as to why they had decided to abandon their faith, but one in particular stood out to me, “Why doesn’t God show up? If God is so powerful, so loving, why are there so many bad things in the world?” One of these individuals said, “Why doesn’t God cure cancer? If I was omnipotent, that’s what I’d do.” How many times have you wondered that same thing?

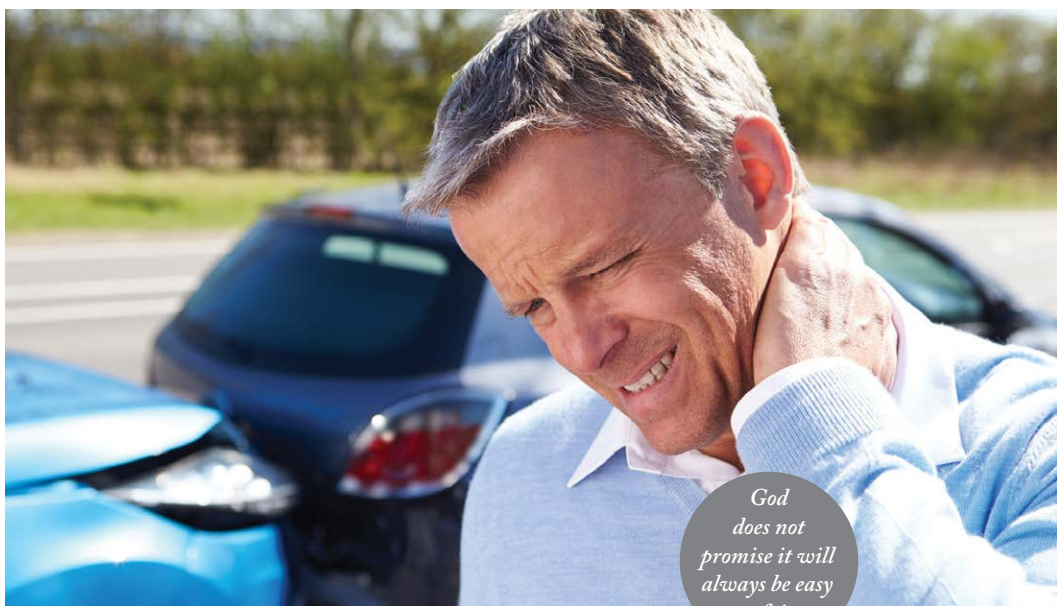
While a strong spiritual argument to the fact that God does show up can be presented, there are two thoughts I'd like to specifically explore.

God says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8, 9. He also says in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you ... thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." The KJV says, "to give you an expected end."

Our future and hope is not in this world and while God does promise blessings and provides what we need in this life, He does not promise it will always be easy or fair. He does not promise, for now, that He will remove all the obstacles or take away all the bad things. We think in terms of the here and now, but God thinks and plans in the what-is-to-come. The reason that bad things happen, that life isn't fair, but rather is hard and painful sometimes, is because of sin and our penchant for indulging in it. Which leads to my second thought.

The entire history of this world is one of spiritual conflict. The purpose of this conflict is to prove to everyone in this world and all the universe the true heinousness and perniciousness of sin. So then, how could God, no matter how much He may want to, remove all the consequences of sin, both the natural ones and those that come from our individual choices?

Remember where sin began. Heaven is a perfect place and Lucifer still exercised his God-given free will to be jealous and prideful, and to spread discontent and malice toward God and His Son even there, aspiring to be like and equal with God. So, if God were to make this earth some kind of perfect place, sin would still find a way in it because there are so many people who would still choose to do evil.



God does not promise it will always be easy or fair.

Once this conflict is over, everyone will know sin for exactly what it is and those who have developed and maintained a saving relationship with Jesus Christ will not want to be sinful anymore. There will be no desire for sin and the Bible says that as a result "affliction [sin] will not rise up a second time." Nahum 1:9

In addition to these two thoughts there are two others to consider: the vindication of God's Law—the representation of His character—and the building up of a people, a church, who follow God's will.

"Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. ... The

history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.'" *Maranatha*, 346

"The final judgment is a most solemn, awful event. This must take place before the universe. To the Lord Jesus the Father has committed all judgment. He will declare the reward of loyalty to all who obey the law of Jehovah. God will be honored and His government vindicated and glorified, and that in the presence of the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds. On the largest possible scale will the government of God be vindicated and exalted. It is not the judgment of one individual or of one nation but of the whole world. Oh, what a change will then be made in the understanding of all created beings. Then all will see the value of eternal life." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, 349

At long last, the universe will clearly see the insidiousness of Satan's efforts to destroy God's character and his insinuations that His law is one of



The entire history of this world is one of spiritual conflict.

tyranny rather than love. But Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to save the souls of all mankind, and every word and deed of His life, proved that God's law was crafted in love, that the happiness and well-being of man is bound up with it.

"God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. His law is truth—unchanging, eternal truth.

His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. By perverting them he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of God. Throughout his rebellion he has sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being.

"But Satan's hypocrisy has been unmasked by Christ's life, trial, and death. Christ took upon Himself human nature, and by His perfect life demonstrated the falsity of the claims of him who constantly accuses those who are trying to obey God's law. And the blood of Christ shed on the cross is the everlasting, incontrovertible testimony that God's law is as immutable as is His own character." *Christ Triumphant*, 291

And then there is the church of God. What, or more accurately who are God's people?

"The church on earth is God's temple, and it is to assume divine proportions before the world. This building is to be the light of the world. It is to be composed of living stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a solid building. All these stones are not of the same shape or dimension.

Some are large and some are small, but each one has its own place to fill. In the whole building there is not to be one misshapen stone. Each one is perfect. And each stone is a living stone, a stone that emits light. The value of the stones is determined by the light they reflect to the world.

"Now is the time for the stones to be taken from the quarry of the world and brought into God's workshop, to be hewed, squared, and polished, that they may shine. This is God's plan, and He desires all who profess to believe the truth to fill their respective places in the great, grand work for this time.

"The angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, that every stone may be hewed and squared by the divine measurement, and polished to shine as an emblem of heaven, radiating in all directions the bright, clear beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

"In this world we are to shine in good works. The Lord requires His people ... to reflect the light of God's character, God's love, as Christ reflected it. As we look unto Jesus, all our lives will be aglow with that wondrous light. Every part of us is to be light; then whichever way we turn, light will be reflected from us to others. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. In Him is no darkness at all; therefore, if we are in Christ, there will be no darkness in us." *In Heavenly Places*, 281

So why has it taken so long? Why has this controversy continued for more than 6,000 years?

"The reason why the Bridegroom delays is because He is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance. ... O that each ... would appreciate the value of the soul that has been purchased at infinite cost on Calvary! O that each one would place a proper estimate upon the capabilities that have been given him of God! Through Christ you may climb the ladder of progress, and bring every power under the control of Jesus. You may represent the character of Jesus. In spirit, in thought, in word, and in action, you may make manifest that you are moved by the Spirit of Christ, and your life may wield a power of influence

over others.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 20, 1894

“The Light of the world is shining upon us that we might absorb the divine rays and let this light shine upon others in good works, that many souls shall be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and it grieves the heart of Jesus that so many refuse the offers of His mercy and matchless love.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, 303

Friends, we can be absolutely certain that God has, does and will show up. The Bible says, “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.” Psalm 145:18

It may not always look the way we think it should but, “When we are in trouble and pressed down with anxieties, the Lord is near, and He bids us cast all our care upon Him, because He cares for us. ...

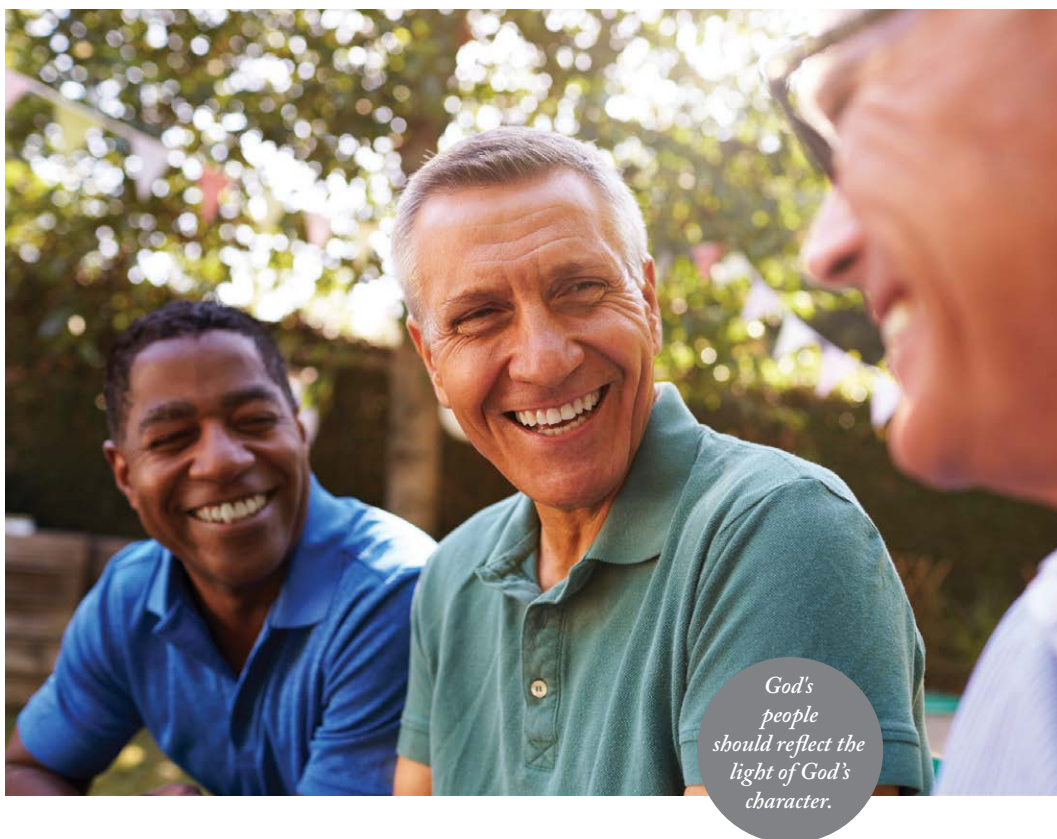
“He comes to all His children in their affliction. In time of danger He is their refuge. In sorrow, He offers them joy and consolation. ... He utters the gracious invitation, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ ...

“Those who turn to God with heart and soul and mind will find in Him peaceful security. ...

“He knows just what we need, just what we can bear, and He will give us grace to endure every trial and test that He brings upon us. ...

“Every provision has been made to meet the needs of our spiritual and our moral nature.” *Our Father Cares*, 17, 18

Doesn’t that sound like a God who shows up? And if we can’t clearly see that God is present, available, powerful and patiently waiting on us, then it is because we are looking somewhere else, or we want Him to respond in a way we expect or even demand, or we think we know better what to do and how to do it.



If you are concerned that maybe God hasn’t shown up, think about this. From the beginning God knew that evil would spread across this world and its people. He knew that they would choose to follow another. Yet, instead of abandoning the idea of creating this world, He made a plan to restore its people to their rightful place as His created children, if they chose Him to be their Father. He provided the Holy Spirit to speak to hearts and effect transformation in the lives of those seeking it. He provided the Lamb as our life pattern and ultimately as a sacrifice to pay the penalty, one we could not pay, for the sins of the whole world. He provides love, forgiveness, restoration, atonement, rest, faith, peace and opportunity. Whatever is necessary is provided to bring even a single one of His children back into a right relationship with Himself, including the entire host of heaven, if needed.

God doesn’t have to show up. He’s never been away. He’s always been

right here. We may not understand why and how things happen in this world, but it isn’t because God has failed to be present. I know that there are a lot of terrible things going on in the world and a lot of innocent people are hurt. And that is why we ask the question “Why doesn’t God show up?” But I have faith that when this world finally comes to an end, when sin and Satan are gone, that God will make everything come out right for those who put their trust in Him. We must always remember what God has promised us: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

The question isn’t whether God will show up, but will we? **LM**

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The Value of Something Almost Lost

By John J. Grosboll

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”

Psalm 95:1–6

Sometimes we are not aware of how important something is until it is almost lost or even gone. For example, many do not understand just how wonderful and important good health is until they are sick or no longer strong and healthy.

When I was young, I loved music. It was my desire to learn to play many different instruments, so my parents arranged for me to have music lessons. At first, I learned to play the trumpet and the piano. I took lessons for several years, and then I began to have trouble with my eyesight. For a while, I had to give up playing the piano and engaging in other musical pursuits.

While there was great concern that I would go blind, in the end I did not. But I have often wondered if the reason that my musical pursuits were halted was providential. Could it be that I might have wanted to pursue a different life, one filled

with the devil’s music? God had other plans for me, and in His mercy, I believe He put a large and potentially permanent obstacle in my path.

I have always tried to follow His leading and as a result I have been a teacher and a pastor for many, many years. Had I continued my musical pursuits all those years ago, it might be that I would not have fulfilled the plans that He had for my life.

Today, I still love music and continue to play the piano. I am filled with praise and thankfulness that God loved me enough to keep me from the wrong path and to lead me in His way. I want to be able to join the saints and angels one day to fill all the realms of heaven with joyous thanksgiving. I hope you want that, too. The great thing is that it doesn’t matter if you can’t play an instrument or even carry a tune here. When Jesus comes, we will all have a song to sing and a voice to sing it. **LM**

Consecration

My Father, take this heart of mine,
And make it wholly, only Thine.
Oh, may no thought be harbored there
But those Thy searching gaze may bear!
This wayward tongue I pray Thee take;
Teach it to speak as Jesus spake.
Pluck out the sting that in it lies,
And check the venom'd words that rise.
Lord, take these hands, these worthless hands,
Bid them be swift at Thy commands
To soothe the sick, to feed the poor,
And bring the outcast to my door.
Take Thou my feet, and make them be
Angels of service, Lord, for Thee;
Teach them to walk the narrow way,
Nor in forbidden paths to stray.
Yea, Lord, this heart, these hands of mine –
Body and spirit, all are Thine;
For Thou didst buy them on the tree;
I do but give Thine own to Thee.

Elizabeth Rosser
From *The Review and Herald*, November 28, 1899



2 Thessalonians

Clues – KJV

Across

- B2 Paul had _____ that they would “keep the faith” 3:4
 B14 Paul saw this mystery working in the church since his last visit 2:7
 D13 Paul called the man of sin in the church the son of _____ 2:3
 E4 Principle of life: if one does not work, he should not do this 3:10
 F9 What the man of sin does to himself 2:4
 G2 Paul said the man of sin would be revealed in _____ (two words) 2:6
 G20 Those who are deluded will believe this 2:11
 H13 Unbelievers have this in unrighteousness 2:12
 I2 He sent greetings along with Paul 1:1
 K2 We will be deceived if we do not have this (four words) 2:10
 K18 We are saved by a belief in this 2:13
 M14 Paul’s clarification was so they’d be _____ troubled (two words) 2:2
 N9 What kind of delusion will some fall into? 2:11
 O1 Jesus returns with what kind of angels? 1:7
 O16 What the Lord will do to the man of sin when He returns 2:8
 Q1 What Paul was, and we Christians should be, to all others 3:9
 Q18 The _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ should be glorified by our lives 1:12
 R11 Though it’s delayed, we should be in a state of _____ waiting for Jesus’ return 3:5
 S5 Who is faithful? 3:3

Down

- A6 Jesus is coming back, but a falling away from truth will come _____ 2:2, 3
 A9 Like the Philippians, we will have to _____ persecution 1:4
 A11 We are counseled to not become weary in _____ doing 3:13
 A16 Paul advised to not get this shaken 2:2
 B2 Jesus will be admired by His saints when He shall _____ 1:10
 B4 Take _____ of disobedient people and don’t associate with them 3:14
 B20 Paul offered rest to those who were this 1:7
 D14 The wicked’s separation from the presence of God will be this 1:9
 D18 Paul commended the Philippians for their patience and faith in their _____ 1:4
 F16 Paul invited the Lord to direct this into the love of God (singular) 3:5
 G7 Paul said he would attempt to destroy God’s true church (three words) 2:3, 4
 I2 From the beginning God has chosen us for this 2:13
 I4 What Jesus and His Father have done to us from the beginning 2:16
 I11 What we should do from any who don’t walk the strait path 3:6
 N13 Paul worked _____ and day to not be a burden on the church 3:8
 N21 The wicked will finally be separated from the glory of God’s _____ 1:9
 O5 Where the man of sin sits claiming to be God 2:4
 O8 Busybodies who don’t work should eat their own _____ 3:11, 12
 O16 Those who don’t believe the truth will be this 2:12
 O19 What Paul did to God for the growing faith of the Philippians 1:3
 R12 Unfortunately _____ men do not have faith in the truth 3:2

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

Answer Key:

22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
S			K		E																	S
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B			C		O																	B
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"Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified."

2 Thessalonians 3:1





The Greatest Love Story Ever Told

The Magi were philosophers from the East and wise as man reckons. They studied for long years the heavens and the stars, and as they observed these marvelous things they beheld the glory of the Creator.

Even though they were considered heathens, in their wonderment they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures and learned that there were prophecies that had been handed down century after century regarding a Messiah. Even in their own land there were treasured prophecies regarding a divine Teacher. And as they studied, they learned that His coming was near.



One night they noticed an extremely bright star in the heavens, one they had not observed before. They consulted with priests and philosophers and searched the ancient records. Balaam of the Old Testament had been one of their number and they found that he had declared “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel.” Numbers 24:17. Some were given dreams and in this way instructed to go in search of the newborn Prince.

They did not know that the star they beheld was actually a company of angels declaring the birth of the Messiah in a manger, in a stable, to the shepherds upon the hills outside Bethlehem. An angel had appeared to the shepherds and said, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And then this angel was joined by a multitude of angels and they all sang together, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Luke 2:10–14

When that company of angels had faded away, a luminous star appeared and lingered in the sky. This was the star observed by the Magi and we are told that once they set off, it led them each night closer to the Christ child. They brought with them rich gifts from their land, as was their custom, to bestow upon the Child. It is a beautiful thought that while the Magi had not only the physical star in the sky to guide their way to the manger, they were also given inward evidence by the Holy Spirit. And though the journey was long, this impressed their hearts and filled them with hope.



The star ultimately led them to the manger in Bethlehem and they were able to bow before the Prince of heaven and to give Him their gifts and worship and praise.

The Spirit of Prophecy says that sin had become very bad and had even found its way into the religious practices of the day. It caused rebellion in the hearts of men and made them hate God, all the while claiming to be His children. “It was demonstrated ... that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world.” *The Desire of Ages*, 37

Even the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds thought that God would rise up and sweep the earth clean of sin and sinners. But this would have given Satan the opportunity to declare again that God’s government could not be both just and merciful.

But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it and though sin was everywhere, God made a way for its recovery. “At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came [as an emissary] of divine grace.” Ibid.

The angel who came to tell Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah said, “[Y]ou shall call His name Jesus, for He

will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21. And verse 23 declares further, “ ‘and they shall call His name Immanuel ... God with us.’ ”

So herein lies the greatest love story ever told. The story of a God who wanted children so much that He created worlds until one chose not to be His. Yet, His love for them was so great that instead of abandoning them, leaving them to die alone, He made a plan to send His Son to pay the price they could not pay. He came to die for their sins and to show them how to live their lives so that they could one day be restored again to their heavenly home, to live for all of eternity with their Father.

“Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the [wickedness] of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled.” *The Desire of Ages*, 37

When the need was the most dire, Jesus came. He lived. He died. He rose again. He lives. He forgives. He saves. This is love.

Adapted from *The Desire of Ages* [LM](#)





The Warfare Before Us

God wants us to help one another by a manifestation of sympathy and unselfish love. There are those who have inherited peculiar tempers and dispositions. They may be hard to deal with; but are we faultless? They are not to be discouraged. Their errors are not to be made common property. Christ pities and helps those who err in judgment. He has suffered death for every man, and because of this He has a touching and profound interest in every man.

A man may be trying to serve God, but temptations from within and from without assail him. Satan and his angels urge and coax him to transgress. Perhaps he falls a prey to their temptings. How then do his brethren treat him? Do they speak harsh, cutting words, driving him further from the Saviour? What a sad sight for Christ and the angels to behold!

Let us remember that we are struggling and falling, failing in speech and action to represent Christ, falling and rising again, despairing and hoping. Let us beware of dealing unkindly with those who, like ourselves, are subjects of temptation and who, like ourselves also, are the objects of Christ's unfailing love.

Testimonies, vol. 9, 222. **LM**

S • P • R • E • A • D

kindness

Giving and Remembrance

For Christians, the Christmas season *should* be about giving and remembering. Remembering God's ultimate gift—His Son, and Jesus' ultimate gift—His life; both are necessary that the gift of salvation might be available to the people of the world.

“For God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16, 17

“What love, what wonderful love, was displayed by the Son of God! The death we deserved was suffered to come upon Him that immortality might be *given* to us, who could never merit such a reward. Is not salvation great in its simplicity and wonderful in its comprehensiveness? ... The plan of redemption provides for every emergency and for every want of the soul.” *In Heavenly Places*, 37

As we listen to the beautiful music, gaze at the pretty lights, thrill as we wrap and unwrap gifts in festive paper and bright ribbons and bows, *let us not forget* the true meaning and reason that we celebrate at this time of year.

We should *remember* all through the year that Jesus left heaven to be born as

a babe, to live His life so that He could bring men and women to the Father, and then to die, to pay a price we could not pay. But most of the world, even those who claim to be Christian, celebrate the birth of Christ in December. That makes this time of year an exceptional opportunity to witness to a world that may be just a little more open to hearing about Jesus and what He has done for us.

“Christmas is coming,’ is the note that is sounded throughout our world from east to west and from north to south. ... But what is Christmas that it should demand so much attention? ...

“It is right to bestow upon one another *tokens of love and remembrance* if we do not in this forget God, our best Friend. We should make our gifts such as will prove a real benefit to the receiver. ...

“Let the presents you shall make be of that order which will shed beams of light upon the pathway to heaven. ...

“Brethren and sisters, while you are devising gifts for one another, I would remind you of our heavenly Friend, lest you should be unmindful of His claims. Will He not be pleased if we show that we have not forgotten Him? Jesus, the Prince of life, *gave all* to bring salvation within our reach.” *The Adventist Home*, 477–480

“If Christmas is kept at all, it should be kept in a way that will be in harmony with its significance. Christ should be *remembered*, His name honored; the old, old story of His love should be recounted. Instead of saying by our actions that we are putting Christ out of our minds and hearts, we should testify to men, to angels, and to God, that we *remember* our Redeemer, by following His example of self-sacrifice for others’ good.” *The Review and Herald*, December 9, 1890 [Emphasis supplied.]

Lord, at this time especially, may we joyously tell the world of Your blessed birth and willing sacrifice to save mankind. May our lives reflect Your character every day of the year so that men and women can see Your love and mercy for them. **LM**



Your Letters

"I do feel so very blessed to be a part of this ministry. You have no idea how my Lord has used the sermons and *LandMarks* to grow me spiritually through some extremely physically and emotionally difficult times these last four years. I just praise God so much for your ministry."

—JA, Colorado

"I am really blessed with all the Bible study guides and especially with the *Landmarks* magazines linked on the website. I've downloaded some of the pdf issues of the *LandMarks* and it has really helped me."

—TV, Fiji

"Thank you for your ministry! For the *LandMarks*!"

—JR, California

December Sermon of the Month

When God's Family Was Stolen

By John J. Grosboll

God created the earth and its inhabitants so that He would have a larger family. But Satan deceived God's children and kidnapped their affections from Him. But God had a plan.

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

December 2021

Dear Friend,

Are you taking advantage of all the opportunities that the Lord sends you to share your faith? 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

"The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" *The Ministry of Healing*, 143

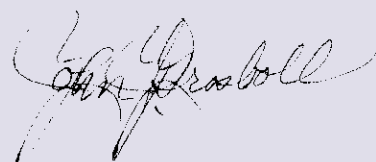
A short time ago, my son struck up a conversation with a man he had seen on occasion while walking for outdoor exercise. This man is an Episcopalian and interested in religious music. As they have gotten better acquainted, my son discovered that this man has been studying prophecy, particularly Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Revelation 18, and the seven trumpets. Recently, this man began to explain to my son what he was studying and his understanding from these prophecies.

You have no doubt read in Acts 18:24–26 the story of Apollos. It says, "Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside, and explained to him the way of God more accurately."

This Episcopal man is like Apollos in that he understands a great deal, but he does not understand how all the prophecies fit together or the significance of the three angels' messages. But as he studies and learns, he is becoming a prime candidate to be gifted with *The Great Controversy* in the very near future.

What opportunity is God sending your way with the people you work with or are acquainted with socially?

Sincerely, your brother in Christ,



John J. Grosboll

13th Sabbath Offering

Chairs for Kenya

We are so thankful for the financial support that enabled us to purchase new plastic chairs for our meetings. It was our intent to purchase 30, but by the grace of our Lord we were able to get a discount sufficient to enable us to buy 40 chairs. Thank you for helping us to fill this need.

We have been meeting in the home of John Atambo in Mekomoni. John is 75 years old, so we come to his house to worship with his family because he is not able to walk long distances.

We deeply appreciate your continued assistance. May the Lord continue to guide you and us as we seek to serve Him.

To support the work in Kenya and other areas of the mission field, please mark your donation *Missions*.

Blessings,
Zachari Makworo



Top: *The Mekomoni, Kenya congregation has been meeting in a private home. Now people will be able to attend as there will be more chairs.*



Left: *Forty plastic chairs for a church in Mekomoni, Kenya.*

“*The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.*

Last Day Events, 188

from the
Mission Fields



Pressing Ahead in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

By Pastor Domingo Nunez

At the beginning of 2010, Steps to Life began working in Santa Cruz, one of the largest cities in Bolivia. The brethren there come from all different backgrounds and religious experiences.



Architectural renderings of a future building which will house the mission headquarters in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to reach Latin America. Construction is currently under way.

At the end of the first meetings in 2010, the brothers in Santa Cruz demonstrated a sincere and honest interest in learning more about the gospel. They desired to become connected with the three angels' messages and the Free Seventh-day Adventist movement. They expressed a strong willingness to learn how to become a part of the family of God, with a longing to become instruments of God as leaders of the gospel movement in South America.

Over the last 10 to 11 years things have wonderfully developed. It has been a blessing to see the progress in the people, especially in Brother Jose Luis, the first graduate of the training program for lay pastors and church leadership. He has since become an instructor in church leadership in the area and as a result,

many others have enrolled in the training program to become church leaders in their home areas.

Today the congregation in Santa Cruz has grown and I see, more and more, the work being done well. There is now a team able to translate the Spirit of Prophecy books that have never before been translated into Spanish. The members of the team come from Panama, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Bolivia, working together in laying out the books and materials for publishing. Once published, these materials will be used as witnessing tools available to the public in South America and Central America.

To facilitate the publishing work, the training programs, as well as radio and television studios, they are in need of their own building. This would provide a

much needed place of worship, classrooms for the training programs, and would also become the headquarters of the South America Division of Free Seventh-day Adventists.

Construction is already underway and, if progress continues at the current pace, the expected date of completion will be the end of December 2021. This will be a challenge, but the Lord is blessing, and the Bible reminds us that all things are possible when we do the Lord's will.

Please continue to remember this work and these brethren in your prayers. Your continued support of this mission work is very much appreciated and any donations toward the building construction or any of the specific ministries being conducted in South America should be marked *Bolivia*. **LM**

Why Birds' Feet Don't Freeze

A quick glance at a winter weather forecast is enough to make most of us grateful for our warm homes and thankful for those who work outdoors in these brutal conditions.

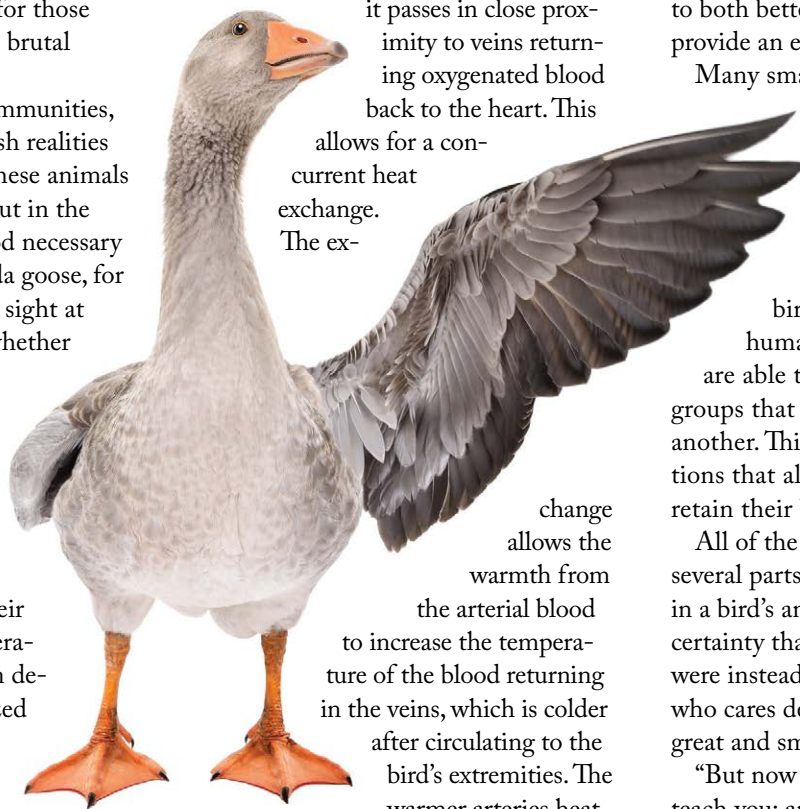
For the wildlife in our communities, there is no escaping the harsh realities of winter. In fact, many of these animals must spend time each day out in the snow and ice to find the food necessary for survival. Take the Canada goose, for instance. They are a familiar sight at our local lakes and ponds, whether they are frozen solid or not.

How do they do it?

Like people and all mammals, birds are warm-blooded. Their body temperature remains constant—about 106 degrees. To maintain their body heat in freezing temperatures, their bodies have been designed with several specialized mechanisms.

Birds' feet are little more than bone, sinew and scale, with very few nerves, and for birds such as geese, ducks, and other waterfowl that spend time on ice or in cold water, keeping their legs and feet warm is essential for survival. Birds rely on a vascular system called *rete mirabile* designed to keep their feet warm. In this system, the arteries and veins in the legs and feet are close together, allowing the blood to be warmed and cooled quickly.

Here is how it works. As warm, oxygenated blood leaves the heart in arteries moving toward the bird's feet, it passes in close proximity to veins returning oxygenated blood back to the heart. This allows for a concurrent heat exchange. The ex-




change allows the warmth from the arterial blood to increase the temperature of the blood returning in the veins, which is colder after circulating to the bird's extremities. The warmer arteries heat the cooler veins and the veins cool the arteries. And since the temperature of the bird's feet is closer to the environmental temperature, they don't lose as much heat as they would if they were at body temperature. Also, birds' feet lack sweat glands, so they stay dry with no danger of freezing to a perch. The heat exchange is just one way birds stay warm in winter. Many birds

have a winter plumage with more feathers to better insulate their bodies. Some species, such as finches, add fat in winter to both better insulate themselves and provide an energy source.

Many small birds, though, cannot bulk up too much because it would affect how they fly. For these birds, such as chickadees, shivering helps them stay warm. Shivering in birds isn't quite like it is for humans. When birds shiver, they are able to activate particular muscle groups that work in opposition to one another. This causes muscle contractions that allow the birds to better retain their body heat.

All of the interaction between the several parts of the different systems in a bird's anatomy only reinforces the certainty that birds did not evolve, but were instead created by a loving God who cares deeply for all of His creation, great and small.

"But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?" Job 12:7-10

Sources: reconnectwithnature.org (including Audubon Society, Smithsonian, Popular Science); Michael Stein for Bird Note 

Q:

How was the ark able to withstand the flood? Was Noah just a really good builder?

A:

The building of this immense structure was a slow and laborious process. On account of the great size of the trees and the nature of the wood, much more labor was required then than now to prepare timber, even with the greater strength which men then possessed. All that man could do was done to render the work perfect, yet the ark could not of itself have withstood the storm which was to come upon the earth. God alone could preserve His servants upon the tempestuous waters.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 95

“The massive ark trembled in every fiber as it was beaten by the merciless winds and flung from billow to billow.

The cries of the beasts within expressed their fear and pain. But amid the warring elements it continued to ride safely. Angels that excel in strength were commissioned to preserve it.” *Ibid.*, 100

“After Noah had done all in his power to make every part of the work correct, it was impossible that it could of itself withstand the violence of the storm which God in His fierce anger was to bring upon the earth. The work of completing the building was a slow process. Every piece of timber was closely fitted, and every seam covered with pitch. All that men could do was done to make the work perfect; yet, after all, God alone could preserve the building upon the angry, heaving

billows, by His miraculous power.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 71

How then are we to withstand the flood of evil, described to be “as in the days of Noah,” that is overwhelming our world today?

“It should be the first work ... to be right before God ... and then to stand in the strength of Christ, unaffected by the wrong influences to which they will be exposed. If they make the broad principles of the word of God the foundation of the character, they may stand wherever the Lord in His providence may call them, surrounded by any deleterious influence, and yet not be swayed from the path of right.” *Counsels on Health*, 405 **LM**





The Health Benefits of Singing

Many studies done over a number of years have focused on the health benefits of singing, and the evidence is overwhelming: singing is good for you.

Singing strengthens the health, broadens the mind, refines the intellect, expands the imagination, makes one happy and gives life a little added zest.

Singing boosts the immune system by causing the body to generate immunoglobulin A, a protein considered a first line of defense against respiratory infections. It also increases the production of hydrocortisone, an anti-stress hormone.

Singing releases endorphins into your system and makes you feel uplifted and energized. People who sing are frequently healthier than people who don't.

Singing gives the lungs a workout. It makes us breathe more deeply than many other forms of strenuous exercise. We take in more oxygen and in turn, our aerobic capacity is improved and we can experience a release of muscle tension.

All of these things—a more robust immune system, a happier mood, stronger lungs, reduced stress and improved circulation—can help prolong life.

And, singing is free. Nearly everyone has the ability, if not perfect tone, to sing for their entire lifetime. Greg Cohen of George Washington University tracked a Senior Singers Chorale in Arlington, Virginia. The chorale singers' average age is 80—the youngest is 65 and the oldest 96. Preliminary data shows the singers suffer less depression, make fewer doctor

visits a year, take fewer medications and have increased their other activities. So singing can provide an inexpensive, easily accessible and powerful way to improve physiological and psychological well-being.

Singing starts in infancy. Babies are known to sing to themselves in moments of absolute emotional tranquility. Like the infant, we sing to ourselves because we feel good. We often find ourselves humming along with a tune or singing in the car or the shower which, in turn, makes us feel even better.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers have found that children learn best through singing, and for a long time, have used music to help children learn and remember material. Music is used

to engage the children in activities that are associated with the songs they are singing. Music, including singing, also helps to strengthen math skills.

In music therapy, certain sounds benefit particular parts of the body. For example:

- Singing the short-a sound, as in ahh, will help banish the blues. It forces oxygen into the blood, which signals the brain to release mood-lifting endorphins.
- To boost alertness, make the long-e sound, as in emit. It stimulates the pineal gland, which controls the body's biological clock.
- Singing the short-e sound, as in echo, stimulates the thyroid gland, which secretes hormones that control the speed of digestion and other bodily processes.
- Singing the long-o sound, as in ocean, stimulates the pancreas, which regulates blood sugar.
- To strengthen immunity, sing the double-o sound, as in too. This activates the spleen, which regulates the production of infection fighting white blood cells.

So, think about this: when a choir does vocal exercises that include ahh, a, e, o and oo, they are not only developing flexibility and helping to control pitch and tone—which is the purpose of vocalizing—they have just made themselves happy, given themselves a boost of energy, helped to regulate their blood sugar and have strengthened their immune system. This is one of the reasons why choral singers look to be in a state of euphoric happiness when they sing.

So, to summarize here are a few of the health benefits gained from singing:

- improves mood
- effective stress reliever
- improves sleep
- releases pain-relieving endorphins
- improves posture
- increases lung capacity



- clears the sinuses and respiratory tubes
- tones your facial and stomach muscles
- tones abdominal and intercostal muscles and the diaphragm
- stimulates circulation

And in addition, a few of the emotional and psychological benefits are:

- strengthens concentration and memory
- broadens expressive communication
- adds a rich, more pleasant quality to speech
- stimulates insight into prose and poetry and piques interest in the deeper meaning of words
- is an ageless enjoyment—you are never too young or too old
- is therapeutic
- improves mental alertness
- increases poise and presentation skills
- increases confidence

And the best part is, you don't have to be a world-class singer to enjoy all of these benefits. Singing enriches the life far beyond notes and music. Add a healthy, new dimension to your life—SING!

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teach-

ing and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” Colossians 3:16

Singing with grace in our hearts to God hymns, scripture songs and uplifting songs of worship are ways we can let the word dwell in us richly. At such times when words alone aren't enough to convey the depth of our thankfulness or praise to the Lord, singing helps open our heart to Him in a way that words may be difficult to express. So let us sing for health and praise to our God!

“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all people. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised.” Psalm 96:1–4, *first part*

Adapted from the following sources: Professor Graham Welch, Director of Educational Research, University of Surrey, Roehampton, UK; Jovita Wallace, Sound Therapist; www.barbershop.org/the-health-benefits-of-singing; Patty Mills, *American Academy of Teachers of Singing* [LM](#)

In Danger of Hell Fire

By John J. Grosboll

If a person cherishes a spirit of malice and unkindness, he is cherishing a spirit that will result in hatred and a desire for revenge. This is why the Bible says that a person who hates his brother is a murderer and cannot hope to have eternal life. The question is, how can this spirit be removed or changed?

Across the Sea of Galilee from where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount was the land of Bashan. This land, filled with wild gorges and wooded areas, had for a long time been a favorite lurking ground for criminals of all descriptions. Even in Jesus' day, there were reports of frequent murders and robberies committed in the area. People thought that if Jesus was teaching the law, He would have a stern rebuke for the people committing these crimes. They were shocked when He quoted the sixth commandment that says, "You shall not murder," and showed that the commandment applied to them.

The people of that time cherished bitter hatred against the Romans and other

people of their own country who did not in all things conform to their ideas. They were contentious and passionate, and so Jesus said to them, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' [an empty-headed, vain fellow] shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' [a person who has abandoned himself to wickedness] shall be in danger of hell fire." Matthew 5:21, 22

Actually, many of the most accurate and ancient manuscripts leave out the words "without a cause." The text would then read: "I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council."

This spirit of hatred and revenge is at the basis of murders. It originated with

Lucifer, the leading angel of heaven. His name became Satan, which means *adversary*, *devil*, or *slanderer*. This spirit led him to put to death the Son of God. The New Testament is very clear, the person, the intelligence that was behind the crucifixion of Jesus, was not just the Jewish leaders or the Roman government or Pilate, but an influence of supernatural forces. The devil wanted to destroy the Son of God, so he engineered and programmed the whole event. The heavenly universe saw and knew exactly what was going on, but the people of the earth did not know or understand.

So, as with the devil and many in ancient Israel, whoever today cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit and its fruit will be death. The revengeful thought is the seed that once grown or unfolded, produces the evil deed. The Bible says, "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15



In the gift of His Son, given for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places on every human soul. He gives no one permission or liberty to speak contemptuously about another human being. It is true, having eyes and ears, we will see and hear of faults and weaknesses in other human beings. But God claims these as His property, first because He created them, as we find in Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness.”

But human beings are doubly His because He purchased them back by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. So, since all human beings were created in the image of God, even those that have been most degraded by sin, we are to treat one another with respect and compassion. When we study the life of Jesus, we find that He treated even His persecutors with politeness and courtesy.

Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount that God will hold us accountable if we speak contemptuously about anyone for whom Jesus laid down His life. The New Testament also is very strict about this principle. Notice what it says in 1 Corinthians 4:7: “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

Paul says that everything you have received is from God, so why do you talk as if you produced something on your own? Paul also says in Romans 14:4: “Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.”

We are not to speak contemptuously of any human being no matter how degraded they are because of a life of sin. We are not to condemn our brother or sister as someone who is beyond the reach of salvation, as though they cannot be saved. If we pronounce judgment on someone else and say that we believe they cannot be saved, Jesus says that we

are in danger of hell fire ourselves. The book of Jude provides us with an example of how we should talk and treat our fellow human beings. “Yet Michael [one who is like God] the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”

Jude 9. Jesus did not bring a railing accusation against the devil. If He had, He would have placed Himself on Satan’s ground for accusations are the weapon of the wicked one. Revelation 12:10 says, “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”

This scripture calls Satan “the accuser of the brethren.” Jesus did not bring an accusation against the devil; He left it for His Father to decide the condemnation and judgment of the devil. We are to follow His example. When we are brought into conflict with the enemies of Christ, for He still has many enemies in this world, we are to say nothing with a spirit of retaliation, or anything appearing to be a reviling or railing accusation. If we stand as a mouthpiece for God, as all Christians should, then we should not utter words that even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with the devil. We must leave with God the work of judging and condemning.

The love of God is a positive, active principle, a living spring ever-flowing out to bless others. If the love of Christ really

dwells in our hearts, we not only will refrain from cherishing evil against our brother or sister, or speaking in a contemptuous way to them or about them, but we will ever and always seek to manifest love for them. In Matthew 5:23,

24, Jesus said, “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” In other words,

don’t even go to church to worship the Lord in public until you have made things right with the person that you have wronged. We cannot expect to be able to express faith in God’s pardoning love if we are indulging an unloving spirit.

If, when we come before God, we remember that someone else has something against us, then we are to leave our gift of prayer, thanksgiving, or freewill offering, and we are to go to that brother or sister with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our sin and ask them to forgive us. If we have in any manner defrauded or injured them, we are to attempt to make restitution. This has been a principle in the Bible from the most ancient times.

Ezekiel 33:15 says, “If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.” So, if we have unwittingly borne false witness against a brother or sister, if we have misstated their words, if we have injured their influence in any way, we need to go to those with whom we have conversed

“
*If a person cherishes
a spirit of malice and
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revenge.*”

about them and take back all the injurious misstatements.

If Christians would do this in matters of difficulty between Christian brothers or sisters, if instead of laying them before third parties we went frankly and honestly to speak directly to them to make things right, in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented. How much bitterness, would be avoided, and how closely Christians would be united in a bond of brotherly love (Hebrews 12:15).

As Jesus presented His sermon, the Jews prided themselves on their morality and they looked with horror upon the sensual practices of the Romans and other nations. But when Jesus showed them that the sixth commandment had to do with what was in the mind and heart, not just in the action, He also revealed something shocking about the seventh commandment. He said in Matthew 5:27, 28: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." When the thought of evil is loved and cherished, even secretly, it shows that sin still reigns in the heart.

He who finds pleasure in dwelling upon scenes of impurity, he who indulges the evil thought and the lustful look, may behold in the open sin the result of what he has been thinking. The Bible is very clear that all human beings are tempted in this world. But temptation does not create the evil that is revealed; it only develops or makes manifest that which was already in the heart, although it has been

hidden. The Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7. "For out of it [the heart] spring the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23, *last part*

To prevent a physical disease from spreading to another part of the body and destroying the life, a man would submit to having a part of his body, an arm or a hand, amputated. How much more should a person be willing to surrender whatever imperils the life of his soul? In Matthew 5:29, 30, He said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck

it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

This is a spiritual principle: whatever endangers the soul must be given up. If we are looking at something that endangers our souls, then we must stop looking at it. If we are handling something that endangers our souls, we must put it away. If where our feet take us is somewhere that endangers our souls, we must stop going there, because, through the gospel, souls that have been degraded and enslaved by Satan, by sin, are to be redeemed and are to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not just to deliver us from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, His purpose is to save us from sin itself.

The gospel purifies, transforms, and sanctifies the soul that has been corrupted and deformed. It is to be clothed in

"the beauty of the Lord our God." Psalm 90:17. It is "to be conformed to the image of His Son." Romans 8:29. The Bible says that "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. In fact, eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which every man and woman may be restored.

If we are going to reach this high ideal, whatever causes our souls to stumble must be sacrificed. It is through the will that sin retains its hold upon us. Often it seems to us that if we surrender everything to the Lord, we will be maimed, or crippled, or unable to do the things we have been planning to do. But it is through the surrender of the will to God, represented by Jesus as the plucking out of the eye or the cutting off of the hand, that we are freed from sin's grip.

Jesus says it is better to enter into life, even if we are maimed or crippled, than to continue in sin and lose our souls. You see, God is the fountain of life and we can only have life as we are in communion with Him. Sin separates us from God and if we are separated from God, we may exist for a little time, but it is inevitable that we will die. The only way that we can truly live is when we surrender to the Lord as our Master and Saviour, and through that surrender we will receive what the Lord wants to give to us.

If we refuse to yield our will to God, if we cling to self and sin, then we are choosing death because sin is going to be destroyed (1 John 3:8), and we will be destroyed along with it.

Friend, what will be your destiny? You have a choice to make. Will you forsake your sin and live, or will you hang on to it and be destroyed? **LM**

Pastor John J. Grosboll is Director of Steps to Life and pastors the Prairie Meadows Church in Wichita, Kansas. He may be contacted by email at: historic@stepstolife.org, or by telephone at: 316-788-5559.

“When we study the life of Jesus, we find that He treated even His persecutors with politeness and courtesy.”

December 26, 2021 – January 1, 2022

The Importance of Prophecy

Key Text

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7

Study Help: *Prophets and Kings*, 722–733; *The Acts of the Apostles*, 25–28

Introduction

“As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 133

Sunday

1 IN THE BEGINNING

1.a. After creating man, how did God communicate with him? Genesis 1:28, *first part*; 3:9

In what special sense can this kindle hope in our hearts? Matthew 5:8

Note: “The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. ‘Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.’ 1 Corinthians 13:12.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 27

1.b. What privilege was extended to Moses? Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:6–8; Deuteronomy 34:10

Note: “It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man’s Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 366

Monday

2 DURING THE OLD DISPENSATION

2.a. What were the prophets called in old times, and why? 1 Samuel 9:9; Numbers 12:6; 24:16. Describe the important scene they beheld. Numbers 24:17

Note: “To Christ ‘give all the prophets witness.’ Acts 10:43. From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven’s glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the Star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice Christ’s death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt.” *The Desire of Ages*, 211, 212

2.b. What are some of the various deeds performed by God’s prophets, and how are we all to benefit from their work? Hosea 12:13; Amos 3:7; 2 Chronicles 20:20

Note: “This is a time when every soul needs to cling earnestly to God. Those whom the Lord is leading to do His last work in the earth are to stand as Micah and Zephaniah and Zechariah stood in their day, to call to repentance and good works. The writings of these prophets contain warnings and instruction applicable to this time, and should receive our careful study. They should teach us to shun every phase of evil that made

such warnings essential to the people of the past. Let every soul arouse and make diligent examination of self, that everything that would separate the people of God from righteousness may be put away. ...

"I would say to all our people, Place yourselves in the light, that you may reflect light, and that souls may be led to see the great and soul-saving truths of the word of God. Every believer in Christ should be a laborer together with Him in drawing souls from sin to righteousness. We are to keep in view the life that measures with the life of God. We are to watch for opportunities to bring the truths of the word before those who do not see and understand. Christ is not now with us in person, but through the agency of the Holy Spirit, He is present to impart His power and grace and great salvation." *The Review and Herald*, September 16, 1909

Tuesday

3 PROPHETS AFTER OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

3.a. What shows that the prophetic gift continued in New Testament times? Acts 11:27, 28; 13:1; 21:8-11

Note: "During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the sacred canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God." *Lift Him Up*, 118

3.b. What are two identifying marks of the true church during the time of the end? Revelation 12:17; 19:10; Malachi 4:5, 6; Joel 2:28, 29

Note: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." This prophecy points out clearly that the remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.

"In Jeremiah's day the people had no question about the message of Moses, Elijah, or Elisha, but they did question and put aside the message sent of God to Jeremiah until its force and power was wasted and there was no remedy but for God to carry them away into captivity. ...

"As the third angel's message arose in the world, which is to reveal the law of God to the church in its fullness and power, the prophetic gift was also immediately restored. This gift has acted a very prominent part in the development and carrying forward of this message." *Loma Linda Messages*, 33

Wednesday

4 THE GIFT OF PROPHECY WITHDRAWN

4.a. Why was the gift of the Holy Spirit, which includes the gift of prophecy, withdrawn from the Christian church for a time? Revelation 11:6; Psalm 74:9

Note: "When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of 'heresy.' In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends." *The Great Controversy*, 443

4.b. What conditions can be expected when the gift of prophecy is either not present or not appreciated in the church? Acts 7:51-53; 7:35-39

Note: “The Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the world, and those who have had great light and opportunities and have not improved them, will be the first to be left. They have grieved away the Spirit of God. The present activity of Satan in working upon hearts, and upon churches and nations should startle every student of prophecy. The end is near.” *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 154

“[The] ... reasoning will be heard today from worldly-wise men, from the unfaithful watchmen in the pulpits, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming, all things remain as they were from the beginning. You have no need to be alarmed, there is to be a thousand years of temporal millennium before Christ will come. All the world will be converted. Peace, peace; you should pay no regard to these fanatics, who are only alarmists.’ The world generally will despise prophecy and abuse those who speak to them the words of God, rebuking their sins and calling them to repentance.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 3, 1878

“I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning?” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 98

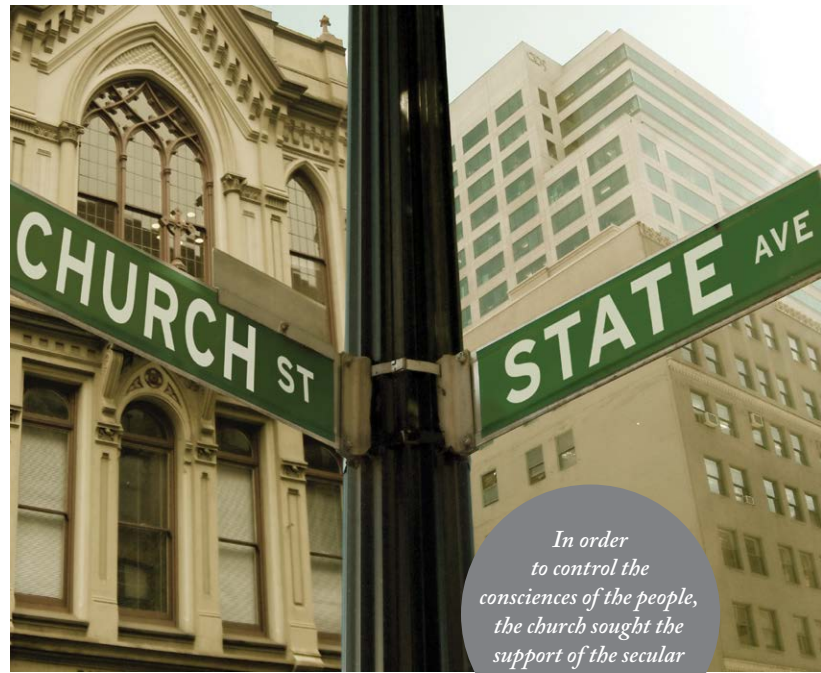
Thursday

5 THE PROPHETIC GIFT RESTORED

5.a. Why should we earnestly heed the counsel given by the apostle Peter regarding prophecy? 2 Peter 1:19–21; 3:1–7

Note: “The laws of nature cannot prevent the fulfillment of God’s word. The law is never greater than the Lawgiver, nor are the things created greater than the Creator. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of man. As men are warned of impending judgment, thousands will say, it cannot be. They will despise the truth, make light of prophecy, and deride the teacher of righteousness. One will turn aside to his farm, another to his merchandise, and care for none of these things.” *The Signs of the Times*, February 24, 1887

“Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in peril by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void His law. When God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand?” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 136



In order to control the consciences of the people, the church sought the support of the secular power.

5.b. In view of the nearness of the end of time, what are we admonished to do? 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Revelation 22:7

Note: “The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed, be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message.” *Evangelism*, 195

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we be sure to retain the gift of prophecy?
- 2 What acts were performed by the Old Testament prophets?
- 3 How were prophets used in the early Christian church?
- 4 Why was the gift of prophecy withdrawn?
- 5 What deserves our special attention in these last days?

January 2 – 8, 2022

God's Character Revealed Through Jesus

Key Text

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Hebrews 1:1, 2, *first part*

Study Help: *Steps to Christ*, 85–91; *That I May Know Him*, 288, 289

Introduction

"Christ came to the world to reveal the character of the Father, and to redeem the fallen race." *The Review and Herald*, January 7, 1890

Sunday

1 THE LAW OF GOD

1.a. What is revealed about God's character as represented in His moral law? Psalm 119:142; Romans 7:12

Note: "Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled." *The Signs of the Times*, February 24, 1898.

1.b. What was Jesus' attitude in regard to the ten commandments? Isaiah 42:21; John 15:10; Psalm 40:8

Note: "The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father's law is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin." *The Great Controversy*, 466

"Though Christ did away with their multitudinous exactions, He explicitly declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should ever fail. He had come to exalt the law, to magnify the law and make it honorable." *The Review and Herald*, April 30, 1895

Monday

2 GOD WITH US

2.a. Who was Christ before His incarnation and what was His position? John 1:1–4; Philippians 2:6

Note: "Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. ... In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. ...

"Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right." *The Faith I Live By*, 46

"There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory." *The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906

2.b. What constituted a miraculous sign about the incarnation of Jesus? Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:34, 35

Note: "The more we think about Christ's becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine

Son of God? Though we cannot understand it, we can believe that He who made the worlds, for our sakes became a helpless babe. Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, He became one with us. In Him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in Him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father.” *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 128

“He [Jesus Christ] was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of His glory.’ It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God’s love—to be ‘God with us.’ Therefore it was prophesied of Him, ‘His name shall be called Immanuel.’” *The Desire of Ages*, 19

Tuesday

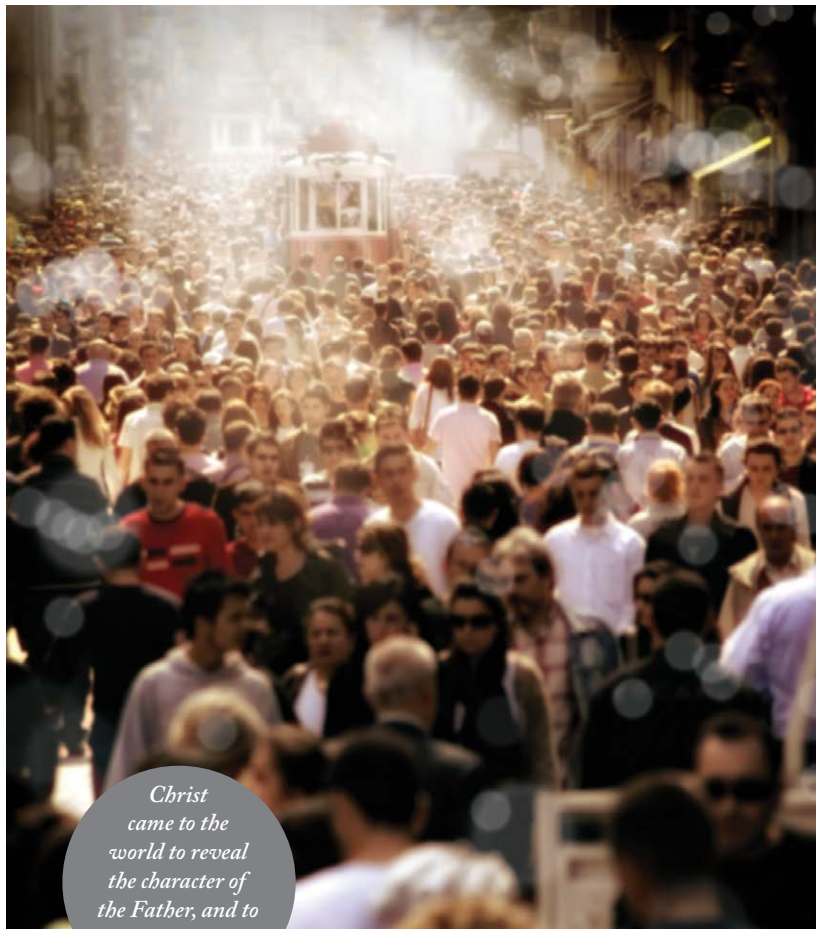
3 SPEAKING THROUGH PROPHETS AND APOSTLES

3.a. Who spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai and gave him the ten commandments written on two tables of stone? Acts 7:38; 1 Corinthians 10:4

Note: “It was Christ who spoke the law from Sinai. It was Christ who gave the law to Moses, engraven on tables of stone.” *The Review and Herald*, September 27, 1881

“Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness—the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host—but it was He who gave the law to Israel. Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father’s law. ... It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 366

“Through patriarchs and prophets He [Christ] revealed His truth to His people. Christ was the teacher of His ancient people as verily as He was when He came to the world clothed in the garments of humanity. Hiding His glory in human form, He often appeared to His people and talked with them ‘face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.’ He, their invisible leader, was enshrouded in the pillar of fire and of cloud, and spoke to His people through Moses.” *Lift Him Up*, 314



Christ came to the world to reveal the character of the Father, and to redeem the fallen race.

3.b. When Jesus was on earth, what did He affirm about His real identity? John 8:58; 13:13

Note: “The teaching of Christ in the gospel is in perfect harmony with the teaching of Christ through the prophets in the Old Testament. The prophets spoke through the messengers of Christ in the Old Testament as much as the apostles voiced His messages in the New Testament, and there is no contradiction between their teachings.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 345

“It was by His word that Jesus healed disease and cast out demons; by His word He stilled the sea, and raised the dead; and the people bore witness that His word was with power. He spoke the word of God, as He had spoken through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is a manifestation of Christ, and the Saviour desired to fix the faith of His followers on the word.” *The Desire of Ages*, 390

Wednesday

4 CALLED TO BE WITNESSES

- 4.a. Just before His ascension, what did Jesus request from the disciples? Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4. What must we realize about the Holy Spirit?

Note: “A determined, vigilant leader was in command of the agencies of evil, and the followers of Christ could resist and overcome the powers of darkness only through the help that God could give them. But through the power of the Holy Spirit they [the disciples] were to be successful witnesses of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. Beginning at Jerusalem, they were to widen the scene of their operations until all nations should hear the sound of the gospel.” *The Review and Herald*, November 6, 1894

“Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us.” *The Desire of Ages*, 672 [Author’s italics.]

- 4.b. What is involved in the gospel commission and how far does it extend? Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8

Note: “The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. ... All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be coworkers with Christ.” *The Desire of Ages*, 822

“Christ urges again and again upon His disciples the obligation to make known the gospel to the world. When within one step of the throne of God, He opened their understanding that they might know the Scriptures, repeating again the old commandment to go forth and preach the message of salvation.” *The Review and Herald*, November 6, 1894

Thursday

5 THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 5.a. According to the promise of Jesus, what event took place ten days after His ascension, and what was the result? Acts 2:1–4, 16–18, 41

Note: “That the disciples of Christ might be prepared for the great work which they were to do, Jesus had instructed them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high. On the day of Pentecost, as they were assembled together, and with one accord were seeking for the fulfillment of His promise, the Spirit of God descended, and the hearts of those who believed were filled with the Holy Ghost. The most signal evidence of the power of God was manifested, and thousands were converted in a day.” *The Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1890

- 5.b. In these last days of earth’s history, what promise is given us, and what will be its result? Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 3:19

Note: “As the ‘former rain’ was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the upspringing of the precious seed, so the ‘latter rain’ will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. ... The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.” *The Great Controversy*, 611, 612

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What relationship exists between Christ and the law?
- 2 What miracle can we not now fully understand?
- 3 How does Christ communicate with His people?
- 4 What is our great duty as Christians?
- 5 What will help us in the fulfillment of our commission?

January 9 – 15, 2022

John the Revelator

Key Text

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:9

Study Help: *The Sanctified Life*, 69–79; *The Acts of the Apostles*, 568–577

Introduction

"To John the Lord Jesus opened the subjects that He saw would be needed by His people in the last days." *The Review and Herald*, October 22, 1903

Sunday

1 THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

1.a. Which of the disciples were the closest with Jesus? Mark 5:37; Matthew 17:1; John 13:23–26; 21:20–25. Of these three who was still closer, and why?

Note: "John and James, Andrew and Peter, with Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew, had been more closely connected with Him than the others, and had witnessed more of His miracles. Peter, James, and John stood in still nearer relationship to Him. They were almost constantly with Him, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His words. John pressed into still closer intimacy with Jesus, so that he is distinguished as the one whom Jesus loved. The Saviour loved them all, but John's was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child's confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus." *The Desire of Ages*, 292

1.b. What subject especially attracted the attention of John? John 13:34, 35; 1 John 3:11

Note: "The apostle John realized that brotherly love was waning in the church, and he dwelt particularly upon this point. Up to the day of his death he urged upon believers the constant exercise of love for one another." *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 241

Monday

2 TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

2.a. What was the character of John like in his early experience in the gospel ministry? Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51–56

Note: "John and his brother [James] were called the 'sons of thunder.' John was a man of decided character, but he had learned lessons from the great Teacher. He had defects of character, and any slight shown to Jesus aroused his indignation and combativeness. His love for Christ was the love of a soul saved through the merits of Jesus; but with this love there were natural evil traits that had to be overcome. At one time he and his brother claimed the right to the highest position in the kingdom of heaven, and at another he forbade a man to cast out devils and heal diseases because he followed not with the disciples. At another time when he saw his Lord slighted by the Samaritans he wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume them. But Christ rebuked him, saying, 'The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'" *The Signs of the Times*, April 20, 1891

2.b. By what means was John, "the son of thunder," transformed into an apostle of love? Hebrews 12:1, 2

Note: "John was a living illustration of sanctification. On the other hand, Judas possessed a form of godliness, while his character was more satanic than divine. He professed to be a disciple of Christ, but in words and in works denied Him.

"Judas had the same precious opportunities as had John to study and to imitate the Pattern. He listened to the lessons of Christ, and his character might have been transformed by divine grace. But while John was earnestly warring against his

own faults and seeking to assimilate to Christ, Judas was violating his conscience, yielding to temptation, and fastening upon himself habits of dishonesty that would transform him into the image of Satan." *The Sanctified Life*, 59, 60

"It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ's own character shining out." *Our High Calling*, 58

Tuesday

3 PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS

3a. What prediction of Jesus was fulfilled in the lives of the early Christians? John 15:20; 16:2

Note: "One after another the foremost of the builders fell by the hand of the enemy. Stephen was stoned; James was slain by the sword; Paul was beheaded; Peter was crucified; John was exiled. Yet the church grew. New workers took the place of those who fell, and stone after stone was added to the building. Thus slowly ascended the temple of the church of God.

"Centuries of fierce persecution followed the establishment of the Christian church, but there were never wanting men who counted the work of building God's temple dearer than life itself. Of such it is written: 'Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.' Hebrews 11:36-38." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 597, 598

3.b. What promises are made to those who are persecuted? Isaiah 43:2; Job 23:10

Note: "John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. As the words were spoken, Thus perish all who believe in that deceiver, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, John declared, My Master patiently submitted to all that Satan and his angels could devise to humiliate and torture Him. He gave His life to save the world. I am honored in being permitted to suffer for His sake. I am a weak, sinful man. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

"These words had their influence, and John was removed from the caldron by the very men who had cast him in.

"Again the hand of persecution fell heavily upon the apostle. By the emperor's decree John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, condemned 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 1:9." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 570

Wednesday

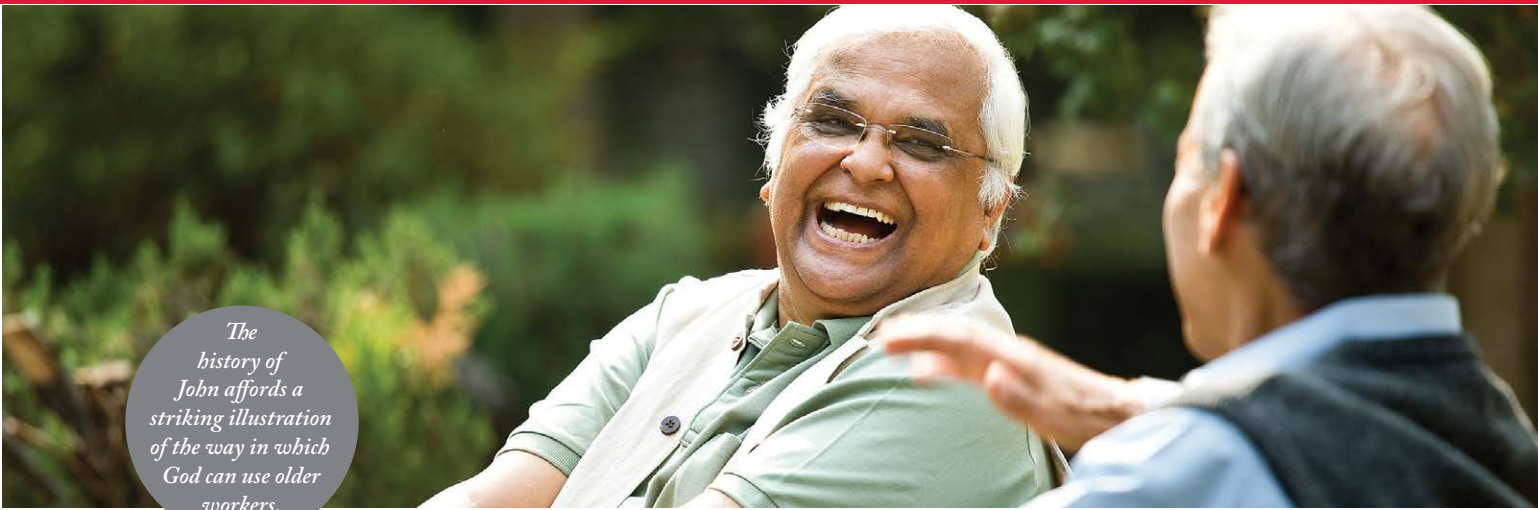
4 ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS

4.a. In order to silence the voice of John, what did the enemies of the gospel do to him after he had been saved from the boiling oil? Revelation 1:9

Note: "Again the enemies of truth sought to silence the voice of the faithful witness. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos. Here, they thought, he could no longer trouble Israel, and he must finally die of hardship and distress." *The Signs of the Times*, March 22, 1905

"John, the beloved disciple, was exiled to lonely Patmos, that he might be separated from all strife, and even from the work he loved, and that the Lord might commune with him and open before him the closing scenes in this earth's history." *The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1887

"Patmos, a barren, rocky island in the Aegean Sea, had been chosen by the Roman government as a place of banishment for criminals; but to the servant of God this gloomy abode became the gate of heaven. Here, shut away from the busy scenes of life, and from the active labors of former years, he had the companionship of God and Christ and the heavenly angels, and from them he received instruction for the church for all future time. The events that would take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history were outlined before him; and there he wrote out the visions he received from God." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 570, 571



The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use older workers.

4.b. What was John specifically instructed to do while on Patmos? Revelation 1:11

Note: “The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use aged workers. When John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, there were many who thought him to be past service, an old and broken reed, ready to fall at any time. But the Lord saw fit to use him still. Though banished from the scenes of his former labor, he did not cease to bear witness to the truth. Even in Patmos he made friends and converts. His was a message of joy, proclaiming a risen Saviour who on high was interceding for His people until He should return to take them to Himself.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 572, 573

Thursday

5 THE LORD'S DAY

5.a. What account does John give us of his first vision on the Isle of Patmos? Revelation 1:10.

Note: “‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.’ Did John here mean Sunday?—There is but one day called the Lord’s day, and that is the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath instituted at creation.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 13, 1897

“It was on the Sabbath that the Lord of glory appeared to the exiled apostle. The Sabbath was as sacredly observed by John on Patmos as when he was preaching to the people in the towns and cities of Judea. He claimed as his own the precious promises that had been given regarding that day.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 581

5.b. What promise is given to those who respect and honor the Sabbath? Isaiah 56:6, 7; 58:13, 14

Note: “John remembered that one of these ten precepts called upon him to ‘remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’ And the Lord’s day, the day on which Jehovah rested after the great work of creation, and which He blessed and sanctified, was as sacredly observed by him upon the lonely isle as it had been when he was among the churches, worshipping with them on that holy day.” *The Signs of the Times*, February 5, 1885

“To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ’s creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight.” *The Desire of Ages*, 289

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How did John become the beloved disciple?
- 2 How can we have the transformation experienced by John?
- 3 What will happen to all who follow Christ?
- 4 What is always the Christian’s duty?

January 16 – 22, 2022

The Book of Revelation

Key Text

“Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” Revelation 22:7

Study Help: *The Acts of the Apostles*, 578–585; *Early Writings*, 110, 285–289

Introduction

“In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 585

Sunday

1 REVELATION — NOT A MYSTERY

1.a. Who is the author of the book of Revelation?

Revelation 1:1. What is the meaning of the word “Revelation”?

Note: “God gave this revelation [of the truth for these last days] to Christ, and Christ communicated the same to John.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, 150

“In the past teachers have declared Daniel and the Revelation to be sealed books, and the people have turned from them. The veil whose apparent mystery has kept many from lifting it, God’s own hand has withdrawn from these portions of His word. The very name ‘Revelation’ contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. ‘Revelation’ means that something of importance is revealed. The truths of this book are addressed to those living in these last days.” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 113

1.b. Why is it that many do not appreciate the study of the book of Revelation? 2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 4:3

Note: “The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world’s history.” *The Great Controversy*, 341

Monday

2 WRITTEN FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

2.a. What can we understand from the words “which must shortly come to pass” written in Revelation 1:1?

Note: “Christ came to John exiled on the Isle of Patmos to give him the truth for these last days, to show him that which must shortly come to pass. Jesus Christ is the great trustee of divine revelation. It is through Him that we have a knowledge of what we are to look for in the closing scenes of this earth’s history.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, 150

“The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Revelation 1:1. ...

“‘Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.’ Revelation 1:3.” *Education*, 191

2.b. Why is it important to heed the messages contained in the book of Revelation? Revelation 1:3

Note: “It was Gabriel, ‘His angel,’ whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John; and a blessing is pronounced on those who read and hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written therein. ...

“God has given these things to us, and His blessing will attend the reverent, prayerful study of the prophetic scriptures.” *The Desire of Ages*, 234

“The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those ‘that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.’ One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation—that the connection between God and His people is close and decided.” *The Faith I Live By*, 345

Tuesday

3 A WONDERFUL PROMISE

3.a. What is the message of the words used by John in his greetings to the churches in Asia? Revelation 1:4–6

Note: “Why is it that there are so many who feel in uncertainty, who feel that they are orphans?—It is because they do not cultivate faith in the precious assurance that the Lord Jesus is their sin-bearer. ...

“We should daily exercise faith; and that faith should daily increase as it is exercised, as we realize that He has not only redeemed us, but has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and the Father.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 287

“The Lord would save us from the corruptions of the world; for He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Jesus, our precious Saviour, has redeemed us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has clothed us with the garments of salvation, even in His own robe of righteousness.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 2, 1892

3.b. In the upper room, what assurance had the Saviour given to His disciples? John 14:1–3. When and how was this promise repeated and further described? Acts 1:9–11

Note: “It was the compassionate Saviour, who, anticipating the loneliness and sorrow of His followers, commissioned angels to comfort them with the assurance that He would come again in person, even as He went into heaven.” *The Great Controversy*, 339

“Jesus is coming, but not as at His first advent, a babe in Bethlehem; not as He rode into Jerusalem, when the disciples praised God with a loud voice and cried, ‘Hosanna’; but in the glory of the Father and with all the retinue of holy angels to escort Him on His way to earth. All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for Him and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.’” *Early Writings*, 110

Wednesday

4 A SOLEMN AND GLORIOUS PROMISE

4.a. What prophetic event is repeated in the very first chapter of Revelation? Revelation 1:7

Note: “Many think lightly of Christ now. They despise and reject Him, and say, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’ for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.’ But we read, ‘He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.’ The same Jesus whose atonement has been rejected, whose followers have been despised and reviled, will be revealed from heaven ...” *The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1898

4.b. What else should we understand about this wondrous scene? 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10

Note: “One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ’s second coming to complete the great work of redemption. To God’s pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in ‘the region and shadow of death,’ a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is ‘the resurrection and the life,’ to ‘bring home again His banished.’ The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer’s power and bring them again to the lost paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope.” *The Great Controversy*, 299

4.c. As believers in Christ’s glorious return, what solemn truths must we realize? 1 John 3:2, 3; Matthew 16:27

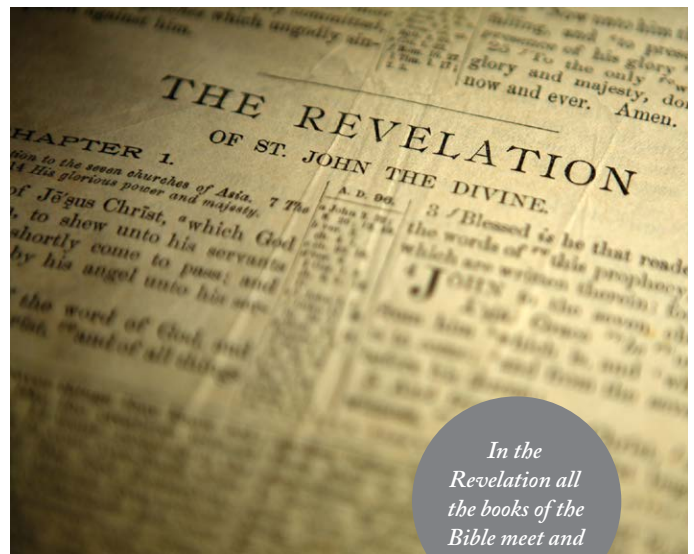
Note: “It is through faith in Jesus Christ that the truth is accepted in the heart, and the human agent is purified and cleansed. ... He has an abiding principle in the soul that enables him to overcome temptation. ‘Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.’ 1 John 3:6. God has power to keep the soul that is in Christ who is under temptation.” *The Faith I Live By*, 130

Thursday

5 AN APPROPRIATE TITLE

5.a. How does Jesus identify Himself to John the Revelator, and what truths does this signify? Revelation 1:8

Note: “When the students of prophecy shall set their hearts to know the truths of Revelation, they will realize what an importance is attached to this search. Christ Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Genesis of the Old Testament, and the Revelation of the New. Both meet together in Christ.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1092



“The first gleam of light that pierced the gloom in which sin had wrapped the world, came from Christ. And from Him has come every ray of heaven’s brightness that has fallen upon the inhabitants of the earth. In the plan of redemption Christ is the Alpha and the Omega—the First and the Last.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 367

5.b. What distinct aspects of Jesus Christ should we keep in mind? Revelation 22:12, 13

Note: “What a Saviour we have! ... None but just such an ever-living, mighty God, could pay the ransom to save sinners.” *The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1896

“The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message.

“The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 406

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why is the book of Revelation important to us today?
- 2 How should the Christian approach Revelation?
- 3 Why are many wandering in hopelessness?
- 4 What are some key aspects to Christ’s second coming?
- 5 What is significant about the title “Alpha and Omega”?

January 23 – 29, 2022

Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

Key Text

“We have such an high priest ... a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 8:1, 2

Study Help: *The Great Controversy*, 409–422; *Early Writings*, 250–253

Introduction

“The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth.” *The Great Controversy*, 414

Sunday

1 A REPLICA OF THE HEAVENLY

1.a. When Moses spent forty days with the Lord on Mount Sinai, what specific instructions did he receive? Exodus 25:8, 9, 40

Note: “The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy. God placed His Spirit upon the builders of the earthly sanctuary.” *The Great Controversy*, 414

1.b. With what was the earthly tabernacle constructed? Exodus 25:1–7. How was it divided?

Note: “For the building of the sanctuary, great and extensive preparations were necessary; a large amount of the most precious and costly material was required, but the Lord accepted only freewill offerings.” *Prophets and Kings*, 61

“The tabernacle itself consisted of two apartments called the holy and the most holy place, separated by a rich and beautiful curtain, or veil.” *The Great Controversy*, 412

Monday

2 THE MINISTRY IN THE HOLY PLACE

2.a. What provision was made for those who ignorantly transgressed God’s law? Leviticus 4:27–31; Acts 17:30

Note: “The most important part of the daily ministration was the service performed in behalf of individuals. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and placing his hand upon the victim’s head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.” *The Faith I Live By*, 198

“Such was the work that went on, day by day, throughout the year. The sins of Israel were thus transferred to the sanctuary, and a special work became necessary for their removal.” *The Great Controversy*, 418

2.b. What was the daily duty of the common priest in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary? Hebrews 9:6, 9, 10

Note: “The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. ...

“Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their

constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ. God expressly directed that every offering presented for the service of the sanctuary should be ‘without blemish.’ Exodus 12:5. The priests were to examine all animals brought as a sacrifice, and were to reject every one in which a defect was discovered. Only an offering ‘without blemish’ could be a symbol of His perfect purity who was to offer Himself as ‘a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ 1 Peter 1:19.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 352

Tuesday

3 THE WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST

- 3.a. How was the high priest attired? Exodus 29:4–7.
What was the difference between the garments of the common priests and those of the high priest?

Note: “In accordance with their office, a special dress was appointed for the priests. ‘Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty,’ was the divine direction to Moses. The robe of the common priest was of white linen, and woven in one piece. It extended nearly to the feet and was confined about the waist by a white linen girdle embroidered in blue, purple, and red. A linen turban, or miter, completed his outer costume. ...

“The garments of the high priest were of costly material and beautiful workmanship, befitting his exalted station. In addition to the linen dress of the common priest, he wore a robe of blue, also woven in one piece. Around the skirt it was ornamented with golden bells, and pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet. Outside of this was the ephod, a shorter garment of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and white. It was confined by a girdle of the same colors, beautifully wrought. The ephod was sleeveless, and on its gold-embroidered shoulder pieces were set two onyx stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 350, 351

- 3.b. What event took place on the tenth day of the seventh month in Israel? Leviticus 23:27–32. What solemn ceremony was performed by the high priest? Hebrews 9:3, 7

Note: “Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration.” *The Great Controversy*, 419

“No mortal eye but that of the high priest was to look upon the inner apartment of the sanctuary. Only once a year could the priest enter there, and that after the most careful and solemn preparation. With trembling he went in before God, and the people in reverent silence awaited his return, their hearts uplifted in earnest prayer for the divine blessing.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 352

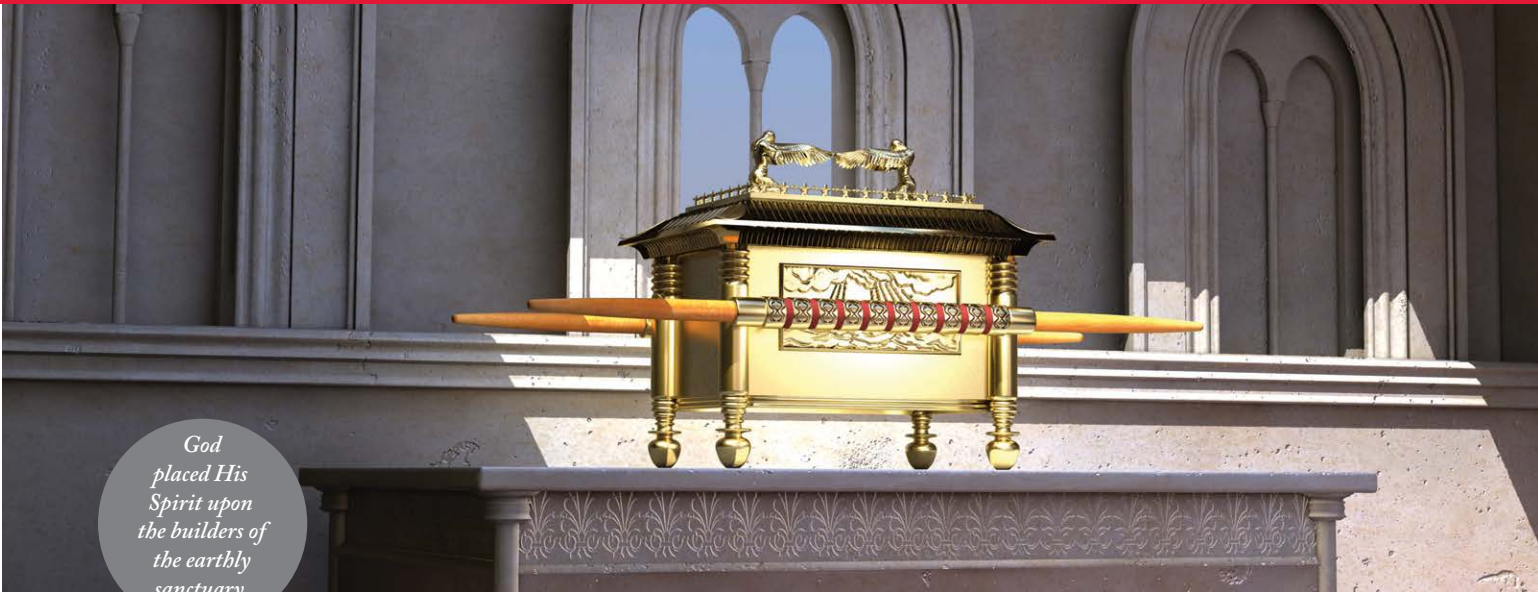
Wednesday

4 THE REVELATOR’S FIRST VISION

- 4.a. How is Christ described in John’s first vision, and what was John’s reaction upon seeing his Lord?
What words of encouragement were given to him?
Revelation 1:14–19

Note: “John, who has so loved his Lord, and who has steadfastly adhered to the truth in the face of imprisonment, stripes, and threatened death, cannot endure the excellent glory of Christ’s presence, and falls to the earth as one stricken dead. Jesus then lays His hand upon the prostrate form of His servant, saying, ‘Fear not; ... I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.’ Revelation 1:17, 18. John was strengthened to live in the presence of his glorified Lord, and then were presented before him in holy vision the purposes of God for future ages. The glorious attractions of the heavenly home were made known to him. He was permitted to look upon the throne of God.” *The Sanctified Life*, 78

- 4.b. What details about the description in Revelation 1 show that Christ was in the first compartment of the heavenly sanctuary? Revelation 1:10, 12, 13. Describe the scene which Sister White was also shown.



God
placed His
Spirit upon
the builders of
the earthly
sanctuary.

Note: “I was then bidden to take notice of the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The curtain, or door, was opened, and I was permitted to enter. In the first apartment I saw the candlestick with seven lamps, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the censer.” *Early Writings*, 251, 252

“The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, ‘within the veil’ which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered at His ascension. It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven.” *The Great Controversy*, 420, 421

Thursday

5 TWO PHASES OF MEDIATORIAL WORK

5.a. What work was Jesus to perform in the heavenly sanctuary after His ascension? Hebrews 8:3–6

Note: “For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record.” *The Great Controversy*, 421

5.b. What work did Jesus undertake in 1844? Daniel 8:14; Hebrews 9:11–15. Why should we be aware of this final mediation?

Note: “As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. ...

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.” *The Great Controversy*, 421, 422

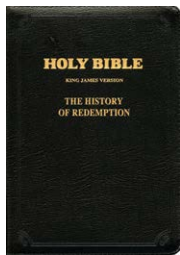
Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

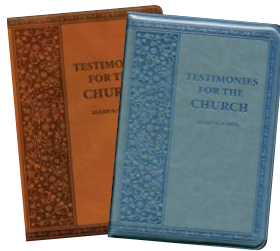
- 1 What gifts are acceptable to God?
- 2 What daily service was performed in the sanctuary?
- 3 Why was the yearly work of the high priest so solemn?
- 4 What do we learn about Christ from John’s first vision?
- 5 What began in the sanctuary in 1844?

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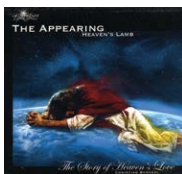


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Fruit

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

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Ingredients

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1½ Tbsp. agar flakes
3-4 Tbsp. pomegranate seeds



Process

- Pour the fruit juices in a saucepan; heat gently until quite warm, but not boiling.
- Sprinkle the agar over the surface of the liquid; continue to heat without stirring, while the agar dissolves.
- When the liquid starts to just bubble, stir in the agar, then simmer, stirring occasionally for a few minutes until all the agar flakes have thoroughly dissolved. Strain the hot jelly into four small serving glasses or dishes. Allow to cool slightly before transferring to the fridge until cold and set. Before serving, sprinkle a tablespoon or so of pomegranate seeds onto the top of each jelly.



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