

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS
OF ADVENTISM

*Commemorating
the Birth of Christ*

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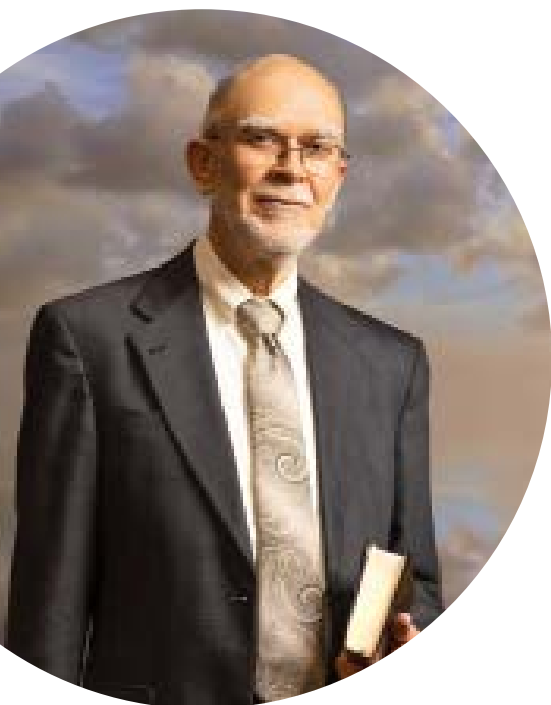
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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

On Being Perfect

Nobody can go to the kingdom of heaven who is not perfect. “The Lord requires at this time just what He required of Adam in Eden—perfect obedience to the law of God. We must have righteousness without a flaw, without a blemish. God gave His Son to die for the world, but He did not die to repeal the law which was holy and just and good. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is an unanswerable argument showing the immutability of the law. Its penalty was felt by the Son of God in behalf of guilty man, that through His merits the sinner might obtain the virtue of His spotless character by faith in His name.” *Faith and Works*, 89, 90

We are imperfect, but there is One who is perfect, with a divine character that He wants to impart to us: “Our claim to Christ’s righteousness is without a flaw, if we meet the conditions upon which it is promised ... if we accept Christ as our personal Saviour.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 189

“The Son of God so conducted His life that even His unbelieving countrymen were compelled to say, ‘He hath

done all things well.’ His character was without a flaw. He did not leave the example of a life of idleness and self-indulgence, although He was heir of all things in heaven and earth, the only-begotten Son of the Father.” *The Signs of the Times*, November 12, 1896

“The law requires righteousness—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can ‘be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ Romans 3:26.” *The Desire of Ages*, 762 **LM**

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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LANDMARKS is a magazine of Steps to Life, a ministry established in 1988 by Seventh-day Adventists. It is dedicated to the publication of the historic doctrines held by God’s true people in all ages. Its special emphasis is to present truth (2 Peter 1:12)—those historic doctrines espoused by Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in the nineteenth century. Its purpose is to help all of God’s remnant people to press together in unity, holding high the banner on which is inscribed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This magazine is designed to help believers to defend the faith and to expose the flood of false doctrine by which the truth is being assailed in these last days. It is the goal of **LANDMARKS’** editors to present articles based on truth from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Viewpoints of writers and/or contributors expressed outside of articles printed in this publication are not necessarily the views of this magazine’s editors and are not endorsed by Steps to Life Ministries.

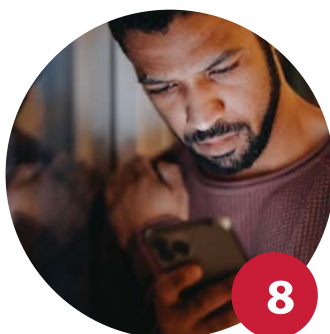
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Commemorating the Birth of Christ

By Marshall J. Grosboll

The question has been asked many times, “How should a Christian celebrate Christmas?”

Is it right to celebrate Christmas? Does Christmas fit into the life of the Christian?

We hear a lot at this time of year that Christmas is Christ’s birthday. We sing songs about it: *The Birthday of the King*, *Away in a Manger*, *Silent Night*, *The First Noel*. That’s why Christians celebrate the holiday, isn’t it? Christ was born on December 25. Or was He? There is nothing in the Bible that says when Jesus was born. In fact, God intentionally did not reveal that date to us.



God hid the burial place of Moses because He knew that the Jews would make it a shrine, and would worship there, and teach all their subsequent generations to worship there. You would find all kinds of paraphernalia representing miracles done by the wonderful healing power that would come through Moses. God did not want us to make a sacrilege of the day Christ was born any more than He did Moses' burial place, so He hid them both.

There are some things we do know that might help us pinpoint when Christ was born or when He wasn't. The seasons in Palestine are very similar to ours here in the United States. Summers are dry, windy, and hot during the five-month period from May through October, with temperatures ranging between 84 and the mid-90s. Winter occurs from December through March, December and January being the coldest months, characterized by severe cold and humidity, with temperatures ranging between 38 and 50 degrees given the time of day. It rarely snows, but does rain with an average rainfall of 27 inches. So the weather tells us that 2,000 years ago it was very unlikely that there were "shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night" on December 25. [Source: 5 Things to Know About Winter in Palestine - (<https://excellencenter.org/5-things-to-know-about-winter-in-palestine/>); Summer & Winter in Palestine (<https://traveltips.usatoday.com/summer-winter-palestine-104225.html>)]

So, where does the Christmas celebration of Christ's birth on December 25 come from? Christmas comes to us from paganism. In every sun-worshipping religion, in whatever country the religion exists, the people worship a sun god, be it Baal, Nimrod, Isis, or Tammuz, and near the winter solstice was the time that these sun gods are believed to have been born. Tammuz, for example, is said to have been born around the time of the winter solstice, December 21 or 22,

the time of year when the sun sinks lowest in the sky, and the days grow shorter. Sun worshipers believe in some special magic that keeps the sun returning every day, otherwise it would sink below the horizon and disappear forever, leaving the world cold and lost in darkness. This led them to believe that their sun god was born on the shortest day of the year and that he gradually gained strength over the subsequent months.

Some will ask that if the winter solstice is December 21 through 22, then how did they come to worship their sun god on December 25? Satan creates a counterfeit for everything that is of God and all that He creates. Satan knew the prophecy of a coming Messiah, so I believe he counterfeited that event before it happened to cause people to disparage Christianity.

For instance, Tammuz was supposedly born by way of virgin birth. Ishtar was his mother and she, it was believed, conceived during the spring equinox (Ishtar/Easter). Nine months later, Tammuz was born. They use the term nativity of the sun god in the same way Christians use the nativity of Christ.

Many things of God's creation have been drafted by Satan into pagan worship, most commonly, of course, the sun, moon, and stars. Jeremiah 10:2 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of the heavens, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them.'" This scripture seems to show that paganism and the worship of the things in the heavens (astrology) existed a long time before Christ was born.

What about the trees, decorated with bulbs and flashing lights, that we see everywhere at Christmas time? In northern Europe, the traditional evergreen was used, and that tradition was brought over to America. In other countries it might be a palm tree or an oak.

"For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple."

Verses 3, 4

Jeremiah tells us not to learn the way of the Gentiles, so why do Seventh-day Adventists have Christmas trees in their churches and homes, and why do they celebrate December 25? Is it possible, at this time of year, for us as Seventh-day Adventist Christians to recognize that Christ was born as a man to be the Saviour of the world?

Inspiration has quite a bit to say on the subject of Christmas. In *The Review and Herald*, December 9, 1884, Mrs.

White wrote:

"Christmas is coming, May you all have wisdom to make it a precious season."

Interesting. Didn't Mrs. White know that Christmas was not Jesus' birthday? How could she not know it is of pagan origin? Listen to the next statements.

"I entreat you, my brethren and sisters, to make this coming Christmas a blessing to yourselves and others." Ibid.

How can something pagan be made a blessing? Let's read a very clear statement proving that Mrs. White did know that December 25 was most certainly not the day of Christ's birth.

“

God intentionally did not reveal the date of Christ's birth to us.

“

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Christ was born.*

“‘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? This day has been made much of for centuries. It is accepted by the unbelieving world, and by the Christian world generally, as the day on which Christ was born. ...

“The twenty-fifth of December is supposed to be the day of the birth of Jesus Christ, and its observance has become customary and popular. But yet there is no certainty that we are keeping the veritable day of our Saviour’s birth. History gives us no certain assurance of this. The Bible does not give us the precise time.”
Ibid.

This statement references back to what we stated above, that being how and why God hid the burial place of Moses and the actual date on which Christ was born, and it clearly shows that Mrs. White did know that December 25 was not the day of Christ’s birth. But associated statements also show that Mrs. White did not condemn certain ways of observing the Christmas season.

“God would be well pleased if on Christmas each church would have a Christmas tree on which shall be hung offerings, great and small, for these houses of worship. ... There is no particular sin in selecting a fragrant evergreen, and placing it in our churches; but the sin lies in the motive which prompts to action, and the use which is made of the gifts placed upon the tree.”
Ibid., December 11, 1879

“Let not the parents take the position that an evergreen placed in the church for the amusement of the Sabbath School scholars is a sin.” Ibid., December 9, 1884

The Bible has always been our foundation of faith, so the Spirit of Prophecy must be tested against the Bible. I have studied this subject from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and I simply do not find that Mrs. White contradicts what the Bible says concerning the birth of Christ.

There are many people who are not willing to accept what the Bible says, and there are just as many more who want to go beyond what it says. As a student of the Bible, I want to challenge you, before going any further, to lay aside any preconceived ideas you may have on this subject, so that we will have a clear mind to see what God says we should or should not do.

In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul is not writing about Christmas, but he is writing about pagan customs. Let’s see what he has to say in verses 4–6:

“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.”

The pagans would offer food to their idols before they would eat it, and after it was blessed by the idol, they believed that the idol had imparted special properties to the food. There were many Christians in Paul’s day who argued that because Paul ate things offered to idols, he was following pagan customs and therefore, was really pagan.

Paul is saying that you don’t need to ask whether the food has been offered to idols. He says to just eat the food because idols can have no effect on it. If you ask, and the food has been offered to idols, and you still eat the food, then you will become a stumbling block for those who believe in the power of their idols. If someone tells you that the food has been offered to idols, then do not eat it.

Interesting counsel, isn’t it? Paul is saying there is only one God, and the gods of paganism have no power over the food, before or afterward. So, can pagan custom desecrate food? No. But we must be sensitive to the beliefs of others.

Now, can paganism desecrate a day or a tree?

Again, Paul doesn’t write regarding Christmas, but we find in Romans 14:4–6 that he does write regarding holidays.

“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. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.”

Paul is not talking about the Sabbath, the day of God’s rest, the day that God esteems most. He was referring to man-made holidays, and of course, Jewish holidays that were no longer consecrated by God. While Paul still kept the Passover, he recognized that it no longer had religious significance. He said that Jesus had become our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Passover and the Day of Atonement, called sabbaths in the Jewish economy, were a shadow of things to come, and done away with at the cross.

Only God can make something holy. This He did when He instituted the Sabbath day at Creation, and does when a man or woman surrenders their will and life to Him. But man, try as he might, cannot make anything holy that God says is unholy, nor can he make something unholy that God has made holy. Man can use something unholy in a holy way or something holy in an unholy way, but that doesn’t change whether it is holy or unholy according to God.

So Paul is saying that the pagan worship and use of food, a tree or flower, or even a day, does not ruin these things for use in other ways. Why? Because as the Bible tells us, what God says is good, is good. Everything that God created was pronounced good, and the Sabbath day was blessed and sanctified by Him. Nothing man can do will change the fact that God made the seventh-day Sabbath His holy day.

Anything outside of God’s creation, anything that is not expressed in or



supported by the Bible, is simply a perverted deception wrought by the devil, who seduces man to use what belongs to God in a distorted and evil way, causing him to break God’s commandments. And these unholy traditions and doctrines are handed down generation after generation in religions and churches all over the world, until the pure truth of God’s word has been all but obliterated. But is it always wrong to have traditions and customs of any kind? Matthew 15:3 says, “Why do you also transgress the commandments of God because of your tradition?”

What did Jesus say in this text is wrong with tradition? Man chooses his own traditions and devisings over God’s law. Tradition too often causes us to break God’s commandments. This is why we say so many traditions are bad—they go directly against God’s word.

Let’s look at an example of an acceptable tradition in driving. Here in the United States, we drive on the right-hand side of the road, but in other places around the world, people drive on the left-hand side. There’s nothing wrong with driving on the right side or the left side of the road. You must drive on one side or the other. There are

many other traditions, some may even be associated with pagan religion, that may not seem bad, but they become bad when they transgress God’s commandments.

The observance of December 25 as Christ’s birthday is clearly rooted in paganism. And what about keeping Sunday as the weekly day of worship? We can see that this, too, is rooted in paganism because the pagans, as sun worshipers, worshiped on Sunday. Over the centuries, as more and more pagan traditions and rituals were adopted into Christianity, the Christian day of worship was changed from the seventh day to the first day. Let’s be clear, God has ever only had one day that He Himself blessed and sanctified as His holy Sabbath. God, who does not change, has never changed—nor has He given man the authority to change—the seventh-day Sabbath to any other day. Yet, man changed the day of worship, on his own assumed authority, to Sunday because, he said, Christ rose from the grave on that day.

It is interesting that many Christians today strongly speak out regarding the pagan origins of December 25 as the birthday of Christ, which comes only

“

*This Christmas, let us
give God the best gift we
can give—our hearts.*

once a year, and yet each week they worship on Sunday, the day of the sun in pagan worship, directly contrary to the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible. You see, the Bible says nothing about Christmas, but it says a lot about sun worship, Sunday worship, and Sabbath worship.

It is important that we are careful in our interpretation of the Scriptures.

Our pre-conceived ideas can lead us to incorrectly interpret or even manipulate Bible verses to say what we want them to say or support what we believe, whether it is truth or not.

We must be extremely careful with the way we use Scripture. We must never say, “If I look hard enough, maybe I can find texts that will prove what I believe.” We are to follow the teachings of the Bible as revealed to our submissive minds, not believe something and attempt to use the Bible to prove it. Because the amazing thing is, often if you manipulate the context just so, it can cause people to think that a particular text justifies an erroneous idea.

This has occurred in regard to worshiping on the first day of the week. With a couple of New Testament scriptures taken out of context, you have the basis for the centuries-long support that changed the Sabbath day from the seventh day to the first. We must be careful to follow everything that God says, and be even more careful not to mix in our own human ideas.

As I have studied the subject of Christmas, I have found that Ellen White has the most biblical approach to it. “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

More and more these days, the people of the world, including Christians, feel little or no need to think about Jesus or about those who live around them. Our own thoughts should ever be on Him and His marvelous work on our behalf, and then we should take every opportunity to turn the thoughts of others to Him.

The world says that in its observance of Christmas, it is celebrating the birth of Christ, but in the celebration, we see little of the true reason for this season. The world needs to be shown Christ. They need to be encouraged to think about and believe in Him. He must be uplifted in our own thoughts so that we can uplift Him to those around us.

Sadly, the world invokes the name of Jesus, but the Christmas season is celebrated by man for man. We make lists. We talk about what we want. We enjoy the bright lights and beautifully decorated trees. On Christmas morning, the morning supposedly on which Christ was born, instead of offering to Him the gift of our life, we are anxiously opening the beautifully wrapped presents we have given and received.

Our thoughts are not on the Sacrifice that was made to save us from eternal death, or on the pain and humiliation He suffered on our behalf, nor on the great love that compelled Him to come. There are few thoughts for those who are hungry, homeless, sick, and alone, both physically and spiritually. This day instead has become one of gluttony and a waste of God’s money for frivolous worldly things to give to each other.

As God’s people, we must think of others above ourselves. Christmas, pagan though it may be, is the one time in all the year that hearts are most open to receive the truth of Jesus’ birth and life, and ultimately His death, resurrection, and the current work He is doing on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. If we would make Christmas a blessing, then we need to know how to do it and prepare to do it.

“There is no divine sanctity resting upon the twenty-fifth of December; and it is not pleasing to God that anything

that concerns the salvation of man through the infinite sacrifice made for them, should be so sadly perverted from its professed design. Christ should be the supreme object" Ibid., December 9, 1884

It was God's design for man to worship Christ especially on the Sabbath, but to also give thanks and praise to Him every day. Designating December 25 as the day Christ was born is man's doing. We must stridently endeavor to make it a time to honor and glorify what heaven has done for us and not taint it with selfishness.

"Christ should be the supreme object; but as Christmas has been observed, the glory has turned from Him to mortal man, whose sinful, defective character made it necessary for Him to come to our world." Ibid.

"Let those who desire a Christmas tree make its boughs fruitful gifts for the needy, and offerings for the treasury of God." Ibid., December 26, 1882.

Do you see in this quote anything about gifts for ourselves? Our gifts should be for those living in poverty all around us or sent to help missionaries spread the good news of salvation.

"There is no particular sin in selecting a fragrant evergreen, and placing it in our churches; but the sin lies in the motive which prompts to action, and the use which is made of the gifts placed upon the tree." Ibid, December 11, 1879

Are we thinking of self, or are we thinking of others?

"The tree may be as tall and its branches as wide as shall best suit the occasion; but let its boughs be laden with the golden and silver fruit of your beneficence, and present this to Him as your Christmas gift. Let your donations be sanctified by prayer." *The Adventist Home*, 482

"While urging upon all the duty of first bringing their gifts to God, I would not wholly condemn the practice of making Christmas and New Year's gifts to our friends. It is right to bestow upon



God
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tree on which shall be
hung offerings.

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 would prove a real benefit to the receiver." *The Review and Herald*, December 26, 1882

We should not waste a single cent on something needless or frivolous. But after making God first in our giving, in our plans and affections, because we are to love Him with all our heart, then we can give gifts that are practical and useful, something that will bring us closer to God and to each other. We need the ties of love and affection with both our family at home and our church family.

To make the Christmas season, even Christmas day, a blessing, we should remember that we have a responsibility to share with the world the gospel, the blessed news of a Messiah, who left

heaven and came to this world, born as a man, so that all of mankind, sinful as we are, could be saved. It is our duty under God to remember the poor and God's work all around the world, and to be willing to sacrifice for them. For this reason Jesus came as a babe and this is what should fill our hearts at this time of the year.

Some people will say that they are tired of giving so much to God's work. They've heard appeal after appeal and have given a lot. Why should they do more?

Well, here is a question for these individuals: If you are tired of giving to God, are you also tired of receiving from Him? We hear a lot of "I'm tired of giving," but I don't recall ever hearing anyone say they are tired of God giving them so much—a roof over their head, food on the table, a job, wealth, family, friends, safety—and that they just wish He'd quit giving them things.

Are you tired of receiving from God? By the death of Christ, God gives us life and health and eternal life. If we gain the whole world and lose our own soul, what will it profit us? And God, in His mercy and love for us, calls for our means that we may take our eyes and desire from where we are and place them on where we are going.

This year, this Christmas, let us give God the best gift we can give Him. We can and should give Him our money and time, but what He really wants is our hearts. He loves us and ransomed us, and as we give Him our earthly temporal life, He in turn gives us His eternal one. **LM**

Pastor Marshall Grosboll, with his wife Lillian, founded *Steps to Life*. In July 1991, Pastor Marshall and his family met with tragedy as they were returning home from a camp meeting in Washington state, when the airplane he was piloting went down, killing all on board.

What Everyone Needs and No One Has

By John J. Grosboll

The righteousness of Christ is a major theme of the New Testament, so let's look at seven facts about righteousness. The first fact is a simple one. You must have righteousness in order to have eternal life. This can be conclusively proven from the Bible in many scriptures, but we'll look at just two.

“Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?



“He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes, a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

“He who does these things shall never be moved.” Psalm 15

“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.” Isaiah 33:14, *last part–16*

Isaiah and David are both speaking of those who are righteous. You must be righteous or you will not go to heaven.

The second fact about righteousness is very startling. We see that in order to go to heaven we must be righteous, but the truth is, we have no righteousness. What we need, we do not have.

“All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6

“There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.” Romans 3:10–12

Not one single person has the righteousness necessary for heaven.

The third fact about righteousness is its definition. What is righteousness? There are two definitions. The first is found in Romans 7:12

“So then, the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.”

God’s law is righteous. Righteousness is that which is in harmony with the ten commandments.

What if a person breaks the law? “All unrighteousness is sin.” 1 John 5:17.

“Whoever commits sin also com-

mits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ... He who

practices righteous-

ness is righteous,

just as He is

righteous.”

1 John 3:4, 7,

last part

So, righteousness is when the law is being kept because the law is righteous, and unrighteousness is when the law is or has been broken.

The second definition of righteousness is found in 1 John 2:1.

“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

This definition of righteousness says that Jesus Christ is righteous; so righteousness is that which is like Him. This definition does not conflict with the first, but rather they complement each other, because Jesus said in John 15:10, “I have kept my Father’s commandments.”

Righteousness, first, is that which is in harmony with the ten commandments, and then it is that which is in harmony with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The fourth fact about righteousness is that when you are perfectly righteous, then you are holy. I believe that inspired writings prove this, but I will let you study it out for yourself.

A fifth fact, regarding righteousness has to do with the motives of the heart—our thoughts and feelings. Jesus brought this out very clearly in the Ser-

mon on the Mount. “For I say to you that except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:20

This was a shocking statement because the Jews thought that the scribes and Pharisees were the most righteous people on the face of the earth.

And here, Jesus was saying that they had to be more righteous than they or they would not be able to enter heaven.

But Jesus went on to explain that righteousness has

more to do with what is

on the inside than what is on

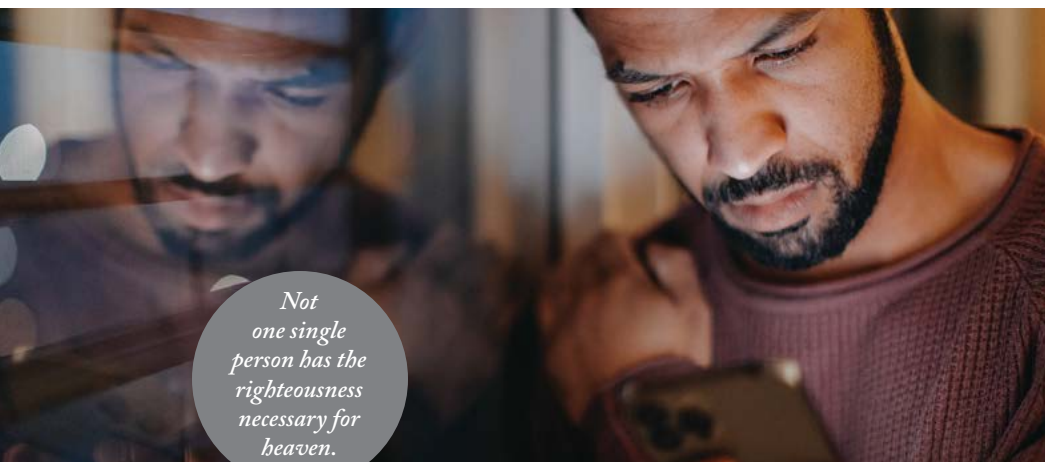
the outside. “You have heard that it was said by them anciently, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment [condemnation].’”

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever will say to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” Verses 21, 22

Jesus is not talking about the person who actually took a club or a spear or a sword and killed somebody. He says that if you are angry with your brother to the point of hatred, then you are guilty of murder, as if you had committed it as Cain did. John supports this in 1 John 3:15, “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” On the outside, it looked like the Pharisees were keeping the law, but Jesus said in their hearts, they were not.

As human beings, we tend to look at what’s on the outside; that’s all we can

*Inspiration tells us
that this world is the
Christian’s winter, and the
next world is the Christian’s
summer.*



*Not
one single
person has the
righteousness
necessary for
heaven.*

see. But Jesus deals with what is unseen by man, the motives and desires of the heart. He spoke of this same thing in reference to the seventh commandment.

“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.” Verses 27, 28

It may be true that we haven’t literally broken the law by actually killing someone or robbing a bank or sleeping with someone who is not our spouse, but if in our hearts we desire it above all things or harbor strong feelings against someone, then in the eyes of God, it is the same as if we actually broke the law.

The commandments go right to the heart. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12, 13

So, this fifth fact has to do with what is in the heart, not just what you say or do, but our motives and feelings, too.

The sixth fact about righteousness is that you cannot become righteous by simply deciding to do what is right and good. Paul tells us in Philippians 3 that

he had already done that. He had determined to do what was right, he was born into the right race and family, he had been circumcised on the eighth day, he had practiced carefully and perfectly his religion, and he says in verse 6, “concerning the righteousness which is in the law, [I am] blameless.”

But notice what he says next in verses 7–9: “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and might be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith”

Paul recognized that his righteousness was worthless to gain eternal life. He realized that he could go through all these forms and rituals and ceremonies, and he could keep the ceremonial law perfectly, and still not go to heaven.

It is the same in the Christian church today. Our name is on the church roll, we are baptized, we participate in the communion and foot washing services, we pay tithes and offerings, and hold offices. But not a single one of those things will make us righteous.

“That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship

of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Verses 10–14

Paul knew that the righteousness he needed could come only from Jesus Christ. This is the seventh fact about righteousness. Righteousness has to do with the heart and we are all sinners. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. The human heart, left to itself, is filled with wickedness. We are incapable of generating righteousness.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9

Deceitful and incurably wicked is the condition of the heart we all possess.

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” Romans 7:18, *first part*. How much good? Nothing. None.

This shows us that we cannot be righteous by deciding to do good or even if we do good things. If we are to be righteous, we must receive righteousness from Jesus Christ.

So, we know where righteousness comes from. The question is, how can we receive it?

The 19th century was an optimistic age. Because of the teachings of evolution, people believed that as a species, we were getting better and better. The many inventions that were created during that time only reinforced that idea; so people believed they could do anything, even make themselves righteous. In theology, that is called perfectionism. The problem with perfectionism is that people believe

they have made themselves perfect all while breaking God's law.

The 20th century became a very pessimistic century. People were asking, How can I do it? I'm a sinner. I can't. So a "new theology" was created; one that said Christ would do everything for us. All a person had to do was believe in Christ and they would be justified, and then Christ would do the rest. You could be living like the devil, but the Lord was going to save you if you just believed.

In actuality, the Lord is going to do everything, but not without your cooperation.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12

Someone might say that this is teaching salvation by works. In a way, it is.

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure." Verse 13

God wants to perform a work of righteousness in your life and mine. But He will do this only when we cooperate with Him. What does it mean to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? The Bible teaches that we do this by looking at ourselves and recognizing that we are filled with sin and need a good cleaning up.

Maybe we have already done some of this work, but we all have besetting sins; those darling sins that we just can't seem to let go of. The Bible says to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us . . ." Hebrews 12:1. It is these sins that we must bring to Christ and plead for His power and grace to overcome them, for only overcomers will see heaven. We cannot be free from sin without divine help, but, we must be willing to give it up. It is in this way that we are colaborers with Christ.

So many people spend their time bemoaning their condition rather than looking in faith to the Lord, who can and will change their thoughts, their



hearts, their motives, and their feelings, which will produce a change in their words and their actions.

"The secret of Satan's power over God's professed people lies in the deceitfulness of the human heart. Their constant stumbling and falling reveal that they have not maintained a stern conflict with their besetting sins." *The Signs of the Times*, December 13, 1899

Paul is an example of this stern conflict with besetting sins and the cooperation with the Holy Spirit to affect the necessary change in his life. Remember he says in Philippians 3 that he cannot change, but that he stretches, extends himself as far as he can, then he will press, pursue, struggle until he reaches the prize of the high calling of God.

The New Testament does not teach a backseat religion where we do nothing and just expect the Lord to do it all. New Testament religion is going to the Lord, admitting our inability to overcome our sins, and claiming His promise to do in our lives that which we cannot do for ourselves; to change us according to His good pleasure. In this way only are we able to be overcomers.

This change occurs only by stern conflict, supreme effort. And if we are not willing to maintain this stern conflict against our besetting sins and our own

inherent nature, then we will not overcome, but will be overcome. That is what Paul is talking about in Philippians 3.

"They have not depended wholly upon Christ, because they have not realized that they are in peril of being overcome by these sins. It is the sin which appears small and unworthy of our notice against which we should be on our guard." Ibid.

How true! It is the little sins that we don't think even amount to much that, if not overcome, will become bigger and bigger until we lose all desire to give them up.

But we have in the courts in heaven an all-powerful Mediator.

"God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. God cannot forgive sins at the expense of His justice, His holiness, and His truth. But He does forgive sins and that fully. There are no sins He will not forgive in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sinner's only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 479, 480

Hebrews 7:25 is a text that we should commit to memory so that we can be encouraged when discouragement looms heavy upon us. "Therefore He is also

able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

No one can truthfully say that they are too great a sinner for Christ to save.

If you are willing to be saved in the way He wants to save you, He can and will save you.

"It is not because there is any flaw in the title which has been purchased for you that you do not accept it. It is not because the mercy, the grace, the love of the Father and the Son is not ample, and has not been freely bestowed, that you do not rejoice in pardoning love. ... If you are lost, it will be because you will not come unto Christ that you might have life." *Our Father Cares*, 92

When you are sick, your physician must determine what needs to be done to help you get better and then you decide whether you are willing to accept the treatment or not. As the Great Physician, Jesus can heal you from the sting of sin, which will cause you to die eternally, but He can only save you if you are willing to accept the cure that He offers.

In an emergency room setting, you would likely hear someone say, "Whatever it takes, I want to live." We must come to Christ with this same whatever-it-takes attitude. We must be willing to put ourselves in His hands, for this is the only way we will be saved.

One of our biggest problems as human beings is that we do not realize just how defiled

we truly are. When people realize that they are terrible sinners and that there is no way they can be saved, that means there is hope, because then they are ready to say, "Lord, I commit my case to You. Whatever it takes." You see, friends, our prayers, our worship, our services are all defiled and worthless unless Christ adds His righteousness to them.

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 344

We must have Christ's righteousness or else we cannot be saved. Peter said, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Jesus is the only One who is righteous, and only He will, through His Holy Spirit, give you the righteousness you lack if you will surrender to Him and become a coworker with Him in working out your salvation.

Christ came to this world to save mankind from sin. John 1:29 says, "Behold! The Lamb of God [this is John the Baptist speaking] who takes away the sin of the world!" How did He do it?

Paul confirmed that concept when he wrote, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21



The Jews thought that the scribes and Pharisees were the most righteous people on earth.

Jesus went to the cross knowing that all the sins that had been and would be committed from the beginning of the world until the end of time would be placed upon Him. He had no sin of His own for the righteousness of God was in Him, but He was made sin for us. When we confess our sins to Him, He takes away our sin, He bears it away from us, and then He gives to us His perfect righteousness in return.

Psalms 40 contains a prophecy of Jesus Christ and describes the basis of His righteousness, "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart." Verse 8

Jesus' righteousness caused Him to delight in doing God's will. And He rejoiced that God's law was in His heart. And when He gives His righteousness to you, His law will be written in your heart and you will seek and enjoy doing God's will. However, this is a process accomplished over time.

When you confess your sins, and exercise faith in Jesus, you will realize that you have no righteousness of your own and that you won't be able to go to heaven without the righteousness of Christ, which is acquired by faith. So Jesus says He'll give you His righteousness and take away your sins. And then the Holy Spirit starts to work. He begins writing on the heart the principles of God's law and as that happens, we look at our sinful life and decide that we aren't going to live, think, feel, or talk that way anymore. That is what always happens when a person receives Jesus and His righteousness.

The sinner says, "How can you save somebody that is as bad as I am?"

The Lord says, "I can save you perfectly. Anybody that comes to God through Me, will be perfectly saved."

When the Holy Spirit begins to write God's law in your heart, you want to do what is right. And that's the kind of religion you want; one in which you do what is right because it is right and not



*Whoever
is angry
with his brother
without a cause shall
be in danger of the
judgment.*

just trying to keep from doing wrong because you don't want to be lost.

Every day, as the Holy Spirit works the miracle of writing God's law in your heart, you begin to want to do His will. You see, preparing for heaven, you are doing good according to God's will more and more until you don't want to do anything else. Down here in this world, we must fight, because we have a sinful nature to fight and an enemy who constantly tempts us to do wrong. And in our flesh, we cannot do anything good.

Paul explains this when he says that he brings his body into subjection. "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." 1 Corinthians 9:27

In heaven, when you no longer have a sinful nature, you will never have to struggle with yourself. Every time you are struggling to overcome a besetting sin, just remember a time is coming when all the struggling and fighting will be over. Your sinful nature will be gone. The devil will be gone. The world we know today will be gone. All in the past. But, if it is going to be in the past, then we must receive the righteousness of Christ now. And finally, you will be doing what you want to do, living like Christ.

"Righteousness of Christ imputed to men means holiness, uprightness, purity. Unless Christ's righteousness was imputed to us we could not have acceptable repentance. The righteousness dwelling in us by faith consists of love, forbearance, meekness, and all the Christian virtues." *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, 134

We need to be righteous if we are to be saved, but we have no righteousness and we can't generate it. There is only one place from which we can get it and that is from Jesus Christ. He has a sufficient supply for everyone, and if we will commit our lives to Him and choose to cooperate with the work He wants to do in our lives, then His righteousness will become ours.

God has something for us that is so much better than anything we can think of ourselves. Do you want God to work in your life, to work out His good pleasure?

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13 **LM**

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The Song of Mary



By Marshall Grosboll

Have you ever felt unimportant, put down, or unappreciated? Mary must have had some of those feelings. She was born in poverty. Her parents were of an unimportant background as far as the world was concerned. She was considered a peasant, and in her day and culture, the poor people were looked down upon because it was believed that God had made them that way. This belief was part of their religion.

Mary undoubtedly grew up rejected by society until the day an angel appeared to her with the news that she would have a child. Being a pure and upright woman, her dumbfounded response was, “‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to

be born will be called the Son of God.’”
Luke 1:34, 35

How do you think it would feel, never having had relations with a man, to be told that you would become pregnant and that your child would be the One that you knew would be the Messiah? Physically speaking, Mary would feel no different than any other pregnant woman, but from a heart perspective, how do you suppose she felt?

We can know how Mary felt because she tells us in a song. Unimportant in the world’s eyes, she must have had tremendous gifts because she composed one of the most beautiful songs in the Bible, especially to those who feel unimportant, rejected, and unappreciated.

“And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will

call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

“‘He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.

“‘He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.’” Verses 46–55

Mary composed this song for all the humble and unappreciated of all the ages. She was given the most important job of any woman who has ever lived or will ever live in this world. She was to be the physical abode for Jesus until He was born into this world. And as He

physically dwelled within her body, He desires to find a spiritual abode inside us.

Paul adds a final verse to Mary's song in 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

God desires to dwell in you, and whatever the world may think, that makes you important. Mary could rejoice because He who is mighty had done great things by her. Whatever the world had done or thought, no matter what her community or her peers thought of her, God had chosen her for this important task, and she praised God. But friends, God also has chosen you, to dwell within you, and if you will accept Him, then you can rejoice as Mary did.

Sadly, while God found a dwelling place within Mary's body and her humble heart, He did not find a dwelling place within the rich in Jerusalem, within all the lives of the priests, or within the hearts of those who were mighty and proud. The song of Mary is a song for the humble, but it is also a song for the proud. In Mary's day, you had to have money or position to be important. Church offices were obtained by quid pro quo, prevalent in the church in those days.

When Mary came to Bethlehem, ready to deliver her baby, there was no room for them in the inn. It was already filled with those who were believed to be of greater importance. But a place was found in a humble stable for Mary's baby, the Saviour of the world, to be born.

Looking at our churches today, are they filled with so many programs, that when God has a plan or program for His church, there is no room left for it? Are our minds so filled with information that we do not hear when God speaks, and no room is found in our hearts for His truth?

It is only God's program, His truth that will survive. Everything else will be put down, pulled down, and destroyed. Mary's song tells us so. The Bible says, speaking of the end-time church and the people who will claim to be God's people, they will believe that they are rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing. But Jesus says, "I will vomit you out of My mouth."

What is your condition today? Are you self-satisfied? Are you rich, in need of nothing?

Or are you poor, blessed, and heirs of God's kingdom? Are you hungry for what God has to give you? Do you need to be filled with His grace? Only those who are hungry can be filled.

We must not envy the proud, but rather pity them, because though they think they are filled, the Bible says they are wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. God can never find an abiding place with the proud of spirit, with the self-satisfied, or the self-conceited.

Today God wants to find an abiding place in your heart. Are you humble enough to receive Him? Are you humble enough to sing Mary's song? Jesus tells us how we can have Him abiding in our hearts this very day, how we, too, can rejoice and glorify God.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.' ...

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

"For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.'" John 6:51, 53-56

Jesus abides in the hearts of those who eat His flesh and drink His blood. Both spiritually and carnally we become

what we consume. If from day to day, our mind food consists solely of things of this world, then we are wholly of this world. If instead we fill our minds with the Scriptures, committing them to memory, meditating upon the messages contained there, with prayer and thanksgiving, then we will become holy, a fit dwelling place for God's Spirit.

Eating the body of Jesus and drinking His blood, is symbolized by the communion service. On Jesus' last day with His disciples, He established the communion service as He told them, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. ... This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22:19, 20. We partake of the bread and grape juice that symbolizes the acceptance of the word of God into our hearts and minds and the salvation purchased by His own beloved blood. Consuming His word and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us once again into the image of God, we become the humble abode of His Spirit. We cannot be the abode of the Spirit if we are proud and worldly.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise." Psalm 51:17

"For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15

And thus, we can sing the song of Mary, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour." **LM**

Pastor Marshall Grosboll, with his wife Lillian, founded Steps to Life. In July 1991, Pastor Marshall and his family met with tragedy as they were returning home from a camp meeting in Washington state, when the airplane he was piloting went down, killing all on board.

Christian Character

Clues – KJV

Across

- B6 God has judged my _____ Genesis 30:6
 B11 We ought to _____ God rather than man..... Acts 5:29
 C3 God put _____ in the Garden of Eden..... Genesis 2:15
 D7 One called Jesus the good _____..... Matthew 19:16
 E3 Jesus was raised from the _____..... 1 Peter 1:21
 F15 A _____ was needed for the people to hear Romans 10:14
 G3 How many are righteous?..... Romans 3:10
 H10 Being naked they were not _____..... Genesis 2:25
 I19 Jesus Christ has _____ in the flesh..... 1 John 4:2
 J4 John saw Jesus as a man _____ before him John 1:30
 K19 Place where Jesus' disciples met..... Luke 22:11
 L1 Jesus' commission to His disciples Matthew 10:8
 M9 The rejected stone became the chief _____..... Acts 4:11
 N1 The virgins _____ their lamps Matthew 25:7
 N19 Wages of sin is _____..... Romans 6:23
 O8 Eve saw the tree that it was _____ to the eyes Genesis 3:6
 Q1 _____ was baptizing in the Jordan John 1:28
 Q8 Paul considered himself to be what sort of man?..... Romans 7:24
 R16 Abiding in Christ, we produce much _____..... John 15:5
 T4 Adam and Eve were created in the _____ (3 words) Genesis 1:27
 U16 Paul was in danger of being called into _____..... Acts 19:40
 V1 What should we confess? 1 John 1:9
 W5 What can be done without Christ? John 15:5
 W18 Something that is available in Jesus..... John 1:4

Down

- B4 Where withered branches are thrown John 15:6
 B12 God's church should be holy and without _____..... Ephesians 5:27
 B21 Pilate wrote this, and put it on Jesus' cross John 19:19
 C17 On what things should we meditate? Philippians 4:8
 E6 The Lord _____ on high (KJV) Isaiah 33:5
 F8 The _____ deceived Eve..... Genesis 3:4
 F15 Jesus' blood is described as _____..... 1 Peter 1:19
 F22 God will _____ you with outstretched arms Exodus 6:6
 H1 Who are God's servants?..... Revelation 10:7
 I19 The earth was _____ after sin..... Genesis 3:17
 J11 God offers _____ life to those who believe John 3:16
 L17 We must be _____ again 1 Peter 1:23
 N4 The _____ shake at God's presence..... Isaiah 64:1
 N20 God put _____ between the serpent and the woman..... Genesis 3:15
 P6 Stand and see the _____ of the Lord Genesis 49:18
 Q22 Godly _____ leads to repentance 2 Corinthians 7:10
 R18 The wicked will _____ perish..... 2 Peter 2:12
 S9 Who is the originator of love?..... 1 John 4:8
 T13 Jesus _____ so we could live together with Him 1 Thessalonians 5:10

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

X	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	X
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The Widow's Christmas

Mrs. Mulford was a woman who doted on ruins. Nothing in the present was as beautiful as she had enjoyed in the past; and it seemed utterly impossible for her to imagine that there was anything in the future that could compensate her for the trials she had endured.

In her girlhood, Mrs. Mulford had been surrounded with the luxuries of life; and after her marriage her surroundings were but a trifle less magnificent. In such an air of luxury and ease, her children, were being reared when suddenly a great change came.

Mr. Mulford was a rash speculator, and on that memorable "Black Friday," the idol he had worshiped, the god of gold, proved itself to be nothing but clay, and was as dust in his hands. He could not rally from the shock; pride, ambition, courage, were all annihilated, and Mrs. Mulford, to whom beggary seemed worse than death, could only mingle her tears with his in speechless agony.

The next morning Mrs. Mulford was a widow, and her children fatherless. A trifle the creditors allowed her was all she had to depend upon, the money she had inherited from her father having been swept away by the financial tornado.

She had taken a little place in the country, and with Arthur's help, and Bridget's, had really succeeded in making things look quite cozy and attractive.

"Sure ma'am," says Bridget, in her homely attempts to comfort her mistress, who dragged herself about, "if you'd only smile once in a while ye'd be surprised at the comfort ye'd get!"

"Ah Bridget," Mrs. Mulford replies, with a long-drawn sigh, "my smiling days are over. I try to be patient, but I cannot be cheerful."

"Ah, but it's the cheerful patience that brings the sunshine; and ye really shouldn't grieve the children so."

"Do they mind it, Bridget?"

"Sure, an' they do! Master Arthur, bless the boy! says it's just like a tomb where ye are; and Miss Minnie and Miss Maud have their little hearts nearly torn out of them."

But Mrs. Mulford could not be easily beguiled from her sorrow, especially as she was obliged to rely on her needle to eke out the limited allowance, and every stitch she took was but an additional reminder of the depth to which she was reduced.

She had managed to exist through the Thanksgiving season, and Bridget had done her best to make it an occa-

sion worthy to be remembered, by the children at least; and if it hadn't been for that kitchen queen, I don't see how the house could have held together.

She had always some amusing story to tell the children, something to excite their wonder or admiration, and every few days would surprise them with some fresh molasses delights.

Minnie and Maud rather enjoyed their poverty, as it allowed them more freedom and exemption from little rules that society enjoined. It was such fun to roll in the snow, and draw each other on the sled, without any caution in regard to the ruffles and frills that used to be such a torment and restraint to them.

Christmas was drawing near, and its approach filled Mrs. Mulford with uncontrollable despondency. It had been a happy season in her young days. Now it was all so changed! Even a moderate expenditure was not to be thought of, when it was so difficult to procure even the necessities of life, and she really wished the day was over, for she dreaded its arrival.

In the kitchen, all was animation and excitement. Minnie and Maud were down in a corner very busy over some mystery, in which Bridget was as much interested as they were themselves. Arthur bustled

about from one room to another, always the active, cheery, hopeful boy, who kept everybody informed of what was going on in the outside world, and he, too, evidently had some weighty secret pressing against the buttons of his jacket.

Christmas Eve came. Mrs. Mulford was in the midst of a troubled dream, when shouts of "Merry Christmas!" rang through the house and awakened her to the reality of the day she so long had dreaded.

The children's cloth bags were fairly bulging with little treasures they had created with their own hands. "Come Mother," said Arthur, "you first; Bridget can hardly wait."

"Oh no," said the mother. "Maud should have the first chance," and the child eagerly availed herself of the privilege.

It was astonishing what an amount of goodies rolled out of that bag. There was a nice pair of warm gloves to use in drawing the sled, or making snowballs, a new doll, and a book full of pictures. Minnie's bag was quite as bountifully stocked. Arthur had filled his own bag with all sorts of odds and ends to increase the excitement. Bridget unloaded her collection of treasures, pulling out a potato labeled, "The last of the Murphys! May they always be first in the field!"

When Mrs. Mulford was finally induced to examine the contents of her bag, the children gathered around anxiously watching the proceedings. There was a pair of nice brackets for hanging outside, which Arthur had cut out with a pen knife, and as she took up each article that had been wrought by loving little fingers, the worsted pulse-warmers, the pretty mats and tidies, she felt that it was indeed possible for love to build upon the old ruins a beautiful palace for the heart to dwell in.

"Forgive me my dear children," she exclaimed, embracing them each in turn. "We will begin the world anew. I have been a weak woman."

"It's been a heavy cross ye had, but we're all going to help carry it."

"And Mother," broke in Arthur, "I've gotten a job in a grocery store! It isn't much, but I'll learn the business, and then I can take care of you."

What a Christmas breakfast they had! Bridget had made delicious waffles, and everything was super excellent, but it was the guest that sat at the board with them that

made it a feast

to be remem-

bered. While

they were at

the table,

there

was a

sudden,

sharp

knock at the

door that

startled all the

inhabitants.

Arthur admitted the gentleman, so swathed in an immense scarf about the neck and chin as to leave one in doubt as to whether he was friend or foe.

"Well, well," said the stranger, divesting himself of his wraps. "Where's Carrie? Where's Carrie Wharton, my niece? She was Carrie Wharton, married Ned Mulford, and a long tramp I've had to find her." Saying which, he entered the room where Mrs. Mulford and her children were sitting.

"Carrie!" said the stranger in eager tones, advancing toward Mrs. Mulford, who having a bewildered moment, then a flash of recognition.

"Uncle Nathan!"

"Yes, dear child! Would I could have got to you sooner. I felt I was growing old and had a hankering after a home to die in, and always the face of my little niece, Carrie, seemed to give me the heartiest welcome. Why, I had hard work finding out anything about Ned Mulford, or Ned Mulford's widow."

"It's because of our poverty," sighed the widow.

"Money don't make a home, I know that well enough, for I've seen it tried. It's the way of the world. But no matter, we'll begin anew. Arthur, what are your plans?"

"I was going into Mr. Chase's grocery the first of January."

"Do you want to?"

"No, sir," replied

Arthur, "but I'd like to help Mother."

"You've done your duty.

But my

opinion is

you'd rather

go to college

than into a

grocery."

"Oh sir!"

hoping the flush on

his face was not to be

misunderstood.

"College it is, then. Carrie, you are to be my housekeeper; these are my little girls," clasping the children in a hearty embrace.

The Christmas dinner was a marvel of cookery, and Uncle Nathan enlivened the meal with accounts of his adventures.

"And this was the Christmas I had dreaded," said Mrs. Mulford, as she retired to her room. Her pride was truly humbled by this manifestation of God's goodness, and long and earnestly she prayed that henceforth, whatever trials might come upon her, she might bear the burden with cheerful patience, trusting in God to lead her through the shadows into the sunshine of a more perfect day. And in years after, no memory was more precious to her than that of a Christmas morning when the children taught her a lesson of unselfishness and duty.

Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle,
Vol. 1, ©1877, 358-372. **LM**





The Child Life of Jesus

Christ appeared upon the scene as a babe, as a child, having no extra advantages in the world. He came of poor parentage, He had no privileges that the poor have not known, He experienced the difficulties that the poor and lowly experience from babyhood to childhood, from youth to manhood. There is a mystery surrounding the birth of Christ that cannot and need not be explained. Nearly two thousand years ago a voice strange and mysterious was heard in heaven, proceeding from the throne of God, and saying: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." God manifest in the flesh came to our world, being justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless Babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory, and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity

and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God, and see in Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person.

Christ ... was a pattern of obedience and industry. He was as a pleasant sunbeam in the home circle. Faithfully and cheerfully He acted His part in doing the humble duties that His lowly calling required. As the world's Redeemer, He had chosen a most humble position. He had clothed His divinity with humanity in order that He might be able to reach humanity. ...

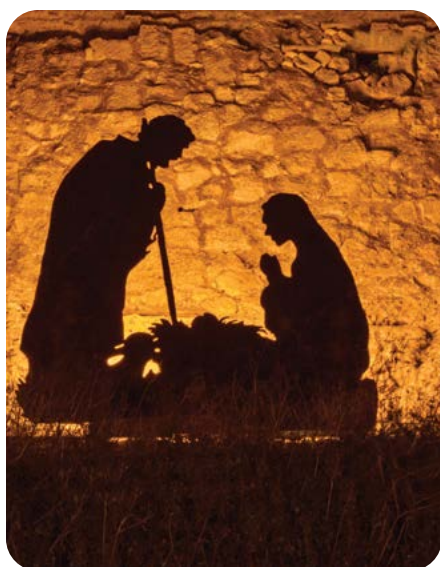
It is written of Jesus in childhood that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him." When only twelve years of age, He made manifest the fact that His mind was developing along spiritual lines. His parents went to Jerusalem every year to the feast of the Passover, and in His twelfth year Jesus accompanied them to the city. "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance; and when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him." For three days they sought Him anxiously ... "And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking

them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

His parents listened in amazement as they heard His searching inquiries. Jesus was taking advantage of the providential occasion that had opened to Him to diffuse light. ... Tho taking the attitude of a learner, Christ imparted light in every word He uttered. He interpreted the Scripture to the darkened mind of the rabbis, and gave them clear light in regard to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. The sharp, clear questions of the child learner brought a flood of light to their darkened understanding. The truth shone out as the clear shining of a light in a darkened place, as He received and imparted the knowledge of the plan of salvation. ...

The doctors and the wise men were amazed at the question of the child Jesus, and, desiring to encourage such a student of the prophecies, they sought to draw out the knowledge He had obtained. Joseph and Mary were as much astonished, as they heard the wise answers of their Son, as were the learned men themselves. When there was a pause in the conversation, Mary, the mother of Jesus, approached her Son, and asked, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." Divine light shone through humanity as Jesus lifted His right hand, and asked, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? ..." *The Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1896 **LM**

Remembering What Matters



December 25 is celebrated by Christians around the world as the day that Christ was born. A diligent student of the Bible knows that it does not tell, anywhere within its pages, the exact day of Christ's birth. A diligent study of the history of the world will show that the date December 25 is actually celebrated as the birthday of the pagan deity Tammuz, worshiped as a god. He has many names depending on the culture, but the date and the way his birth is celebrated is deeply rooted in paganism. So why do Christians celebrate December 25 as the birthday of Christ?

Likely it is because not many of us are diligent students of history. We don't believe in paganism and the many varied gods and services and rituals that are worshiped and performed in that

religion, and since we don't believe, we dismiss paganism as a relic religion of the past. The pagan religion involved the worship of many things—trees, bunnies, chicks, stars, the sun, the moon, mountains, rivers, the earth and the sky. As Christians, should we then be concerned about having pictures of trees and mountains and rivers in our homes? Should we be concerned because we are fascinated by the stars in the sky and the things of the earth?


Perhaps our concern should not be so much about how Christmas came to be and more about the Christ who came.

"The 25th of December has long been commemorated as the day of Jesus' birth, and ... it is not my purpose to affirm or question the propriety of celebrating this event on this day, but to dwell upon the childhood and life of our Saviour ... the humble manner in which the Redeemer came to the world. All heaven was interested in the great event of Christ's advent to earth. Heavenly messengers came to make known the birth of the long-promised, long-expected Saviour to the humble shepherds who were watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. The first manifestation that attracted the notice of the shepherds at the birth of the Saviour, was a radiant light in the starry heavens, which filled them with wonder and admiration. ...

"The astonished shepherds could scarcely comprehend the precious message borne to them by the angels,

and when the radiant light had passed away, they said one to another, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child' (Luke 2:15-17). ...

"What matchless love Jesus has manifested for a fallen world! If angels sang because the Saviour was born in Bethlehem, shall not our hearts echo the glad strain, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men? Although we do not know the exact day of Christ's birth, we would honor the sacred event. May the Lord forbid that anyone should be so narrow minded as to overlook the event because there is an uncertainty in regard to the exact time. Let us do what we can to fasten the minds of the children upon those things which are precious to everyone who loves Jesus. Let us teach them how Jesus came into the world to bring hope, comfort, peace, and happiness to all. ... Let the hearts of all respond with exceeding joy for the priceless gift of the Son of God." *The Review and Herald*, December 17, 1889

(For a more in-depth reading regarding Christmas and its pagan origins, see Marshall Grosboll's article *How to Celebrate Christmas*, p. 2, in this issue.) 

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December Sermon of the Month

The Tipping Point

By John J. Grosboll

What if the Holy Spirit speaks to the heart, but is repeatedly ignored? There is a point beyond which there is no turning back.

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have donated in
the past month will
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Sermon of the Month
free of charge.

From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

December 2022

Dear Friend,

Christians have a mission to take the gospel to all the world. This is a divine command (Mark 16 and Matthew 28). However, most of the world is not interested and will not listen to either the message of mercy or of warning that we bring. Because of this, many Christians have given up. Why tell people when they won't listen?

Jesus understood this problem. He knew it from the beginning. When, after the fall of Adam and Eve, He announced the plan of salvation to the angels, He told them, "He was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin; yet few would receive Him as the Son of God." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 64

When He dwelt on earth as a man, He knew this problem and spoke a parable explaining why it was this way (Matthew 13:3–9; 18–23). He said the kingdom would be given to a "little flock." Luke 12:32

But if you witnessed for Jesus your whole life and were only successful one time, it would be more than worth it.

"One soul saved, to live throughout the ages of eternity, to praise God and the Lamb, is of more value than millions in money." *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, 246

"One soul saved in the kingdom of God is of more value than all earthly riches." *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, 209

"Satan had declared to his synagogue that not a single human soul would maintain his loyalty to God's commandments. One soul saved would prove this statement to be false. One soul saved would demonstrate the righteousness of God's government." *The Upward Look*, 223

"One soul saved in the kingdom of God is worth more than ten thousand worlds like this." *The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1880

God has promised that His word will not return to Him void, and if you and I continue to carry the message to the world, the Lord will see that souls are saved as a result of our witnessing.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Daniel 12:3 KJV

Your brother in Christ,

John J. Grosboll

No Room for Christ

“No room in the inn,” its keeper said;
No place where the Christ-child might lay His head.
The throng knew not, though of David’s line—
They might have made room for a King divine,
And sped as heralds to first proclaim
That the Prince of Peace had come to reign.
No room in the inn for the lowly birth,
While all heaven beheld its gift to earth.
No room in the inn. ‘Tis often heard,
“This is not the place to declare His word.”
And travelers meet, converse, and away,
But find no room His name to say.
No room in the inn for the Christ to bide!
How oft our allegiance to Him we hide!
Though accounting ourselves of the royal line,
We prove we know not the King divine.
Oh, let us make room in our hearts for aye
That each morn may witness His natal day,
And Christ as our Saviour be born anew
To abide in our hearts the whole day through.

By Mrs. Worthie H. Holden

Taken from *The Review and Herald*, December 19, 1899





Evangelism Headquarters in Kenya

By Pastor Domingo Nunez

For the last 18-20 years, Steps to Life Ministry has been working in Africa to assist our brethren there in spreading the three angels' messages. During that time, we have been blessed with the opportunity to work in many countries: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Congo, and Togo. By God's grace, we have found the interest and desire to receive, learn, and share the three angels' messages in all of these countries. We are very blessed to be able to assist all those who are hungering and thirsting for the pure gospel of Christ and who desire most of all to be ready for His second coming.



In the last four years, we have been working in Kisii and Keroka in Kenya, specifically with Moses Asimba and Zachary Okeyo Makworo, both of whom completed training as lay pastors and in church administration and organization. They faithfully have been giving Bible studies in Kisii, training other interested individuals in church administration and organization, and working together in the operation of the Steps to Life Outreach Mission in Kenya.

For the last two years, they have worked out of rented office space in Kisii, but it became apparent that most of the people who responded to their outreach work were coming from Keroka.

At the beginning of 2022, property was purchased in Keroka and construction of the Steps to Life Headquarters

for Global Evangelism of Free Seventh-day Adventists was soon begun. Its purpose is to teach and preach the three angels' messages throughout Kenya, and to print truth-filled literature.

While there is still a bit of construction left before it is completely finished, we are happy to report that we conducted the first worship service in the headquarters and office building in September. The facility is expected to be fully completed by the end of the year, but it is with joy and praise that we are able to come together and do God's work now. We can use all the help we can get to buy the furniture for the offices and meeting room, and the equipment needed to produce the literature for distribution. Please mark your donations *Mission-Kenya*. **LM**

The Lamb: Rejected & Restored

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Isaiah 53:6

“I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. ‘I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.’”

Ezekiel 34:15, 16

We are familiar with the Biblical parables of the lost found in Luke 15—the sheep, coin, and prodigal son. We are also familiar with instances of those who have been *rejected* (driven away), broken or sick: the poor, fatherless, weak, and outcast. The beauty in the Lord’s pursuit is in sight, even to this day. Here, for example, we may learn from sheep.

A shepherd or farmer, although not often spoken of, may be skilled in maternal reconnection (restored bond). A shepherd or farmer who notices a ewe mother’s rejection of her lamb, will assess her willingness to allow the lamb to come close and nurse. Freely, on occasion, she will allow the lamb to suck when distracted, eating hay or grain, grazing, or sleeping. However, an occasional suckle is inadequate for nutritional benefit. And so, immediate reorientation must take place. The ewe is placed securely in a bonding pen or head gate to allow its lamb to nurse. Ideally, within three days, they are both placed in natural surroundings separate from the flock; in the interim, their interactions are closely monitored. Most often, successful bonding occurs and the ewe and its lamb are placed once again with their flock.

A restored lamb will thrive in health, learn mannerisms, nurse appropriately, gain weight, play with other lambs, prance on all four limbs, run, climb, express curiosity in its environment, nap throughout the day, sleeping 8–16 hours daily. The lamb will also establish a bond with the shepherd, farmer, or adoptive caregiver and will retain him or her in its knowledge, and distinctively knowing his or her voice, is the first to come running when called.

However, a rejected lamb will fail to thrive and may have a sickness or defect. The lamb may be unable to retain warmth or exhibit a strong suck. A weak suck is inadequate for nutritional sustenance; making both natural nursing and bottle-feeding difficult. The lamb will require stomach-tube feedings which has a low survival rate. Failure to thrive during its first few weeks may ultimately lead to starvation and suffering, even death.

What a blessing, The Lord is not willing that any shall perish! Just as the Good Shepherd searches for and rejoices over the lost, He searches for and *restores* the *rejected*, broken, and sick:

“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow

His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth,’ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to

Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:21–25 **LM**



Q:

*I know I'm not right
with God. There are
things that I have to
get out of my life,
but how?*



A:

Paul understood this situation completely.

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Romans 7:18, 19, 24

So what is the answer to his question? Who can deliver him, you, me?

“Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies; in You I take shelter. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.” Psalm 143:9, 10

“Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.” Psalm 25:20, 21

“God will accept nothing less than unreserved surrender. Half-hearted, sinful Christians can never enter heaven. There they would find no happiness, for they know nothing of the high, holy principles that govern the members of the royal family. The true Christian keeps the windows of the soul open heavenward. He lives in fellowship with Christ. His will is conformed to the will of Christ. His highest desire is to become more and more Christlike.” *The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1907

“We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people ‘to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ Philippians 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.” *The Desire of Ages*, 672 **LM**





Trust in Divine Power

"Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness [temperance], rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power—these are the true remedies." *My Life Today*, 135

Over the last few issues, we have looked at the seven physical laws of health. To complete our study of all eight laws, let's look at how these physical blessings are brought together by the spiritual principle of trusting in God.

By following these laws, we keep our bodies healthy and strong, our minds clear and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"God is working, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, to keep us alive, to build up and restore us. When any part of the body sustains injury, a healing process is at once begun; nature's agencies are set at work to restore soundness. But the power working through these agencies is the power of

God. All life-giving power is from Him. When one recovers from disease, it is God who restores him. ..." Ibid.

"It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow. The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate [instill] distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power. ...

“As soon as Satan can separate the soul from God, the only Source of strength, he will seek to arouse the unholy desires of man’s carnal nature. The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle.” *Conflict and Courage*, 177

Satan is determined to separate us from God and he uses many things to achieve that separation. The busyness of our lives may keep us from getting a sufficient amount of exercise, or eating at a time that is best for the body. He places before us many foods, drinks, and activities that our sinful natures crave and when not denied, destroy the vitality of the body and numb the mind. We consume all kinds of drink, many containing caffeine, sugar, and other harmful substances, rather than the water the body so desperately needs. Working many hours a day in an indoor setting can keep us from the pure air and sunshine that the body needs to thrive. The stresses and worries of life can prevent us from getting the kind and amount of sleep necessary for the body to rejuvenate each night, so that we are not sluggish both physically and mentally every day.

Following God’s eight laws of health so that our bodies will be strong and our minds clear and receptive is a choice. Just as we set aside time to spend with Jesus in Bible study and prayer each day, we must also set aside time and effort to live in the healthful way He has designed for the bodies He created.

Our trust must be wholly and completely in Jesus. He who does not fail is faithful to keep us according to His will. However, without a full surrender of heart and mind to Him, and complete trust in Him, we cannot hope to succeed in our struggle against Satan and self. And as a consequence, our lives will be filled with weakness and ill-health, both spiritually and physically.

Through prayer and study of His word, we must be in constant communion with God.

“For the health and vitality of the soul, the divine Physician has prescribed communion with Himself.

We are to sit at His feet and learn of Him how to be meek and lowly in heart. Spiritual health is dependent on the food given to the mind and on the air which is breathed.

“The soul needs food, and in order to get this food, the word of God must be studied. ... The breathing of pure air is essential for the cure of disease. And it is no less essential that the atmosphere we breathe in the spiritual life shall be pure. This is essential for a healthy growth in grace. Breathe the pure atmosphere which produces pure thoughts and noble words.” *The Upward Look*, 174

Without sufficient pure air, sunlight, rest and exercise, water for both the body and the soul, if we do not partake of a clean and adequate diet, avoiding harmful foods and substances such as drugs and alcohol, our minds and judgment cannot be clear to receive the Holy Spirit. We know that we can have complete trust in God because He created us, He made salvation available to all who would accept it, and He is willing and waiting to do for us what is necessary, what we cannot do for ourselves, so that we can

be with Him for eternity. This is where we trust. We can clearly see in His

holy book all that He has done and are amazed at

His faithfulness in the face of our own untrustworthiness.

“Christ says, ‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’ Those who surrender body, mind, and spirit into the hands of God, to be controlled by Him, will see of His salvation.

“Christ says, ‘Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.’ Precious is the experience of finding rest. He who does not, day by day, learn lessons from Christ, cannot appreciate the suggestions of the Holy Spirit. But he who learns daily of Jesus, making use of every means of grace, grows in the knowledge of God. Under the influence of the Spirit, his heart is filled with the peace and comfort of hope. His faith and trust are strengthened. His development in Christlikeness is apparent to all with whom he comes in contact.” *The Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1902

God is steadfast, unwavering in His love and care for us. Shouldn’t we be as steadfast and unwavering in our surrender and commitment to Him?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5, 6 **LM**





To Him Who Overcomes

By John J. Grosboll

It is recorded in several places in Scripture that one day there will be an almost complete reversal of the ranking of mankind so that those who are now last will become first, and those who are now first will become last. What is it that will determine a person's ranking in society at that time?



Matthew 19 records that Jesus said that those who are first will be last, and the last will be first. He had stated this principle earlier in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) where He said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

There are two groups of people involved in this rearrangement of society. Revelation 21:5–7 describes one group: “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done!’ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.’”

Verse 8 describes the other group: “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

These two groups are again described in Revelation 22:14, 15, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”

Revelation 21:5–7 tells us that the one who is promised salvation and an inheritance is the one who overcomes. In the messages to the seven churches (Revelation 2 and 3), every church is given a promise, if they overcome.

Ephesus – “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Revelation 2:7

Smyrna – “He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” Verse 11

Pergamos – “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” Verse 17

Thyatira – “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father.” Verses 26, 27

Sardis – “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” Revelation 3:5

Philadelphia – “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.” Verse 12

Laodicea – “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” Verse 21

The church at Pergamos is known as the compromising church. There are many people today who worship in compromising churches, and to them the Lord is saying that if they overcome, they will be given hidden manna to eat.

What is this hidden manna? We find the story of the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness in Exodus 16. They had no water to drink and no food to eat, but the Lord promised them that He would provide water and send

them food from heaven. And the Lord promised each morning for six days a small, round substance, like white coriander seed, like wafers made with honey, that the people were to gather for food. Not knowing what it was, they called it *manna* which means “What is it?”

What was this manna and what is the difference between it and the hidden manna spoken of in Revelation 2:17? Jesus answered that question for us in John 6:47–51. “Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

Of course, the Jews got a little miffed when He said that, and they said, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” Jesus responded, “My flesh truly is food, My blood truly is drink. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” They were accusing Jesus of teaching cannibalism, but Jesus was using symbolic language. Verse 63 makes it very clear what He was talking about. “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” Jesus wasn’t talking about literally eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The Bible attributes many names to Jesus and one of those names, found in John 1, is “The Word of God.”

The manna sent to the children of Israel in the wilderness was physical food meant to sustain the body during their wandering. But the hidden manna is Jesus, the true Bread that will give you eternal life if you eat it, and you do this by consuming His word. The word of God is powerful. It is powerful to recreate in a person new life, new desires, a new spirit, a new mind. To consume the Bread of God means receiving Jesus into your life and then living by His word.

“

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

James 4:7, 8

When Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted, the devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3, 4). But Jesus' response was, "... 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."'"

To be in the kingdom of heaven, to have salvation, to live forever, you must eat the word of God, receiving it into your mind and heart, and then living according to that word.

If you live according to the word, then you have received the hidden manna, and your life will be changed; you will be given a new name.

These days, there's not much in a name. Most people name their children after someone famous or an ancestor or a character in a book or movie, because it sounds nice. But from the beginning of earth's history, a person was given a name because it expressed something about the person. The Bible records some of these names. For instance, *Jesu* or *Jesus* means a *Saviour* or *Deliverer*. *Elijah*, that mighty Old Testament prophet, means *Jehovah is my God*. *Daniel*, who wrote so extensively about judgment, means *God is my judge*.

When you receive the word of God into your life, when your life is changed, then your new name will be in harmony with the character that you have developed; and as promised to the overcomer of the church of Ephesus, you will eat again of the tree of life.

Looking at the promise to the church of Thyatira, the Lord said that the overcomer would "rule over the nations with a rod of iron." We see this in both the Old and New Testaments. Psalm 2:7-9 says, "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron: You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Speaking of what would happen at the end of the world, Isaiah 11:4 says, "But with

righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."

In Revelation 19:13-16, John writes in symbolic language about the Second Coming of Christ, "He [Jesus] was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

There is coming a time when everything in this world is going to be completely reversed. Today, there are people who believe in Christ—the overcomers—all over the world being persecuted, oppressed, and in great difficulty. However, when all things are overturned, they will be delivered, because their names are found written in His book, whereas those who may seem now to have all the power and money and fame, but who are not overcomers, will, when Christ comes, be destroyed.

Those imprisoned, persecuted and in all manner of trouble, but who love the Lord and obey His law, because of the promise given to the people in the church at Thyatira, will fulfill what Jesus said, "So the last will be first, and the first will be last. For many are called, but few are chosen."

One other thing was promised to the overcomer of the church of Thyatira: "And I will give him the morning star." Revelation 2:28

This is one of the most wonderful promises in the Bible. Friends, who and what is the Morning Star? Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:19, "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts."

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am

the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” Revelation 22:16.

Jesus is the Morning Star. If you are an overcomer, you will have the Morning Star in your heart, the character of Christ will become your character.

What are we to overcome, and how do we do it? The Bible makes this very clear. First, John says in 1 John 5:4, that he that “is born of God overcomes the world.” Then he says, speaking of the world, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15–17

The lust of the flesh (desire for unlawful sexual pleasure), the lust of the eyes (desire for possessions), the pride of life, and the desire for the praise and approbation of men, all are pleasing to the worldly man. However, these are the very things that must be overcome and eliminated from the life of the born-again child of God.

To be an overcomer, one must overcome the world, for everyone who is born of God overcomes the world. But how? “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:7, 8

Paul expressed the same principle in Ephesians 4:27–29: “Nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”



Both Paul and James say to resist the devil and make no room in our lives for him. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:11, 12, just how to do that. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

And Peter is just as direct, “Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8

We do not have to chase after the things of the world nor yield to the temptations put before us. The Holy Spirit can and will give us the power to overcome all of them. Paul dwells upon this repeatedly in his epistles. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of

sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Romans 8:1–9, *first part*

Friends, we must seek the new birth experience, to fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit, so that the devil can find no place in us for him to dwell anymore. The Holy Spirit is waiting to create in us a new heart and a new spirit so that we may overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil and that we may have eternal life. **LM**

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Introduction to the *Mystery of* *Godliness Series*

By Judy Rebarchek
Managing Editor

In the late summer of 2021, Pastor John Grosboll began a series of sermons entitled *The Mystery of Godliness*. These sermons are available on DVD and YouTube. However, the *LandMarks* staff is excited to bring them to you reduced to article format.

LandMarks magazine has for some time included a regular series article (e.g., the *Sermon on the Mount* series; the *Facts about the Future* series) and we will present *The Mystery of Godliness* as the regular series article beginning with the January, 2023, issue.

Using both Bible and Spirit of Prophecy support, these sermons discuss the dual nature of Christ—divine and human—but they delve more deeply into His human nature. The topic of Christ’s human nature has often been, and continues to be, very controversial. However, we hope that we all can remain open to the weight of evidence in inspired writings (*The Desire of Ages*, 458).

Considering the state of the world today, Pastor Grosboll felt that the Holy Spirit had impressed him that now was the time to present these messages. It was

not His intention to convince or change anyone’s mind, but only to present what he has studied for more than 50 years, and to encourage those who hear his messages to study for themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to guide them.

God is preparing a people for eternity. If we seek to be a part of that people, then we must understand Jesus’ human nature to the fullest degree that the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy reveal so that we might more faithfully reflect His character in our own lives.


For all of my adult life, I have asked the questions: “Was Jesus really like me? How could He be of any help to me as an example of how to live, if He wasn’t *just* like me?” And I strongly defended my belief. After all, if He wasn’t like me, then He had some advantage living this life that I don’t have. Right?

But perhaps the real questions we should be asking are, “Can we trust in Christ to be our Saviour; were His death and life sufficient, in every way, to save me from my life of sin, by the power of the Holy Spirit? What kind of person did Christ have to be to be a spotless,

unblemished sacrifice to save me from the guilt of my sins?”

Christ came to this earth in a body and nature created especially for Him (Hebrews 10:5), but the life He lived was especially designed for us (*This Day With God*, 32).

Both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy tell us that we will never have, not now nor throughout eternity, a full understanding of the mystery of Christ’s nature. So, regardless of the exact specifications of Christ’s nature, we must believe that He is able to save us to the uttermost if we are willing to surrender ourselves to His grace and mercy, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

It is our greatest hope that these messages will enable you to first understand what it really means to be Christlike and, ultimately, an overcomer. And secondly, that in understanding the standard that you and I are to reach to be overcomers, we will be encouraged to forget the past and press toward the mark of our calling which is much higher than most Adventists have realized. 



Joy to the World

A few years ago, a friend emailed me a story told about a mother who encouraged her young son to practice playing the piano, and specifically, to practice his scales. She told him to practice them not only forward, from middle C up the scale to C an octave higher, but to also practice them starting at the octave C and going back down to middle C. I'm not sure that I have everything exactly right about this story, but this part I know is right, she told him, as he played the descending scale, to put pauses at certain points in the scale. When the son did so, he recognized, not just a scale of notes, but the carol *Joy to the World*. As of right now, I've been playing the piano just shy of 60 years, and that was news to me. But let's look at the real story behind this beautiful song.

The lyrics were written by Isaac Watts in 1719, though not with the intention of becoming a Christmas carol. It was written as a response to or reinterpretation of Psalm 98 and has more to do with Jesus' second coming than His first.

"Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

"The Lord has made known His salvation, His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. Sing to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, with trumpets and the sound of a horn; shout joyfully before the Lord, the King.

"Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity." Psalm 98

An accomplished and well-known composer and arranger, Lowell Mason arranged the tune used today in 1848. This tune is somewhat reminiscent of a couple of musical phrases found in Handel's Messiah; although Handel scholars dismiss as mere coincidence the idea that Mason might have "borrowed" these phrases for his arrangement of *Joy to the World*.

Source: wikipedia.org/wiki/Joy_to_the_World

A joyful and glorious hymn of praise to God for sending His Son, and a looking forward to His soon return, *Joy to the World* is a wonderful song to sing all throughout the year.

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come;

Let Earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare Him room,

And heaven and nature sing,

And heaven and nature sing,

And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing." **LM**



January 1 – 7, 2023

Humanity's Fall

Key Text

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23

Study Help: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 52–62

Introduction

"Transgression placed the whole world under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, 'I have found a ransom.'" *The Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900

Sunday

1 THE IMAGE OF GOD

1.a. What is mentioned about Adam and Eve when they were created? Genesis 1:26, 27

Note: "When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. 'God created man in His own image' (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase." *Education*, 15

1.b. How does Ellen White explain the confusing text in Genesis 2:25 that says that Adam and Eve were naked before the Fall?

Note: "The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of

their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 310, 311

"The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 45

Monday

2 SIN CAUSES RUIN

2.a. What special instructions did God give to Adam and Eve about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Genesis 2:16, 17

Note: "Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents, capable of appreciating the wisdom and benevolence of His character and the justice of His requirements, and with full liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. They were to enjoy communion with God and with holy angels; but before they could be rendered eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. At the very beginning of man's existence a check was placed upon the desire for self-indulgence, the fatal passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 48, 49

2.b. Describe the sad experience of Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:1–6

Note: "When Eve, disregarding the Lord's admonition concerning the forbidden tree, ventured to approach it, she came in contact with her foe. Her interest and curiosity having

been awakened, Satan proceeded to deny God's word, and to insinuate distrust of His wisdom and goodness. To the woman's statement concerning the tree of knowledge, 'God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,' the tempter made answer, 'Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' Genesis 3:3-5." *Education*, 24

"We must set our hearts to know what is truth. All the lessons which God has caused to be placed on record in His word are for our warning and instruction. They are given to save us from deception. Their neglect will result in ruin to ourselves. Whatever contradicts God's word, we may be sure proceeds from Satan." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 55

Tuesday

3 SELF-JUSTIFICATION, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

3.a. After their disobedience, what did Adam and Eve try to do? Genesis 3:7

Note: "But when sin entered, they [our first parents] severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

"This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God." *Christ's Objects Lessons*, 311

3.b. What explanation did they present to the Lord? Genesis 3:8-13



Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves to cover their nakedness caused by transgression.

Note: "Adam could neither deny nor excuse his sin; but instead of manifesting penitence, he endeavored to cast the blame upon his wife, and thus upon God Himself: 'The woman whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' He who, from love to Eve, had deliberately chosen to forfeit the approval of God, his home in Paradise, and an eternal life of joy, could now, after his fall, endeavor to make his companion, and even the Creator Himself, responsible for the transgression. So terrible is the power of sin.

"When the woman was asked, 'What is this that thou hast done?' she answered, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' 'Why didst Thou create the serpent? Why didst Thou suffer him to enter Eden?'—these were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin. Thus, like Adam, she charged God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies; it was indulged by our first parents as soon as they yielded to the influence of Satan, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Instead of humbly confessing their sins, they try to shield themselves by casting the blame upon others, upon circumstances, or upon God—making even His blessings an occasion of murmuring against Him." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 57, 58 [Author's emphasis.]

"He who is guilty of wrong is the first to suspect wrong. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart. It was through sin that men gained the knowledge of evil; no sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when uncontrolled by the grace of Christ." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 126

Wednesday

4 THE ONLY REMEDY FOR SINNERS

4.a. What provision had been made to save the human race? John 3:16

Note: “The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’ (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16. Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which ‘passeth knowledge’? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.

“God was to be manifest in Christ, ‘reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19. Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become ‘sons of God.’ 1 John 3:2.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 63, 64

4.b. What ray of hope was presented to Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:15

Note: “To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel’ (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 222

“Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed, ‘the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever,’ is communicated to men. 1 Peter 1:23. In that first promise spoken to our fallen race in Eden, Christ was sowing the gospel seed.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 38

Thursday

5 “ALL HAVE SINNED”

5.a. What is written regarding the condition of the human race? Romans 3:10, 11, 23

Note: “Transgression placed the whole world under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, ‘I have found a ransom.’” *The Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900

“Christ mourned for the transgression of every human being. He bore even the guiltiness of Caiaphas, knowing the hypocrisy that dwelt in his soul, while for pretense he rent his robe. Christ did not rend His robe, but His soul was rent. His garment of human flesh was rent as He hung on the cross, the Sin-bearer of the race. By His suffering and death a new and living way was opened.” *The Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900

5.b. What promise is given to those who accept the provision made? Romans 6:23; John 5:24

Note: “Only by the precious blood of the Son of God could the transgressor be redeemed. The plan of salvation was laid in sacrifice. The apostle Paul wrote, ‘Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.’ 2 Corinthians 8:9. Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity. And as the crowning blessing of salvation, ‘the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Romans 6:23.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 519

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What kind of dress was worn by our first parents before the Fall?
- 2 How can we be secure against Satan’s deception?
- 3 What is self-justification or self-righteousness?
- 4 What is the only way we can be saved?
- 5 What is written about the condition of the unconverted person?

January 8 – 14, 2023

Jesus Christ Our Only Hope

Key Text

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Study Help: *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 226–228

Introduction

“Christ alone is exalted to be ‘a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ Acts 5:31. ‘Neither is there salvation in any other.’ Acts 4:12.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 264

Sunday

1 THE DIVINE SUBSTITUTE

1.a. What happened the same day Adam and Eve sinned? Genesis 3:21

Note: “To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God’s dear Son could expiate. And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 68

1.b. How does the prophet Isaiah explain this substitution? Isaiah 53:4, 5

Note: “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.” *The Desire of Ages*, 25

Monday

2 THE CONDITION OF ETERNAL LIFE

2.a. What is the condition of eternal life? Matthew 19:16, 17

Note: “The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.” *Steps to Christ*, 62

“The law requires righteousness—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can ‘be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’” Romans 3:26. *The Desire of Ages*, 762

“Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God’s law, which is holy, just, and good.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 391

“As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two covenants.

The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 370

2.b. Can human beings present perfect obedience by themselves? Isaiah 64:6

Note: "It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness." *Steps to Christ*, 62

Tuesday

3 PERFECT OBEDIENCE THROUGH CHRIST

3.a. What assurance do we have through the merits of Christ? John 15:5; Philippians 4:13

Note: "The world's Redeemer, the only-begotten Son of God, by His perfect obedience to the law, by His life and character, redeemed that which was lost in the fall, and made it possible for man to obey that holy law of righteousness which Adam transgressed. Christ did not exchange His divinity for humanity, but combined humanity with divinity; and in humanity He lived the law in behalf of the human family. The sins of every one who will

receive Christ were set to His account, and He has fully satisfied the justice of God." *Special Testimonies on Education*, 21

"Because man fallen could not overcome Satan with his human strength, Christ came from the royal courts of heaven to help him with His human and divine strength combined. Christ knew that Adam in Eden, with his superior advantages, might have withstood the temptations of Satan, and conquered him. He also knew that it was not possible for man, out of Eden, separated from the light and love of God since the Fall, to resist the temptations of Satan in his own strength. In order to bring hope to man, and save him from complete ruin, He humbled Himself to take man's nature, that, with His divine power combined with the human, He might reach man where he is. He obtains for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam that strength which it is impossible for them to gain for themselves, that in His name they might overcome the temptations of Satan." *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1874

3.b. What was prophesied by Daniel in regard to the righteousness of Christ? Daniel 9:24

Note: "In the prophecy of Daniel it was recorded of Christ that He shall 'make reconciliation for iniquity, and ... bring in everlasting righteousness' (Daniel 9:24). Every soul may say: 'By His perfect obedience He has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law perfectly for me. By faith in His merits I am free from the condemnation of the law. He clothes me with His righteousness, which answers all the demands of the law. I am complete in Him who brings in everlasting righteousness.'" *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 396

Wednesday

4 THE LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH

4.a. Under what symbol did John the Baptist introduce Christ to the people? John 1:29

Note: “John had been deeply moved as he saw Jesus bowed as a suppliant, pleading with tears for the approval of the Father. As the glory of God encircled Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, John recognized the token which God had promised. He knew that it was the world’s Redeemer whom he had baptized. The Holy Spirit rested upon him, and with outstretched hand pointing to Jesus, he cried, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’” *The Desire of Ages*, 112

4.b. What does the apostle Peter say about Jesus Christ?
1 Peter 1:18, 19

Note: “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’ Men need to understand that Deity suffered and sank under the agonies of Calvary. Yet Jesus Christ whom God gave for the ransom of the world purchased the church with His own blood. The Majesty of heaven was made to suffer at the hands of religious zealots, who claimed to be the most enlightened people upon the face of the earth.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 907

“As the sinner looks upon the Saviour dying on Calvary, and realizes that the Sufferer is divine, he asks why, this great sacrifice was made; and the cross points to the holy law of God, which has been transgressed. The death of Christ is an unanswerable argument [as] to the immutability and righteousness of the law. In prophesying of Christ, Isaiah says, ‘He will magnify the law, and make it honorable.’ The law has no power to pardon the evildoer. Its office is to point out his defects, that he may realize his need of One who is mighty to save, realize his need of One who will become his substitute, his surety, his righteousness. Jesus meets the need of the sinner; for He has taken upon Him the sins of the transgressor. ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.’ The Lord could have cut off the sinner, and utterly destroyed him; but the more costly plan was chosen. In His great love He provides hope for the hopeless, giving His only begotten Son to bear the sins of the world.” *The Bible Echo*, March 15, 1893

Thursday

5 THE DIVINE CHALLENGE

5.a. What unanswerable question did Christ put to His enemies? John 8:46

Note: “In His life on earth, Christ developed a perfect character, He rendered perfect obedience to His Father’s commandments. In coming to the world in human form, in becoming subject to the law, in revealing to men that He bore their sickness, their sorrow, their guilt, He did not become a sinner. Before the Pharisees He could say, ‘Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ Not one stain of sin was found upon Him. He stood before the world the spotless Lamb of God.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, December 29, 1898

5.b. How can we be saved? John 3:16–18

Note: “How, then, are we to be saved? ‘As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,’ so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God.’ Psalm 40:8.” *The Desire of Ages*, 175, 176

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain Isaiah 53:4, 5.
- 2 How does the Bible clarify human righteousness?
- 3 How can we present perfect obedience to the law of God?
- 4 What does the death of Christ on Calvary prove?
- 5 What challenge did Christ direct to His enemies?

January 15 – 21, 2023

Jesus Christ—Fully God

Key Text

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” 1 John 5:20

Study Help: *The Desire of Ages*, 463–475

Introduction

“That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 17

Sunday

1 “I AM THAT I AM”

1.a. How did Christ identify Himself to Moses? Exodus 3:2–7, 11–14

Note: “Leading his flocks one day near Horeb, ‘the mountain of God,’ Moses saw a bush in flames, branches, foliage, and trunk, all burning, yet seeming not to be consumed. He drew near to view the wonderful sight, when a voice from out of the flame called him by name. With trembling lips he answered, ‘Here am I.’ He was warned not to approach irreverently: ‘Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. ... I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 251, 252

1.b. When did Christ use the same title? John 8:56–58

Note: “With solemn dignity Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.’ Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, ‘whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.’ Micah 5:2, margin.” *The Desire of Ages*, 469, 470

Monday

2 “THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD’S HOST”

2.a. How did Christ appear to Joshua in Jericho? Joshua 5:13, 14

Note: “To reduce Jericho was seen by Joshua to be the first step in the conquest of Canaan. But first of all he sought an assurance of divine guidance, and it was granted him. Withdrawing from the encampment to meditate and to pray that the God of Israel would go before His people, he beheld an armed warrior, of lofty stature and commanding presence, ‘with his sword drawn in his hand.’ To Joshua’s challenge, ‘Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?’ the answer was given, ‘As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.’” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 487, 488

2.b. What command, similar to that given to Moses, was given also to Joshua? Joshua 5:15

Note: “The same command given to Moses in Horeb, ‘Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy,’ revealed the true character of the mysterious stranger. It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel. Awe-stricken, Joshua fell upon his face and worshiped, and heard the assurance, ‘I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor,’ and he received instruction for the capture of the city.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 488

Tuesday

3 “WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”

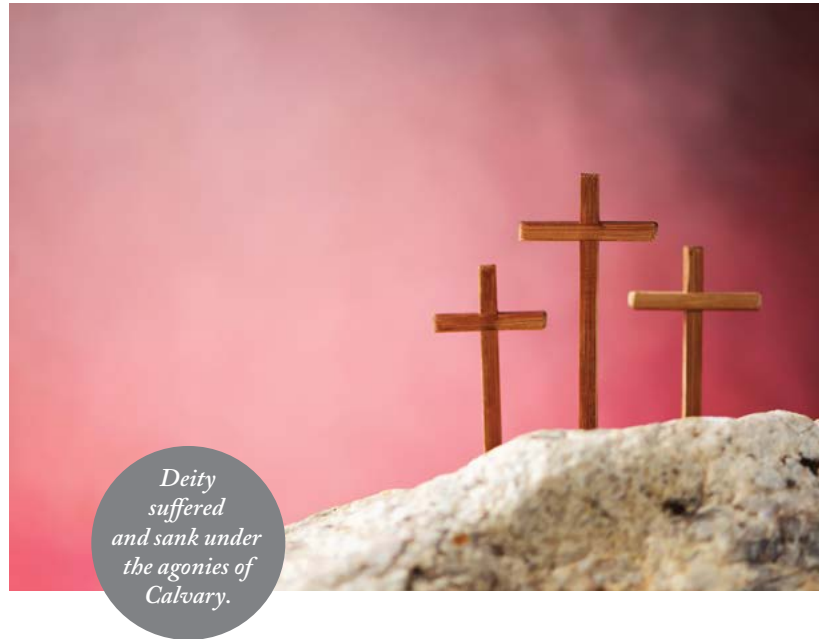
3.a. What titles are applied to Christ by Isaiah? Isaiah 9:6

Note: “We need more simplicity, more trust and confidence in our Saviour. He whose name is called ‘The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace;’ He of whom it is written, ‘The government shall be upon His shoulder,’ is the Wonderful Counselor. We are invited to ask wisdom of Him. He ‘giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.’ Isaiah 9:6; James 1:5.” *The Desire of Ages*, 363

3.b. How did Thomas address Christ after the resurrection? John 20:24–29

Note: “Many who have a weak and wavering faith, reason that if they had the evidence which Thomas had from his companions they would not doubt as he did. They do not realize that they have not only that evidence, but additional testimony piled up about them on every side. Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, may never realize their desire as he did, but gradually become entrenched in their unbelief, until they cannot perceive the weight of evidence in favor of Jesus, and, like the skeptical Jews, what little light they have will go out in the darkness which closes around their minds. To reject the plain and conclusive evidences of divine truth hardens the heart, and blinds the understanding. The precious light, being neglected, fades utterly from the mind that is unwilling to receive it.

“Jesus, in His treatment of Thomas, gave His followers a lesson regarding the manner in which they should treat those who have doubts upon religious truth, and who make those doubts prominent. He did not overwhelm Thomas with words of reproach, nor did He enter into a controversy with him; but, with marked condescension and tenderness, He revealed Himself unto the doubting one. Thomas had taken a most unreasonable position, in dictating the only conditions of his faith; but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers he had raised. Persistent controversy will seldom



weaken unbelief, but rather put it upon self-defense, where it will find new support and excuse. Jesus, revealed in His love and mercy as the crucified Saviour, will wring from many once unwilling lips the acknowledgment of Thomas, ‘My Lord, and my God.’” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 3, 221, 222

Wednesday

4 “GOD WITH US”

4.a. How did the prophet Isaiah foretell the incarnation? Isaiah 7:14

Note: “‘His name shall be called Immanuel, ... God with us.’ ‘The light of the knowledge of the glory of God’ is seen ‘in the face of Jesus Christ.’ From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He 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.’

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God—God’s thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, ‘I have declared unto them Thy name’—‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth’—‘that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in



them.' But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which 'angels desire to look,' and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 19, 20

4.b. How was this prophecy fulfilled? Matthew 1:21–23

Note: "Again God dwelt on earth; human hearts became conscious of His presence; the world was encompassed with His love. Heaven came down to men. In Christ their hearts acknowledged Him who had opened to them the science of eternity—" 'Immanuel, ... God with us.' " *Education*, 83

"The eternal Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and of His fullness have all we received. He is the author and finisher of our faith. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.'" *The Review and Herald*, November 3, 1904

Thursday

5 "THE WORD"

5.a. What title does John apply to Christ? John 1:1–3

Note: "If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity. God over all, blessed forevermore." *The Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906

5.b. What does Paul say about Christ in connection with the works of creation? Colossians 1:16, 17

Note: "As a personal Saviour He came to the world. As a personal Saviour He ascended on high. As a personal Saviour He intercedes in the heavenly courts. Before the throne of God in our behalf ministers 'One like the Son of man.' Daniel 7:13.

"The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declares of Christ that 'all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.' Colossians 1:16, 17, R.V., margin. The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us." *Education*, 132

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain the meaning of the title "I Am that I Am."
- 2 What titles are applied to Christ in Isaiah 9:6?
- 3 How did Christ identify Himself to Joshua?
- 4 Explain the expression "God with us."
- 5 "The Word was God." What does this expression mean?

January 22 – 28, 2023

The Divinity of Christ—Confessions

Key Text

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

Study Help: *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 127–142

Introduction

“We must confess Christ openly and bravely, exhibiting in our characters His meekness, humility, and love, till men shall be charmed by the beauty of holiness.” *Counsels on Health*, 400

Sunday

1 BY THE ANGEL

1.a. What did the angel Gabriel declare about Christ?
Luke 1:35

Note: “From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity. ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same’ (Hebrews 2:14). Only through Him can we become children of God. To all who believe on Him, He gives power to become the sons of God. Thus the heart becomes the temple of the living God. It is because Christ took human nature that men and women become partakers of the divine nature. He brings life and immortality to light through the gospel.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 229

1.b. What else did the angel say to Mary? Matthew
1:21–23

Note: “Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour’s life on earth, we see ‘God with us.’” *The Desire of Ages*, 24

Monday

2 BY THE APOSTLES

2.a. What public confession did Peter make? Matthew
16:16

Note: “Jesus now put a second question, relating to the disciples themselves: ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ Peter answered, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”

“From the first, Peter had believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Many others who had been convicted by the preaching of John the Baptist, and had accepted Christ, began to doubt as to John’s mission when he was imprisoned and put to death; and they now doubted that Jesus was the Messiah, for whom they had looked so long. Many of the disciples who had ardently expected Jesus to take His place on David’s throne left Him when they perceived that He had no such intention. But Peter and his companions turned not from their allegiance. The vacillating course of those who praised yesterday and condemned today did not destroy the faith of the true follower of the Saviour. Peter declared, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ He waited not for kingly honors to crown his Lord, but accepted Him in His humiliation.” *The Desire of Ages*, 411, 412

2.b. Later, during the crisis in Galilee, what did Peter again declare? John 6:68, 69

Note: “Without attempting to hinder those who were leaving Him, Jesus turned to the twelve and said, ‘Will ye also go away?’”

“Peter replied by asking, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go?’ ‘Thou hast the words of eternal life,’ he added. ‘And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.’

“‘To whom shall we go?’ The teachers of Israel were slaves to formalism. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in constant contention. To leave Jesus was to fall among sticklers for rites and ceremonies, and ambitious men who sought their own glory. The disciples had found more peace and joy since they had accepted Christ than in all their previous lives. How could they go back to those who had scorned and persecuted the Friend of sinners? They had long been looking for the Messiah; now He had come, and they could not turn from His presence to those who were hunting His life, and had persecuted them for becoming His followers.” *The Desire of Ages*, 393

Tuesday

3 BY THE BELIEVERS

3.a. What confession was made by the Ethiopian before his baptism? Acts 8:36, 37

Note: “The man’s [the Ethiopian’s] heart thrilled with interest as the Scriptures were explained to him; and when the disciple had finished, he was ready to accept the light given. He did not make his high worldly position an excuse for refusing the gospel. ‘As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.’” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 108

“Among the Jews there were those who were seeking for that which they had not. Dissatisfied with a formal religion, they longed for that which was spiritual and uplifting. Christ’s chosen disciples belonged to the latter class, Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch to the former. They had been longing and praying for light from heaven; and when Christ was revealed to them, they received Him with gladness.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 116

“When the Ethiopian asked, ‘What doth hinder me to be baptized?’ Philip did not wait to see how he would hold on to the faith. He said, ‘If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.’ Acts 8:37, 38.” *The Upward Look*, 130

“Had Philip left the eunuch with his case hanging in the balance, he might never have accepted the Saviour. Evil angels were waiting for their opportunity, when they could press in their falsehoods and divert the Ethiopian from seeking after truth.” *The Bible Echo*, December 10, 1900

3.b. How did the Roman centurion confess his faith in Christ? Mark 15:39

Wednesday

4 BY GOD THE FATHER

4.a. What did God the Father declare about Jesus? Matthew 3:16, 17

Note: “Christ’s prayer on the banks of the Jordan includes everyone who will believe in Him. The promise that you are accepted in the Beloved comes to you. God said, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ This means that through the dark shadow which Satan has thrown athwart your pathway Christ has cleaved the way for you to the throne of the infinite God. He has laid hold of almighty power, and you are accepted in the Beloved.” *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 4, 1901

“When Christ bowed on the banks of Jordan, after His baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove, like burnished gold, and encircled Him with its glory; and the voice of God from the highest heaven was heard, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ The prayer of Christ in man’s behalf opened the gates of heaven, and the Father had responded, accepting the petition for the fallen race. Jesus prayed as our substitute and surety, and now the human family may find access to the Father through the merits of His well-beloved Son. This earth because of transgression had been struck off from the continent of heaven. Communication had ceased between man and his Maker; but the way has been opened, so that he may return to the Father’s house. Jesus is ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’ The gate of heaven has been left ajar, and the radiance from the throne of God shines into the hearts of those who love Him,

even though they dwell in this sin-cursed earth.” *The Review and Herald*, February 28, 1888

4.b. When did the Father utter a similar declaration?
John 12:28

Note: “On another occasion Christ made the request: ‘Father, glorify Thy name.’ And in answer there came ‘a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ John 12:28.

“If this voice did not move the impenitent, if the power that Christ manifested in His mighty miracles did not cause the Jews to believe, we should not be greatly surprised to find that men and women today are in danger, through continual association with those who are incredulous, of manifesting the same unbelief that the Jews manifested, and of developing the same perverted understanding.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, 202, 203

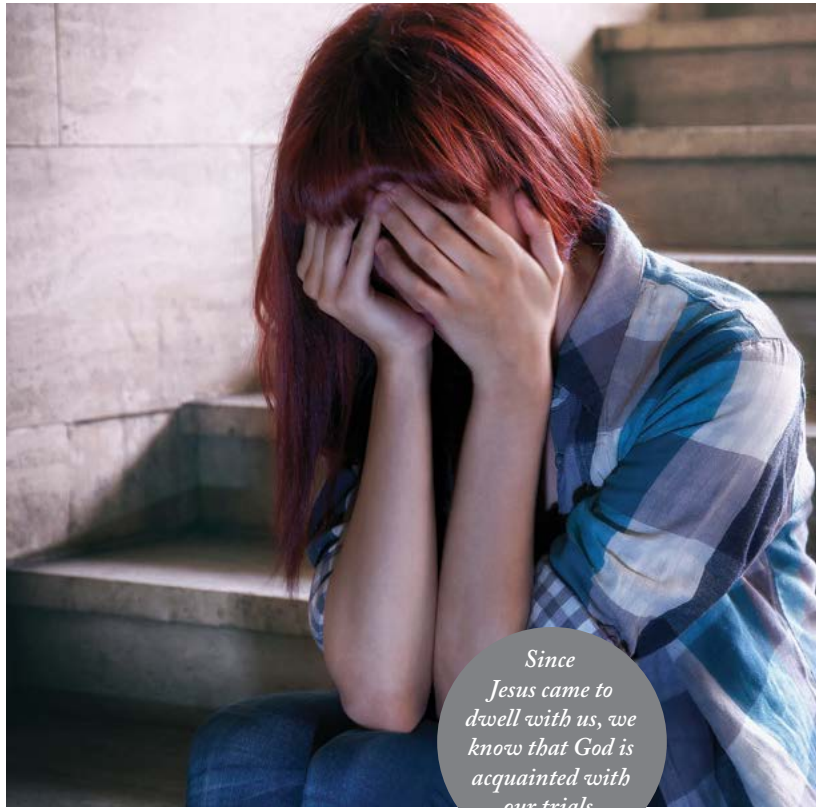
Thursday

5 BY CHRIST HIMSELF

5.a. How did Jesus give evidence of His divinity? John 10:24–29

Note: “The blessed Bible gives us a knowledge of the great plan of salvation, and shows us how every individual may have eternal life. Who is the author of the book?—Jesus Christ. He is the True Witness, and He says to His own, ‘I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.’ The Bible is to show us the way to Christ, and in Christ eternal life is revealed.” *The Review and Herald*, September 11, 1894

5.b. What words of Christ angered the Jews? John 10:30–32. Why did they try to stone Him? John 10:33



Since
Jesus came to
dwell with us, we
know that God is
acquainted with
our trials.

Note: “Again the priests and rabbis cried out against Jesus as a blasphemer. His claim to be one with God had before stirred them to take His life, and a few months later they plainly declared, ‘For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.’ John 10:33. Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were bent on destroying Him. Now many of the people, siding with the priests and rabbis, took up stones to cast at Him. ‘But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.’” *The Desire of Ages*, 470

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the meaning of “salvation” according to Matthew 1:21?
- 2 What does the confession of Peter mean when he said “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”?
- 3 What was the confession of the Roman centurion?
- 4 To whom do the words “This is my beloved Son” apply?
- 5 Why did the Jews try to stone Christ?

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Vanilla

Vanilla is a spice derived from orchids, primarily obtained from pods of the Mexican flat-leaved vanilla species. The vanilla orchid must be pollinated in order to produce the fruit from which the vanilla spice is obtained. Although one species of bee, the Eulema, found in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, northern Mexico, and occasionally in the U.S., is known as the orchid bee because it will pollinate the vanilla orchid, the majority of vanilla orchids are hand pollinated by a method discovered by a 12-year-old child in 1841. Growers tried to introduce the orchid bee in Europe, but the little buzzers weren't interested in helping out.

There are three major species of vanilla; all are found in Mesoamerica. Because the cultivation of the plant is so labor-intensive, it is the second most expensive spice (after saffron) to produce. Nevertheless, it is widely used in baking, perfume production, and aromatherapy.

The fruit of the vanilla orchid is actually a seed capsule containing tiny, black seeds. The seed capsule ultimately ripens, opens at the end, and then dries out. The seeds can be seen as black specks in dishes prepared using whole natural vanilla. Both the pods and the seeds are used in cooking.

Source: *Wikipedia*

While researching for this article, I discovered that vanilla extract is 35 to 40 percent ethyl alcohol. Interestingly, almond extract is 90% alcohol. All extracts contain alcohol. Alcohol-free vanilla flavoring is available at certain stores or you can substitute an equal measure of maple syrup.



Fruit

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



GRANOLA BITES

Ingredients

1 cup rolled oats
A pinch of salt
A pinch of ground cardamom
A splash of maple syrup
1/4 cup almond butter
1 Tbs. honey (a vegan substitute option is agave syrup)
1/4 cup dried berries, such as cherries, cranberries, or raisins

Process

With a fork, stir together oats, salt, and cardamom in a medium bowl. Stir in maple syrup, almond butter, honey, and dried berries. Once the mixture is mixed well, use your hands to roll into one-inch balls. If the mixture is too dry to roll into balls, add a bit more honey or almond butter.



Change Service Requested

Benefits of Vanilla

- *Rich in vanillin (antioxidant, anticancer, neuroprotective)*
- *May have anti-inflammatory properties*
- *May benefit brain health*
- *May help reduce added sugar intake*
- *Highly versatile (add to drinks, smoothies, cakes, waffles, etc.)*

[www.healthline.com/nutrition/
vanilla-extract-benefits](http://www.healthline.com/nutrition/vanilla-extract-benefits)

