

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

The Great Controversy

*With a word, a look, a benevolent voice,
Lucifer inspired the greatest rebellion in
the universe's history.*

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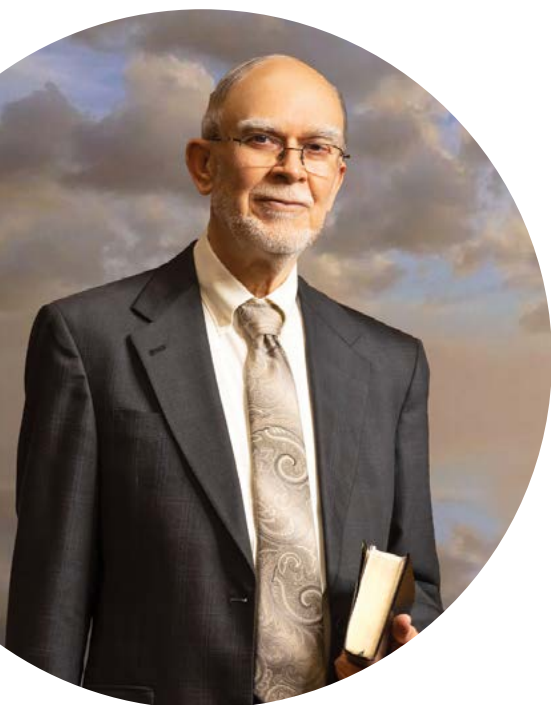
The New Birth Experience

*Understand the new birth
experience and how to have it.*

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Heaven Bound

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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

Higher Ground

“When my heart is overwhelmed,
lead me to the rock that is
higher than I.” Psalm 61:2

“The enemy presents bribes to win us to the world, as he presented bribes to Christ in the wilderness of temptation. Unless we depend upon a power out of and above ourselves, the enemy will succeed in accomplishing our ruin. But in looking to Jesus, by studying His life and character, by earnestly desiring to be like Him, our minds will be balanced in the right direction, that we may overcome selfishness, and choose a course of righteousness. Looking unto Jesus, we shall hear a voice saying, ‘This is the way; walk ye in it.’ If any man will come after me [now the conditions], let him deny himself, and take up his cross [which cuts directly across the natural inclinations], and follow Me.’

“... Jesus says, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.’ He invites you to step upon new and higher ground than that which you have occupied in the past. If your heart is filled with love to Christ, it will be demonstrated that He is stronger than the passions which have ruled you,

whose indulgence have undermined noble impulses, and left the soul to the mercy of Satan’s temptations. ...

“In serving their own lust, they make it manifest that they are not subject to the rule of Christ, but day by day are robbing God of that which is His due. ... They refuse to be the children of Christ, and choose rather to be the slaves of Satan. ...

“Christ invites the sinner to come to Him. With what loving entreaties He follows the sinner! When the heart of the sinner is touched, he yields his will to God’s will, and selfish inclination is no longer the controlling power; for the slavery of Satan is broken, and the soul brought into subjection to Christ. Impressed with the sense of the Saviour’s long-suffering, forbearance, compassion, and measureless love, the repenting soul is deeply conscious of his own unworthiness and guilt. He yields his will to the will of God, and longs to reveal his loyalty to Christ, watching for opportunities to speak forth His goodness and love. He sees in Jesus matchless charms, and his heart is captivated. ... He becomes a partaker of the divine nature.”

The Youth’s Instructor, October 27, 1892 **LM**

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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Subscriptions

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

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

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

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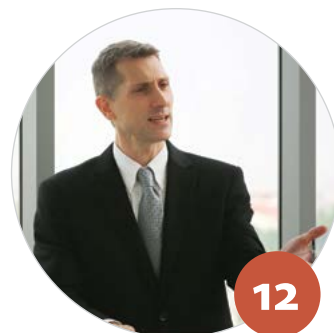
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The Great Controversy

By Marshall J. Grosboll

On the day when Jesus comes, as we look back over our lives at the things we've done, what will we see? A lot of things that are important today will then seem unimportant and worthless. But before that day, Satan is, and will be, working with great power (2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10) to keep us from seeing the truth. However, God is working with a greater power than is Satan.

This great controversy, this all-out war, between God and Satan for the souls of mankind, is being fought beyond the sight of mortal eyes, but we must not be fooled, for the enemy of God and man is a great strategist. He has many plans with which to deceive and tempt every man, woman, and child to follow him, but God will make the hidden visible.

“There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices.” *The Great Controversy*, 516. If we know the devil’s plans, then how can we be deceived? And this he fears the most.

“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. . . . Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Revelation 12:9, *first part*, 12

Satan is the master deceiver. For 6,000 years, he has studied man. He comes in ways we least expect. His wisdom, knowledge, and power are bent to just one thing: How can I cause each one to be lost? He plans actual strategy, intelligently arranging affairs and circumstances that will cause us to be confused, discouraged, deceived, and hopefully, lost. And, unfortunately, he has been and is very successful. The Bible says that soon he will come as an angel of light, his greatest deception of all, and almost the whole world will be deceived, including many who say they know and love Christ.

Lucifer was created by Jesus, the Creator (Colossians 1:16; James 1:17), just as Adam was created, not born like we are. “You were perfect in your ways.” Ezekiel 28:15. Lucifer was created perfect in his love, loyalty, humility, and reverence toward God. His character was maturing, as Adam’s character was maturing. But at that stage of his development, before he changed, he was perfect in his think-



Satan is arranging affairs so that we become confused and discouraged.

ing, actions, and the motives of his heart. He was perfect in all his ways from the time that he was created.

Everything that comes from the hand of Jesus is good. When Jesus created Lucifer, he was holy. Jesus loved him. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” Isaiah 14:12, *first part*. In prophecy, morning is a symbol of Jesus. So, Isaiah is really speaking of Lucifer as “O son of Jesus.”

We know that Lucifer was the highest angel in heaven. Being called the son of Jesus could very well mean that he was the first created. So his betrayal in heaven caused great sorrow for Jesus. He had developed a deep friendship with Lucifer, as deep as His friendship with you or me. Lucifer was Jesus’ special friend. “Son of man [Jesus], take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre [Lucifer].” Ezekiel 28:12. A lamentation is a “passionate expression of grief or sorrow; weeping.” Here the Bible depicts Jesus as weeping over Lucifer’s betrayal.

“You were the anointed cherub.” Ezekiel 28:14, *first part*. God Himself anointed Lucifer to be the covering cherub. In the sanctuary service in heaven, you find there were two covering cherubs. They were the two angels

closest to God, His special messengers. But Ezekiel says: “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.” Verse 17, *first part*. Lucifer became proud—proud of his intelligence, his beauty, his physique, his ability and wisdom, and his position, forgetting it had all come from God.

Soon pampered pride became raging jealousy. “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” Isaiah 14:13, 14

Lucifer wasn’t perfect one day and then prideful and jealous the next. The transformation from a perfect being to a selfish creature warring against God took time, likely a long time. At first, he felt only the desire to be equal with the Creator, to be included in counsels with God and His Son. But then, no longer content with just equalness, the tiny seeds of jealousy and resentment were nurtured day after day, maybe for hundreds or thousands of years, until he desired the unthinkable—to be greater than God. He said, “I will be like the Most High.”

“Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. ... Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 35

As his own pride and jealousy grew, he began a behind-the-scenes campaign among the angels, to drive a wedge between them and God.

“Taking advantage of the loving, loyal trust reposed in him by the holy beings under his command, he had so artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction. He cunningly

drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings; then these expressions were repeated by him when it would serve his purpose, as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the government of God. While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government. Thus while working to excite opposition to the law of God and to instill his own discontent into the minds of the angels under him, he was ostensibly seeking to remove dissatisfaction and to reconcile disaffected angels to the order of heaven. While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he with consummate craft caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and to preserve harmony and peace.

“The spirit of dissatisfaction thus kindled was doing its baleful work. While there was no open outbreak, division of feeling imperceptibly grew up among the angels.” *Ibid.* 38

Pride is never satisfied. The richest person is never rich enough; the powerful person craves still more power; the most famous person must have more adulation.

More money, more power, more, more, and still more.

“Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his [Lucifer’s] endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.” *Ibid.*, 35

God made everyone on earth to be accountable to someone. It doesn’t matter who you are—however important or insignificant—we all answer to someone, and ultimately, to God. This was a lesson that Lucifer did not learn. He answered only to God, and he was jealous of Him. He sought praise, attention, power, and control. But he could not let the angels see his selfishness, so he began to clothe God with his own attributes claiming that God craved all the power, demanded all the praise, controlled everything with an iron fist.

Lucifer was so insidious and skillful—Mrs. White calls it mysterious secrecy—in implanting these ideas in the minds of the angels, that it appeared to them that what he was saying was true by the very fact that Jesus and the Father were actually in charge.

“He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God.” *Ibid.*, 37. He himself of course was loyal. He was simply interested in the welfare of heaven, simply interested in God’s glory and the welfare of the angels. His purposes were all so noble. “He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings. ... It was his object to secure freedom for all.” *Ibid.* He, after all, only had the welfare of heaven at heart, and sadly, many of the angels were blinded by his deceptions. There were no open accusations, only insinuations. He asked only honest questions that needed to be answered.

Imagine how he went about it. He first sought out his best friends. First one and then another, and then to this group of angels and the other group of angels. Lucifer was perfect, they had no reason to question

“

Satan is the master deceiver, and he has studied man for 6,000 years to discover his weaknesses.

his motives. They completely trusted him. He simply asked a few questions, which instilled some doubts, until to many of the angels it seemed that discontent could be seen everywhere. His words gave the impression that he wished to end the discontent when in reality it was his purpose to foment it and spread it as far as he could, to build an army of malcontents to rise up against the government of God and make him, Lucifer, their leader.

“He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings [feelings he had instilled]; then these expressions were repeated by him when it would serve his purpose, as evidence that the angels were not fully in harmony with the government of God.”

“While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes in the order and laws of heaven were necessary for the stability of the divine government.” Ibid.

Mrs. White says that Lucifer sought most for unity and harmony, not to the government and law of God, but to his own leadership and government.

“While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he with consummate craft caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty and to preserve harmony and peace.” Ibid.

Lucifer was proud and selfish, seeking to serve only himself, and to have, if possible, all the angels of heaven to serve him in opposition to the government of God.

However, that isn’t what he told the angels. To them he gave flowery speeches about loyalty and harmony, peace, and unity. Something was wrong in heaven and God wouldn’t see it, so he, Lucifer, had to do something because he loved God and heaven too much to just sit by and let things fester.

His real purpose was to dispute the supremacy of the Son of God and he bent all his energies to it behind a mask of concern and benevolence. He insinuated doubt about the commandments.



*Lucifer's
pampered
pride became
raging
jealousy.*

They might be necessary for the people of the worlds, but as exalted angels, there was no need for such restraint; their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. It was not possible for them to dishonor God because they were holy just as God was holy (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 37).

“The spirit of dissatisfaction thus kindled was doing its baleful work.” Ibid.

And Lucifer suggested that it was because God wanted absolute control. Once all of heaven was filled with happiness and praise, but now the angels had become discontented and unhappy. That should have told them that something was wrong with what Lucifer was saying.

“Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction.” Ibid.

God knew what Lucifer was doing. Lucifer’s desire to see the singular supremacy of the Son removed and himself made an equal to Him, God would not grant. And He did not leave the angels unaware of Lucifer’s sophistry and malicious intent.

“But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy.” Ibid., 36

“The spirit of discontent and dissatisfaction had never before been known in heaven. It was a new element, strange, mysterious, unaccountable. Lucifer himself had not at first been acquainted with the real nature of his feelings; for a time he had feared to express the workings and imaginings of his mind; yet he did not dismiss them. He did not see whither he was drifting.” Ibid., 39

As the affections of some of the angels began to be drawn from Jesus to Lucifer, God had to make it plain that Jesus is the head of all things and all beings in the entire universe, even head over Lucifer. Jesus had been with God from the beginning. Lucifer was a created being, albeit an exalted one. All praise and honor were to be given to Jesus, the same as to the Father Himself.

“

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation.

With love and adoration, the angels fell to their knees and with great joy acknowledged the supremacy of Christ. Even Lucifer bowed with them, though his heart remained conflicted. And when the angels rose and lifted their voices in songs of praise to the Son, Lucifer joined them. The spirit of evil seemed to have disappeared and unspeakable love took its place in Lucifer's heart, but only for a short time. Pride and envy returned once again.

God bore long with Lucifer. Love and reason, mercy and justice pleaded with him. The angels who remained loyal to Jesus, and Jesus Himself, tried to reach him, but to no avail. He continued to spread discontent until the time came that God had to take open measures against him, and he was removed from his position as the head of the angels and a covering cherub.

A significant number of the angels sympathized with Lucifer, even shed tears at this unfair change of circumstances. They listened to him as he took them into his confidence. They took his side against God. Thus, he and these angels—and soon most of mankind with them—became known as “Satan and his sympathizers.”

“There are ever to be found those who will sympathize with those who are wrong. Satan had sympathizers in heaven, and took large numbers of the angels with him. God and Christ and heavenly angels were on one side, and Satan on the other. Notwithstanding the infinite power and majesty of God and Christ, angels became disaffected. The insinuations of Satan took effect, and they really came to believe that the Father and the Son were their enemies, and that Satan was their benefactor.”

Gospel Workers (1892), 86

Lucifer took four steps that took him from being a “son of the morning” to becoming Satan, the great deceiver:

- he became proud;
- he became jealous;

- he worked to influence others and gain sympathizers;
- he made war.

Once he was removed from his position in heaven and his sympathizers were secured in his grasp, he declared war against God. “Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and His angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.” Revelation 12:7

“God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all. ...

“It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven, and of all the worlds, that God's government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper and his real object must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works.

“The discord which his own course had caused in heaven, Satan charged upon the government of God. All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. He claimed that it was his own object to improve upon the statutes of Jehovah. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked.

“Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit

of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question.

“Satan’s rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. The working out of Satan’s rule, its effects upon both men and angels, would show what must be the fruit of setting aside the divine authority. It would testify that with the existence of God’s government is bound up the well-being of all the creatures He has made. Thus, the history of this terrible experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings, to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression, to save them from committing sin, and suffering its penalty.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 41–43

And so began the great controversy between God and Satan.

“Satan has the same power and the same control over minds now, only it has increased a hundred-fold by exercise and experience. Men and women today are deceived, blinded by his insinuations and devices, and know it not. By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God, and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. They rise up with bitter feelings against the ones who dare to speak of their errors and reprove their sins.” *Gospel Workers* (1892), 86

Satan succeeded in heaven. Even the honest and loyal angels were affected to a certain extent by his insinuations—by quoting what others said, by creating feelings of sympathy, by appearing to try to help. In fact, so well did Satan succeed, that it took 4,000 years to undo the harm done to these angels; not until



Pride is never satisfied. The richest person is never rich enough; the powerful craves still more power.

Jesus’ death on the cross was the extent of Satan’s malice and hatred, his lies and deception, finally and completely revealed to them.

At Calvary, Satan’s disguise was torn away and his administration was laid open before the unfallen worlds and the angels of heaven. Satan revealed himself to be a murderer. “By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted.” *The Desire of Ages*, 761

So successful were Satan’s insinuations and so strong the sympathy for his circumstances, that a horrible price had to be paid to show Satan for who he truly is—the great deceiver, the father of lies, and the murderer of Jesus Christ. “The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.” *Ibid.*

Satan, who began in glory next to Christ, attempted to exalt himself above Christ, and ended up with nothing. We are told that the day is coming, burning like an oven, in which all the proud will be burned up. Satan, the root, along with all those who follow him, the branches,

will then be ashes under our feet (Malachi 4:1).

Satan left glory and will soon become ashes. However, Jesus began life on this earth as a humble babe born in a barn, to become the Saviour of the world, and will soon return as triumphant King.

There are only two paths to follow in this world. One is the path of selfishness which leads to self-exaltation and eternal death. The other is the path of humility, the path that Jesus followed. This path leads us to a perfected character, one like Jesus’ character, one that we must have if we are to be with Him in glory. “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.” Revelation 3:21

Which path will you choose? **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.



The New Birth Experience

By Michael C. Wells

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

John 3:3

Many people today say that they are Christians. They had an experience once in their lives that makes them feel like they have been converted. They may believe all the correct doctrines that are espoused in the Bible, they may go to church weekly, and they may believe in Jesus as their personal Saviour. These are all signs that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts and the Father has drawn them to Him.

However, as I have studied and continue to study this “new birth” experience Jesus speaks of, I have come to believe that we all should question whether we have truly had this experience. We cannot rely on a feeling or the knowledge that we believe Jesus is the God of heaven as our evidence that we have had it, for the devil himself believes that God is the Ruler of the universe. “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” James 2:19

When Jesus said “unless one is born again” to Nicodemus, this learned leader of Israel did not understand it. With a bit of sarcasm, he asked Jesus how he could physically be reborn from his mother’s womb. Yet, because of his ignorance regarding the nature of God, he could not fathom this new concept. Jesus was not offended, but asked a cutting question, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?” John 3:10

Nicodemus, a religious leader in the church of God, had no idea what a new birth experience was all about, and today there are many leaders of the churches who still have no idea of the gravity or extent of becoming renewed in Christ. Jesus tried to explain it to Nicodemus in as simple a way as He could. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:5, 6

What did Jesus mean when He said that we must be born of water? This concept was introduced by John the Baptist. John was a man specifically chosen just for the purpose of preparing the way for Jesus’ first appearance on earth. He was the one about whom Isaiah said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” Isaiah 40:3

It was John the Baptist’s mission to prepare the people to recognize and accept the Saviour when He came. John’s message was simple. “In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’” Matthew 3:1, 2. He knew that to be ready for Jesus, all must turn away from their sins and be cleansed from iniquity. Even King David knew this. He prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10

Repentance of sin is a turning away from wrongdoing. It is not a one-time thing. It is an everyday task. A daily commitment to work by the power of the Holy Spirit to remove all sin from our lives and receive a Christlike spirit. Jesus wants to give us clean hearts, but it is our part to daily die to sin. When Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born of water, He was talking about baptism. Baptism is an outward expres-



sion of this renewed, inward change effected by God.

Paul tells us that we must die so that the new person we become can prosper. “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him [Jesus], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” Romans 6:6

When we die to self, we are spiritually crucifying our old self so that the new self might live. The old self is then buried in the water of baptism as Jesus was buried with the sins of the world upon Him in the tomb.

“Baptism is a most sacred and important ordinance, and there should be a thorough understanding as to its meaning. It means repentance for sin, and the entrance upon a new life in Christ Jesus.” *Counsels for the Church*, 296. As Jesus rose from the tomb without the sins of the world upon Him, we are raised from the watery death of baptism to newness of life. Through our repentance, confession, and baptism, Jesus cleanses us from our iniquity. This public exercise is not only symbolic, but if we have truly repented, it is a cleansing act of God.

When Jesus went to John and asked to be baptized, He was giving us the example of how we are to begin a new life

in Him. Jesus told Nicodemus, after His own baptism, that a man must be born of water and the Spirit to be born again, to emphasize that we must first repent of our sins before the new birth can even begin. We must make the commitment to God and therefore “die daily” in Christ Jesus. “I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31

Baptism does not mean that we will never sin again, rather it is a public confession that we are sinners in the sight of God and need cleansing through our repentance. If we look at the disciples of Jesus, we can see many instances where they sinned. For example, they contended with each other to see who would be the greatest in heaven (Matthew 18). These disciples had all been baptized, but still were controlled by selfishness. They had not yet had the second part of the new birth experience. They had not learned the lesson of “dying daily” as Paul relates to us.

The water Jesus talks about is just the beginning of the new birth experience. Nicodemus did not even understand the first part of the new birth, so how was he to understand the spiritual side of it? Jesus says to him, “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” John 3:12. Nicodemus, like most of us, was slow to understand and believe. We say that we believe in Jesus, but like Satan and his demons, we believe, but do not obey. Nicodemus needed to be converted, and each of us, without that experience, will never see the kingdom of God. We can claim to be Christians, but our hearts are far from God, just as the hearts of the children of Israel.

“Therefore the Lord said: ‘Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.’” Isaiah 29:13

As we accept the fact that we are sinners and in need of a change in our life, baptism is the first step in a new walk with Christ. We must make the decision to turn away from sin and confess to God for the cleansing process to start. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 1:9.

If we have died to self in the watery grave of baptism, we will receive the Holy Spirit in our lives. But a true conversion must take place, a change of heart not only to believe, but also to do. Many people make the confession of belief in Jesus but fail to continue the walk with Him. There immediately is a feeling of renewed vigor, one of "first love." Once the feeling begins to wear off, new Christians start seeing trouble in their lives. Old habits are cherished that were not totally put away. Sin revives and their faith wavers.

That is why the second half of the new birth experience is so important. Jesus said we must be "born of water and the Spirit." It is the Holy Spirit that makes the changes in a person's life. It does not happen all at once, but is a continual, daily process. If we are daily walking with Christ, the Spirit will make changes in the way we think. He connects us with God through Jesus Christ. Without this connection, there is no real conversion. What is it that the Spirit does for us? First, it convicts the heart of sin, of righteousness, and coming judgment. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And

when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

John 16:7-11. The Spirit of God is given to help us overcome our sinful tendencies.

Jesus was crucified and presented His sacrifice to the Father. He became our High Priest in heaven to offer Himself as our sacrifice for sin. He was

our justification for the penalty of sin so that we would

not be required to die the eternal death. Jesus also promised not to leave us alone, therefore, He sent the Holy Spirit to be our Helper in place of Jesus on earth. The Spirit could be many places where Jesus could only be in one place because of His now begotten humanity.

Jesus wants to clean out our hearts so that the Spirit can live within us and give us better things. Jesus said the "Spirit is spirit." This allows Him to come to each person and impart His holy attributes in us. As we gain this change through the new birth process, we become a new creature in Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. This is the conversion process that each day changes us to become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is also a teacher of truth. Jesus calls Him the Spirit of truth. "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of

Me." John 15:26. It was for our advantage that Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to us in His stead.

The Spirit will continue the new birth experience by imparting new character traits. The Holy Spirit will produce new traits that are not naturally occurring in mankind. Once we are plucked from the clutches of Satan, these new traits will begin to develop a godly character in us. These traits are found in 2 Peter. The Holy Spirit will add to us—if we are submissive to His will—faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and Christlike love. By daily dying to self, we are giving up our own will and letting the Spirit join His will to ours to make significant changes in our lives.

The Father requires perfect faith, so the converted Christian will endure trials and temptations, allowing the Holy Spirit to help him overcome, thereby developing his faith, and perfecting his character to be like Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we gain strength as we overcome temptation and trial, and in this way, we learn to trust in God and obey His word. God knows what we can endure and does not give us more than is necessary for character growth. But if we do not trust in God, and do not pray for help, we will be overcome by our trials and temptations.

Once converted to the Spirit of God, He will produce love in our hearts for every person, whether good or evil. Jesus loves all of us, even before we come to Him. We are all wicked, evil in the sight of God, yet He loves us without reservation. He died for this evil race so that we can understand the goodness of God. He wants us to experience this goodness through the Holy Spirit. Conversion produces other traits of character as well. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22, 23. Paul also says that "the fruit of

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Baptism does not mean that we will never sin again, rather it is a public confession that we are sinners in the sight of God and need cleansing.”

the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.” Ephesians 5:9

The new birth experience is an ongoing, continual changing of one’s character by the Holy Spirit. Profession is the beginning, but the end is a spotless character. Our character will be washed and scrubbed, purged by the fire of trials and temptations until we are free from sin, reflecting only the image of God. The Holy Spirit will be with us through each issue of life making it possible to weather every trial and temptation while our character is being perfected. After all, our character is the only thing we take from this life to heaven, and God will only allow a spotless and cleansed Christian character in heaven.

So how do we receive this character from the Holy Spirit? Through prayer and the study of His holy word. Jesus said to some of His critics, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” John 5:39. The Scriptures that Jesus was talking about were the Old Testament. None of the New Testament had even been written, yet Jesus said they all testified of Him. He was the One who created the worlds, who spoke to Moses and wrote the ten commandments with His own finger. He shut the mouths of the lions to save Daniel from being killed, and He employed His Spirit to give testimony of future events to His prophets. The Spirit of truth testified of Jesus and what was to happen hundreds of years before His birth.

The Holy Spirit is the sanctifying power from the Godhead. We are justified by Christ’s sacrifice, and by the Holy Spirit we are sanctified by the changing of our character to be like Jesus. The new birth becomes complete when every wrong thought, action, and word is no longer part of us. Each day the Holy Spirit is working to perfect us. His goal is to “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5, *last part*



We should never be discouraged in Christ as He has promised to complete the changes in us, even as we see our faults so clearly. This is the purging power of the Holy Spirit. Paul gives us this word of encouragement, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Philipians 1:6. The Holy Spirit will not let us go unless we let go of Him. What a wonderful promise!

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.’ James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.

There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.’ Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.” *Steps to Christ*, 100

If this has not been our experience in our walk with Christ, then we have a work to do. We submit our will to Him, and He will work together with us. We must believe His truth and His truth is His word. “Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth.” Psalm 119:142

His truth will set us free from the sinful passions of worldliness. Jesus will help us overcome all sin in our lives and His Spirit will prepare us for our eternal life with the Father. Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31, 32

As Jesus showed His character and how His Spirit could change their lives, the disciples and Nicodemus were broken down by His goodness and mercy. They realized that all selfishness and pride of life must be put away. They hung their “old man” on the cross with Jesus and took up a new life in Christ. They were born not only of the water, but also of the Spirit of God that now rested in them. They “overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” Revelation 12:11. We, too, can have this experience by fully submitting all in our lives to God. **LM**

Michael C. Wells is the director of Anointing Oil Ministries.

Heaven Bound

By Lawrence Nelson

“And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: they need no lamp nor light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. Then He said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ‘Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.’”

Revelation 22:1–7

The study of the saints’ trip to heaven, considering the anticipated wonders of heaven, is enjoyable for us all. However, we also must spend time considering the judgments of God that are to fall upon the lost. All of the wicked have made their decision in the great controversy, and the time has arrived in which the judgments of God are with man as well as with angels. “A noise will come to the ends of the earth—for the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,” says the Lord.” Jeremiah 25:31

“For six thousand years, the great controversy has been in progress; the Son

of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decisions; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men.” *The Great Controversy*, 656

This is the time when those with the slaughtering weapons will go forth, and their work of destruction will begin with those who have been the spiritual guardians of the people. “The mark of deliverance has been set upon those ‘that sigh and that cry for all the

abominations that be done.’ Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel’s vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: ‘Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.’ Says the prophet: ‘They began at the ancient men which were before the house.’ Ezekiel 9:1–6. The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together.” Ibid.

It is of interest to note that it is by the strife of men and the wrath of God that the wicked are slain.

“For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.” Isaiah 26:21

“And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongue shall dissolve in their mouth. It shall come to pass in that day, that a great panic from the Lord will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor’s hand.” Zechariah 14:12, 13

Commenting on these two scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy states, “In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low. ‘And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.’ Jeremiah 25:33.” *The Great Controversy*, 657

“At the coming of Christ the wicked are blotted from the face of the whole earth—consumed with the spirit of His mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His glory.” *The Faith I Live By*, 353

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

And how is this accomplished? The wicked are slain by His glory. “The glory of His countenance, which to the

righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.” Ibid., 600

This death by God is an act of mercy. “Could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; the glory of God would be a consuming fire. They would long to flee from that holy place. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.” *The Great Controversy*, 542, 543

“God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 120

Thus, the wicked are responsible for their own death.

“Christ takes His people to the city of God, and the earth is emptied of its inhabitants. ...

“The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.” *The Great Controversy*, 657

“Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years.” *Early Writings*, 290

It is at this time that the sins of the people are placed upon the scapegoat.

Justice demands that Satan bear the penalty for all the sins which he caused God’s people to commit. “When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty.” *The Great Controversy*, 422

“And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness.” Ibid., 658

“... Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit, will be for a thousand years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked.” Ibid., 485, 486

“The revelator foretells the banishment of Satan and the condition of chaos and desolation to which the earth is to be reduced, and he declares that this condition will exist for a thousand years. After presenting the scenes of the Lord’s second coming and the destruction of the wicked, the prophecy continues: ‘I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.’ Revelation 20:1–3.” Ibid., 658

Turning our attention to what takes place as the saints of God meet the Lord in the sky, Mrs. White writes, “There stands the risen host. The last thought was of death and its pangs. The last thoughts they had were of the grave and the tomb, but now they proclaim, ‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ ...

“Here they stand and the finishing touch of immortality is put upon them and they go up to meet their Lord in the air.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 359

As the saints ascend to the holy city, consider what takes place. “Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the city of God.

“On each side of the cloudy chariot are wings, and beneath it are living wheels; and as the chariot rolls upward, the wheels cry, ‘Holy,’ and the wings, as they move, cry, ‘Holy,’ and the retinue of angels cry, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’ And the redeemed shout, ‘Alleluia!’ as the chariot moves onward toward the New Jerusalem.” *The Great Controversy*, 645

“How glorious it will be to see Him and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud: ‘Homeward bound!’” *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, 253

Oh friend, what a journey this will be for it will take seven days. “We entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass.” *Early Writings*, 16

“Before entering the city of God, the Saviour bestows upon His followers the emblems of victory and invests them with the insignia of their royal state. The glittering ranks are drawn up in the form of a hollow square about their King, whose form rises in majesty high above saint and angel, whose countenance beams upon them full of benignant love. Throughout the unnumbered host of the redeemed every glance is fixed upon Him, every eye beholds His glory whose ‘visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.’ Upon the heads of the overcomers, Jesus with His own right hand places the crown of glory. For each there is a crown, bearing his own ‘new name’

(Revelation 2:17), and the inscription, ‘Holiness to the Lord.’ In every hand are placed the victor’s palm and the shining harp. Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise: ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.’ Revelation 1:5, 6.”

The Great Controversy, 645, 646

What a glorious sight that will be!

As the saints receive their crown, a very touching event takes place, for many will thank their mothers. “The day of God will reveal how much the world owes to godly mothers. ...

“When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened; when the ‘well done’ of the great Judge is pronounced, and the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the brow of the victor, many will raise their crowns in sight of the assembled universe, and pointing to their mother say: ‘She made me all I am through the grace of God. Her instruction, her prayers, have been blessed to my eternal salvation.’” *Maranatha*, 308

Can you imagine the joy of parents? “With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. The days of hope and fear are ended. The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed.” *Ibid*.

Isn’t that thrilling to consider?

Then our loving Saviour, having led the entire company across the sea of glass to the holy city, “raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, ‘You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in.’” *Early Writings*, 17

“‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” Matthew 25:34

But let us not forget for a moment the joy that will be found in the heart of Christ. “Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, ‘I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.’ I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.” *Early Writings*, 288, 289

And now the time has come. Adam is to again meet Him with whom he once walked and talked in his innocence. Try to catch the celestial excitement. “As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the city of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race—the being whom He created, who sinned against his Maker, and for whose sin the marks of the crucifixion are borne upon the Saviour’s form. As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying: ‘Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!’ Tenderly the Saviour lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled.” *The Great Controversy*, 647

Gazing upon its beauty, Adam views once again the very same Eden

in which he and Eve had worshiped and praised God before sin entered the earth. “Transported with joy, he [Adam] beholds the trees that were once his delight—the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the paradise of God.

Then he casts his glittering crown at the feet of Jesus and, falling upon His breast, embraces the Redeemer. He touches the golden harp, and the vaults of heaven echo the triumphant song: ‘Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again!’ The family of Adam take up the strain and cast their crowns at the Saviour’s feet as they bow before Him in adoration.” Ibid., 648

Try to envision the feelings of the redeemed as they behold the tree of life and the throne of God, and the moment when the saved will actually eat of the tree of life.

And now, we see the 144,000 standing on the crystal sea before the throne. These are they who:

- have gotten the victory over the beast, his image, and his mark;
- were translated from among the living at the second advent and are, therefore, the firstfruits;
- came out of great tribulation, for they have passed through the time of trouble;
- went through Jacob’s trouble;
- stood without an intercessor after the close of probation;
- and were without fault before God.



“With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, ‘having the harps of God,’ they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, ‘the voice of harpers harping with their harps.’ And they sing ‘a new song’ before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had. ... ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation’ ... But they have been delivered, for they have ‘washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’ ” Ibid., 648, 649

When considering heaven’s blessings, it is difficult to contain our yearnings for we long to experience the joy of such salvation. “Henceforth they are to be ever with the Lord. They stand before the throne clad in richer robes than the most honored of the earth have ever worn. They are crowned with diadems more glorious than were ever placed

upon the brow of earthly monarchs. The days of pain and weeping are forever ended. The King of glory has wiped the tears from all faces; every cause of grief has been removed.” Ibid., 650

Our understanding of the plan of salvation will forever enlarge with the coming of eternal ages for we shall be ever learning more and more about the tremendous price God paid to save us. “In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. ... The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost.” Ibid., 651

“Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendor and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, ‘Oh, what love! what wondrous love!’ The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love.”

Maranatha, 319 **LM**

For more than fifty years, Pastor Lawrence Nelson served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a pastor, evangelist, and then in Conference, Union, and General Conference leadership. When God laid upon him the responsibility to “tell it like it is” to alert the people how the church was leading them into the worldwide ecumenical movement, he was forbidden to preach in any church within the Oregon Conference. Though nothing could be found in his preaching that was contrary to the doctrines of the church, he was considered divisive. As a result, Keep the Faith Audio Tape Ministry was born. Pastor Nelson passed to his rest on April 18, 2012.

Christian Character

Clues – KJV

Across

- B8 The wise man should not glory in his Jeremiah 9:23
 C14 What kind of times are expected in the last day?..... 2 Timothy 3:1
 D11 Better not to _____ than to _____ and not pay. Ecclesiastes 5:5
 D22 A well of _____, springing up into everlasting life..... John 4:14
 F7 Those who eat Jesus' flesh will have _____ life..... John 6:54
 H3 A great _____ came to find Jesus. John 6:5
 H16 Some trust in Psalm 20:7
 K9 To be added to virtue. 2 Peter 1:5
 L20 We must _____ daily. 1 Corinthians 15:31
 N3 Jesus taught the people from a _____. Luke 5:3
 N9 Paul tells us to put on the _____ of righteousness. Ephesians 6:14
 Q7 A great _____ followed Jesus..... John 6:2
 Q22 Not by might, nor by _____, but by My Spirit..... Zechariah 4:6
 S2 If we desire riches, we can fall into 1 Timothy 6:9
 S21 God promises to _____ Satan's head. Genesis 3:15
 U16 Righteous and _____ are God's judgments. Psalm 119:137
 V8 Where is the _____ of this world?..... 1 Corinthians 1:20
 W22 _____ men will see visions..... Joel 2:28
 X5 God gives signs, wonders, and Hebrews 2:4
 Y16 If you will hear God's voice, do not _____ your heart..... Hebrews 4:7

Down

- B11 Be partakers of the _____ nature. 2 Peter 1:4
 C16 Declare His works with Psalm 107:22
 D4 Straight is the gate, _____ is the way. Matthew 7:14
 D13 The disciples _____ received Jesus into the ship..... John 6:21
 D22 We do not _____ against flesh and blood. Ephesians 6:12
 D24 With thanks _____ of God's wondrous works..... Psalm 26:7
 E18 Man shall not live by _____ alone..... Matthew 4:4
 E20 He who _____ enters into rest. Hebrews 4:3
 F7 To test our faith, we _____ ourselves. 2 Corinthians 13:5
 J11 The early believers sold all of their _____. Acts 2:45
 K5 _____ up a child and they will not depart from the faith..... Proverbs 22:6
 L3 The word of God is a _____ of thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12
 M25 Whoever has eternal life, God will _____ up..... John 6:54
 N18 All who believed, were _____. Acts 2:44
 P22 Who gives life? John 6:63
 Q14 The hand of the _____ shall bear rule. Proverbs 12:24
 S5 The angel spoke to this church. Revelation 2:12
 S25 We are told to be _____ in the Lord. Ephesians 6:10
 U20 Jesus preached the _____ of the kingdom..... Matthew 4:23

Z	Y	X	W	V	U	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	J	I	H	G	F	E	D	C	B	A
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God's Rules

Johnny and his mother had been over to see Grandmother. As they walked down the street, they passed the beautiful new church with colored glass windows. The sun shone on the glass and made it sparkle like gems of many colors.

"Would you like to go in and see the new church?" Mother asked.

Of course, Johnny wanted to see inside the church, so they walked quietly through the front door and sat down in one of the pews.

"Johnny, can you see God's ten commandments carved in white marble hanging on the wall in the front of the church?"

"Let's go up closer," Johnny whispered. They walked softly toward the front.

"What are commandments, Mother?" he asked.

"God made some very wonderful rules a long time ago," Mother explained. "He wrote them with His own finger on two tables of stone. They are called the ten commandments."

"Did God write those on the wall with His finger?" wondered Johnny, pointing to the white marble slab.

"No, dear, this is a copy of the ones He wrote. You will find them in the Bible, for God wanted them to be kept where people could find them and read them. He wanted men to obey them."

"Read God's rules to me," begged Johnny.

"All right, son, when we get home I'll read them to you from the Bible."

Johnny and his mother went out of the church and walked on toward home. "Johnny, you know rules are very important," said Mother. "God made the world according to certain rules or laws. A farmer has seeds to plant, but until he puts the seeds in the ground they will not grow. It is a rule of nature that seeds must be put in the ground and given water and sunshine so that they will sprout and grow. If you plant wheat seed, what will come up?"

"Wheat," replied Johnny.

"If you plant beans, what will come up?" his mother asked again.

"Beans!"

"That is another rule of nature.

Seeds always grow to be like the plants from which they came,"

Mother went on.

"God made rules so that this world would be a happy place in which to live.

God does not make us obey

His rules; He

allows us to decide

whether we will obey

or not. If we love Him, we will want to obey Him.

We are the happiest when we obey God's rules."

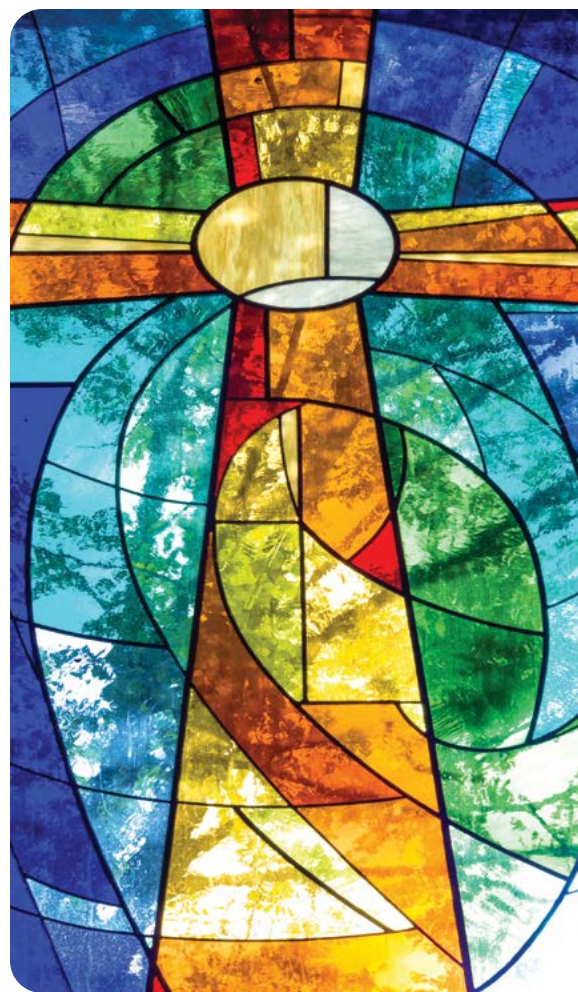
When Johnny and Mother got home, they sat down on the lounge together. Mother took her Bible and read the ten commandments from Exodus 20.

"I like to hear you read the commandments, Mother," said Johnny as she finished reading. "Tell me some more about them."

"All right, son," Mother agreed. "God spoke the commandments from the top of a high mountain peak called Mount Sinai. Moses and the people of Israel heard the wonderful words. The people of Israel had camped at the foot of Mount Sinai on their journey from Egypt to their new home, which they called 'the promised land.' They had been slaves in Egypt, but now they were to be a free people.

"God told Moses, the leader, to climb to the top of Mount Sinai while the people waited below. The mountain peak was covered with clouds, and the people could not see Moses as he went up the steep path. When Moses got to the top, he heard the voice of God above the winds:

“
God's ten
commandments will
continue to live forever.
They show all people how to
love God and how to love
others.”



"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

"Then God gave the ten commandments to Moses. God wrote them on two tables of stone which Moses had brought with him. The laws were for all the people of the world. God's ten rules or commandments have lived for hundreds and hundreds of years, and they will continue to live forever. The ten commandments show all people how to love God and how to love others.

"Wouldn't you like to learn God's rules, Johnny?" Mother asked.

"Oh, yes," he exclaimed; "please teach them to me."

"I will help you learn the first one now," Mother replied.

God's Ten Rules, Ethel M. Neff,
©1948, 7-13 LM



Christ Purges for a Reason

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

John 15:1, 2

When trials come to us, let us not dwell upon the greatness of the difficulties and feel that we cannot have joy in the Lord. It is true we will have changes of feelings. There will come to us times of discouragement and depression. But shall we live by feeling or by faith? When our brethren and friends speak unadvisedly, and cause us grief, let us not be cast down. Let us remember that we are in a world of trial and grief, of sorrow and disappointment. When these experiences come to us, they should drive us to Christ. If they do not, we meet with loss.


When tempted to give up under discouragement and difficulty, let us study the life and experiences of Christ. He had to contend against the powers of darkness that He might not be overcome. We have the same battle to

fight, the same victories to win. "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. It is our privilege to lay hold on the strength of One who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. He invites you to present your case at the throne of grace, and cast your helpless soul on Him.

The purging is not pleasant, but let us remember that Christ came to our world and took humanity that He might bear the afflictions that humanity must bear and be an example of faithful endurance under every form of trial. God wants us to realize that we are a part of the great human family, and that we must bear its tests. ...

Let your humanity lay hold of divinity. Go to the footstool of God's grace, and

say, "Lord, I hang my helpless soul on Thee. Help me to control my speech. Teach me to overcome." Christ will give you a spirit of overcoming. "They overcame him," we read, "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Revelation 12:11

You may bear a testimony the opposite to that which Satan would have you bear. You may keep heart and mind sanctified by obedience to the truth. Look to Him, at morning and at noon and at night. Keep heart and mind fastened upon Christ. This is your privilege. The suffering and death of Christ has paid the price for your redemption, and through faith in Him you may overcome. ... Let the love of Christ dwell in your hearts. ... We must graduate sensibly in this life if we would be transferred to the higher school of the courts above. *The Upward Look*, 252 

The Love of God

Years ago, when the Steps to Life ministry first began, it was my privilege to be a part of the Bible study program that still airs on television here in the local Wichita area every Sunday morning. At that time, I would sing a short song of appeal at the end of each program. Pastor Marshall Grosboll presented the Bible study in those days, and he had two songs that were his favorites: *The Choice is Mine* and *The Love of God*.

He used *The Choice is Mine* frequently for the Bible study program, but *The Love of God* was a favorite to close his Sabbath morning sermons. It was not unusual for him to preach a lengthy sermon and then announce that I would now sing *The Love of God*. My silent response was typically, “I will?” because I rarely knew I would be singing until he said so. But this song has such a beautiful message.

*The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;*

This reminds me of what David said in Psalm 139:7–10: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the utter-

most parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.”

*The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.*

No matter where you’ve been. No matter what you’ve done, reconciliation, pardon, and restoration are available to the one who comes to Him in repentance and complete surrender.

“It is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law. . . . Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth

“The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed

“In the new birth, the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the

sinner, he has passed from death unto life, from sin unto holiness, from transgression and rebellion to obedience and loyalty. . . .

“... The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.” *A New Life*, 11–13

*Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints’ and angels’ song.*

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38, 39

*Dear God, we thank You that
Your love is forever true and
that Your desire is for us all to
reflect Your image once again. LM*



Your Letters

"I pray for health, strength, resources, and fulfillment of needs for your ministry and each and everyone who contributes to the publication of *LandMarks*. They are such a blessing and help me in so many ways."

—ML, South Dakota

"We are one year closer to seeing Jesus. We are blessed to have Steps to Life, the *LandMarks*, DVDs and CDs."

—DF, Florida

"*LandMarks* keeps me going!!"

—MP, Illinois

"Love *LandMarks*."

—DO, North Dakota

July Sermon of the Month

Two Ships

By John J. Grosboll

As we study the history of the Second Advent Movement, we can see divine involvement as it grew. Though the devil has tried everything to destroy it, it will not pass away until all things are completed.

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

From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

July 2023

Dear Friend,

Does it seem that those you want desperately to witness to are hard-hearted and insensible to the claims of the gospel? So much so, that you feel there is no use even trying?

"Today, as in the days of Babylon, the accuser of the brethren is working through human agencies to hurt and destroy those who are dear to the Lord. ... Those who try to keep the commandments of God, will meet with much opposition. Satanic attributes will take possession of the hearts of men, making them as hard as steel; and all who depart from evil will make themselves a prey to the hatred of those that refuse to obey the law of God." *The Signs of the Times*, May 13, 1897

How, then, can we witness to those with hearts of steel?

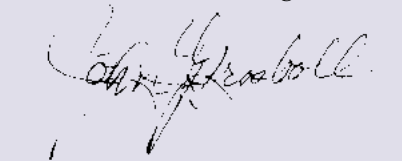
"The principle inculcated [implanted] by the injunction, 'Be ye kindly affectioned one to another,' lies at the very foundation of domestic happiness. Christian courtesy should reign in every household. It is cheap, but it has power to soften natures which would grow hard and rough without it." *Ibid.*, September 9, 1886

"In Christlike sympathy, we should come close to men individually, and seek to awaken their interest in the great things of eternal life. Their hearts may be as hard as the beaten highway, and apparently it may be a useless effort to present the Saviour to them; but while logic may fail to move, and argument be powerless to convince, the love of Christ, revealed in personal ministry, may soften the stony heart, so that the seed of truth can take root." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 57

"If the love of God is not appreciated and does not become an abiding principle to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost. The Lord can give no greater manifestation of His love than He has given. If the love of Jesus does not subdue the heart, there are no means by which we can be reached." *Ibid.*, 236

"The graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearing pervading our life will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith." *Lift Him Up*, 143

Your brother in witnessing,



John J. Grosboll

Just as I Am

Charlotte Elliott was born on March 18, 1789, in Westfield Lodge, Brighton (England). She was the third of six children, with two brothers and three sisters. Charlotte was highly educated and developed a great passion for music and art at an early age and was surrounded by great refinement and piety in her family.

While still young, Charlotte became “aware of her sinful nature and realized her need to resist sin’s enticements. She felt unworthy to receive God’s grace, and wholly incapable of facing a righteous and perfect God.” She was a frequent visitor at many different churches and the pastors advised her to pray more, study the Bible more, and to do more virtuous deeds.

The first 32 years of her life were spent in Clapham, a district in S.W. London, where she was popular as a portrait artist and wrote humorous verses. In 1821, she suffered a serious illness that removed her from the whirl of social life in London and put her in a position to feel her dire need of a personal Saviour. A pastor visiting in her father’s home, asked her, “Are you at peace with God?” She resented the question at first, but some days later, she called for the pastor to return. She apologized for her behavior and told him that she wanted to cleanse her life before becoming a Christian. But the pastor replied, “Come just as you are.” Charlotte committed her life to Christ that very day.

She had a weak constitution thereafter, but in 1834, undertook the editorial supervision of *The Christian Remembrancer Pocket Book* and in 1836, the *Invalid’s Hymn Book*. This she did for the next 25 years and many of her own hymns can be found in these annual publications.

In 1835, Charlotte wrote the hymn *Just As I Am*. It is sung to at least four different hymn tunes, but the tune *Woodworth*, written by William B. Bradbury, is the best known and used by congregations the world over today.

Charlotte Elliott died on September 22, 1871. Little did she know that her most famous hymn would become the number one altar call song in the world. It was the song to which Billy Graham gave his heart to the Lord and then used for decades during his own crusades.

Just imagine the number of people who will come to Charlotte Elliott, if she remained faithful, to tell her how this beloved song touched their hearts and helped them to come, just as they were, to the Saviour.

“Jesus loves to have you come to Him just as you are, hopeless and helpless, and cast yourself upon His all-abundant mercy and believe that He will receive you just as you are.” *In Heavenly Places*, 119

Sources: [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_as_I_Am_\(hymn\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Just_as_I_Am_(hymn)); [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Clapham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clapham); [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Elliott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Elliott)



Charlotte Elliott
(1789–1871)

Just as I am – without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am – and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am – though toss’d about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come!

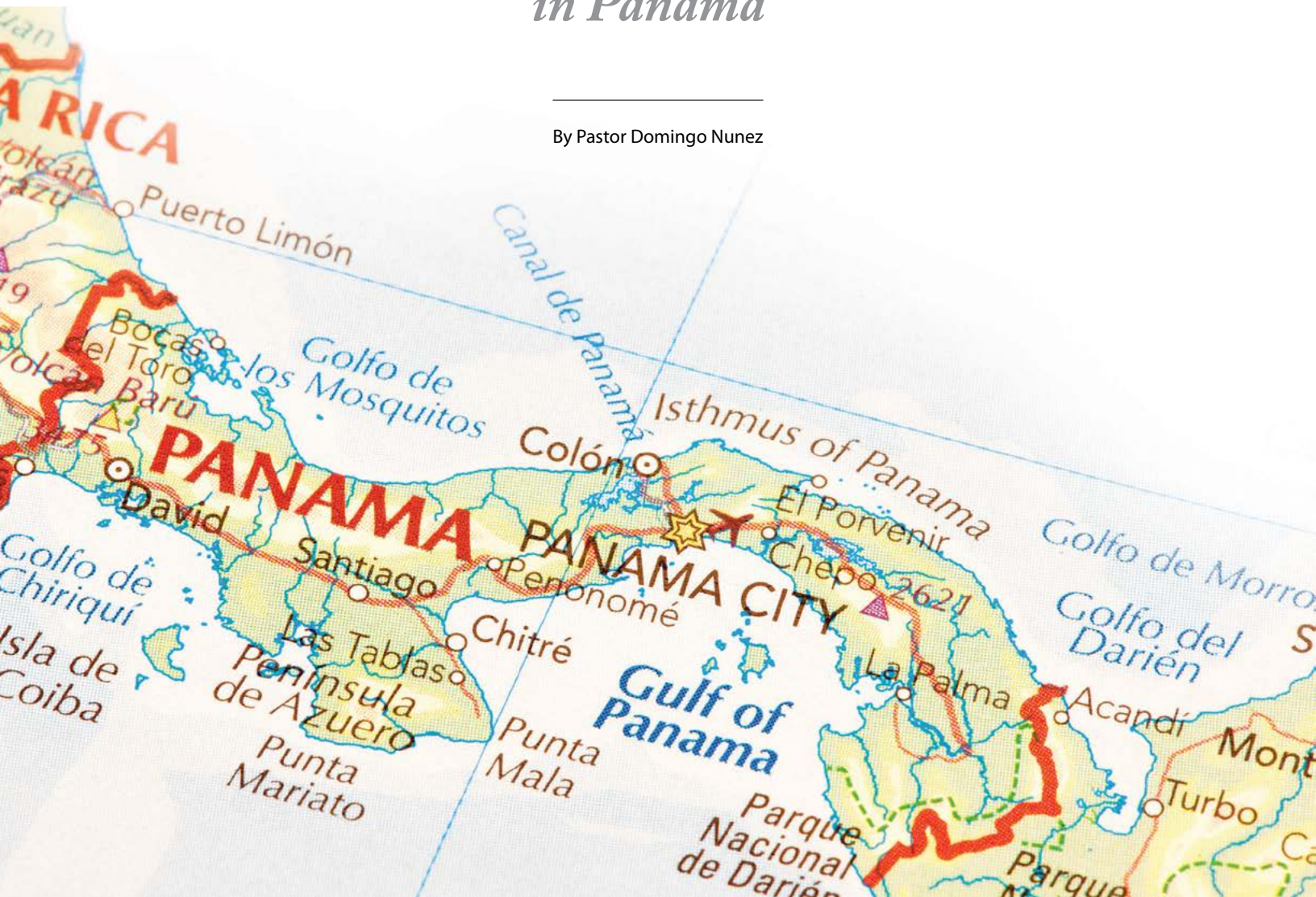
Just as I am – poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come! **LM**

from the
Mission Fields



Free Seventh-day Adventists Headquarters in Panama

By Pastor Domingo Nunez





Top left: *First Elder Bolívar preaching Sabbath sermon*



Top right: *Elder Alex Santamaría*

Bottom left: *Ready for Sabbath morning service*

Bottom right: *Sabbath School class*



In 2017, I was invited to Panama City, Panama, to conduct a two-week prophecy seminar. After the meetings were finished, I met with the group leaders in Panama. They told me of a faithful group of worshippers in The City of David, Chiriquí, near the border of Costa Rica. This group was struggling to become an organized church and needed assistance.

For several months, I communicated with the brothers in Chiriquí and was able to travel there to evaluate their situation and to determine what would be needed to help guide and direct them.

In 2018, they decided to become a part of the Free Seventh-Day Adventists as a church. Since that time, they were renting several facilities all over The City of David as they worked to spread the gospel there and in the surrounding areas.

They have been earnestly praying that the Lord would provide them with a piece of property to buy on which they could construct a building for worship and outreach, and the Lord has answered their prayers. A piece of property with a building formerly used as a Jehovah's Witnesses temple in Chiriquí became available for sale. The brothers in The City of David joined together with two groups from Nicaragua and Costa Rica and bought the property so that they can work together to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. They have completed all the legal paperwork, and have now registered the ministry to be called the Iglesia Ministerio Cuarto Angel Free Seventh-day Adventists.

By God's grace, they hope to have all the remodeling work finished this year, establishing the headquarters of Central

America in Chiriquí. From this headquarters building, they will be able to produce literature, tracts, and fliers for evangelism as they preach and teach the three angels' messages throughout the regions of Central America.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Central America as they move forward in their efforts to complete this headquarters building and work together according to the New Testament order to spread the gospel. God is using these lovely people to present the three angels' messages and preach the soon-coming of Jesus, and the devil will be very angry as they follow God's leading to prepare a people in Central America for heaven.

If you would like to help with the construction of the Central America headquarters, please mark your donation *Missions-Central America*. **I.M.**



Out of the Fire

On the west coast of the United States grows an amazing example of “beauty from ashes”—the Knobcone pine. This tree does not attract a second glance; however, observing it for any length of time, one would see what makes this tree so special.

The pinecones of most species maintain the natural cycle of life by dropping their seeds in the fall of each year which then germinate with the coming rains, thus perpetuating the species, but the Knobcone doesn't do this. Its cones cling to its branches year after year, closed firmly against the environment, glued shut with resin, a phenomenon called serotiny. An extremely determined squirrel may chew through a pinecone or two, but for the most part these cones resist predators and remain unharmed.

Things may continue this way for years, 50 or more. The possibility of the Knobcone pine's extinction looks real. The situation appearing hopeless until one day, a forest fire sweeps through the forest, reducing all in its path to smoking ashes. The Knobcone pine is now a charred stump with no possibility of reviving. To our logical minds this

looks like the end for this tree; but God created something miraculous when He formed it.

The fire melts the resin, allowing the heavily armored and insulated cones to open, releasing its seeds. These areas of burn are soon covered in dense carpets of seedlings, thriving because there is reduced competition from other plants. Over a period of time, lasting up to four years after a burn, they will still be scattering seeds, replanting what was lost, and more.

The seeds of a Knobcone pine grow best in soil with a higher pH level. A fire temporarily creates this condition. All the cones produced since the tree was a sapling, or since the last fire, are caused to open by the heat and discharge their seeds soon after a forest fire. Fire is essential for the completion of the pinecone's life cycle. Thus fire, the destroyer of these trees, is directly responsible for the new growth that follows. In the aftermath of destruction, seedlings of life are born, springing up out of the ashes.


The Heartbeat of the Remnant, Spring 2017, Angela Zimmerman; <https://trees-foundation.org/2020/11/knobcone-pine/>

The Refiner's Fire

There burns a fire with sacred heat
White hot with holy flame
And all who dare pass through its blaze
Will not emerge the same
Some as bronze, and some as silver
Some as gold, then with great skill
All are hammered by their sufferings
On the anvil of His will

I'm learning now to trust His touch
To crave the fire's embrace
For though my past with sin was etched
His mercies did erase
Each time His purging cleanses deeper
I'm not sure that I'll survive
Yet the strength in growing weaker
Keeps my hungry soul alive

The Refiner's fire
Has now become my sole desire
Purged and cleansed and purified
That the Lord be glorified
He is consuming my soul
Refining me, making me whole
No matter what I may lose
I choose the Refiner's fire

Written by: Jon Mohr and John Randall Dennis 

Q:

*What is Mrs.
White's counsel
on leaving the
cities?*

A:



"Get out of the cities as soon as possible and purchase a little piece of land where you can have a garden, where your children can watch the flowers growing and learn from them lessons of simplicity and purity.

"Out of the cities, is my message at this time. Be assured that the call is for our people to locate miles away from the large cities. ...

"The Lord calls for His people to locate away from the cities, for in such an hour as ye think not, fire and brimstone will be rained from heaven upon these cities. ...

"As God's commandment-keeping people we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.

"The cities are to be worked from outposts. ...

"For years I have been given special light that we are not to center our work in the cities." *Last Day Events*, 95, 96

"Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their

own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. We should now begin to heed the instruction given us over and over again: Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 141

"It was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements. In the beginning He placed our first parents in a garden, amid the beautiful sights and sounds of nature, and these sights and sounds He desires men to rejoice in today. The more nearly we can come in harmony with God's original plan, the more favorable will be our position for the recovery and the preservation of health. ...

"He [God] wants them to take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life. In a little while they will have to leave the cities. ... Satan is in them, controlling men in their work of destruction. ... Every mind

is controlled either by the power of Satan or the power of God. ... God can fill our lives with His peace and gladness and joy. He wants His joy to be in us, that our joy may be full." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 12, 30, 31

"Your letter tells me, my brother, that there are many who are stirred deeply to move out of Battle Creek. There is need, great need, of this work being done, and now. Those who have felt at last to make a move, let it not be in a rush, in an excitement, or in a rash manner, or in a way that hereafter they will deeply regret that they did move out. ...

"Take heed that there shall be no rash movements made in heeding the counsel in moving from Battle Creek. Do nothing without seeking wisdom of God, who hath promised to give liberally to all who ask, and who upbraideth not. All that anyone can do is to advise and counsel, and then leave those who are convicted in regard to duty to move under divine guidance, and with their whole hearts open to learn and obey God." *Country Living*, 25 **LM**



Carbohydrates

What comes to your mind when you hear, read, or think about the word *health*? Health is a nebulous concept that has different definitions depending on your personal perspective. The tendency of some is to define health simply as the absence of disease or injury. The constitution of the World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Seven Dimensions of Wellness has an even more comprehensive definition. Their definition is “Wellness is commonly viewed as having seven dimensions: mental, physical, social, financial, spiritual, environmental, and vocational. These dimensions are interdependent and influence each other.”

An article found on the Aetna Insurance website identifies the four pillars of health as nutrition, exercise, relaxation, and sleep. You can find many varying numbers and explanations of the pillars of health in many places on their website.

As Adventists, we subscribe to the Eight Laws of Health: nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest and trust in God. Without fail, nutrition is identified by almost everyone as a key pillar/law when it comes to achieving good health. What is considered good nutrition is nebulous. You can find varied recommendations for what constitutes good nutrition, depending on the book, author, or region. Because we are each created uniquely with what are different inherited strengths, tenden-

cies, and weaknesses, what constitutes good nutrition will vary somewhat from person to person.

If we are going to experience vibrant health, not just the absence of disease or injury, there are seven broad, needful categories to be considered when it comes to good nutrition. These categories are carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water. In this article, we will be taking a closer look at carbohydrates.

Carbohydrate, often shortened to carbs, seems to have taken on a bad connotation because of the obesity and diabetes rampant in American society today. But are carbs inherently bad for us? Are all carbs bad or just some of them? Are they a detriment to vibrant health, and have they always been detrimental for us? Or have certain

carbohydrates under some circumstances become detrimental?

Carbohydrates means “watered carbon.” They are probably the most abundant and widespread organic substance in nature. They are composed primarily of molecules containing atoms of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, and are formed by plants during the process of photosynthesis. They are an essential structural component of all organisms and are even part of the structures which contain our genetic information. They come in three main forms: simple sugars, starch, and fiber.

The importance of carbohydrates to all living things can hardly be overemphasized. Carbohydrates are the body’s primary source of fuel and energy. Simple sugars are quickly absorbed into the bloodstream and enter, with the aid of insulin, into the cells of the body to provide immediate energy in the form of glucose. This energy fuels physical activities, all bodily functions that maintain life, and cellular activity that we cannot see. Extra glucose is converted to fat, or stored in the liver, muscles, and other cells for later use.

Carbohydrates work cooperatively to protect against disease, supply fuel and energy, and help with weight control. Some studies suggest that whole grains, and the fiber found in whole foods, help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. The same fiber may also play a role in the fight against obesity, colon and rectal cancers, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber is also essential in good digestive health.

Many studies show that by consuming the carbs contained in whole fruits, vegetables, and grains we can help control weight. Their bulk and fiber content supports weight control by helping us feel fuller on fewer calories. Too often, we have sabotaged our innate regulation of “feeling full” by consistently overeating.

Carbohydrates, as created by God, clearly are not detrimental to our health

or a loving God would not have prescribed them for our diet.

The Bible tells us that,

“Out of the ground

the Lord God

made every tree

grow that is

pleasant

to the

sight and

good for

food.”

Genesis

2:9, *first*

part.

God

then said,

“... of

every tree

of the garden

you may freely

eat.” Verse 16. This

instruction came with

but one exclusion, the tree of

knowledge of good and evil as found in

verse 17.

After Adam and Eve sinned God added the green plants of the field, “Both thorns and thistles it [the ground] shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.” Genesis 3:18

“Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.” *Counsels for the Church*, 222

Carbohydrates are an essential part of a healthy diet and do much to help us achieve and maintain health, while providing essential nutrients. Today, we must choose our carbohydrates wisely, because not all carbs are equally good for us, nor are they created by our Creator.

- Focus on eating fiber-rich whole, fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables without added sugar.



- Choose whole grains over refined grains. Refined grains are processed—a process by which fiber and other important nutrients are stripped away.

- Include beans, peas, and lentils in your diet. Low in fat and high in needed proteins, vitamins, and minerals, these are among the most versatile and nutritious foods.

- Limit foods with added sugars and refined grains, such as sugary drinks, desserts, and candy. These are high in calories, but low in nutrition.

So choose your carbohydrates wisely. If God created them, they are good for us; if man-made, man-processed, or man-altered, use caution, think twice.

“Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. ... If we move from principle in these things, if we as Christian reformers educate our own taste, and bring our diet to God’s plan, then we may exert an influence upon others in this matter, which will be pleasing to God.” *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 119

Sources: who.int; students.wlu.ca/aetna.com/health-guide/ways-achieve-total-body-health; britannica.com/science/carbohydrate; mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/carbohydrates; betterhealthkare.com/good-carbs-vs-bad-carbs **LM**



How am I Tempted?

By John J. Grosboll

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Timothy 2:15

Is it possible to wrongly divide the word of truth? Paul’s specific wording to rightly divide tells us that God’s word can also be wrongly divided. As we study the subject of the mystery of godliness, we must be careful to rightly divide what we study. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that this subject will be the study of the saved throughout eternity. In its completeness, it is a subject that is meant to be a mystery to us, but there are things that we can study and understand, and God means for us to study and rightly divide what He has revealed in His word.

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14

So Paul is saying that to understand the deep things of God, we must wholly and continually rely upon the Holy Spirit to make plain that which we cannot grasp with our human mind. This has led to great debate and controversy in the Adventist church regarding the human nature of Christ.

One of the most wonderful verses in all of Scripture is found in Hebrews 4:15:

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.” However, this verse is so difficult to understand that it will not be understood until we get to heaven; and we might not fully understand it even then.

In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “‘And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son ... He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over

the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.' Then Mary said to the angel, 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' "Verses 31–35 KJV

Mrs. White wrote to Elder Baker, an Adventist minister, about "that Holy Thing." "These words [that Holy Thing] are not addressed to any human being, except to the Son of the Infinite God. Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called that Holy Thing. It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 13, 19

When God's prophet quotes a verse from the Scriptures and, without reservation, says that it is a mystery that is left unexplained to man, there is no human explanation that can be trusted.

Mrs. White also wrote, "The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery." Ibid. Even in heaven, the saved will be unable to fully explain the incarnation of Christ.

However, God has given us some things that can be understood regarding the human nature of Christ. "That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves: for it cannot be." Ibid.

The best way to understand how Christ could be tempted like us is to understand how we are tempted. When I was a young preacher, I never preached about this, because I thought everyone understood how we are tempted. But I have since learned that there are many

things in the spiritual world that we think everyone understands, but almost no one does. So, to be confident in our study of how Christ was tempted, let's first study how we ourselves are tempted.

We have already studied that the nature of man before the fall was governed by the principles of righteousness; that the nature of man after the fall was, and continues to be, governed by the principles of selfishness. And what is sin? Sin is not just an action, but also a state of being—the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23

"As in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man." Proverbs 27:19

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

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6:45

"All sin is selfishness." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1763

"The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 7, 233

When I am tempted, but do not yield to the temptation, I have not *committed* a sin. However, if my temptation, for example, is to be angry with a fellow brother, and if I yield to that temptation and express my anger, the Bible says that I am guilty of breaking the sixth commandment (Matthew 5:21, 22). Why is it that if I hate my brother, even though I do him no physical harm, I still am guilty of breaking the ten commandments? Because human nature is now governed by the principle of selfishness. Selfish is what we are to the core and, without a miracle of transformation effected by the power of the Holy Spirit,

selfishness directs everything we think, say, and do.

My brother Marshall and I both attended Seventh-day Adventist schools for over 20 years, including Loma Linda University where we both obtained master's and doctor's degrees, and also a year at Andrew's Theological Seminary for Ministers. We both entered the ministry.

Over 40 years ago, Marshall was living on the East Coast while I was living on the West Coast. We had a difference of understanding regarding the incarnation of Christ. We would write back and forth, each trying to convince the other of our understanding. After a few years of this back-and-forth dialogue, we stopped the discussion, realizing that neither of us was going to be able to convince the other to change what we believed to be true. For the last ten years of my brother's life, I do not recall that we ever discussed it again. We knew we agreed on the important things—that Christ's sacrifice was sufficient, that He did not sin, and that we must overcome sin as He did in order to be saved. On the rest, we just did not discuss it.

During the time of our discussions, I wrote a paper on the subject of sin. Marshall liked my explanation of sin so much, and believing that it needed to be published, he sent it to the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference (BRI). The BRI director at that time happened to be a personal friend of mine, whom I had known for many years. But when he received and reviewed my paper, the BRI would not print it. The BRI is supposed to be a collection of the best theological minds in the Adventist church, but they had a different opinion about sin.

So how is it that two men, having received the same education, both ministers in good standing with the Seventh-day Adventist church (at that time), both totally committed to studying, knowing, following, and preaching the truth, along with a collection of the best theological minds

of the Adventist church be so opposite in their understanding of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy on the subjects of sin and the incarnation of Christ?

In addition to the texts and quotations above, let me add what I feel is the best definition of sin that I have ever found in the Spirit of Prophecy.

“God will accept only those who are determined to aim high.

He places every human agent under obligation to do his best. Moral perfection is required of all. Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin. ...

“And those who would be workers together with God must strive for perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 330

Notice that moral perfection is not optional. It is a requirement, an obligation to do our very best. This is a frightening thought. I am a terrible sinner and I cannot make myself better, let alone perfect. But there is a way that you and I can reach that required, perfected character.

“All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole, and everyone who receives Christ as a personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes.” *Ibid.*

Unless Christ delivers me, I have no hope. He, the promised Saviour, is my only hope. “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.” Hebrews 7:25. Another literal Greek translation of this verse is, “He is able to save perfectly those that come to God by Him.”

There is no need to be afraid or feel anxious about your imperfect character, for we have a Saviour who is able to save every soul, even those at the very bottom of the pit of sin. He has promised to pull us, each one, out of the darkness of sin and to perfectly

save us. In your heart, you may feel that you are nothing, filthy, and that your mind is all wrong, but you can call upon Him, and trusting in Him alone, He will work out the plan of salvation in your life.

God’s law is holy, just, and good, and broad in its requirements. It reaches to the very thoughts and feelings of the soul (*Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 10, 287). Notice that God’s law reaches to my thoughts and feelings. Why? Because that is where the sin is. It is not just what I do, but what I am. I, my thoughts, feelings, and intentions, are not in harmony with God’s law. Just because I have not committed an act of sin does not make me any less of a sinner. If I am, in any way, out of harmony with the law of God, then I am sinning because I am living in a state of sin.

“They [the law of God, the ten commandments] lay men under obligation to God: they reach to the thoughts and feelings of the soul; and they will produce conviction of sin in everyone who is sensible of having transgressed them. If the law extended only to the external conduct, men would not feel guilty over their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. But the law requires that the soul itself, the spiritual agent, be pure.” *Ibid.*, 287, 288. We must accept Christ as our Saviour, surrendering to His transforming power, or we will remain impure, unholy, and sinful, because alone we are unable to be anything else.

The Spirit of Prophecy makes it very clear that the expression “that Holy Thing,” was referring to Jesus’ humanity not His divinity. Jesus was to be the physical walking, talking, breathing example to man of the character of God. “The Lord Jesus is the embodiment of the glory of the Godhead.” *The Signs of the Times*, December 12, 1895

Webster’s dictionary defines *embodiment* as “the act of embodying or a state of being embodied.” *Embodied* means to “cause to become a body or part of a body”; in other words, *incarnate*. When Mrs. White wrote that Jesus is the embodiment of the glory of the Godhead, she was speaking about His body.

“What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the

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It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin.

manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, 1131

“To human eyes, Christ was only a man, yet He was a perfect man. In His humanity He was the impersonation of the divine character. God embodied His own attributes in His Son—His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His purity, His truthfulness, His spirituality, and His benevolence. In Him, though human, all perfection of character, all divine excellence, dwelt. ...

“He was manifesting God in humanity. Yet He was the humblest of all the prophets; and He exemplified in His life the truth that the more perfect the character of human beings, the more simple and humble they will be.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 16, 1897

Jesus came to this world as a human being, “not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset. The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in [the] human nature which we now have.” *Selected Messages*, Book 3, 140

The devil was jubilant. He was sure that finally he would win the great controversy. And if he were to win, every son and daughter of Adam would perish. Christ would perish, too, because if the devil had won, Christ would have lost His divinity. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ.



“Satan and his angels exulted as they discovered that the Son of God had taken upon Himself the nature of man, and had come to be man’s substitute, to engage in the conflict in our behalf. The human family had been overpowered by the deception of the enemy; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and the enemy hoped that Christ also would become a victim to his seductive wiles. Satan gloried in the opportunity of besieging the Son of God with fierce temptations. Because He had taken upon Himself the nature of man, Satan deemed that his victory was certain, and with every malignant device in his power he strove to overcome Christ. The steadfast resistance of Christ to the temptations of the enemy brought the whole confederacy of evil to war against him. Evil men and evil angels united their forces against the Prince of Peace. The issues at stake were beyond the comprehension of men, and the temptations that assailed Christ were as much more intense and subtle than those which assail man as his character was purer and more exalted than is the character of man in his moral and physical defilement. In his conflict with the prince of darkness in this atom of a world, Christ had to meet the whole confederacy of evil, the united forces

of the adversary of God and man; but at every point he met the tempter, and put him to flight. Christ was conqueror over the powers of darkness, and took the infinite risk of consenting to war with the enemy, that he might conquer him in our behalf.” *The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1893

Christ was tempted far more than any of us will ever be tempted. If He had lost, we, too, would have been lost. Yet, He took an infinite risk, coming to this earth as a man to face the devil, and to save mankind. Imagine the difference of the level of temptation between Jesus and us. One demon comes and whispers a suggestive thought to us and have we not given in to the temptation many times? Jesus met Satan and “the whole confederacy of evil, the united forces of the adversary” and stood fast.

Very few Adventists understand what happened to mankind when Adam sinned. “When man sinned, all heaven was filled with sorrow; for through yielding to temptation, man became the enemy of God, a partaker of the satanic nature. The image of God in which He had been created was marred and distorted. The character of man was out of harmony with the character of God; for through sin man became carnal [fleshly].” *Ibid.* February 13, 1893. The entire human race became carnal.

Man’s carnal flesh must be crucified, and he must be born again. Paul speaks repeatedly that the old man, our carnal nature, must be crucified.

“That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” *Ephesians 4:22–24*

Your carnal nature is to be crucified, but a crucified person can come down from the cross. That is what they said to Jesus. “If You are the Son of God, throw

Yourself down [from the cross].” Matthew 4:6. Mrs. White says that Christ could have come down from the cross and gone back to His Father, but had He done so, you and I would be lost (*The Desire of Ages*, 145). Have you let your carnal man get down from the cross?

Because of Adam’s sin, the whole human race became carnal, therefore, we are all partakers of the satanic nature, and if we are to be in heaven, three things must occur. “Since the divine law is as changeless as the character of God, there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his transgression might be pardoned, his nature renewed, and his spirit restored to reflect the image of God.” *That I May Know Him*, 18

God’s law requires a perfect character. “Even the thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God, and the feelings under the control of reason and religion. Our imagination was not given us to be allowed to run riot and have its own way, without any effort at restraint and discipline. If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When we decide that as Christians we are not required to restrain our thoughts and feelings, we are brought under the influence of evil angels, and invite their presence and control.” *The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1885

God’s law requires that we present to Him a holy character. What constitutes a holy character? “The law requires us to present to God a holy character. It demands of men today just what it demanded of Adam and

Eve in Eden—perfect obedience, perfect harmony with all its [the law of God] precepts in all relations of life, under all circumstances and conditions. No unholy thought can be tolerated, no unlovely action can be justified. As the law requires that which no man of himself can render, the human family are found guilty before the great moral standard.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895
The thoughts and feelings in all relations of life, under all circumstances and all conditions must be holy, in harmonious agreement with all the precepts of

God’s law; anything less is transgression of God’s law and therefore, sin.

“Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” James 1:14. So what is temptation?

“It [temptation] is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried.” *The Signs of the Times*, May 27, 1897

When Satan tempted Eve in the garden, the temptation involved three parts: [1] distrust in God’s love, [2] doubting His wisdom, [3] and transgressing His law (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 57). “Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman.” Ibid. Eve failed in all three, and if you or I fail on the first two parts, we will fail on the third—every time. We must be vigilant, because the devil is still using this same temptation on God’s people all over the world today.

Someone might say, “I know that God loves me and everything He does is wise and best. I would never distrust His

love or doubt His wisdom.” But what if that same person had a loved one in the hospital dying of cancer, and they say, “This person is a Christian, how can this happen? If there was a God in heaven, this couldn’t happen.” Do you see? The devil is tempting them to doubt God’s love and wisdom. The devil whispers in the ears of those suffering some trial, “If there was a God who had infinite love, infinite wisdom, and infinite power, He wouldn’t let this happen.”

The time of trouble is coming, and if I do not trust in God’s love and wisdom now, then I will not keep His law, and I will be unable to make it through that terrible time.

If I am to survive the temptations that are coming, then I must be rooted and grounded in the truth so that I have perfect trust and confidence in God’s love for me. Whether I am sick and no one can say why, or everything seems to be going against me and nothing makes sense, still I must have faith in God’s love and wisdom now.

An army of soldiers came to the home of a Waldensian family. They killed the sons, cut off their heads, tied them around their father’s neck, and then marched the father to his death. Could you trust that there is a God in heaven who has infinite love and wisdom for you in a situation like that? Can you trust God’s love and know that He is wise and He is going to work all things out for your good in the end even when everything’s going wrong and you can’t understand it?

Friends, we must practice trusting in God now, every day, in all things—because trust in God will not just magically appear when things get tough. We must trust in Him or we will fail and be lost. **LM**

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The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.”



Be Glad

Be glad when the flowers have faded?
Be glad when the trees are bare?
When the fog lies thick on the fields and moor,
And the frost is in the air?
When all around is a desert,
And the clouds obscure the light,
When there are no songs for the darkest day,
No stars for the longest night?

Be glad when the world is lonely,
And the heart has been bereft?
When of all the loves of the young springtime
Scarcely a friend is left?
Be glad in the desolate valley
After the sunny hills?
When the joy of the morning is far behind,
And the gloom its task fulfils?

Ah, yes! For the truest gladness
Is not in ease or mirth;
It has its home in the heart of God,
Not in the loves of earth.
God's love is the same forever,
If the skies are bright or dim,
And the joy of the morning lasts all day
When the heart is glad in Him.

Marianne Farningham
The Review and Herald, October 10, 1899

July 30 – August 5, 2023

Life (continued from July)

Key Text

“Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:14

Study Help: *The Desire of Ages*, 652–661

Introduction

“The cross stands where two roads diverge. One is the path of obedience leading to heaven. The other leads into the broad road, where man can easily go with his burden of sin and corruption, but it leads to perdition.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, 1095, 1096

Sunday

1 ABUNDANT SPIRITUAL LIFE

1.a. What basic principle for spiritual life was taught by Christ? John 6:54, 56, 57

Note: “It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness. And this life we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded.” *The Desire of Ages*, 660

1.b. What is the meaning of the expression “whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life”? John 6:63

Note: “To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to be-

come partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.” *The Desire of Ages*, 389

Monday

2 SHARPER THAN A SURGEON’S SCALPEL

2.a. How does Paul describe God’s word? Hebrews 4:12

Note: “The truth is the truth. It is not to be wrapped up in beautiful adornings, that the outside appearance may be admired. The teacher is to make the truth clear and forcible to the understanding and to the conscience. The word is a two-edged sword, that cuts both ways. It does not tread as with soft, slipped feet.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, 1147

2.b. How does Christ identify Himself to the church of Pergamos? Revelation 2:12.

Note: “When Christ preached, His message was like a sharp, two-edged sword, piercing the consciences of men and revealing their inmost thoughts. The work that Christ did His faithful messengers will have to do. In simplicity, purity, and the strictest integrity they are to preach the Word.” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 159

2.c. How is this powerful sword to operate in our own life? 2 Corinthians 13:5

Note: “You should humbly and carefully examine your own hearts, your own individual characters. You need to open your hearts that light may shine upon your darkness, that you may see and understand your motives. ... What is the character of your thoughts, your spirit, your purposes, your words and actions? Compare them with the Scripture, and see whether you represent the character of Christ. Go to Jesus humbly, and break your hearts hardened by feelings of bitterness and hatred. Let the grace of Christ soften and melt you that you may put away everything that is destructive of your peace. If you do not see your hearts in the light of Jesus Christ, self love will prompt you to have a much better opinion of yourselves than you deserve; for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 13, 87

Tuesday

3 THE BREAD OF LIFE

3.a. How does Jeremiah describe his relish for God’s word?
Jeremiah 15:16

3.b. What must we likewise cultivate in order to obtain real spiritual strength from the Word? Matthew 5:6

Note: “All pampering of self must be at an end. There must be an earnest longing, a soul-hunger, for the presence of the Lord. ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.’ Matthew 5:6.

“It is a case of life or death with us. We have been stricken with spiritual paralysis, and everyone needs the help of the Great Physician. He alone can reach our case. He is only waiting to be invited by us with earnest heart, with sincere desire. Nothing is wanting but a preparation of heart, and earnest, believing prayer, to bring Jesus to our side as a mighty helper. He longs to come. If we will but listen to His voice and open the door, He will come in.” *Gospel Workers* (1892), 225, 226

3.c. What factors are important to consider when spiritually feeding our young? Proverbs 22:6

Note: “Do not encourage a superficial manner of investigating the truth. Make every point of truth clear and distinct to the minds of the children. Do not crowd upon their minds an accumulated amount of matter at one time. The precious word of God is to be a lamp to their path, and a light to their feet. Impress upon their minds that it is their privilege to walk in the light. It is the path of peace, of purity, of holiness, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. Christ has led the way in this path; He is the true Shepherd; in following Him, they avoid the bypaths and dangerous pitfalls.

“In the word of God they are to learn that all who enter heaven must have a perfect character; for then they will meet their Lord in peace. Many children and youth have their characters imprinted on their countenances. Their life’s history they carry in the features of the face. The true workers should impress upon the minds of the children a beautiful, pure, Christlike character, which will transfigure the countenance.” *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, 112, 113

Wednesday

4 GOD’S WORD, A LIGHTHOUSE

4.a. What are we to realize about the inspiration of Scripture, and how the Bible came into being?
Habakkuk 2:2; 2 Peter 1:19–21

Note: “The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. ... ‘Write the vision, and make it plain, ... that he may run that readeth it.’ Habakkuk 2:2. The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart.” *The Great Controversy*, 521

4.b. What admonition did Paul send to Timothy?
2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2:15

Note: “The law is a wall of protection to those who are obedient to God’s precepts. From what other source can we gather such strength, or learn such noble science? What other book will teach men to love, fear, and obey God as does the Bible? What other book presents to students more ennobling science, more wonderful history? It clearly portrays righteousness, and foretells the consequence of disloyalty to the law of Jehovah. No one is left in darkness as to that which God approves or disapproves. In studying the Scriptures we become acquainted with God, and are led to understand our relation to Christ, who is the sinbearer, the surety, the substitute, for our fallen race. These truths concern our present and eternal interests. The Bible stands the highest among books, and its study is valuable above the study of other literature in giving strength and expansion to the mind. ...

“The word of God is the most perfect educational book in our world. Yet in our colleges and schools, books produced by human intellect have been presented for the study of our students, and the Book of books, which God has given to men to be an infallible guide, has been made a secondary matter. Human productions have been used as most essential and the word of God has been studied simply to give flavor to other studies. Isaiah describes the scenes of heaven’s glory that were presented to him, in most vivid language. All through this book he pictures glorious things that are to be revealed to others.”
Fundamentals of Christian Education, 394, 395

Thursday

5 HOW TO STUDY GOD’S WORD

5.a. Since the Bible is a divine book, how should we approach it? Isaiah 28:10

Note: “Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.” *Steps to Christ*, 91

“Observe system in the study of the Scriptures in your families. Neglect anything of a temporal nature, ... but be sure that the soul is fed with the bread of life. It is impossible to estimate the good results of one hour or even half an hour each day devoted in a cheerful, social manner to the word of God. Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances.” *Child Guidance*, 511

5.b. How could we be really benefited by studying God’s word? Matthew 4:4

Note: “We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know ‘what saith the Lord.’

“In His promises and warnings, Jesus means me. ... The experiences related in God’s word are to be my experiences. Prayer and promise, precept and warning, are mine. ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Galatians 2:20. As faith thus receives and assimilates the principles of truth, they become a part of the being and the motive power of the life. The word of God, received into the soul, molds the thoughts, and enters into the development of character.” *The Desire of Ages*, 390, 391 [Author’s emphasis.]

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we “eat” the flesh and “drink” the blood of Christ?
- 2 In what sense is God’s word a “two-edged sword”?
- 3 What is the difference between reading the Bible and studying the Bible?

August 6 – 12, 2023

Godliness

Key Text

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness.” 2 Peter 1:5, 6

Study Help: *Christ's Object Lessons*, 272–283

Introduction

“Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of the ladder. We are saved by climbing round after round, mounting step after step, to the height of Christ's ideal for us.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 530

Sunday

1 BEWARE OF THE COUNTERFEIT

1.a. Against what class of professed believers are we warned? 2 Timothy 3:1–5

Note: “Since the second angel proclaimed the fall of the churches, they have been growing more and more corrupt. They bear the name of being Christ's followers; yet it is impossible to distinguish them from the world. Ministers take their texts from the word of God, but preach smooth things. To this the natural heart feels no objection. It is only the spirit and power of the truth and the salvation of Christ that are hateful to the carnal heart. There is nothing in the popular ministry that stirs the wrath of Satan, makes the sinner tremble, or applies to the heart and conscience the fearful realities of a judgment soon to come. Wicked men are generally pleased with a form of piety without true godliness, and they will aid and support such a religion.” *Early Writings*, 273

1.b. Why are false believers worse than unbelievers? Revelation 3:15, 16

Note: “Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian” *Our High Calling*, 348

Monday

2 FERVENT BELIEVERS

2.a. What is the ideal Christian life? Romans 12:9–14

Note: “We are to compare our characters with the infallible standard of God's law. In order to do this, we must search the Scriptures, measuring our attainments by the word of God. Through the grace of Christ, the highest attainments in character are possible; for every soul who comes under the molding influence of the Spirit of God, may be transformed in mind and heart. In order to understand your condition, it is necessary to study the Bible, and to watch unto prayer. The apostle says, ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?’ Let not those who are ignorant remain in ignorance. They cannot remain in ignorance, and meet the mind of God. They are to look to the cross of Calvary, and estimate the soul by the value of the offering there made. Jesus says to all believers, ‘Ye are My witnesses.’ ‘Ye are laborers together with God.’ This being true, how earnestly should each one strive to make use of every power to improve every opportunity for becoming efficient that he may be ‘not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.’ ” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 214

2.b. What example do we have from the early Christians? Acts 2:42–47

Note: “After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples went forth to proclaim a risen Saviour, their one desire the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of the communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to

make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had commanded them to reveal. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts.

"The believers were ever to cherish the love that filled the hearts of the apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit. They were to go forward in willing obedience to the new commandment: 'As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' John 13:34. So closely were they to be united to Christ that they would be enabled to fulfill His requirements. The power of a Saviour who could justify them by His righteousness was to be magnified." *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, 241

Tuesday

3 GOD'S PLAN FOR US

3.a. Since we are living in the Laodicean era, in what situation may we find ourselves, and what hope does Christ offer? Revelation 3:18–20

Note: "Love of self excludes the love of Christ. Those who live for self are ranged under the head of the Laodicean church who are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. The ardor of the first love has lapsed into a selfish egotism. . . . Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance." *Our High Calling*, 348

3.b. What is God's desire for each one of us? Ephesians 3:14–21

Note: "God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Matthew 5:48. As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 365

3.c. How can this desire be accomplished? John 15:4, 5

Note: "Without the divine working, man can do no good thing. God calls every man to repentance, yet man cannot even repent unless the Holy Spirit works upon his heart. But the Lord wants no man to wait until he thinks he has repented before he takes steps toward Jesus. The Saviour is continually drawing men to repentance; they need only to submit to be drawn, and their hearts will be melted in penitence.

"To man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life—he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, and the Spirit works in him to accomplish this. But man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle and exercise every faculty in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence." *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 365, 366

Wednesday

4 THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

4.a. How can we be overcomers in our spiritual struggle? Ephesians 6:11–13

Note: "In the word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God's control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God's will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels.

"But unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy. Although a solemn revelation of God's will concerning us has been revealed to all, yet a knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking to cooperate with

Him in answering the prayers offered. He accomplishes His purposes through human instrumentalities.

“God wants everyone to stand with the whole armor on, ready for the great review.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, 1119

4.b. What is the meaning of the “breastplate of righteousness”? Ephesians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Note: “We must put on every piece of the armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him, maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circum-spect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 12, 1901

Thursday

5 THE CHRISTIAN ARMOR (continued)

5.a. What are the other parts of our armor? Ephesians 6:15, 16

Note: “‘Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,’ you will be prepared to walk from house to house, carrying the truth to the people. Sometimes you will find it very trying to do work of this kind; but if you go forth in faith, the Lord will go before you, and His light will shine upon your pathway. As you enter the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven. Learn to sing the simplest of songs. These will help you in house-to-house labor, and hearts will be touched by the influence of the Holy Spirit.” *The Review and Herald*, November 11, 1902



5.b. Mention two essential weapons with which Christian should continually be armed. Ephesians 6:18

Note: “Men and women may reach a high standard, if they will but acknowledge Christ as their personal Saviour. Watch and pray, making a surrender of all to God. The knowledge that you are striving for eternal life will strengthen and comfort you both. In thought, in word, in action, you are to be lights in the world. Discipline yourselves in the Lord; for He has committed to you sacred trusts, which you cannot properly fulfill without this discipline. By believing in Jesus, you are not only to save your own souls, but by precept and example you are to seek to save other souls.” *The Adventist Home*, 96

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How would you define a Laodicean believer?
- 2 What do we understand by the expression “hot”?
- 3 What is my goal as a Christian?
- 4 Name the parts of the Christian armor.
- 5 How can we reach a higher standard in spiritual, cultural, and physical education?

August 13 – 19, 2023

Glory

Key Text

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18

Study Help: *The Acts of the Apostles*, 202–210

Introduction

“Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The believers in Christ, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. On earth they walk in narrow paths; they are purified in the furnace of affliction.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 576

Sunday

1 HUMAN GLORY

1.a. What should we realize about the futility of human glory? Jeremiah 9:23

Note: “God is the source of all wisdom. He is infinitely wise and just and good. Apart from Christ, the wisest men that ever lived cannot comprehend Him. They may profess to be wise; they may glory in their attainments; but mere intellectual knowledge, aside from the great truths that center in Christ, is as nothingness.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 66

“It was a very intellectual being, one who occupied a high position among the angelic throng, that finally became a rebel; and many a mind of superior intellectual attainments is now being led captive by his power.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, 422

1.b. What is written about loving worldly riches?
1 Timothy 6:9, 10. Give one example. Matthew 26:14–16

Note: “Worldly policy plans were constantly cherished by Judas. There was no outbreking sin on his part, but his sharp scheming, the selfish, parsimonious spirit that took possession of him, finally led him to sell his Lord for a small sum of money.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, 1101

Monday

2 TWO KINDS OF WISDOM

2.a. What is worldly wisdom in the sight of God?

1 Corinthians 1:19–21. What miracle will yet be seen even in some who have been blinded by worldly wisdom?

Note: “Many of the greatest scholars and statesmen, the world’s most eminent men, will in these last days turn from the light because the world by wisdom knows not God. Yet God’s servants are to improve every opportunity to communicate the truth to these men. Some will acknowledge their ignorance of the things of God and will take their place as humble learners at the feet of Jesus, the Master Teacher.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 241, 242

2.b. Rather than becoming spiritually dwarfed by the temporal scope of worldly knowledge, how are we to make the most of our intellectual endowments?
2 Timothy 2:15

Note: “Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God.

“We are indebted to Him who gave us existence, for all the talents which have been entrusted to us; and it is a duty we owe to our Creator to cultivate and improve upon the talents

He has committed to our trust. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing the glory of God.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 160

“Whatever may be your calling, it is essential that you improve your abilities by diligent study. Young men and women should be urged to appreciate the heaven-sent blessings of opportunities to become well disciplined and intelligent. They should take advantage of the schools that have been established for the purpose of imparting the best of knowledge. It is sinful to be indolent and negligent in regard to obtaining an education. Time is short, and therefore because the Lord is soon to come to close the scenes of earth’s history, there is all the greater necessity of improving present opportunities and privileges.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 216

Tuesday

3 DIVINE WISDOM

3.a. Where is true wisdom to be found? 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24, 30

3.b. In what kind of knowledge should God’s children glory? 1 Corinthians 1:31; Jeremiah 9:24

Note: “If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin.

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father’s love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that

His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

“Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour’s love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 209, 210

3.c. What will be the result in our life if we partake of that in which the apostle Paul gloried? Galatians 6:14

Note: “Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 210

Wednesday

4 HUMAN POWER

4.a. What is the value of trusting in human power in God’s plan? Psalm 20:7, 8

Note: “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.” Ephesians 6:12, margin. 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 distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 717

- 4.b. What warnings should we heed when considering, for example, the tragic episode in David's life at a moment when he was trusting in his own strength? 2 Samuel 11:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:12
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Note: "David was surrounded by the fruits of victory and the honors of his wise and able rule. It was now, while he was at ease and unguarded, that the tempter seized the opportunity to occupy his mind ... When in ease and self-security he let go his hold upon God, David yielded to Satan and brought upon his soul the stain of guilt." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 718

"It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him. ... Instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust to his own wisdom and might. 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. It begins in apparently small things—the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world." *Ibid.*, 717, 718

- 4.c. Describe an example of how divine power can readily outstrip human strength. Isaiah 36:18-20; 37:33-38
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Note: "The God of the Hebrews had prevailed over the proud Assyrian [king]. ... Their earnest entreaties for deliverance had been mingled with confession of sin and with many tears. In their great need, they had trusted wholly in the power of God to save, and He had not failed them." *Prophets and Kings*, 361, 362

Thursday

5 GOD'S POWER

- 5.a. What is the only way by which God's people should defend the truth? Zechariah 4:6, 7, 10
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Note: "The very same difficulties which were created to hinder the restoration and upbuilding of the work of God, the great mountains of difficulty which loomed in Zerubbabel's way, will be met by all who today are loyal to God and to His work. Many human inventions are used to carry out plans after the mind and will of men with whom God is not working. But it is not boastful words nor a multitude of ceremonies that show that the Lord is working with His people. The assumed power of the human agent does not decide this question. Those who place themselves in opposition to the Lord's work may hinder for a time, but the same Spirit that has guided the Lord's work all the way through will guide it today. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' ...

"The Lord would have every soul strong in His strength. He would have us look to Him, receiving our directions from Him." *The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1899

- 5.b. What promise should encourage us in these last days? Joel 2:28, 29
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Note: "If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God. He will so bestow His Spirit upon His people that they will become a light amid the moral darkness; and great light will be reflected in all parts of the world. O that our faith might be increased, that the Lord might work mightily with His people." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, 1175

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain why "reasons" for human glory are empty according to Jeremiah 9:23.
- 2 What is the basic difference between human wisdom and divine wisdom?
- 3 What role does the cross of Calvary play in our Christian life?
- 4 Relate the victories of God's people over the Assyrians.

August 20 – 26, 2023

Precious Promises

Key Text

“By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4

Study Help: *Christ's Object Lessons*, 307–319

Introduction

“The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul of the child with a spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the receptive mind a familiarity with divine things which will be as a barricade against the temptations of the enemy.” *Child Guidance*, 496

Sunday

1 GOD'S PROMISES

1.a. After the Fall, in what words was the work of redemption promised? Genesis 3:15

Note: “Ever since the first promise of redemption was spoken in Eden, the life, the character, and the mediatorial work of Christ have been the study of human minds. Yet every mind through whom the Holy Spirit has worked has presented these themes in a light that is fresh and new. The truths of redemption are capable of constant development and expansion. Though old, they are ever new, constantly revealing to the seeker for truth a greater glory and a mightier power.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, 127

1.b. How sure can we be about God's promises?
1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13

Note: “The apostle adjured the Corinthians, ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.’ Should they become boastful and self-confident, neglecting to watch and pray, they would fall into grievous sin, calling down upon themselves the wrath of God. Yet Paul would not have them yield to despondency or discouragement. ... ‘God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.’” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 316

Monday

2 FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING

2.a. What is promised to us if we fulfill some basic conditions? 1 John 1:9

Note: “Thank God that He who spilled His blood for us, lives to plead it, lives to make intercession for every soul who receives Him. ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:9. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. It speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, for Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us. We need to keep ever before us the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. That life-cleansing, life-sustaining blood, appropriated by living faith, is our hope. We need to grow in appreciation of its inestimable value, for it speaks for us only as we by faith claim its virtue, keeping the conscience clean and at peace with God.

“This is represented as the pardoning blood, inseparably connected with the resurrection and life of our Redeemer, illustrated by the ever-flowing stream that proceeds from the throne of God, the water of the river of life.” *Our High Calling*, 47

2.b. What are the conditions upon which we are forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ? Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13

Note: “The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. He that ‘confesseth and forsaketh’ his sin ‘shall have mercy.’ Proverbs 28:13.

“In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood. Centuries, ages, can never lessen the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice. Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 552, 553

Tuesday

3 FREEDOM AND POWER

3.a. How can we be free from sinning? Matthew 1:21

Note: “God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

“The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 311

3.b. What is promised to those who accept the gospel? Romans 1:16, 17

Note: “United with Christ, all the power you require will be given you. Abiding in Him, you can fight manfully. The more you believe and trust as a child in the Lord Jesus, the greater will be your capacity for believing. By faith you stand. Only by exercising faith can you conquer self. ... Self is the ground where Satan always meets and manages those whom he wishes to deceive and conquer. But if the righteousness of Christ is revealed in you, you become strong. Looking beyond yourself to a crucified Saviour, a risen and ascended Lord, who is, as your Advocate, making intercession for you, taking hold of Christ’s power and efficiency, you can conquer.” *Our High Calling*, 126

3.c. How long did it take for Christ to cleanse the leper? Matthew 8:2, 3. How long will it take for Christ to forgive and cleanse us?

Note: “In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.” *The Desire of Ages*, 266

Wednesday

4 POWER TO OVERCOME

4.a. What is promised to overcomers in the Laodicean period? Revelation 3:21

Note: “If Jesus resisted Satan’s temptations, He will help us to resist. He came to bring divine power to combine with human effort.

“Jesus was free from all sin and error; there was not a trace of imperfection in His life or character. He maintained spotless purity under circumstances the most trying. ...

“Christ’s overcoming and obedience is that of a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of

our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity. His imputed grace and power He gives to all who receive Him by faith.

“The obedience of Christ to His Father was the same obedience that is required of man. Man cannot overcome Satan’s temptations without divine power to combine with his instrumentality. So with Jesus Christ; He could lay hold of divine power. He came not to our world to give the obedience of a lesser God to a greater, but as a man to obey God’s holy law, and in this way He is our example. The Lord Jesus came to our world, not to reveal what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God’s power to help in every emergency. Man is, through faith, to be a partaker in the divine nature, and to overcome every temptation wherewith he is beset.

“The Lord now demands that every son and daughter of Adam, through faith in Jesus Christ, serve Him in human nature which we now have. ... Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 929

4.b. What is the only way we can be overcomers?

1 Corinthians 15:57

Note: “The followers of Christ are to become like Him—by the grace of God to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.

“This work can be accomplished only through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God.” *The Great Controversy*, 469

Thursday

5 PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

5.a. In accepting God’s written promises, what happens to our life? 2 Peter 1:4

Note: “Through belief in Him [Christ] it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. ...

“As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.” *The Review and Herald*, April 24, 1900

“It is God who gives us power to overcome. Those who hear His voice and obey His commandments are enabled to form righteous characters.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 943

5.b. What does Revelation 12:11 say about how a person overcomes?

Note: “All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.

“We become overcomers by helping others to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. The keeping of the commandments of God will yield in us an obedient spirit, and the service that is the offspring of such a spirit, God can accept.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 974

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the first gospel message ever preached?
- 2 How can we be sure that our sins are forgiven?
- 3 Explain the expression: “He shall save His people from their sins.”
- 4 What is the only way we can be overcomers?
- 5 How many of us can be overcomers?

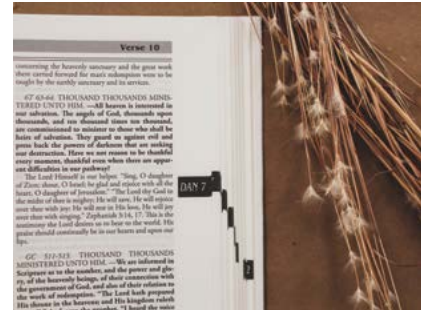
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DANIEL & REVELATION

Back in print after fifteen years, these two volumes are an exhaustive commentary by Ellen G. White on the books of Daniel and Revelation, verse by verse, with passages taken from her published and unpublished sources, compiled and meticulously keyed to scripture. This set features a redesigned exterior while keeping the same content as the previous edition.

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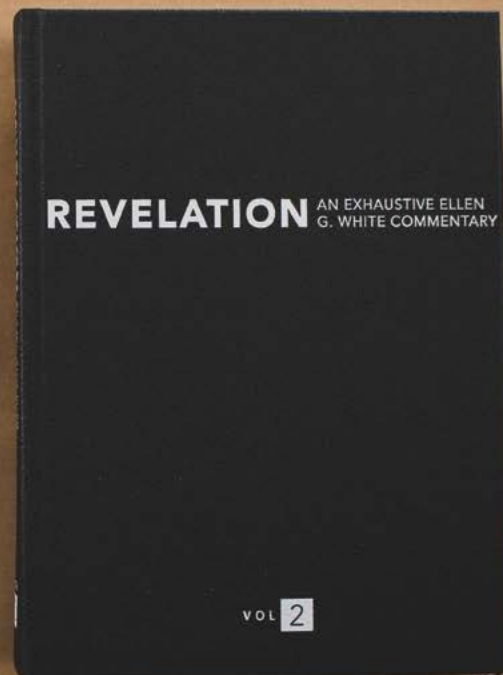
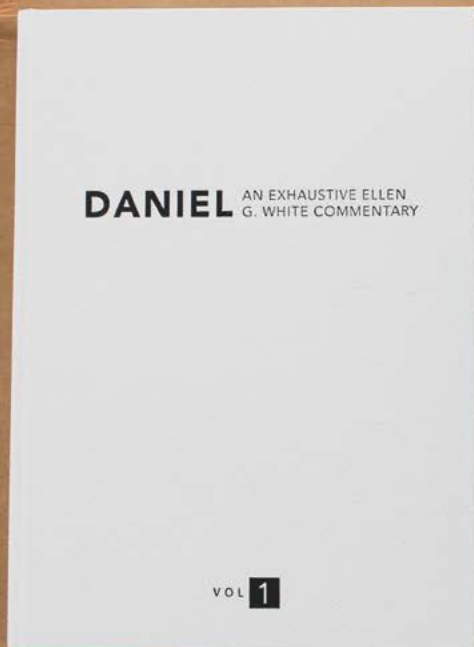
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Watermelon

Is watermelon a fruit or a vegetable? Interestingly, it can be considered both. Watermelon is botanically a fruit like the pepper, tomato, and pumpkin, and a vegetable like squash and cucumber. This large, sweet fruit originated from southern Africa.

Did you know? Watermelon is 100% edible.

There are 200-300 varieties of watermelon from different parts of the world. Watermelon has a smooth exterior rind and a juicy, sweet interior flesh. It is most often eaten raw, but can be added to desserts, salads, and beverages, and can be cooked, grilled, or baked.

The seeds have a nutty flavor and can be ground, dried, or roasted. The rind contains fiber and potassium, and is rich

in citrulline. You can pickle the rind, use it in a smoothie, and make rind preserves and gazpacho.

Farmers plant seeds or seedlings in a nursery and then transplant them into well-drained rows or raised beds of soil. They are grown in warm, sunny climates. One plant grows into multiple vines, 6 to 8 feet in length. Honeybees are needed to pollinate the yellow blossoms from which the watermelon grow. The melons are ready to harvest in about 90 days.

Watermelons are packed with water and nutrients, have very few calories, and may help lower blood pressure, improve insulin sensitivity, and reduce muscle soreness.

Watermelons are available today with seeds, seedless, and in mini size. Picking

the best watermelon is as easy as, “Look, Lift, Turn! Look for a firm watermelon that is free from bruises, cuts or dents; light scratches are all right. A watermelon is 92% water by weight and is therefore very heavy. When turned over, the underside should have a creamy yellow spot from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun. Farmers do not recommend thumping, patting, slapping, flicking, or knocking. But if you insist on trying the thump, a ripe watermelon will have a dull, muffled, or hollow sound like a pong; an unripe watermelon will have a metallic, clear ring like a ping.

Sources: watermelon.org/watermelon-101/facts-faqs; onlyfoods.net/types-of-melon; vitacost.com/blog/watermelon-rinds; healthline.com/nutrition/foods/watermelon

Fruit

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



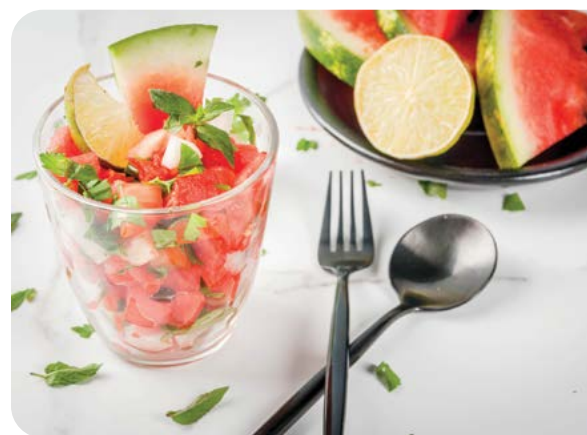
WATERMELON APPLE SALSA

Ingredients

1/2 of a medium-sized watermelon
2 granny smith apples
1 Tbs. olive oil
2 Tbs. fresh mint
1/4 cup fresh cilantro
Zest of 1 lime
1 Tbs. fresh lime juice
A pinch of sea salt

Process

- Cut the watermelon and apples into 1/4"-thick matchsticks.
- Chop the mint and cilantro.
- Zest the lime and squeeze out the juice.
- Toss all ingredients gently to mix together.
- Best served chilled and before the apples begin to brown.





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Benefits of Watermelon

- *Loaded with essential nutrients*
- *Offers a big dose of lycopene*
- *Helps keep you hydrated*
- *Facilitates healthy digestion*
- *Could help with weight management*
- *May improve heart health*
- *Could work to reduce cancer risk*
- *Great for your skin*

www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/a40257118/watermelon-health-benefits/

