

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

*The Christian America
Project 2.0*

p. 8

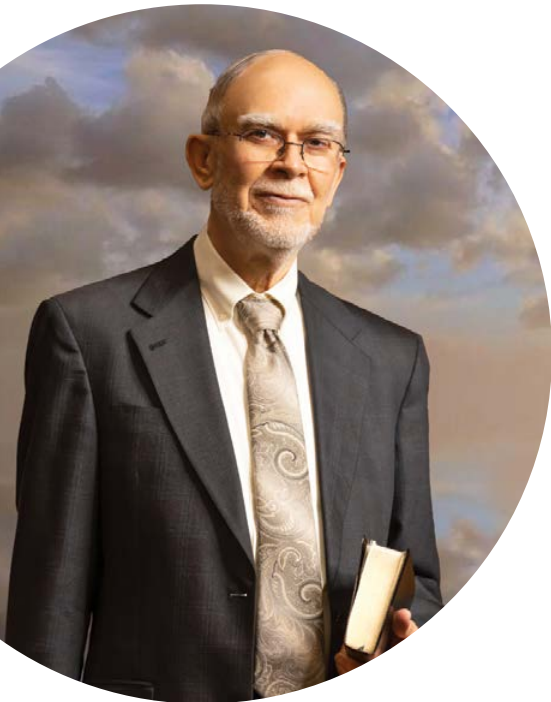
*The
Christian's
Privilege*

p. 2

*Are You
Ready to
Die?*

p. 5





From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

The Sudden Change Coming

“There will soon be a sudden change in God’s dealings. The world in its perversity is being visited by casualties—by floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, famines, wars, and bloodshed. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power; yet He will not at all acquit the wicked. ‘The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.’ O that men might understand the patience and longsuffering of God! He is putting under restraint His own attributes. His omnipotent power is under the control of Omnipotence. . . . But His forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God’s dealing with sinful men?” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 356

God called the second advent movement into existence to warn the world that the judgement of this world had come. Do not let any misguided person cause you to forget that we are living in that time when all its inhabitants will be judged by the God of heaven and the millions of angels at His court (Daniel 7:9, 10) First the righteous will be judged

(1 Peter 4:17) and then the unrighteous—those who have not accepted the gospel and endured to the end (Matthew 24:13).

The judgment of the righteous will end at midnight—the darkest period of human history (Matthew 25:6) And a short time after this, the Lord Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven (Mark 4:29; Revelation 14:15).

Christ’s first advent to this world was not to judge but to save the world (John 3:17). At His second advent, He will come to judge its inhabitants (2 Timothy 4:1; Acts 10:43).

“People are now settling to rest, imagining themselves secure under the popular churches; but let all beware, lest there is a place left open for the enemy to gain an entrance. Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. . . . The day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one’s interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.” *Ibid.*, 336 [LM](#)

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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

In this Issue



The Christian's Privilege

"I have the right" people shout. But do they? What is the difference between a right and a privilege?

John R. Pearson



Are You Ready to Die?

Everyone is tired. We are ready to go home. Or are we?

Judy Rebarckek



The Christian America Project 2.0

Is the wall of separation between church and state falling? The article researches historical and contemporary examples of how this important rule is being manipulated to bring about the mark of the beast.

Marcin Watras

More in this Issue

14 Story Time

Siddi's Secret

16 Bible Puzzle

Living in the Day of Atonement

18 Pen of Inspiration

Christ's Followers the Light of the World?

21 Keys to the Storehouse

Predestined or Predestined

23 Songs We Love

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

24 From the Mission Fields

God's Church in Bolivia

26 Nature

How Does Cold Weather Affect Nature?

28 Health Nugget

The Health Benefits of Winter

32 The Seven Deadly Sins

Wicked Imaginations

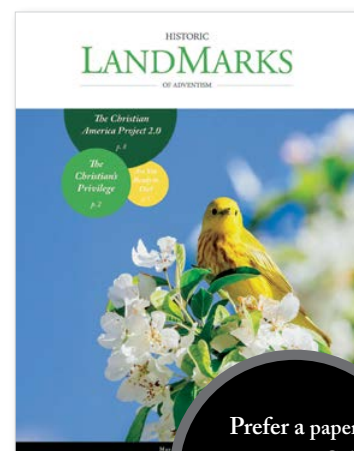
36 Bible Study Guide

Living in the Day of Atonement

49 Recipe

Dates

All Bible texts, unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, are from the New King James Version.



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The Christian's Privilege

John R. Pearson

“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

John 1:11-13



What is the difference between a right and a privilege?

According to legal scholars, a right is something that cannot be legally denied, such as the right to free speech, press, religion, and raising a family. A privilege is something that can be given and taken away and is considered to be a special advantage or opportunity that is available only to certain people.

This explains the difference in secular law between a right and a privilege. I would like to suggest, however, that in the religious realm, a right and a privilege are pretty much the same. We talk of the privilege we have to bow before the throne of grace and carry our petitions to the source of infinite power. While this is indeed a privilege, a special advantage or opportunity that is available only to certain people—and that would be those who believe in a superior power—it is also something that cannot be legally denied. While laws may well be passed that prohibit in a certain degree open prayer, nothing can stop someone from silently praying.

We indeed have a right to pray. While it is also considered a privilege to bow before our Creator, legally we cannot be prevented from praying. The time may well come when we have to pray silently, but as true believers, we know that God hears even our silent prayers.

In nearly every one of Paul's letters, he exhorts his readers to understand the wonderful privileges they have as followers of Christ. He often expressed these privileges in terms of prayers. This is especially evident in his letter to the Ephesians.

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all



the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:14–19

Here Paul writes of his desire that the brethren at Ephesus might come to understand the height, the fullness of the Christian's privilege. He opens before us, in the most comprehensive language, the marvelous power and knowledge that we might possess as sons and daughters of the Most High. It is our privilege "to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," to be "rooted and grounded in love," to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." But the prayer of the apostle reaches the epitome of privilege when he prays that "you might be filled with all the fullness of God."

This is the exact same condition that Christ experiences in His relationship to His Father. "For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Colossians 2:9. Paul prays for that same fullness for us!

Let's take a deeper look at this prayer. Paul prays that his readers—and indeed all Christians—might comprehend the love of Christ; then he acknowledges that that love passes knowledge.

It is incomprehensible.

It is an interesting contrast in understanding that we can comprehend the love of Christ, although it passes knowledge. The Greek word that is translated *passes* in this text can also be translated *exceeds* or *excels*. Christ's love for us exceeds knowledge, although we can comprehend it and are aware of it. It is revealed to us in the fragrance of every flower, the song of every bird, the beauty of the sunrise. Indeed, throughout nature God's love is revealed to us when we sense and perceive that love as He wants us to, as He has given us the privilege to, and indeed, the right to.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul sets forth the rich blessings granted to the children of God. He says: We "do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy." Colossians 1:9–11

Another prayer; another set of privileges for the Christian. Here, Paul prays that the Colossians, and again, all Christians, may be filled with the

knowledge of God’s will. What exactly does that mean? Knowing and doing God’s will is a salvational issue. There is absolutely no hope of my crossing the Jordan if I am not actively engaged in seeking to know His will and following through with action. If it were not important, the Holy Spirit would not have moved upon Paul to compose that prayer.

“

In the religious realm, a right and a privilege are pretty much the same.

A walk worthy of the Lord.

Paul also prays that Christians may walk worthy of the Lord and be fruitful in every good work. Whether or not a person is worthy can be a hot topic. It is true that on my own I cannot now nor will I ever “walk worthy of the Lord,” as Paul puts it.

However, as we all know, it is the Christian’s privilege to be clothed, by faith, in the righteousness of Christ, and therefore, be found worthy of everlasting life.

Indeed, we are promised in Zechariah 3 that the Angel of the Lord will perform the miracle of miracles by removing those character traits that defile us—our filthy garments—and replacing them with His own righteous nature.

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at His right hand to oppose him.

“And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.’

“And I said, ‘Let them put a clean turban on his head.’ So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by.

“Then the Angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, Then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.

“ ‘Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the Branch. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,’” Says the Lord of hosts, “And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day,” says the Lord of hosts, “Everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.”” Zechariah 3:1-10

I don’t fully understand every verse of Zachariah 3; however, the final verse depicts a time of peaceful and tranquil Christian fellowship that the saved will experience after the destruction of the enemy of peace. This experience is a privilege that is open to all.

We can engage in endless discussions about the legal difference between a right and a privilege. But in religious terms, I don’t think it matters that much. Although legally, while a right cannot be denied, I can choose to reject salvation. If I choose to disregard the privileges that I have as a believer in the salvation that Christ has afforded me by His death on the cross, I have no right to reside where the peace and blessings of Jesus reign supreme, and where “everyone will invite his neighbor under his vine and under his fig tree.” If I, by my own choices, am lost, then there is no place for me among the saved, neither here nor there.

It is my hope, indeed my prayer, that all who succeed in overcoming, which it is our privilege to do, will have a fruitful vine and a shady fig tree near their country homes in the earth made new and enjoy wonderful fellowship as we invite others to join us there. **LM**

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Are You Ready to Die?

Judy Rebarck

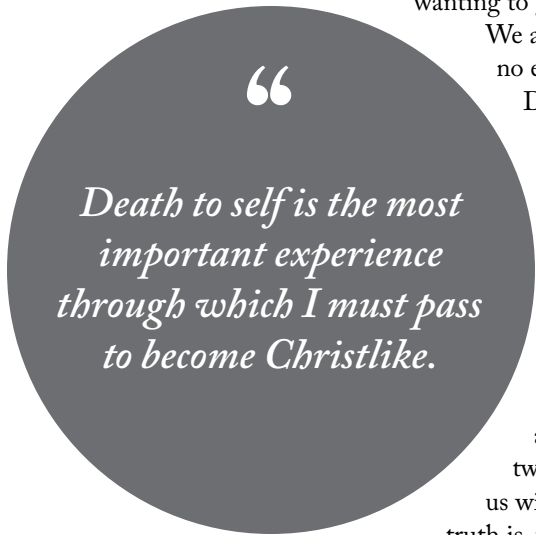
“I am so ready for Jesus to come.”

We have all made that statement at some point in our lives. A person usually says that after some unpleasant experience, or in a time of want, or after reading about or seeing some terrible calamity or evil occur in the world. But are those reasons sufficient for anyone to be ready to be taken out of this world? It is the equivalent of saying, “Get me out of here!”

Wanting something and being prepared to go is not the same as being anxious to leave.

I am going on vacation for a few days and I am anxious to have these days off. However, I still need to pack, make travel and lodging arrangements, and make reservations to board





my dog and cat. Someone might wonder if I am truly ready for my vacation. I certainly want to go, and I am anxious to be where I intend to spend my days off, but I have made none of the necessary preparations for my vacation. And that is the difference between wanting to go and being prepared to go.

We are all destined to die; there is no escape from this inevitability.

Death is the consequence of sin, and as sinners, we will all die, just as those who have died over the 6,000 years behind us. However, the Bible tells us that there will be a group of people—the 144,000—who will never see death on this earth. We have Bible examples of that group—Enoch and Elijah. But except for these two and the 144,000, not one of us will escape the first death. The truth is, there is one death that everyone in heaven must experience while they are still on this earth—death to self.

Physical death is the consequence of being sinful, which we are by nature. But death to self is the spiritual necessity if we are to spend eternity in heaven, and definitely if it is our desire to be one of the 144,000. This life is only a time of preparation. If I want to see Jesus, then I must do the work of being made ready now, and it must be done here. There is no second chance. Preparation for heaven is our earthwork.

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” *Messages to Young People*, 157

“You must experience a death to self, and must live unto God. ‘If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.’ Self is not to be consulted. Pride, self-love, selfishness, avarice, covetousness, love of the world, hatred, suspicion, jealousy, evil surmisings, must all be subdued and sacrificed forever. When Christ shall appear,

it will not be to correct these evils and then give a moral fitness for His coming. This preparation must all be made before He comes. It should be a subject of thought, of study, and earnest inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? What shall be our conduct that we may show ourselves approved of God? ...

“Only the faultless will be there [before the throne of God]. None will be translated to heaven while their hearts are filled with the rubbish of earth. Every defect in the moral character must first be remedied, every stain removed by the cleansing blood of Christ, and all the unlovely, unlovable traits of character overcome.” *Maranatha*, 58

So, what is the purpose of this life? Dying to self. In dying, I reject the world and all its evils and temptations, and in doing so, my selfish nature is cleansed of every stain, and my character is transformed to be like Christ’s. Death to self is the most important experience through which I must pass, and becoming Christlike is the sure result of the daily experience of dying to self.

“There are those who for a time are successful in the struggle against their selfish desire for pleasure and ease. They are sincere and earnest, but grow weary of protracted effort, of daily death, of ceaseless turmoil. Indolence seems inviting, death to self repulsive; and they close their drowsy eyes, and fall under the power of temptation instead of resisting it.

“The directions laid down in the word of God leave no room for compromise with evil. The Son of God was manifested that He might draw all men unto Himself. He came not to lull the world to sleep, but to point out the narrow path in which all must travel who reach at last the gates of the city of God. His children must follow where He has led the way; at whatever sacrifice of ease or selfish indulgence, at whatever cost of labor or suffering, they must maintain a constant battle with self.” *Gospel Workers*, 135

“True conviction of sin, real heart sorrow because of wickedness, death to self, the daily overcoming of defects of character, and the new birth—these, represented as old things, Paul says had passed away, and all things had become new.” *Our Father Cares*, 300, 301

“He who has an obedient heart, that is ready to do the will of God, will not only gladly receive truth, but will earnestly seek for truth as for hidden treasure. He will come to the Scriptures with a humble and teachable spirit, seeking to understand how he may walk in the light, and saying, ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’ (Acts 9:6). He is ready to sacrifice anything and everything, if required, in order that he may be in harmony with the will of God.

“It is not always an easy matter to render obedience to the will of God. It demands firmness of purpose to enter in at the strait gate and to travel in the narrow path that leads to eternal life . . . There is not room to enter in at the strait gate and carry the things of this world along.

“He who would enter in at the strait gate must make an entire consecration of his all to God.” *Ye Shall Receive Power*, 110

So, the next time you hear yourself saying, “I am so ready for Jesus to come,” look closely at your heart’s desires, listen to what you say, and pay attention to what you think and do. You may not be as ready for that day to come as your statement suggests.

“Since we know not the hour of Christ’s coming, we must live soberly and godly in this present world, ‘Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’” *Reflecting Christ*, 258

“We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day.

“By the exercise of living faith today, we are to conquer the enemy. We must today seek God, and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us.



“If you are right with God today, you are ready if Christ should come today.” *The Faith I Live By*, 249

Friend, today is the day of our salvation. Today, we must surrender ourselves—body, soul, mind, and spirit—to the One who makes us ready to dwell with Him for eternity. We must not simply want to go; we must now prepare to go.

“The heart of God never yearned toward His earthly children with deeper love and more compassionate tenderness than now. There never was a time when God was ready and waiting to do more for His people than now. And He will instruct and save all who choose to be saved in His appointed way. Those who are spiritual can discern spiritual things and see tokens of the presence and work of God everywhere.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 455

“Sanctification is not the work of a day or a year, but of a lifetime. Without continual efforts and constant endeavor, there can be no real advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor’s crown.” *The Southern Watchman*, January 17, 1905

“The voice of the angel seems to ring in my ears . . . Get ready, get ready, get

ready, lest ye be weighed in the balance and found wanting.” *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 6, 253

“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.” Romans 13:11

“Therefore you also be ready . . .”

Luke 12:40, *first part*

“No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.

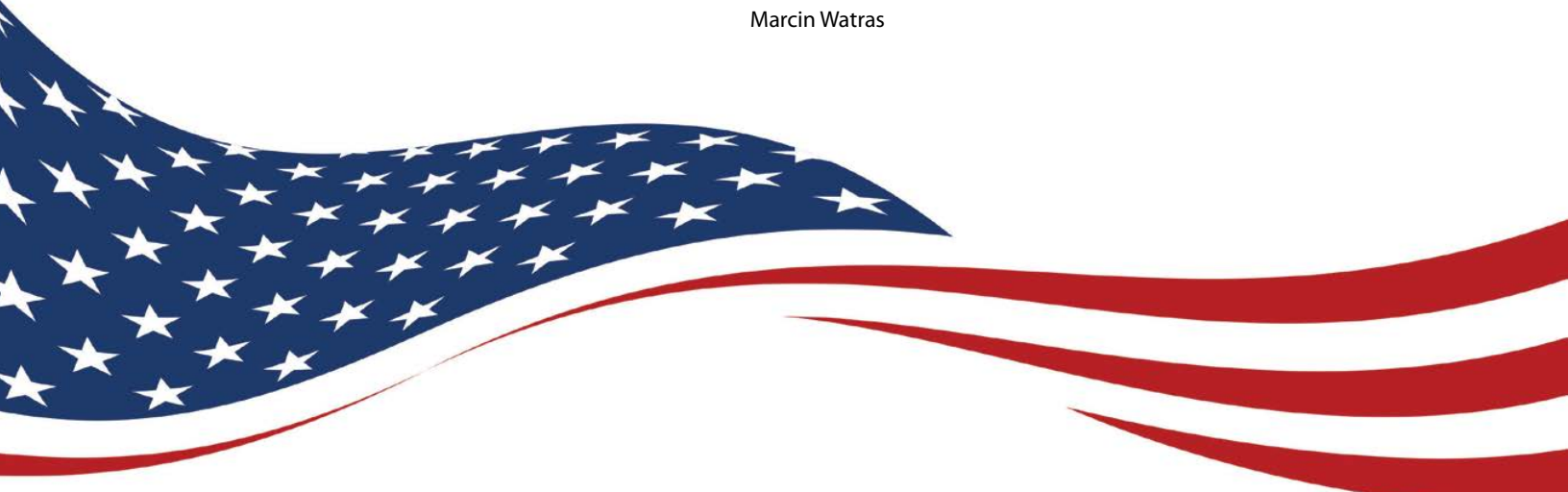
“It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore, there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 159, 160

Let this be our prayer. Let our work during these closing hours of earth’s history be “to make a heart and a life surrender” (*The Upward Look*, 289), letting the old man die so that a complete change of character can occur in our lives. May we truly be made ready for Jesus to come, to at last hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” **LM**

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The Christian America Project 2.0

Marcin Watras



In the previous two articles on issues related to the separation of church and state, we traced the history of the formation of the idea of the great separation and the threats posed to it by human nature and contemporary global trends in politics, society, and religion. In this article, I would like to look at selected historical and contemporary examples of the crumbling of the wall separating church and state.

A brief history of religious freedom in the Roman Empire

In the November issue of *LandMarks*, I wrote that man's age-old thinking about politics is political theology, that is, politics as a sphere of social life regulated by religion. From its beginnings, Christianity has stood in steadfast opposition to the pagan world, a world that requires conversion and lives under the rule of demonic supremacy. Therefore, Christians have sought to maintain a biblical separation from the pagan world, not accepting the relationship between light and darkness. To put it another way, Christians did not think about political theology. However, in the fourth century, an epochal change occurred. Emperor Constantine created a new world order.

In 313, the Edict of Milan was promulgated jointly by the emperor of the western part of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great, and the emperor of the eastern part, Licinius. The promulgation of this document established religious freedom in the Roman Empire because the imperial document was not merely tolerant but expressed the idea of religious freedom based on the belief that true faith and worship could not come from coercion. Until then, Christianity had been an illegal and persecuted religion, but from then on, Christianity became a legal religion and, more specifically, was legally equated with other religions of the Roman Empire.¹

Certainly, the religious freedom brought about by the promulgation of the Edict of Milan was extremely valuable and good. What is worth noting is that religious freedom was something unusual in the ancient world, something unprecedented. The Edict of Milan was promulgated not in the vacuum of socio-religious life but in the specific religious and political context of the ancient world. This context assumes a symbiotic relationship between religion and politics, creating a homogeneous social system in which religion and the state are mutually supportive. The Edict



Christians had to flee to the mountains to remain free from persecution.

of Milan did not fit into such a world. It is also clear that Christianity, with its religious-political dualism, i.e., the professed principle of separation of religion and politics, in line with Jesus' words on paying taxes: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21), did not fit the pagan world of the time. "In the ancient states, political purpose was equated with religious purpose and political power with religious power. The monarch was both ruler of the state and high priest."²

Beginnings of the union of church and state

Christians now had to choose to transform and overcome the prevailing pagan principle of the union of religion and state or to submit completely to this principle. Unfortunately, Christianity chose the second option. Within a relatively short period of time, after the edict was issued, the Christian Church merged with state power, using the state's coercion to enforce what it considered to be orthodoxy and exterminate what it considered to be heresy.

The birth of the Christian state

In 380 A.D., Emperor Theodosius issued the Thessalonian Edict, which established Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire.³ The church gained influence over the state, but the state also gained influence over the church. The balance of gains and losses of the union of church and state seemed unequivocally positive but led to the greatest deviation in Christianity. Christians, led by church leaders, adapted very quickly and very easily to the new order of things, recognizing in it the restoration of God's theocratic covenant with Israel. Christian dissidents who did not benefit from this union were persecuted by the state and established Catholicism.⁴

Thus was born a political-religious alliance, its roots dating back to the Tower of Babel, which would later develop into a power that would usher in a theocratic totalitarian system in medieval Europe, bloodily persecuting all opposition. The Bible calls this political-religious power the beast. Nimrod founded the world's first empire in which religion and the state were one.⁵

Christian inspired legislation

The construction of a new political-religious system was highly promising, and it may have seemed that Christianity had achieved a transformation in the cruel and decadent pagan culture of the Roman Empire, influencing the state to make legal and social changes.

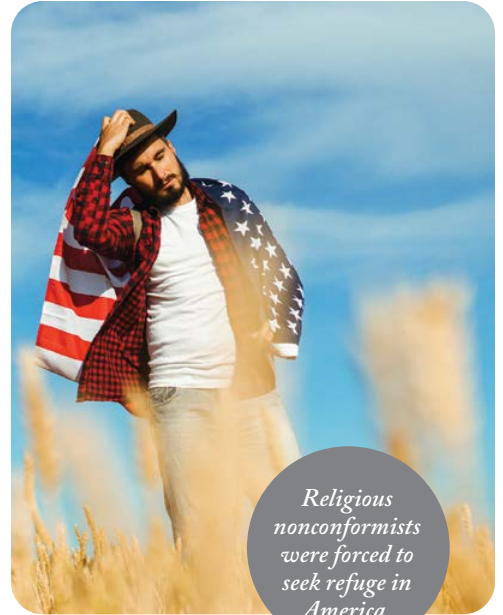
The Roman state passed many Church-inspired laws: the abolishment of crucifixion as a punishment, the elimination of bloody gladiatorial performances, and banned other cruel rituals. The state abolished the burning of birthmarks on the faces of slaves, and their liberation was encouraged. Pro-family laws emerged: the prohibition of abortion, adultery, and concubinage, restrictions regarding divorce, and assistance for widows and orphans. In addition, the emperor ordered soldiers to say public prayers on Sunday, supported the Church's finances, placed Christian symbols in public places, and legally sanctioned Sunday, banning work on that day.⁶

Initially, the Edict of Milan by Emperor Constantine granted everyone the freedom to practice their religion according to their conscience, but later the Edict of Thessalonica by Emperor Theodosius established Christianity as the state religion, thereby invalidating the right to practice religion according to one's conscience.

However, morality and religion imposed by state laws never lead to a true renewal of the heart. Religious legislation resulted in intolerance, and it didn't take long before using state coercion to enforce religious laws was established. In short order came persecution—first of non-Christians, and later of Christians who disagreed with the official Church in something. Finally, Pope Leo I sanctioned the death penalty for heresy in the fifth heresy.⁷ Only those Christians who led lives in desolate places where the power of the imperial might of papal Rome did not reach remained free from persecution.

“

Morality and religion imposed by state laws never lead to a true renewal of the heart.



Christian America before the Constitution

We should note that Protestantism has also proved vulnerable to the temptation to use state coercion in matters of faith. Political theology is written into human sinful nature more strongly than we may think. Yes, the Reformation brought to the world the extraordinary light of God's truth, progress, and much good for humanity. However, it did not abolish the church-state connection in Europe, which was the root cause of intolerance and lack of freedom of conscience and speech. Anabaptists, persecuted by both Catholics and most Protestants, were among the few Protestants who denied the church-state connection.⁸

A historical example is the Anglican Church's persecution of dissenters. During the 16th and 17th centuries, thousands of religious nonconformists were forced to seek refuge on the American continent. Many of those who failed to escape were imprisoned, tortured, and killed. Therefore, America is referred to in Revelation as the "land" that came to the aid of God's people (Revelation 12:15, 16). Here, we find another paradox of history, which is not a paradox but a confirmation that the mentality of people operating in terms of political theology is extremely difficult to eradicate. The same

people who found refuge from religious persecution in Europe on American soil persecuted Christian minorities, such as Baptists and Quakers.⁹

The lack of separation of church and state in America caused Protestant newcomers, mainly Puritans, to try to transfer the model of church-state relations to American soil. How oppressive and tyrannical a social system can be when the church influences politics is shown by the example of religious laws introduced in the state of Virginia in 1610; of particular interest is the law on the observance of the so-called Christian Sabbath, or Sunday: “Every man and woman shall repair in the morning to the divine service and sermons preached upon the Sabbath day, and in the afternoon to divine service, and catechising, upon pain for the first fault to lose their provision and the allowance for the whole week following; for the second, to lose the said allowance and also be whipped; and for the third to suffer death.”¹⁰

The Christian America Project

Just as in the days of the Roman Empire, the church, through its influence on politics, sought the moral renewal of the empire, so today, the religious right in the U.S. is influencing politics and the government to enact legislation that the Christian right believes will halt the moral decline of the American people and lead to their moral renewal.

Social barometer—the Supreme Court

In relation to the wall of separation of church and state, a peculiar barometer of changes is taking place in politics, society, and religion. This barometer is the Supreme Court of the United States and its decisions because “the responsibility for interpreting American constitutional principles lies precisely with the Supreme Court, its jurisprudence clarifies the understanding of all principles, including those relating to religious



freedom. The endless number of new doubts related to the interpretation of constitutional principles also allows the Supreme Court’s jurisprudence to admit a certain amount of dynamism. It is all the greater because this institution is not an interpretive monolith, but a place where different positions and opinions clash. An example of such divergence is precisely the coexistence in the Supreme Court of different positions on the assessment of the degree of separation of state and church between supporters of strict separation and supporters of symbiosis of the spheres of politics and religion, allowing the state to adapt, in a certain way, to the religious needs of citizens. The problem of the degree of separation of church and state is often an issue of public debate, in which the opinion of the Supreme Court is treated as conclusive.”¹¹

The role of the President of the United States

However, let us remember that the Supreme Court does not operate in a vacuum. The President of the United

States has a fundamental influence on public opinion on this issue, and his attitude, both formal and informal, to religious freedom and the social role of churches, has repeatedly set the boundaries of the separation of state and church.¹²

If the influence on the understanding of the separation of church and state becomes a question not of constitutional guarantees but more of the will of the majority, then we have a problem that threatens the very existence of the separation of state and church. A democratic majority elects the President, and the President appoints certain judges whose ideological profile agrees with the ideological profile of the democratic majority. The Supreme Court, structured in this way, then decides the degree of separation of church and state by a majority vote. We must then ask: Is the United States a democracy, ruled by a majority, or is it a constitutional republic, in which it is decided not only by the electoral vote of the people but also by constitutional principles that stand above the current majority?

Pro-religious Supreme Court of a global superpower

We certainly are living in perilous times for the idea of separation of church and state, for the Supreme Court, in which conservatives are in the majority, in a series of recent rulings, has undermined this wall of separation, thus undermining American legal traditions designed to prevent government officials from promoting any particular faith.¹³

Conservative judges appointed by President Donald Trump seek to minimize the impact of President Jefferson's separation wall. In three 2022 cases, the court backed a Washington State soccer coach who officials suspended for leading a Christian prayer with players after a game. Using the doctrine of free speech and the right to the free exercise of religion, the judges found that the coach had the right as a citizen to lead the post-game prayer. In addition, the judges approved taxpayer money for students to attend religious schools in rural areas without public high schools nearby. Finally, the Supreme Court overturned the City of Boston's decision to remove a flag with a cross from the front of City Hall. In that case, too, the right to free speech and the right to the free exercise of religion provided the basis for supporting the display of the flag on public property. Currently, the conservative majority on the Supreme Court supports the trend of linking free speech to religiously motivated activities.¹⁴

However, as Judge Sonia Sotomayor, quoted by Reuters, accurately noted, such

an approach "brings us to a place where the separation of church and state becomes a violation of the Constitution."¹⁵

Now let's take a look at the composition of the Supreme Court, because something is very wrong here. "The current Court consists of six conservative Catholics in the majority: Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Thomas, Alito, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Barrett, as well as a liberal Catholic (Justice Sotomayor), a Jew (Justice Kagan) and a Protestant (Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson)."¹⁶

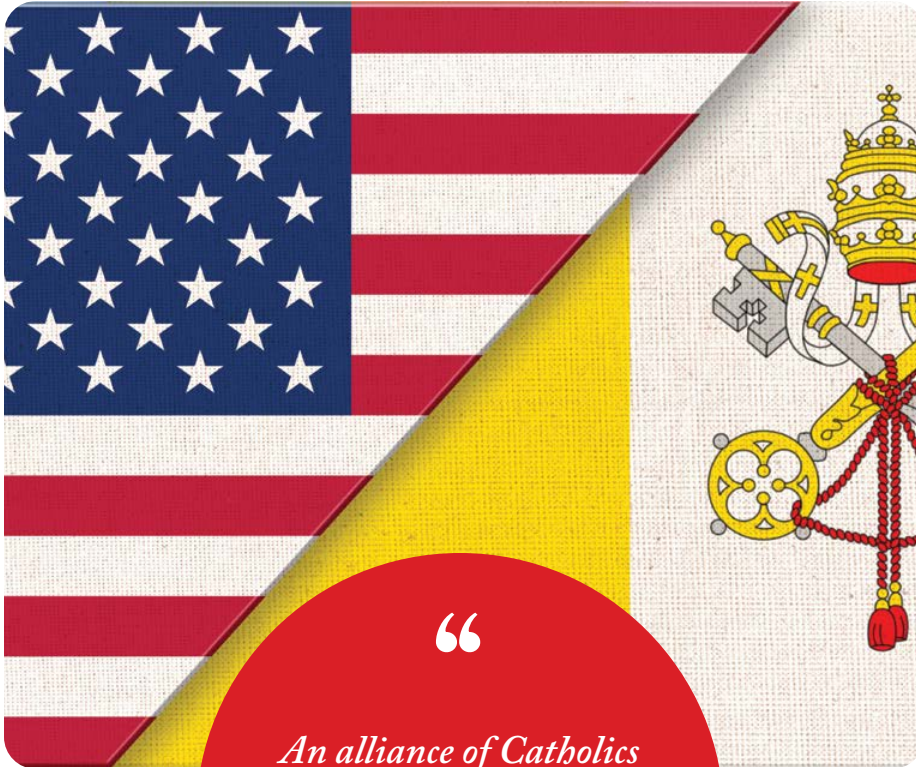
These decisions of the Supreme Court in a country with hundreds of different faiths are alarming and puzzling. The Supreme Court now has a majority of Catholic justices who will be able to advance their interests and political-religious agenda. This was not an accident but a deliberate, planned action. Random events do not exist in big politics, and it is all the more frightening because, as Ellen White noted: "The Roman Catholic Church, with all its ramifications throughout the world, forms one vast organization under the control, and designed to serve the interests, of the papal see. Its millions of communicants, in every country on the globe, are instructed to hold themselves as bound in allegiance to the pope. Whatever their nationality or their government, they are to regard the authority of the church as above all others. Though they may take the oath pledging their loyalty to the state, yet back of this lies the vow of obedience to Rome, absolving them from every pledge inimical to her interests."¹⁷

Pro-religious President of global superpower

President Donald Trump believes he received miraculous divine protection during a near-fatal attack in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, 2024.¹⁸ In other words, President Trump feels anointed by God to play a historical role and repay the debt of gratitude for saving his life by divine intervention on the day of the assassination attempt. How can such a debt be repaid? If only by implementing a Christian-nationalist agenda allowing churches to participate in power, giving Christians a privileged position in the country, and thus disregarding the separation



The United States still upholds religious freedom and the separation of church and state. However, history does not stand still.



of church and state. This is what the Christian right wants, and this is what President Trump promised at the National Religious Broadcasters annual meeting in Nashville on February 22, 2024, attended by leaders of the largest evangelical communications media. "If I get in, you're going to be using that power at a level that you've never used before."¹⁹ He continued: "I really believe it's the biggest thing missing from this country, the biggest thing missing. We have to bring back our religion. We have to bring back Christianity in this country."²⁰

The horizon of prophetic time

Under these conditions, the majority of Christian churches in the U.S. will gain influence similar to that which the churches held over the government in the days of Constantine the Great. Then,

An alliance of Catholics and Protestants will use the state's authority to implement a religious agenda. This is the future.

an alliance of Catholics and Protestants will use the state's authority to implement a religious agenda, just as in the Middle Ages. This is the future. The U.S. still upholds religious freedom and the separation of church and state. However, history does not stand still. Current societal trends, Christianity, and politics are causing the eschatological perspective to accelerate sharply. The wall that separates church and state stands, but we must fervently defend it. In the dynamically changing world around us, let us be vigilant. Let us prudently read the signs of the times and be ready to bear witness to truth and freedom.

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- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 54–75
- ⁷ Jonatan Dunkel, *Apokalipsa*, publishing house Orion plus 2001, p. 93
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85
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- ¹⁰ Articles, Lawes, and Orders, Divine, Politique, and Martiall for the Colony of Virginea, in William Strachey, *For the Colony in Virginea Britannia: Lawes, Divine, Morall, and Martiall*, etc. (London: Walter Barre, 1612), 1–7, 19, from the website: www.religioninamerica.org/rahp_objects/excerpts-of-colonial-laws-related-to-religious-establishment-and-toleration/, accessibility: 01.12.2025
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Siddi's Secret

The tinkle of her father's sheep bells awoke Siddi. Usually she smiled and closed her eyes for another few minutes of sleep, but not this morning.



Last night her father had told her, “Siddi, you will have to herd the sheep by yourself tomorrow. I have to go to the village for our supplies, and the herd boy cannot come.”

This news had pleased Siddi. In the country of India, where she lived, the children often herded goats and sheep. Siddi’s father had never allowed her to herd them by herself, but she was certain she could.

Springing out of bed, she dressed and hurried outside. “Little shepherdess, are you ready?” her father greeted her with a smile.

“Oh yes, Father,” Siddi answered.

“Then I’ll drive the sheep to the grazing grounds for you.” Father opened the gate and started the ewes and the lambs on the trail.

Siddi did not follow right away.

After a moment, her father called to her, “Siddi, are you not coming?” He saw her standing by the gate with her head bowed.

“Yes, Father,” she answered and ran to catch up. Siddi had a secret that she had never told her father. Her secret was that she believed in Jesus Christ.

Several months ago, her missionary friend Naomi had told her about Jesus, and every day now Siddi prayed to Him. She was certain her father would be angry if he knew. Often he had remarked, “Don’t forget, Siddi, to worship our gods.” But Siddi had learned better than to worship gods who can neither see nor hear.

As she skipped along on the trail with her father, she saw her friends Rajendra and Santha standing in their uncle’s garden. She knew they were beginning their task for the day. It was their job to chase away any birds or animals that came to eat the young vegetable plants.

“I would rather herd sheep than chase birds,” she told her father gaily.

“Would you?” smiled Father. “Why?”

Siddi wanted to say because Jesus had loved the baby lambs so much, but

she knew she couldn’t. Before she could think of an answer, her father turned onto another path. “Graze the sheep here this morning,” he said. “I should be back in the early part of the afternoon. Then we will drive them farther.”

“All right, Father,” Siddi said.

She gave her father a kiss and waved goodbye to him.

After he had gone so far down the trail that she could no longer see him, Siddi sat on a rock. For a while she watched the woolly lambs eat the tender green grass beside their mothers. Then she looked across the countryside.

Naomi had told her that India was a little like the land where Jesus had lived. She said the tamarind groves were once like the olive groves mentioned in the Bible. In the distance, Siddi saw some day lilies and a clump of balsams. I guess they are like the flowers that grew in Jesus’ land, she thought.

The sun grew hot. Siddi became sleepy, but she remembered to stay awake and watch the sheep.

She was still herding them in the grassy plain when she saw her father coming down the trail from the village. Forgetting the sheep for a moment, she raced to meet him.

Then a strange thing happened. Siddi heard a voice calling, “Go back, Siddi.”

Siddi slowed and looked at her father. He was smiling and waving to her. Surely he hadn’t told her to go back.

Again, Siddi started down the path. Again came the voice, “Go back, Siddi, go back!”

Puzzled, Siddi stopped once more. Who could be calling? There was no one but her father near. As she stood still, the voice spoke louder this time. “Siddi, go back to the sheep at once!”

Quickly Siddi turned to obey. As she did she caught sight of something

beside the path—the horrible flat head of a cobra!

Siddi ran as fast as she could. She did not see the poisonous snake strike, barely missing her, nor did she see her father destroy the snake.

She was still shaking from the experience when her father reached her.


“Oh, Siddi, if you hadn’t run when you did the snake would have killed you!” her father cried. “How did you ever see it in time?”

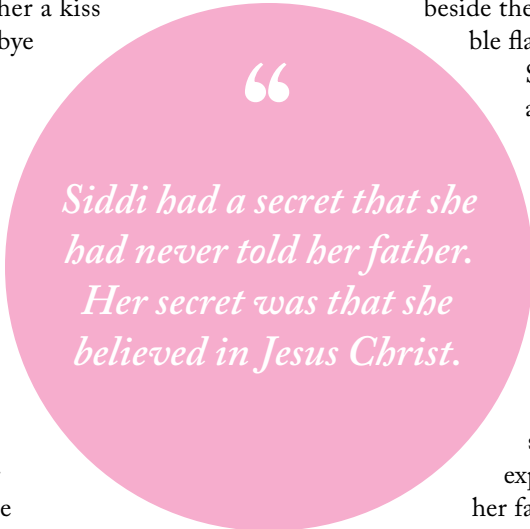
Siddi shook her head. She knew it had been one of Jesus’ angels who had warned her. She knew too, that she must tell her father her secret.

“I didn’t see the snake in time, Father,” she said. “Jesus sent an angel to tell me to turn back. My friend Naomi has taught me all about Jesus. Father, you must come to the meetings that Naomi’s father has and learn about Jesus too.”

For a moment Siddi’s father looked almost angry. Then his look softened as he put his arm around Siddi. “If Jesus has the power to save you from the cobra,” he said, “then I certainly must learn about Him.”

Learning about Jesus is no longer a secret in Siddi’s family. Both her father and her mother go with her to the Sabbath meetings.

Heaven, Please!, Helena Welch, ©1973, 76–79 



Living in the Day of Atonement

Clues – NKJV

Across

- B4 May you be preserved _____ at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 D5 Moses made an ark from _____ wood and hewed two tablets of stone. Deuteronomy 10:3
 D14 Abraham was justified when he offered Isaac his son on the _____. James 2:21
 G17 You induced me and I was _____. Jeremiah 20:7
 H2 Much study is _____ to the flesh. Ecclesiastes 12:12
 H12 My sheep _____ My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. John 10:27
 I19 Let us _____ to go and pray before the Lord and seek Him. Zechariah 8:21
 L2 _____ us what we shall do for the child. Judges 13:8
 M8 My speech and preaching were a _____ of the Spirit and of power. 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5
 O2 Do not present your members as _____ of unrighteousness to sin. Romans 6:13
 Q6 Be _____ then, you children of Zion. Joel 2:23
 Q11 Whatever is _____, just and pure, meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8
 R18 This is the _____ that I will make with the house of Israel. Hebrews 8:10
 T6 To not rule your spirit is like a city _____ down. Proverbs 25:28
 T16 I saw another angel _____ from the east. Revelation 7:2
 U14 Give _____ to Me for law will proceed from Me. Isaiah 51:4
 V20 Be ready in and out of _____. 2 Timothy 4:2
 W2 Trust in the Lord forever, for YAH, the Lord, is _____ strength. Isaiah 26:4
 X14 Behind the second veil was the _____ of all. Hebrews 9:3
 Y5 _____ to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business. 1 Thessalonians 4:11

Down

- A8 God who is rich in _____ made us alive together with Christ. Ephesians 2:4, 5
 B6 The Lord repays man _____ to his work. Job 34:11
 B12 All moan _____ like doves looking for justice, but there is none. Isaiah 59:11
 B18 Let us _____ the knowledge of the Lord. Hosea 6:3
 B23 We are _____ with Him through baptism. Romans 6:4
 C2 Surely goodness and mercy shall _____ me all the days of my life. Psalm 23:6
 C20 You are still carnal when there are envy, strife, and _____ among you. 1 Corinthians 3:3
 E4 People shall come, _____ of many cities. Zechariah 8:20
 F15 No _____ has eternal life abiding in him. 1 John 3:15
 G10 He _____ the hand of every man, that all men may know His work. Job 37:7
 G17 Be _____ joined together in the same mind and judgment. 1 Corinthians 1:10
 H12 Set your minds on things above; your life is _____ with Christ in God. Colossians 3:2, 3
 J8 There is now no _____ to those who are in Christ. Romans 8:1
 K22 He calls to me out of Seir, _____ what of the night? Isaiah 21:11
 K24 The word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and _____ daily. Jeremiah 20:8
 M19 He who _____ shall be clothed in white garments. Revelation 3:5
 N2 I am the true vine, and my Father is the _____. John 15:1
 P14 Looking for the _____ hope. Titus 2:13
 R4 Do not correct a _____ lest he hate you. Proverbs 9:8
 R16 Whatever you do, do it _____ as to the Lord. Colossians 3:23
 T24 Christ raised from the dead by the _____ of the Father. Romans 6:4
 U12 Arise, shine, for your _____ is come. Isaiah 60:1
 V7 The commandment is a _____, and the law a light. Proverbs 6:23

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Answer Key:

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Christ's Followers the Light of the World

So far as human sympathy was concerned, Christ was as though alone in our world. His nearest friends and relatives did not understand Him. They could not understand the nature of the kingdom of which He spoke, nor comprehend the vastness of that love which embraced humanity.

His knowledge extended, not only to this world, but to the future, unseen world. He had lived in eternal light in the heavenly courts, and was one with the Father, but in the world which He had created, He was in solitude.



Fallen men, in one sense, could not be companions for Christ, for they could not enter into sympathy with His divine nature, and hold communion with the world's Redeemer. When woe, and want, and suffering demanded His help, they found relief; for human suffering ever touched a responsive chord in the Saviour's heart. His work was to elevate men through His condescension, through His lessons of instruction, and by means of His example, lifting them heavenward by the might of His divine power. But companions He had none upon earth. He was fully understood in heaven alone.

After the toils of the day, the Redeemer of the world was frequently found all night in prayer. Crowds throng Him through the day so that He has not a moment for rest or prayer. The fame of His work and of His wonderful teachings brought vast multitudes from all the region round about, not only to listen to His life-giving words, but to receive power from Him that they might be healed of their maladies. All are eager to receive His first attention.

Some ply Him with questions to gratify their curiosity, some to show their aptness and learning; and the jealous, caviling Pharisees watch to find some pretext to denounce Him as an impostor. Some selfishly think that they may be advantaged by His great knowledge, and receive help in their personal difficulties, while others, hungering and thirsting for clearer light, and a better knowledge of the true way, humbly listen as for their lives, drinking in every word that falls from the Master's lips.

The restless throng sways to and fro, as some are continually coming and striving to press nearer, while others are passing away with greater zeal in their own worldly interests than in the words of eternal life.

The suffering ones call for His sympathy, the feeble, the distorted, the decrepit, the blind, and the palsied, all turn imploringly to Him, and faint voices

plead earnestly for help. The crowd is so dense it seems impossible to urge a passage to Christ, and hope almost dies out of some hearts. They fear their chance will come too late, for they feel that life is fast ebbing. Can they reach the mighty Healer through the dense masses before it is too late?

But not one passes from His presence unrelieved. He repulses none, but speaks kindly and patiently with all, and in clear, calm, earnest tones He utters the truths that search to the very souls of His hearers. He is often interrupted with the cry of the demoniac, and the suffering and dying ones are urged through the crowd and laid at His feet.

His disciples see the pressure of care and burdens upon the Master, and decide that they must interfere and draw Him away from the crowd. They invite Him to find rest from His physical weariness before He shall faint with exhaustion. But Jesus continues His work notwithstanding the urgency of His disciples to draw Him away for refreshment and rest. They say one to another, He must be beside Himself to continue this taxing labor longer. They think that force will have to be used to save His life. He has not had sleep, or food, or a moment's repose. He makes His way toward the sea-shore, and the surging crowd urge Him to the very water's edge. He beckons to Peter to receive Him in his boat, and there upon the swaying seat of a fisherman's boat He teaches His disciples upon the shore.

When the sun was set, and the night came on, and the people had dispersed to their homes, the disciples felt relieved.

They felt sure that the Master would rest in some quiet home, and they would have Him a little period all to themselves; but they were disappointed. Worn, weary, and faint as He was, He would not consent to go with them to seek refreshment or repose. He

dismissed His disciples, and would not allow them to accompany Him, but repaired to the solitary mountains, telling them where they may meet Him in the morning. All night He must be alone in the mountain sanctuary with His God. All night He spent in prayer, pouring out His soul with strong crying and tears, not because He had sins to confess, or to bring remorse to His heart, not because He had troubles of His own to be relieved. A world in the darkness of error is weighing upon His soul, and while it sleeps in security He prays that it may not perish in its sin and impenitence. Thus passed the night, and when nature's choristers tuned their songs of praise in the early morning, Christ was prepared for the day of active, earnest work.

The day after the scene at Capernaum was to be one of great importance. The memorable sermon upon the mount was to be given to His disciples, and so come down through the ages to us. The day before He had not place sufficiently large to accommodate the people, and had taken His seat in Peter's boat to address the people on the shore. This day He led the people to the high table-land overlooking the lake, where the tall grass was waving in the breeze, and wild flowers bloomed in rich profusion of beauty and variety at their feet, and nature was clothed in her most beautiful garments. Yonder were sharp mountain peaks out-

“
Christ's work was to elevate men through His condescension, through His lessons of instruction, and by means of His example.



Divinity flashed through humanity as the deep and earnest words of eternal life were spoken.

lined against the sky, bearing testimony to the majesty and power of God in His created works.

Christ seated Himself upon an eminence, while the people gathered on the large grassy plain at its foot. The place was well chosen for the discourse. The sun had not yet appeared above the mountains; the incense of flowers perfumed the air, and the singing birds seemed to attune their songs responsive to the words uttered by the God of nature to impress souls with the truths falling from His divine lips.

The contrast of this morning's scene with that of Sinai was marked. Then the millions of people gathered before the mountain whose lofty peaks seemed to reach to the very heavens. The lightnings flashed, and the groaning, muttering thunders, like supernatural voices filled the air, and God's voice was heard in trumpet-like tones by all the congregation. Moses was commanded to come up and talk with God. He obeyed the mandate, and climbed far up the solitary heights, and God talked with him. On the morning of the third day a thick cloud began to cover the mountain,

increasing in denseness every moment, while its billowy form surged violently. The earth shook and trembled as if convulsed, and the thunder peals were caught up in reverberations from peak to peak, far and near. The stately tread of the Lord Jehovah and of His Son was upon that mountain. At intervals, between the bursts of the thunder were sounds as of a trumpet swelling louder and louder till it rose above the war of the elements.

The people stood terror-stricken, every face pale as the dead, with eyes fixed in awe upon the fearful manifestations of the awful presence of God. Then was spoken amid flame and smoke the law of God. The people about the mount receded from its base in awe and fear. Their souls were overwhelmed with the grandeur and terrible majesty of the scene. They saw the two men go up amid the awful glory to receive the law from the lips of God. When Moses and Aaron again stood in their midst, the people implored them that the word of God might come to them through Moses, and not by the direct and terrible voice of God, lest they could not live.

"Fear not," said Moses, "for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." All the majesty of this scene was necessary to impress its solemnity upon the minds of the children of Israel, whose lives had been spent among the symbols and ceremonies of the Egyptian worship.

Christ, who had led the children of Israel in the wilderness, who revealed His majesty and spoke the law from Sinai, was now to define the principles of that law, which was to be carried out and exemplified in practical life. The multitude close about the great Teacher, interested and eager to catch every word that fall from His lips. Yet there are no grand and awful demonstrations on this occasion, as at Sinai. The beauties of nature in the luxuriant vegetation and adornment of flowers speak to the senses of the love of God in His created works.

There was no eloquence of words used in the lessons of Christ, no overdrawn language hiding the simple grandeur of the thought, nothing to bewilder the mind or mislead the imagination. The language was simple, the utterance slow and forcible, and the enunciation clear and distinct. God was speaking to the soul of man in kindness and love. The countenance of Christ beamed with the glory of heaven's light. His eyes expressed love and sympathy for man. Divinity flashed through humanity as the deep and earnest words of eternal life were spoken to the interested hearers.

The sun was climbing above the mountain tops, reflecting its bright beams upon the hills and mountains, distinctly revealing the cities upon their slopes.

"He pointed to the bright beams of the sun, saying impressively, 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. ... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'" *The Signs of the Times*, December 11, 1879 [LM](#)

Predestined or Predestined

We are predestined to be saved because God created us to be His children. Sin and the separation it brings, had no place in His creation.

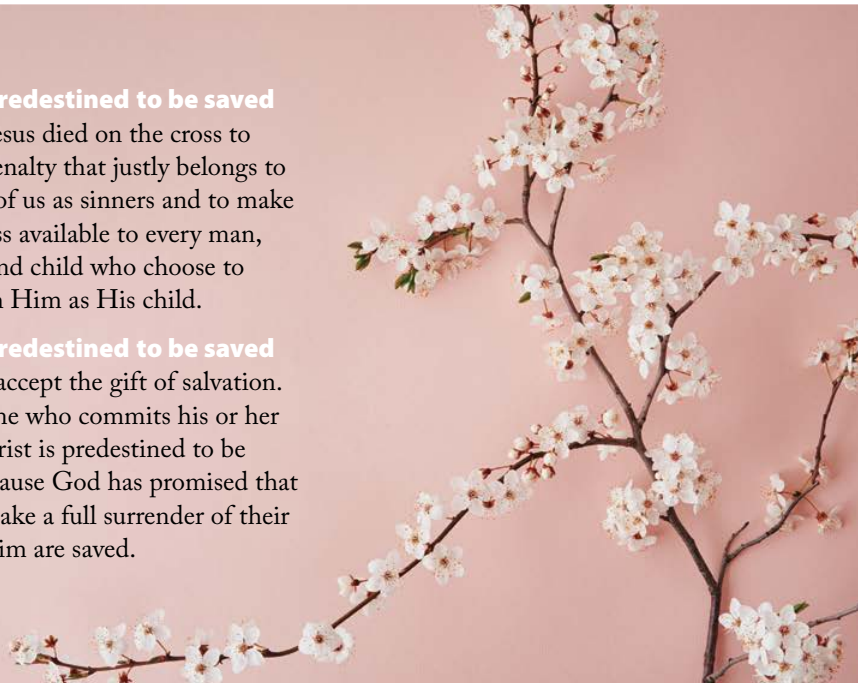
We are predestined to be saved because God formulated a plan so that if man exercised his free will and chose to love and serve another, there would be a way to bring him back.

We are predestined to be saved because Jesus came to this world to live the life that would restore us to the condition of holiness and righteousness that is necessary to live in the presence of Almighty God.

We are predestined to be saved because Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty that justly belongs to each one of us as sinners and to make forgiveness available to every man, woman, and child who choose to unite with Him as His child.

We are predestined to be saved when we accept the gift of salvation.

Everyone who commits his or her life to Christ is predestined to be saved, because God has promised that all who make a full surrender of their lives to Him are saved.



We are not predestined because God has a naughty or nice list on which He places a check mark by my name or your name and, regardless of our life, saves us while others on the list are left behind.

God has provided salvation through His Son, and when we accept that salvation and allow the Holy Spirit to transform us to be, once again, holy and righteous, then we become a part of His people, His church, all of whom are predestined to be saved by virtue of their acceptance of salvation and obedience to God's law.

"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame

before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself" Ephesians 1:4, 5, *first part*

"These promises are not made to a few, but to all who will come to the heavenly banquet that God has prepared by sending His Son to our world to die in our behalf, that through faith in Him, we should become one with God. ...

The predestination of which God speaks includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God's commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God from among men. All who are will-

ing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 6, 388

God gives me the ability to reject His offer of salvation, but if I do not reject salvation, if I seek to develop a Christlike character, then I am predestined to be saved.

"The struggle is lifelong and the victory is certain. Every soul who has Christ abiding in him ... will maintain a noble spirit, after the holy example of Christ. He will represent Christ's character, maintaining integrity, purity, and holiness." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 938, 939 [LM](#)

May 21-24

Speakers:

Pastor John Grosboll
Pastor Domingo Nunez
Evan Sadler
Dr. Heinrich Korinth

There will be meetings for the children and young people. Additional information will be provided in the May *LandMarks* and the May/June newsletter. The registration form will be in the May/June newsletter. Attendees will be responsible for making their own lodging arrangements.

Hotels near the Steps to Life campus:

Holiday Inn Express 4860 S. Laura St. Wichita, KS 316-558-8001	Super 8 4848 S. Laura St. Wichita, KS 316-448-8427
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May Sermon of the Month

Simon's Feast

Marshall J. Grosboll

Joy or hatred. Crucifixion or crowning. The people wanted Jesus to be their king. The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted Him gone. But what was Jesus really doing just one week before His crucifixion?

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

May 2025

Dear Friend,

Have you ever been in trouble that seemed like it would go on forever? If you have, were you tempted to become discouraged?

Many years ago, I had emergency surgery and afterwards developed serious complications. Because of the complications, the pain and the fevers seemed to never go away, and I began to feel dispirited. However, a woman much older than myself visited me. This unfortunate woman had endured 14 surgeries, but she was cheerful with a positive mental attitude, continually praising the Lord. Her optimism had a very positive effect upon my mind.

Do you know someone who is in real trouble—health, financial, marriage troubles, troubles at home, troubles on the job? What can you do to witness for the Lord and help this person? Here are some ideas from Inspiration.

“Our confession of His faithfulness is heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. . . . These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power, that works for the salvation of souls.” *The Desire of Ages*, 347

“To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a duty as is prayer. We are to show to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we appreciate the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity, and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. . . . After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children. These exercises drive back the power of Satan. They expel the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions. Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 299, 300

Your brother in soul-winning endeavors,



Pastor John J. Grosboll

Louisa M.R. Stead was born in England in 1850. As a young girl, she wanted to be a missionary. At 21, she immigrated to America, living in Cincinnati, Ohio. While attending a camp meeting in Urbana, Ohio, her desire to be a missionary grew, and her ambitions to serve in China sadly were dashed because of her frail health.

In 1875, Louisa married George Stead and moved to New York City. One summer day in 1880, Louisa and her husband, George, took their daughter Lily to Long Island Sound for a picnic. While enjoying the day by the seashore, they heard cries for help from a young boy struggling against the tide offshore. Without hesitation, George plunged into the water to save him.

But as Louisa and Lily watched from the shore, both George and the boy drowned. In those darkest days following her loss, and when grief was the most profound, Louisa turned to the one constant in her life: Jesus Christ.

As Louisa poured out her heart through prayer and tears, a divine inspiration began to stir within her soul, and the refrain of this beloved hymn was born. Through the words of this hymn, Louisa expressed her complete reliance on God's promises and found peace and solace as she trusted her Saviour to carry her through this trial, as He had throughout her life. William J. Kirkpatrick set the lyrics of *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus* to music, and the hymn became a beacon of hope for Louisa and Lily as they navigated their grief together and many others down through time.

The impact of the hymn is evident by its popularity and ability to touch hearts within churches across cultural barriers. It remains an enduring testament of unshakable faith amid sorrow and adversity. It serves as a reminder that we are never alone when we place our trust in our loving Saviour, as every Christian believer should.

As you sing or listen to this cherished hymn today, may you find strength and solace in knowing that you have a Saviour who loves you deeply and will carry you through every storm life brings your way.

Sources: hymncharts.com/2023/05/29/the-story-behind-tis-so-sweet-to-trust-in-jesus; Wikipedia.org/wiki/%27Tis_So_Sweet_to_Trust_in_Jesus



Louisa M. R. Stead
1850-1917

'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, "Thus says the Lord!"

O how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
Just in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.

I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Saviour, Friend;
And I know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more! **LM**

from the
Mission Fields



Santa Cruz is Bolivia's largest city of 1.3 million people.

God's Church in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Pastor Domingo Nunez

“Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent.

“The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.”

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 489



For more than a decade I have invited the different church groups in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to unite their efforts, talents, and spiritual gifts to spreading the three angels' messages throughout the city and surrounding areas.

Many of these groups have been exposed over the years to speakers who have come to Bolivia to present many different doctrines—false doctrines regarding the Godhead, women's ordination, keeping the feast days, and belonging to an organization means you are part of Babylon—and sadly, the growth of the gospel in Bolivia and especially in the city of Santa Cruz has been adversely affected by these preachers and their false preaching.

Many times, I have expressed to them the importance of an organized work in spreading gospel. And each time, I was given a noncommittal response. However, this year, they have expressed a strong desire to come together to go through every doctrine, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation that has been presented to them throughout the years.

We will set up meetings in the coming months during which everyone will

study and discuss, one by one, the items and concerns that have caused difficulty in organizing these groups based upon the New Testament gospel order. By God's grace, they will then be able to help each other through training Bible workers and medical missionaries, educating the groups in church organization, and individuals to be lay pastors and church leaders.

I ask that you will continue to support the church groups in Santa Cruz, that they will come to these meetings with open hearts and minds. Helping people to understand the differences between truth and error is challenging, and it is only by God's grace and mercy, and your continued support, that we can be committed and faithful to spreading God's word even in the face of the many winds of doctrine blowing through this world. It is our goal to see these brothers and sisters in Christ working together, using the talents given them by their Maker to become efficient instruments in the work of reaching souls for Christ in Bolivia and throughout South America.

When God called the children of Israel out of Egypt and chose them as His

peculiar people, He provided for them an impressive system of organization to govern their conduct in both civil and religious matters. We are told by the messenger of the Lord that, "The government of Israel, was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity.

"The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God's created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy. God was the center of authority and government, the sovereign of Israel. Moses stood as their visible leader, by God's appointment, to administer the laws in His name.

"From the elders of the tribes a council of seventy was afterward chosen to assist Moses in the general affairs of the nation. Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary. Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes. Under these were 'captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens,' and, lastly, officers who might be employed for special duties. Deuteronomy 1:15." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 374 (Read also Exodus 18:13–26.) [LM](#)

Cold Weather Effects on Nature

It is true that winter weather can have some negative effects in the environment, but it is also true that winter has positive—even necessary—effects in the environment.

“Snow affects people everywhere by cooling the Earth, supplying water for a variety of human uses, and sustaining healthy ecosystems, including fish and wildlife populations.”

Reflecting and Absorbing

On a sunny, snow-covered day the sun reflects off the bright white of snow. The heat and light coming from the sun is called radiation. The amount of radiation that is reflected from a material is called *albedo*, a Latin word meaning *white*. And what covers the Earth’s surface during winter with a whole lot of white and contains the greatest



amount of albedo? That's right, snow. New snow (the brightest and whitest) on the ground reflects up to 90% of the incoming radiation from the sun. The older and dirtier the snow, the less radiation it reflects.

The albedo is either absorbed by the earth or reflected back into the atmosphere. The more radiation the Earth absorbs, the warmer it becomes. But when snow covers the Earth's surface, the majority of the albedo is reflected back into the atmosphere instead of being absorbed into the earth, and thus, it keeps the planet cooler.

Water Supply

The more snow that falls the greater the melt when warmer temperatures arrive. This melting snow soon becomes the water that comes out of the faucet, it helps produce the food we eat, and supplies electricity. Melting snow is actually critical as a source of water for agriculture, electricity generation, and other industrial uses.

Agriculture

Winter is a tough time for farmers, but farmers are pretty tough, too. Despite the risk of frost, which can damage both crops and the soil, the farmer uses winter as an opportunity to prepare the land and make plans for the coming year's crops. They plant cold-resistant crops (i.e., garlic, carrots, spinach, lentils) using protective techniques to help mitigate the cold weather.

Winter time is the recommended time for applying compost or manure to the soil. This helps the soil to maintain its structure and fertility. To protect your winter crop from frost cover it with mesh or plastic or mulch. A light watering at the end of the day, before the temperatures drop to the point of frost, will help to keep the plants from freezing.

Source: agronoblog.com/agriculture/winter-and-its-impact-on-agriculture-a-guide-for-the-cold-season



Did You Know? If you live in the western U.S., there's a good chance that you brushed your teeth this morning with water that started out as millions of tiny snowflakes that fell in the mountains during the winter. The eastern U.S. enjoys sufficient year-round precipitation in the form of snow and rain. This provides a reliable source of water. The precipitation seeps through the soil into underground aquifers storing water until it is pumped out when needed.

Snowmelt supplies 75% of the water supply in the western states, and this is important because of the warmer temperatures particularly in the summer months. Melting snow is a slow process that begins in the spring and provides a steady flow of water.

Source: ourwinterworld.org/importance-of-snow



Did You Know? If you thought that winter would wipe out those pesky pests like fleas and ticks, you'll have to think again. Cold temperatures can kill some, but both fleas and ticks have gotten pretty good at surviving even a really cold, hard winter.

"If we had perpetual summer, we should not value as we do now its bright days and beautiful flowers. Through the winter months we look forward to the time when summer with its beauty will once more gladden the earth.

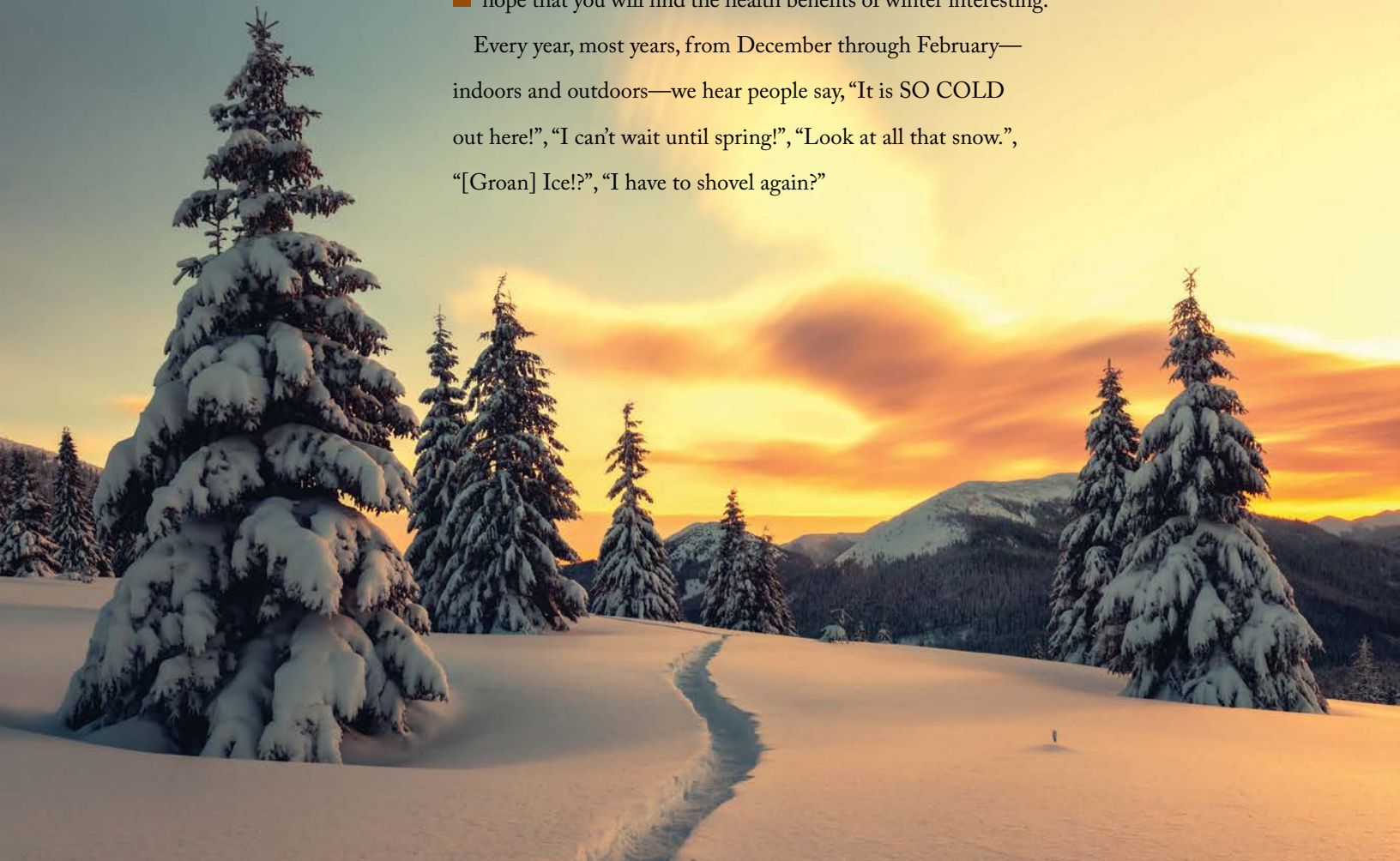
"So it is with the Christian life. ... Our sojourn here is as it were the Christian's winter. But our faith and hope reach forward and upward ... to the home that Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 18, 138 [LM](#)



The Health Benefits of Winter

It is May, and the cold of winter and coolness of spring are mostly behind us as we welcome the summer months ahead. It probably seems untimely to talk about winter in May, but I hope that you will find the health benefits of winter interesting.

Every year, most years, from December through February—indoors and outdoors—we hear people say, “It is SO COLD out here!”, “I can’t wait until spring!”, “Look at all that snow.”, “[Groan] Ice!?” , “I have to shovel again?”



We can think of many unpleasant things about winter—cold, ice, snow, shorter days and longer nights, shoveling, sand, salt, dirty cars, depression, the flu, heavy coats, gloves, ear muffs, boots. On the other hand, there are those who are very positive toward winter because they can ski, snowboard, sled, ice skate, and simply enjoy the colder temperatures because there are people who really like winter.

But does winter really offer actual health benefits? Let's take a look.

You Might be Smarter in Winter

Colder weather can help you think more clearly according to a 2017 study by Stanford University. The study found that some cognitive skills like decision-making and staying calm were performed with more control during colder weather. Study participants were less impulsive and were more likely to take on complex tasks in the winter than they would in the summer. The brain requires glucose to function and the body uses more glucose in the summer in order to keep its core temperature down, and it, therefore, has less for reasoning and recall.

Burn More

You burn more calories during cold weather because it takes a greater amount of energy to keep ourselves warm. Another American study in 2017 found that when the outside temperature hovered between 14° and 23° Fahrenheit, 34 percent more calories were burned while hiking than on a 50° day.

Do You Have Diabetes?

Exposure to mild cold temperatures will activate a diabetic's "brown fat." This is the tissue that produces heat and this helps to absorb excess sugar in the blood. Repeated exposure will lead to improved insulin sensitivity.

A 2017 study done by the University of Toronto found that pregnant women who were exposed to cold outdoor temperatures were less likely to develop gestational diabetes.



In the winter, we naturally sleep later.

Achoooo!

Tree, grass, and weed pollens are reduced during the cold months of the year, thereby reducing allergy symptoms. However, all good things have a bad tradeoff—if you're allergic to mold, that allergy can be worse in the cold.

Ahhhhh, Zzzzzz

When you lie down to sleep, your body's core temperature drops over the next two hours in the summer. However, it happens faster in the winter. And when sunrise is later, you naturally sleep later.

Infections, viruses, and colds, oh my!

It is true that during the winter months, we are more likely to become the victim of an infection or virus. But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we can energize our immune system with just a few minutes of exposure to frigid temperatures.

A Heart's Work is Never Done

The heart works harder during the cold months to pump blood and maintain body temperature during periods of physical exertion. Exercising outdoors in the winter strengthens the heart muscle. However, here is another tradeoff—be careful if you are at risk for heart disease. Exercising outdoors too much can also raise your blood pressure and decrease oxygen to the brain, and that puts added stress on the heart.

Layer After Layer

Layering is the key to staying warm and dry during your daily excursions outside. Hypothermia and frostbite can happen quickly when the temperature is frigid, so keeping as much of the body as you can shielded from the cold, you are less likely to have to worry about those conditions. Cold temperatures, strong winds, and damp conditions will steal your body heat. Layering traps your body heat and becomes a kind of insulation against the elements.

Did You Know? Because it gets wet so easily with sweat, rain, or snow, your first layer should not be cotton. The moisture will be trapped and you will feel colder and heavier. Use moisture wicking fabric (used in high-performance sportswear), then fleece, and then a thin waterproof layer.



What Can I Do?

Here are some suggestions for outdoor winter activities:

- Brisk walking or hiking
- Jogging or running
- Raking leaves
- Shoveling snow
- Ice skating
- Skiing
- Sledding
- Snowboarding
- Cross-country skiing

Am I Blue?

Because the days are shorter and nights are longer, and ice and snow can often keep us homebound for days at a time, it isn't surprising that we might experience depression. But exercising or even just standing on your front porch in the sunshine for a few minutes can improve your mood and help you take in vitamin D which is essential for our overall well-being, keeps our teeth and bones strong, and supports our immune system so that we might better fight off the infections and viruses (including Covid-19) that are more prevalent during the cold winter months. It also reduces inflammation, the risk of heart

disease and the growth of cancer cells, and it can even help you lose some of those extra holiday pounds.

Inspiration Says

We should follow the eight laws of health (pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, water, and trust in divine power) during the cold months just as much as we do during the warmer ones.

"True religion and the laws of health go hand in hand." *Lift Him Up*, 260

"I have been shown that a great amount of suffering might be saved if all would labor to prevent disease, by strictly obeying the laws of health. ... Many have expected that God would keep them from sickness merely because they have asked Him to do so. But God did not regard their prayers because their faith was not made perfect by works. God will not work a miracle to keep those from sickness who have no care for themselves, but are continually violating the laws of health, and make no effort to prevent disease. When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God

in faith to bless our efforts for the preservation of health. He will then answer our prayer, if His name can be glorified thereby. But let all understand that they have a work to do. God will not work in a miraculous manner to preserve the health of persons who are taking a sure course to make themselves sick, by their careless inattention to the laws of health.

"In order to preserve health, temperance in all things is necessary—temperance in labor, temperance in eating and drinking. ... The body, which God calls His temple, should be preserved in as healthy a condition as possible." *The Review and Herald*, April 2, 1914

"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Source: readersdigest.ca/health/healthy-living/cold-weather-good-for-you; heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/how-to-stay-active-in-cold-weather; healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/benefits-vitamin-d#may-support-weight-loss, accessibility: March, 2025 **LM**

All of These

How vast His grace
How great His faithfulness
How deep His love
How rich His mercy
How high His thoughts
How sure His wisdom
And all of these He gives to me.

How just His ways
How good His discipline
How pure His truth
How kind His goodness
How calm His peace
How long His patience
And all of these He gives to me.

How broad His power
How grand His majesty
How true His reign
How bright His glory
How strong His might
How clear His triumph
And all of these He gives to me.

So I will praise Him with every breath
For He has rescued me from certain death
And now this life I live, I live in Him
Oh let His glory shine
While mine grows dim.

Steve Pettit Evangelistic Team, © 2014



Wicked Imaginations

Pastor Ivan Plummer

“An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations.”

Proverbs 6:18, first part

There are seven deadly sins that God hates, and they are noticeably the spring from which all sin flows. However, it is a simple fact that too many people are not aware of the real issue which plagues us, that gives rise to our overt responses, dictates our actions, and molds our characters.

The children’s Sabbath School song still rings true.

“Watch your eyes, watch your eyes, what they see

“Watch your ears, watch your ears, what they hear

“Watch your lips, watch your lips, what they say

“Watch your hands, watch your hands, what they do

“Watch your feet, watch your feet, where they go

“For there’s a Father up above, looking down in tender love

“Watch your eyes, your ears, your lips, your hands, your feet.”



Interestingly, the song begins with the key entry points to our minds, our eyes and ears—what we see and what we hear, what Inspiration describes as “avenues of the soul.” Next it addresses what we say with our lips, do with our hands, and where our feet take us. This is a step-by-step process that begins with what we see and the internal reaction it invokes, coupled with what we hear, which causes us to say, do, and go. Our lips express what is in our minds (Luke 6:45), our hands are the instruments which perform what is in our soul, and our feet are the vehicles that transport us to where we need to go in order to fulfill what has been hatched in our minds.

Sadly, the majority of the time, the things which we look at and listen to are not wholesome and suitable for the formation of a moral and Christlike character! How important then that we guard mainly what we see and hear.

The Wisest Man

Solomon lays out a formula for the preservation of the mind.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” Proverbs 4:23–27

“A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.” Proverbs 16:9

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.” (*Nephesh*, in Hebrew means “heart, mind, soul, life, or the entirety or essence of a person”) Proverbs 23:7

“Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.” Proverbs 24:1, 2



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

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are [the things] which defile a man . . .” Matthew 15:18–20 (*Kardia*, the Greek word for heart used by Matthew in these passages, means “the thoughts or feelings, the mind.”)

“An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations.” Proverbs 6:18. This is the fourth deadly sin which God hates. According to the Hebrew, “wicked imaginations” literally means “thoughts of iniquity,” and all of this begins in the heart or the mind. Let us remember that there are evil thoughts in the minds of all human beings: but the devising, fabricating of

them, and thus making the mind into the devil’s workshop, is the mark of utter depravity and wickedness, and therefore is repugnant to God.

This was the state of mind of the majority of the people in Noah’s day. Moses records, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5. In Paul’s day, it was no different, for he tells us of the spiritual disposition of the people of his time, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Romans 1:21

We also read Paul’s account in his letter to the Ephesians, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being

past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Ephesians 4:17–19

The question that we need to answer is, how does the mind become the fountain of “wicked imaginations” or “thoughts of iniquity?” Paul gives us the answer.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:28–32

People’s minds become the reservoir for “thoughts of iniquity” because they choose to reject the ways of God for the ways of Satan. They find pleasure in dwelling upon the things of unrighteousness rather than holy things. This was the attitude of the church people who had apostatized from the Lord in Jeremiah’s days.

“Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now everyone from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will everyone do the imagination of his evil heart.” Jeremiah 18:11, 12

Furthermore, Paul told Timothy that in the last days some people would have “their conscience seared (to brand; to render insensitive) with a hot iron.” 1 Timothy 4:2

“

All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues of the soul.

Understanding the gravity of the matter, the servant of the Lord wrote, “All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues of the soul.

“You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of grace alone can accomplish this most desirable work.” *Counsels for the Church*, 166

And Peter states, “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13

“The apostle sought to teach the believers how important it is to keep the mind from wandering to forbidden themes, or from spending its energies on trifling subjects. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentineled, or evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander in darkness.” *The Review and Herald*, July 25, 1912

We must ask ourselves, what do I relish looking at and listening to on social media (Facebook, SnapChat, X, etc.), in books and magazines, on television and radio, and online gaming? Do the things that I look at or listen to cause me to love Jesus more? Do they encourage me to live the holy life? Or do they inspire me to desire those things that are ungodly? Does online gaming, which often depicts stealing, murder, war and death, and other violations of God’s law pull me away from things which pertain to Jesus Christ? Do these social media mediums reinforce in my mind unholy traits that cause me to speak and act in unChristlike ways?

Jesus used a similar expression as Peter, when He said, “Let your loins be girded about” Luke 12:35. What must the Christian gird his or her mind with? “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with



What do we relish looking at and listening to on social media?

truth ...” Ephesians 6:14. Jesus is the Truth. The word *girt* used in this verse has the same meaning as the word *gird* used by Jesus and Peter. It means “gird all around.” Why is it so important that we do this?

“Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and re-proofs shall not be heard; or, if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life.” *Counsels for the Church*, 166

“All who name the name of Christ need to watch and pray and guard the avenues of the soul; for Satan is at work to corrupt and destroy if the least advantage is given him.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 476

We also are reminded, “It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.” *The Great Controversy* (1888), 555

“The mind of a man or woman does not come down in a moment from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to transform the human to the divine, or to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed.” *The Adventist Home*, 330

Sadly, we daily witness the display of “wicked imaginations” or “thoughts of iniquity.” These “wicked imaginations” are reflected on the billboards along our streets, on the television and social media, in books and magazines, from the music of the day. They speak to mankind’s hopeless condition. God abhors this fourth deadly sin because it corrupts the mind and pollutes the motives, thus leaving the soul morally and spiritually bankrupt.

A man in such a condition has no desire for spiritual things, but instead craves the unfruitful works of darkness. His conscience is rendered insensitive to any and everything that is holy. It is interesting that this fourth

deadly sin is no respecter of persons. It doesn’t care who you are. Much like a boa constrictor wraps itself around its prey, squeezing ever more tightly, until it dies and is consumed. This kind of sin holds its captive prisoner until he or she becomes spiritually and morally depraved, dead to righteousness, as a result.

But Jesus offers hope. “Blessed (happy) are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8. Those who do not entertain “wicked imaginations” will be happy because they will have peace in this world and will spend an eternity with God in the next.

May David’s prayer be our prayer, too. “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

[All Scriptures from the KJV.] **LM**

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June 1 – 7, 2025

Order and Organization

Key Text

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1 Corinthians 1:10

Study Help: *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 343–362

Introduction

“God designs that His people shall be a unit, that they shall see eye to eye and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. This cannot be accomplished without a clear, pointed, living testimony in the church.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 361

Sunday

1 DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZED MIND

1. What question, asked to God by Manoah, should guide our desire for education? Judges 13:8, 12

Note: “The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds.” *Education*, 126

“It is right for the youth to feel that they must reach the highest development of their mental powers. We would not restrict the education to which God has set no limit. But our attainments will avail nothing if not put to use for the honor of God and the good of humanity. Unless our knowledge is a steppingstone to the accomplishment of the highest purposes, it is worthless. . . .

“Heart education is of more importance than the education gained from books. It is well, even essential, to obtain a knowledge of the world in which we live; but if we leave eternity out of our reckoning, we shall make a failure from which we can never recover.” *Child Guidance*, 497

“A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ should guide you in all your plans of education.” *Ibid.*, 69

“The mind is to be disciplined, trained, educated; for the child of God is to do service for God in ways that are not natural, or in harmony with inborn inclination. Those who become the followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result.”

Christian Education, 122

Monday

2 SELF-DISCIPLINE FOR ETERNITY

- 2.a. In our pursuit of knowledge, what should we be aware of in order to avoid an unbalanced state of health? Ecclesiastes 12:12

Note: “If the physical powers are not taxed equally with the mental, too much strain is brought upon the latter. Unless every part of the human machinery performs its allotted tasks, the mental powers cannot be used to their highest capacity for any length of time.” *Christian Education*, 211

“Much is lost by a neglect to unite physical with mental taxation. The leisure hours of the student are often occupied with frivolous pleasures, which weaken physical, mental, and moral powers. Under the debasing power of sensual indulgence, or the untimely excitement of courtship and marriage, many students fail to reach that height of mental development which they might otherwise have attained.” *Ibid.*, 36, 37

“How prevalent is the habit of turning day into night, and night into day. Many youth sleep soundly in the morning, when they should be up with the early singing birds, and be stirring when all nature is awake. Let youth practice regularity in the hours for going to bed, and for rising and they will improve in health, in mind, in spirit, in disposition.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 7, 1893

- 2.b. What practical counsel does Paul give to the Thessalonians? 1 Thessalonians 4:11

Note: “As far as possible, it is well to consider what is to be accomplished through the day. Make a memorandum of the different duties that await your attention, and set apart a certain time for the doing of each duty. Let everything be done with thoroughness, neatness, and dispatch.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 7, 1893

**2.c. What is like a city with broken-down walls?
Proverbs 25:28**

Note: “An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 335

Tuesday

3 INCREASING OUR WISDOM

3.a. How should we perform tasks? Colossians 3:23, 24

Note: “Of one girl whom I employed, I was told that she would sit down in the midst of her unfinished work, when the dishes were not washed, or the beds made, and forget her duties while she read a book or a newspaper. In this way she would spend hours of time that should have been employed in doing the work for which she was paid. The house would be left in confusion for hours after it should have been in perfect order, because of this untidy habit.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 7, 1893

3.b. What contrast exists between the wise and the foolish? Proverbs 9:8; 15:31

Note: “Of another whom I thought of employing. I learned that she was disrespectful to those who employed her, unless she took a fancy to them. Those whom she fancied, she would serve to her utmost, and the friends whom she chose, who flattered and approved her course, received her affection and favors. But I reasoned, ‘If she is a Christian, she will certainly take counsel and advice.’ A sorrowful expression came over the face of the person to whom I was speaking, as she said, ‘I am afraid you will be disappointed. If you seek to show her where she is erring, she will insist that she is doing the best she knows how, and instead of correcting her faults, will take on the air of one who is much injured. She does not respect authority, and will keep up rebellion in her mind, which, if not expressed in words, will be plainly revealed in her countenance. She will not keep her opinions to herself, but will freely tell others what she thinks about those who seek to correct her errors.’” *The Youth’s Instructor*, September 7, 1893

**3.c. Although reproof is not easy to bear, what will assist in learning how to grow and succeed in life?
Proverbs 17:10; 6:23**

Note: “The Lord sends us warning, counsel, and reproof, that we may have opportunity to correct our errors before they become second nature.” *Our High Calling*, 160

Wednesday

4 ORDER THAT HONORS GOD

4.a. In what does the New Testament teach about order in the church? 1 Corinthians 1:10; 14:40; 12:27, 28

Note: “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 9

4.b. Looking back in history, explain how Korah challenged God’s appointed leaders and the powerful way God stopped his rebellion. Numbers 16:1-3, 28-35. How did Korah use flattery to deceive the people?

Note: “Korah and his company, who aspired to the priesthood in their self-confidence, even ventured to take the censers and to stand in the door of the tabernacle with Moses. Korah had cherished his envy and rebellion until he was self-deceived, and he really thought the congregation were righteous, and that Moses was a tyrannical ruler. The people, flattered by their rebellious leaders, had been led to believe that all their troubles originated with Moses, who was continually reminding them of their sins. They thought that if Korah could lead them, and encourage them, and dwell upon their righteous acts instead of reminding them of their failures, they would have a very peaceful, prosperous journey, and he would without doubt lead them, not back and forward in the wilderness, but into the promised land.” *The Signs of the Times*, September 9, 1880

4.c. How did God endorse Moses’ ministry of reproof? Numbers 17:1-10

Note: “This wonderful rod was preserved to be frequently shown to the people to remind them of the past, to prevent them from murmuring, and again calling in question to whom the priesthood rightfully belonged. After the children of Israel were fully convinced of their wrong, in unjustly accusing Moses and Aaron, as they had done, they saw their past rebellion in its true light, and they were terrified.” *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 4a, 35, 36

Thursday

5 REPROVING POPULAR SINS

5.a. Why did the ark contain the pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded? Hebrews 9:4; Numbers 17:1-5; Exodus 16:32-35

Note: “The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They were restless under restraint, and unwilling to receive reproof. This was the secret of their murmuring against Moses. Had they been left free to do as they pleased, there would have been fewer complaints against their leader. All through the history of the church God’s servants have had the same spirit to meet.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 404

5.b. What character of ministry is needed in order to prepare God’s people to meet the Lord in peace? 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:11-15

Note: “We do not consider that our dangers are any less than those of the Hebrews, but greater. There will be temptations to jealousies and murmurings, and there will be outspoken rebellion, as are recorded of ancient Israel. There will ever be a spirit to rise up against the reproof of sins and wrongs. But shall the voice of reproof be hushed because of this? If so, we shall be in no better situation than are the various denominations in our land who are afraid to touch the errors and prevailing sins of the people.

“Those whom God has set apart as ministers of righteousness have solemn responsibilities laid upon them to reprove the sins of the people.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, 358, 359

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Name some points to remember about how our minds must be developed.
- 2 Why is temperance needed, even in intellectual pursuits?
- 3 Name some faulty work habits that should be overcome.
- 4 In what ways does the rebellion of Korah repeat itself today?
- 5 What solemn duty rests upon ministers and leaders at this hour?

June 8 – 14, 2025

Spiritual Vitality

Key Text

“Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4, *last part*

Study Help: *Steps to Christ*, 73–95

Introduction

“We cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 56

Sunday

1 A SYMBOL OF GOD’S CHARACTER

1.a. What did God direct Moses to place in the ark of the covenant? Deuteronomy 10:1–5

1.b. What was the purpose of the law? Romans 3:20; 7:7; Deuteronomy 33:2, 3

Note: “The words written by the finger of God on tables of stone so perfectly reveal His will concerning His people that none need make any mistake.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 225

“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 to reach? ‘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. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character.” *In Heavenly Places*, 141

Monday

2 REFLECTING HIS CHARACTER

2.a. Besides on tables of stone (Hebrews 9:3, 4; Deuteronomy 10:1–5; Revelation 11:19), where are the ten commandments to be written, and by whom? Hebrews 8:10; 2 Corinthians 3:3

2.b. What will be the experience of those who have the law of God within their heart? Psalms 37:31; 40:8; 119:165

Note: “In mercy, God seeks to lead the unrighteous to repentance. The obedient will delight in the law of the Lord. He puts His laws in their minds, and writes them in their hearts. Their speech will be such as is prompted by an indwelling Saviour. They have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul from all the defilement of Satan’s suggestions. Their heart yearns after God. In their conversion they love to dwell upon His mercy and goodness, for to them He is altogether lovely. They learn the language of heaven, the country of their adoption.” *The Upward Look*, 297

2.c. What does it mean to live under God’s grace? Romans 6:4, 10–18; 8:1

Note: “Those who will accept Him [Christ] as their personal Saviour will grow in grace, and in His strength will be enabled to obey the law of God.” *The Signs of the Times*, February 11, 1897

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.” *The Desire of Ages*, 668

“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

Tuesday

3 FRUITS OF OUR CONNECTION

3.a. How do we receive divine strength from Christ?

John 15:1-4

Note: “All who take their position on the Lord’s side will, as branches of the True Vine, receive nourishment, and will be stimulated by the vine to bear like fruit. They will be in cooperation with God, according to their ability exercising themselves unto godliness by walking in newness of life, which is daily repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” *The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1897

3.b. As we look to Jesus in the sanctuary above, what will our experience become? How does this also involve church relationships? Ephesians 2:4-6, 10; Hebrews 10:23-25

Note: “In a life of service to Christ, connection with the church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties.” *Education*, 268, 269

“Notwithstanding our varying types of character, we are brought into church capacity through the profession of our faith. Christ is the head of the church; and if those whose names are on the church record do not belong to Jesus, the invisible Head, they are like the fruitless branch of the vine, and are taken away. If one is really a fruitful branch, he will make it manifest by bearing fruit, giving evidence of his absolute allegiance to Christ. He will have a spiritual connection with God. Faith and love constitute the gold of character, and will be ever working on the Lord’s side to unite and harmonize the members of Christ’s body.

“Name, position, or wealth will not weigh one jot in the scale with God. Men and women are admitted to the church who do it no honor. But however poor, whatever the rank, tribe, or nationality, all are to be heartily received on their confession of faith, if you have evidence that the grace of God, which brings salvation, has wrought upon the heart. ...

“This faith in Christ is demonstrated by works; it produces a transformation of character through the effectual working of God’s Holy Spirit. ... Contrition of soul will mark the experience of every one who has received the grace of Christ.” *The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1897

Wednesday

4 COMING INTO LINE

4.a. What is Christ’s goal for His church? Ephesians 5:1, 2, 27; Titus 2:13, 14

Note: “Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 214

4.b. How should church members relate to each other? 1 Peter 4:8-11; 1 John 1:7

Note: “Christ calls for unity. But He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices. The God of heaven draws a sharp contrast between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. He calls sin and impenitence by the right name.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 175

4.c. Describe some ways God purifies us. Proverbs 27:17;
Isaiah 58:6–10

Note: “While the world needs sympathy, while it needs the prayers and assistance of God’s people, while it needs to see Christ in the lives of His followers, the people of God are equally in need of opportunities that draw out their sympathies, give efficiency to their prayers, and develop in them a character like that of the divine pattern.

“It is to provide these opportunities that God has placed among us the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the suffering. They are Christ’s legacy to His church, and they are to be cared for as He would care for them. In this way God takes away the dross and purifies the gold. ...

“In placing among us the poor and the suffering, the Lord is testing us to reveal to us what is in our hearts.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, 261

“Good works cost us a sacrifice, but it is in this very sacrifice that they provide discipline. These obligations bring us into conflict with natural feelings and propensities, and in fulfilling them we gain victory after victory over the objectionable traits of our characters.” *Ibid.*, 262, 263

Thursday

5 THE TEST OF OUR DEVOTION

5. What reveals whether we truly love God? 1 John 3:14,
15, 18; 4:20, 21

Note: “The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. ...

“Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by trying to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is



attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance.

“It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 384

“A healthy Christian is one who has Christ formed within, the hope of glory. He loves truth, purity, and holiness, and will manifest spiritual vitality, having love for the word of God, and seeking communion with those who are acquainted with the word, in order that he may catch every ray of light that God has communicated to them, which reveals Christ and makes Him more precious to the soul. He who has sound faith finds that Christ is the life of the soul, that He is in him as a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and he delights to conform every power of the soul to the obedience of his Lord.” *The Review and Herald*, December 11, 1894

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why were the ten commandments to be preserved in the ark?
- 2 Describe the type of obedience the Lord longs to see in us.
- 3 What are some of the ways that discipleship of Christ is revealed?
- 4 Why is purity important for us, both individually and collectively?
- 5 How can I develop a deeper love both for Christ and others?

June 15 – 21, 2025

“As a Lamp That Burns”

Key Text

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.” Isaiah 62:1

Study Help: *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 157–162, 307, 308, 385–389

Introduction

“Let us not allow the light which is in us to go out because we refuse to give that light to others.” *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 20, 1908

Sunday

1 AWAKENING OUR PRIORITIES

1. What is God’s goal for His church? Isaiah 62:1, 12

Note: “There is no greater evidence that those who have received great light do not appreciate that light, than is given by their refusal to let their light shine upon those who are in darkness.” *The Review and Herald*, July 16, 1895

“If you ... were in a saved state, you would all feel the perilous condition of the unsaved. The day will come, unless a great change is wrought in you, when you will hear from many lips. ‘I associated with these Christians, yet they never told me of my danger. They never warned me. I thought that if I was in danger of being lost, they would not rest day or night without arousing me to see my lost condition. Now I am lost. If I had been in their place and had seen one in a similar condition, I would not have rested until I had made them sensible of their state and pointed them to the only One who can save them.’” *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, 181, 182

“What can be said to the idlers that will lead them to understand, and arouse them from their do-nothing position? O, that Zion would arouse and put on her beautiful garments. Brethren and sisters, as members of the church, let us act our part faithfully. ...

“God has given to every man his work; not one is excused from service.” *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 20, 1908

Monday

2 IN AN AGE OF MORAL DARKNESS

2.a. How is it that morning and night are coming at the same time? Isaiah 21:11, *last part*, 12

Note: “Everything seems to be stirred with an intense activity from beneath. Excitement is continually kept up. Feasting, buying, and selling, are brought into the churches. The watchman cries, ‘The morning cometh, and also the night.’ The night symbolizes prevalence of error, misinterpretation and misapplication of Scripture. Every species of delusion is now being brought in. The plainest truths of God’s word are covered with a mass of man-made theories. Deadly errors are presented as the truth to which all must bow. The simplicity of true godliness is buried beneath tradition.” *The Bible Echo*, February 1, 1897

“A great work is to be done in the world, and what efforts are we making for its accomplishment? The people have had too much sermonizing; but have they been taught how to labor for those for whom Christ died? Has a line of labor been devised and placed before them in such a way that each has seen the necessity of taking part in the work?”

“It is evident that all the sermons that have been preached have not developed a large class of self-denying workers. This subject is to be considered as involving the most serious results. Our future for eternity is at stake.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, 431

“We are certainly living in the closing days of this earth’s history. We need to devote much time to our spiritual interests, if we would experience the spiritual growth that is essential in this age. We are to make decided reforms. The Voice said: The watchmen need to awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. The morning cometh; and also the night. Wake up, My watchmen. Voices that should now be heard presenting the truth are silent. Souls are perishing in their sins, and ministers and physicians and teachers are asleep. Wake up the watchmen!” *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 20, 1908

2.b. What is the light and glory of the Lord, and what is the darkness described in Isaiah 60:1, 2?

Note: “The churches are withering up because they have failed to use their talents in diffusing the light of truth to others. Careful instruction should be given that will be as lessons from the Master that all may put their light to practical use in benefiting others.” *The Review and Herald*, February 28, 1893

Tuesday

3 RESULTS PROMISED

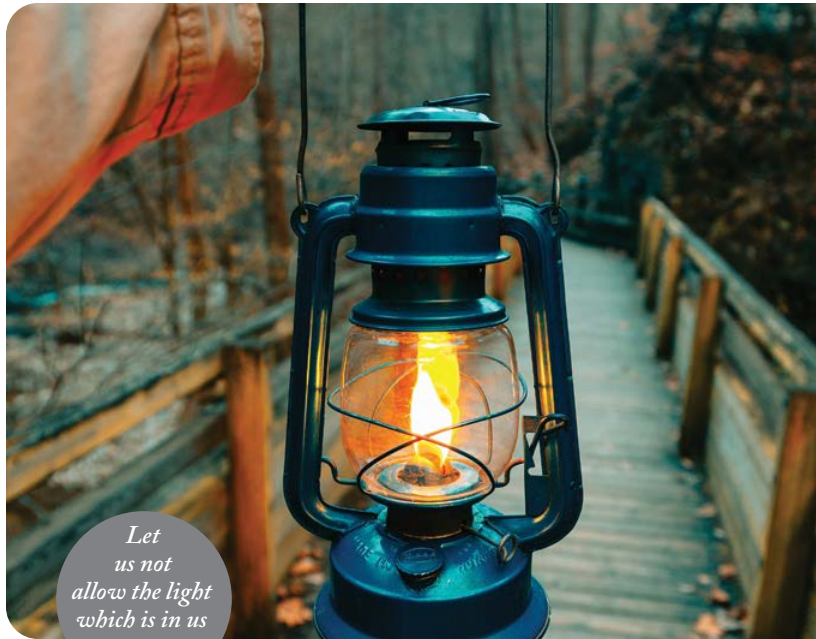
3.a. What is promised to those who seek to communicate God’s message to the world? Proverbs 1:23; Luke 24:39; Acts 1:7, 8; Luke 11:9–13; Ephesians 1:13, 14

Note: “All who have received the light of truth are placed under solemn obligations to let that light shine forth to others. Each can, in his humble sphere, do something for the Master. He may not be able to make magnificent offerings to advance the cause of God, but he can give the willing, cheerful, service of an obedient heart. All cannot be preachers; all cannot be generals in the army of the Lord; but all can be faithful privates, following in humble obedience the commands of the Captain of their salvation. They can cheer their companions with words of hope and courage, and by so doing will show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. God demands of all the very best service that they can give. If they can only do the lowly errands for Him, these should not be neglected.” *The Review and Herald*, August 24, 1886

“Church members need to be taught that the measure of their success in ministering to souls will be the measure of their self-denial and their faithfulness in following Christ’s example.” *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 20, 1908

3.b. What results from faithful efforts to share light?
Zechariah 8:20–23

Note: “God will move upon men of humble position in society, men who have not become insensible to the bright rays of light through so long contemplating the light of truth, and refusing



to make any improvement or advancement therein. Many such will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from Heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man’s machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit’s power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.” *The Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895

Wednesday

4 COURAGE AMID OPPOSITION

4.a. Describe the experience of Jeremiah when mocked and derided while witnessing for God, and how he overcame his fears. Jeremiah 20:7–11

Note: “Because of the bitterness, hatred, and opposition manifested against the word of God spoken in reproof, many other messengers of God have decided to do as Jeremiah decided. But what did this prophet of the Lord do after his decision?”

Try as much as he would, he could not hold his peace. As soon as he came into the assemblies of the people, he found that the Spirit of the Lord was stronger than he was. ...

“In this generation, when God’s servants speak the word of the Lord to reprove wrongdoers, to rebuke those who bring in wrong principles, have they not had an experience similar to that which Jeremiah had? When a course of action to pervert justice and judgment is introduced, the word of the Lord must be spoken in reproof.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, 1156

4.b. What should we learn from how prophets and apostles shared God’s messages with such tremendous power? Micah 3:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5

Note: “The word of God was preached by His ministers in early days ‘in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.’ The hearts of men were stirred by the proclamation of the gospel. Why is it that the preaching of the truth has now so little power to move the people? Is God less willing to bestow His blessing upon the laborers in His cause in this age than in the apostles’ day?

“The warning which we bear to the world must prove to them a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. And will the Lord send forth His servants to proclaim this fearfully solemn message and withhold from them His Holy Spirit? Shall frail, erring men, without special grace and power from God, dare to stand between the living and the dead to speak the words of everlasting life? Our Lord is rich in grace, mighty in power; He will abundantly bestow these gifts upon all who come to Him in faith. He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than are parents to give good gifts to their children. The reason why the precious, important truth for this time is not powerful to save is that we do not work in faith.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 157, 158

Thursday

5 REAPING THE BOUNTY

5.a. What did the disciples learn from the miraculous catch of fish? Luke 5:4-10

Note: “Be not so self-caring. There are thousands whose lives are just as precious as yours. Then why do you wrap your coat about you, and hug the shore? Awake to duty and to usefulness! If you will launch out into the deep and let down your nets, the Master will gather in the fishes, and you will see of the mighty working of God. ...

“Teach the people to have light in themselves, and not to depend upon the ministers. They should have Christ as their helper, and should educate themselves to help one another, so that the minister can be free to enter new fields.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 139

“Our people have had great light, and yet much of our ministerial force is exhausted on the churches, in teaching those who should be teachers; enlightening those who should be ‘the light of the world.’” *Evangelism*, 382

5.b. How is our Creator able to perform His work using the individuality He has graciously bestowed upon each one of us? Job 34:11; 37:7

Note: “Men with one talent may reach a class that those with two or five talents cannot approach. Great and small alike are chosen vessels to bear the water of life to thirsting souls. ... Let God work through whom He will. The message must go.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 462

“My brethren and sisters, study your plans; grasp every opportunity of speaking to your neighbors and associates or of reading something to them from books that contain present truth. Show that you regard as of first importance the salvation of the souls for whom Christ has made so great a sacrifice.” *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, 129

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Of what will many lost souls rightfully complain after it’s too late?
- 2 Beyond mere sermonizing, what is the heart of the church’s duty?
- 3 Explain God’s plan to enlighten the world with the present truth.
- 4 How is the example taught by Jeremiah to be rewarded?
- 5 In what ways can I wean myself from burdening the ministers?

June 22 – 28, 2025

To Be Sealed as Blameless

Key Text

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24

Study Help: *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 367–375; *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 207–216

Introduction

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them.” *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, 214

Sunday

1 AN EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

1.a. What has Christ promised for all who gain the victory over sin? Revelation 3:5

1.b. Upon what must we set our affections in order to experience this victory? Colossians 3:1–3

Note: “Christ says of the overcomer, ‘I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.’ The names of all those who have once given themselves to God are written in the book of life, and their characters are now passing in review before Him. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. They are watching

the development of character in those now living, to see if their names can be retained in the book of life. A probation is granted us in which to wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Who is doing this work? Who is separating from himself sin and selfishness? ‘Ye are dead,’ says the apostle Paul of the true followers of Christ, ‘and your life is hid with Christ in God.’ When we are alive to God, we are dead to self. May God help us to die to self. Whose names will not be blotted out of the book of life? Only the names of those who have loved God with all the powers of their being, and their neighbors as themselves.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 138

Monday

2 A WORK FOR THIS ERA

2.a. Four mighty angels carry out a crucial work throughout the Day of Atonement. What is this work? Revelation 7:1–4

Note: “Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish.” *Maranatha*, 257

“A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, preparing to step down from the throne and leave the world to the control of Satan. The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against those who serve Him, and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battlefield—the scene of the final contest and the final victory.

“While their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed, and He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.” *My Life Today*, 308

2.b. What determines the outcome of the coming conflict for each of us? Romans 8:6–8. What are the evidences of a carnal heart or mind? 1 Corinthians 3:3, 4

Note: “As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle. How carefully we should improve the little remaining period of our probation!

“Minds that have been given up to loose thought need to change. . . . The thoughts must be centered upon God. Now is the time to put forth earnest effort to overcome the natural tendencies of the carnal heart.” *Maranatha*, 243

Tuesday

3 A SOLEMN TASK

3.a. Explain how the sealing work involves the third angel of Revelation 14. What shows the solemn importance of being fully sanctified? Revelation 14:9–12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24

Note: “I . . . saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, ‘Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.’” *Early Writings*, 118

“Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be

hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father.” *Ibid.*, 71

3.b What final blessing does God bestow especially to prepare the harvest of souls for His kingdom? Joel 2:23; Zechariah 10:1

Note: “The sins of Israel must go to judgment beforehand. Every sin must be confessed at the sanctuary, then the work will move. It must be done now. . . .

“When the four angels let go, Christ will set up His kingdom. None receive the latter rain but those who are doing all they can. Christ would help us. All could be overcomers by the grace of God, through the blood of Jesus.” *Spalding and Magan Collection*, 2a, 2, 3

Wednesday

4 CONDITIONS FOR THE LATTER RAIN

4.a. What is required to receive the latter rain? Isaiah 43:25; 44:22

Note: “The names of some will be blotted out of the book of life. Whose shall it be? Let us each examine ourselves carefully to see if we are in the faith; let us be diligent to make sure work for eternity. Jesus says that He will confess the name of the overcomer before His Father, and before the holy angels.” *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 139

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti-typical day of

atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 445

"No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome." *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 139

"Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, 187

"We want the deep movings of the Spirit of God in our hearts, that we may not only be able to secure for ourselves the white raiment, but that we may so influence others that their names may be entered in the book of life, never to be blotted out." *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 140

4.b. What should we realize about the latter rain? Hosea 6:3; Acts 3:19

Note: "The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel, are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are 'the times of refreshing' to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said, 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out [in the Investigative Judgment], when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.' [Acts 3:19, 20]."

"Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from Heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given." *The Great Controversy*, (1888), 611, 612

Thursday

5 ULTIMATE VICTORY

5.a. When Jesus completes His ministry in heaven, what encouraging declaration will He make in behalf of the overcomers? Revelation 22:11, *last part*

5.b. How may we realize the wonderful promises made to all who gain the victory through the blood of the Lamb? Revelation 22:14; Isaiah 26:2-4

Note: "Glorious will be the reward bestowed when the faithful workers gather about the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . They will stand before the throne, accepted in the Beloved. All their sins have been blotted out, all their transgressions borne away. Now they can look upon the undimmed glory of the throne of God. They have been partakers with Christ in His sufferings, they have been workers together with Him in the plan of redemption, and they are partakers with Him in the joy of seeing souls saved in the kingdom of God, there to praise God through all eternity.

"My brother, my sister, I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ. Prepare for the judgment, that when Christ shall come, to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace. In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory—those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph will peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain." *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, 285, 286

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 With Christ's help, why must we overcome our character defects?
- 2 Why has Jesus bidden four mighty angels to hold back the winds?
- 3 What do many people misunderstand about the latter rain?
- 4 If our sins are blotted out, with what blessed task can God entrust us?
- 5 What can I do today to ensure I am one of the ultimate overcomers?

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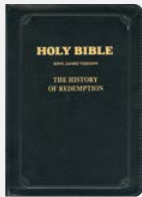
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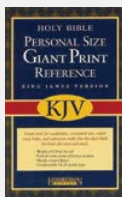
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Dates

The date is the superfood of nature: a powerhouse of minerals, energy and fiber. But how much do we know about this rich, creamy piece of goodness? Here are a few interesting facts about dates:

The word <i>date</i> comes from the Greek word <i>daktylos</i> , meaning “finger,” because a date looks like the tip of a finger.
About 3% of the earth’s farmland is covered by date palms, producing four million tons a year.
There are more than 200 varieties of dates. Egypt is the top date producing country.
Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics mark years with images of full date palms, as the trees grow 12 new fronds a year.
One cup of dates has about 380 calories, 27% of the recommended daily requirement of potassium and 48% of daily fiber needs, and also provide calcium, zinc, iron, copper, magnesium, and other minerals.
An adult can survive with only 15 date fruits per day, which gives the body all the necessary minerals and vitamins for its existence.
While dates are high in sugar, many varieties have a low glycemic index (a tool that measures how foods affect blood sugar levels), due to the fact that its fruit sugar is high in dietary fiber.
Bedouin tribes of the Middle East, who include a high percentage of dates in their diet, have one of the lowest rates of cancer.

Sources: bateel.com/bateel-gourmet/all-about-dates; healthline.com/nutrition/glycemic-index

Fruit

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



GRANOLA BARS

Ingredients

- 1 cup dates, soaked for 20 minutes in hot water
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup tahini, or any nut butter
- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- 1 tsp. cardamom, or to taste
- ½ cup pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup dried figs, chopped
- 1 pinch salt
- ¼ cup carob chips

Process

Process softened dates in a food processor until smooth. Add maple syrup and tahini and process until mixed, scraping down sides if needed. In a separate bowl, combine oats, cardamom, seeds, coconut, cranberries, figs, salt, and date mixture. Mix until well combined. Stir in carob chips.

Line an 8 x 8-inch pan with parchment paper. Spread out mixture with water dampened hands until flattened. Bake at 350° F. for 25-30 minutes until golden and crispy on top. Allow to sit for about an hour before cutting into 16 bars.



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