HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM



The Double-Minded Man Is Unstable in All His Ways

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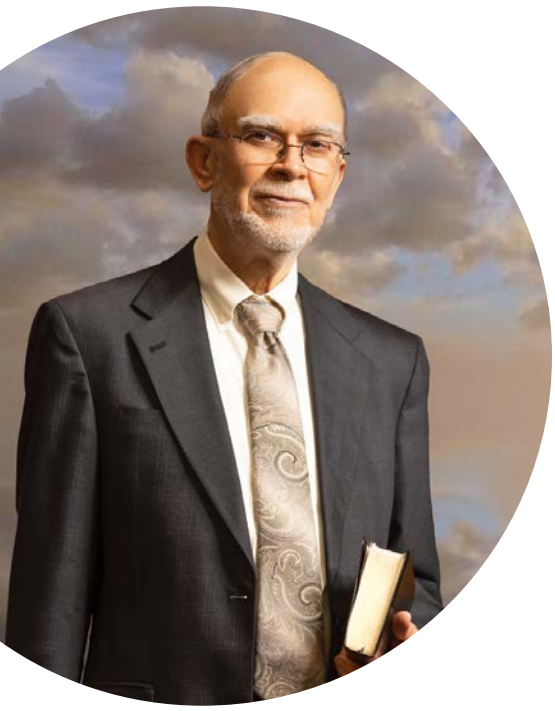
John Knox and the Reformation in Scotland

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HAPPY

Thanksgiving

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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

The Danger of Overwork

"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep." Psalm 127:2

It is very common today, even among Christians, to develop the habit of overworking. Mrs. White gave wise counsel to her son Edson who was damaging his health through this practice.

"I have a word more to say to you. Will you not sign a pledge that you will no longer weaken or deface the Lord's temple by working when you ought to rest? In order to have proper thoughts and in order to speak proper words, you must give your brain rest. You do not take sufficient time to rest. The weary brain and tired nerves would be invigorated if you would make a change in this respect.

"We must study to discipline ourselves carefully, refusing to do that which would weaken the physical, mental, and moral strength. You need a clear, patient mind, which will endure all that may arise. You need a stronghold from above. Exercise faith, and leave the results with God. When you have done your best, be of good courage. Believe, believe, and hold fast. The enemy will try to get you to make some move which means defeat, but you cannot afford to do this. …

"Edson, the Lord does not want you to worry and fret over a state of things that you cannot help. He wants you to go on from strength to strength, and this you will do if you trustingly do your best. …

"God is your Father. He would have you take more time to rest, that you may have a healthy spiritual experience. He loves you with a deep and tender love. O children, there are great things before us. Edson, do not allow your mind to become in any way diseased. God wants your mind to be clear, your temper sweet, and your love abounding. Then the peace that passeth knowledge will flow forth from you to bless all with whom you come into contact." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1806

"Let no one labor to the point of exhaustion, thereby disqualifying himself for other duties. Do not try to crowd two days' work into one. All should use their strength wisely, and at the end those who work carefully and wisely will be found to have accomplished as much as those who so expend their physical and mental strength that they have no deposit from which to draw in a time of need." *The Signs of the Times*, August 5, 1897 LM

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OF ADVENTISM

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

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The man who stands firm on principles of truth will not be deceived by multiple forms of error. But the man who is constantly changing what he believes, will be deceived.

John J. Grosboll



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Now is not the time to allow our minds to be absorbed with things of minor importance.

John R. Pearson



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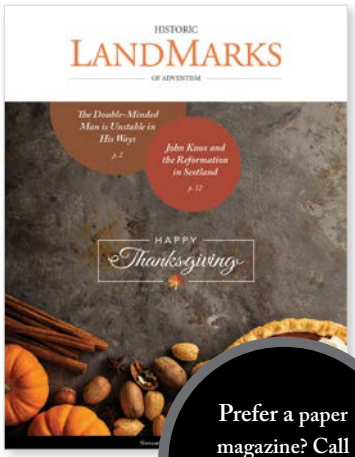
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All Bible texts, unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, are from the New King James Version.



The Double-Minded Man Is Unstable in All His Ways

John J. Grosboll

The Time in Which We Live

"The contest will wax more and more fierce on the part of Satan; for he is moved by a power from beneath. As the work of God's people moves forward with sanctified, resistless energy, planting the standard of Christ's righteousness in the church, moved by a power from the throne of God, the great controversy will wax stronger and stronger, and will become more and more determined. Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which, if possible, will deceive the very elect." *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 407

According to this quotation, error is ever changing and increasing its forms. The person whose mind is filled with truth from the throne of God will stand against the minds of those who have accepted these forms of error. The plans in the minds of God's people will be in opposition to the plans of others in the church who have accepted the plans of the adversary. The principles of heavenly origin will be in opposition to the principles originating with Satan. All this is described as going on in the church as we approach the end.

Since the principles of error are constantly changing, they are not stable like the principles of truth. Those who accept them are not stable either, because they are constantly having to change what they believe. The truth accepted by Adventists does not change. It is like an unfolding flower—developing and revealing more and more in its eternal beauty as time passes.

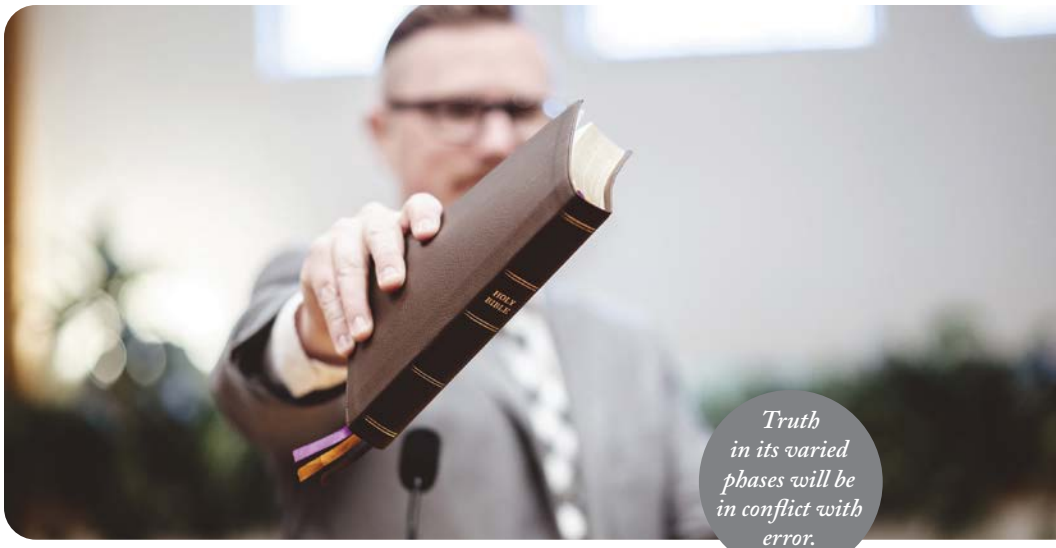
Abandoning error to follow truth requires a change of mind and heart. But, if our minds are constantly changing, this is evidence that we are double-minded, and we will deceive others and become deceived ourselves. The Bible strictly warns about this. Let's look at the symptoms of the problem.

Symptoms and Propositions

Symptom 1

The double-minded man is the man who is bent on having his own way, all the while professing to be doing the will of God. Not only does he deceive others, he eventually deceives himself. He will genuinely believe when following his own way he is actually doing the will of God. It took forty years of unlearning and learning anew to prepare Moses to overcome this problem.

"It was the experience gained during the years of toil and waiting in Midian—the spirit of humility and long-suffering there developed—that prepared Moses to meet with patience



Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error.

the unbelief and murmuring of the people and the pride and envy of those who should have been his unswerving helpers. Moses 'was very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth,' and this is why he was granted divine wisdom and guidance above all others. Says the scripture, 'The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.' Psalm 25:9. The meek are guided by the Lord, because they are teachable, willing to be instructed … God does not force the will of any; hence He cannot lead those who are too proud to be taught, who are bent upon having their own way. Of the double-minded man—he who seeks to follow his own will, while professing to do the will of God—it is written, 'Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.' James 1:7." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 384

Symptom 2

The double-minded man has two agendas in his mind. When people talk to him, sometimes he is on one agenda and sometimes on the other. Consequently, while everything he says might be absolutely the truth according to the agenda he is talking about, it actually is very deceptive. This deception eventually is manifest when the two agendas become known and are found often to be contradictory.

"They are men of two minds." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, 531

Some years ago, a conference minister moved to the area of a Seventh-day Adventist church which was not recognized by the conference and was therefore an independent church seeking to become sanctified and spread the three angels' messages to their community. He said he had come to help with the work in that church. However, he disclosed to another worker that the conference president had sent him to take control of the church. Why was the story so different? Because there were two agendas—one public and another hidden.

Over many years, Steps to Life Ministries has received many appeals from conference ministers to "Come back home." These appeals would be most attractive to those who are mixed up about who and what the church really is. Just as in Jesus' day, if you did not know who the church was, you most certainly would not be part of it, but would instead have been in that multitude demanding Jesus' death. Sadly, we have learned by bitter experience that while they appear to be making a genuine invitation to welcome Steps to Life back into the "fold," in reality, their objec-

> *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*
>
> *Matthew 24:24*

tive was and continues to be to destroy this ministry, and others like it, over which they have no control. Thus, we see two distinct messages, extended by the same people, but in complete contradiction to one another—one public, the other hidden. This proposed destruction will be accomplished by the double-minded upon all others who are double minded:

Proposition 1: Offering a flattering appeal and attempting in every possible way to win them over. Many will be won by this method.

Proposition 2: If appeal and flattery do not work, then the power of the state is employed. While the Adventist organization extends loving appeals to Historic Adventist churches to return to the structure, it issues threats at the very same time. A double agenda—one public, one hidden.

Symptom 3

The double-minded man is unstable, constantly in the process of changing his mind, back and forth and up and down.

"To be double-minded is to be unstable." *The Youth's Instructor*, May 24, 1900

"They are unstable in all their ways, and cannot be depended upon." Ibid., February 8, 1894

Examples of These Symptoms

1. The Spirit of Prophecy made it very clear in 1893 that we were not to call the Seventh-day Adventist church Babylon. But, she also made it clear to the General Conference President in 1886 that we as a people could become part of Babylon (*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery and Divorce*, 188). We see there have been several positions taken.
   - The church has not become Babylon.
   - We can become part of Babylon if we fulfill all the conditions laid down in the Spirit of Prophecy. However, we are not at the present time.
   - That it is impossible for us as a people to ever become part of Babylon.

At Steps to Life, we are convinced that the second position is the correct one and have proclaimed this position for many years in publications and sermons. We believe the Spirit of Prophecy statement that we are on the track of Romanism (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 362) is more true now and that we are nearer the "city-limits" of Babylon than ever before.

An interesting thing has developed in Historic Adventism. Some, having taken position number one, are proclaiming all others as heretics. They are saying that everyone should have their names removed from the denominational rolls. Others, who used to do this same thing, have switched to position number three, stating that the organization they formerly called Babylon is really the true church. They are saying that everyone must belong to it or they are in danger of having their names stricken from the book of life in heaven, while claiming they are still not part of the structure church.

Whenever you see a "Babylon" like this, you can know that there is a problem with being double-minded.

2. Where do you take your converts? Some know from experience that if you bring them into a conference church in your area, you may lose them. Others say that only baptisms into a conference church count. In plain language, we must know who and what is the church. The true church is one founded upon the Rock that cannot be moved and against whom the powers from beneath cannot prevail. If you keep changing your mind, obviously you are double-minded. If you say, we are going back to the conference ("church" "home") but a few days later you say that you are not—is this not being double-minded?

More Symptoms and Devices

Symptom 4

The double-minded man professes one thing and does another. To be more specific, he, by profession, deplores the work of Satan and yet enters into his devices.

"Of what profit is it to say pleasant things, to deplore the works of Satan, and yet at the same time to enter into the fulfillment of all his devices? This is being double-minded." Ibid., February 15, 1894

- **What are some of Satan's devices?**
  Blaming others and justifying ourselves.
  "The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies; it was indulged by our first parents as soon as they yielded to the influence of Satan, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Instead of humbly confessing their sins, they try to shield themselves by casting the blame upon others, upon circumstances, or upon God." *Patriarchs and Prophets,* 58
  "The very thing that gained for Satan the sympathy of one-third of the angels in heaven, was this spirit of self-justification. The angels were deceived by Satan's misrepresentations and by his artful power of accusing those who would not unite with him. Satan has kept up this work ever since his fall, and he has large numbers of men and women who follow in the very steps he has taken, until they fall from the truth, give up their steadfastness, and stand on Satan's side, as accusers, criticizing others." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 18, 324, 325
  We are all in a world of temptation."Let no one feel … that he makes no mistakes." *Counsels on Health*, 244. The problem is not so much that we make mistakes, but rather when we do, we refuse to take responsibility. Instead we accuse others, trying to cast the blame on some other minister or worker or ministry or on "the constituency" or on the Historic Adventists worldwide or on some conference or the general conference or some other scapegoat.



Moses met unbelief and murmuring with a spirit of humility.

- **Deception.**
  In the effort to cause good to happen to ourselves by self-justification and blaming others, inevitably we will sooner or later be caught up in deception. We may have proclaimed to all that we are transparent in all our actions, but an attempt to justify self and blame others will always end up in a crooked course of action. And not only will others be deceived, but we will deceive ourselves by this course.

Symptom 5

Instead of going to God for unerring, stable counsel, the double-minded man seeks counsel from man. Therefore, he is controlled by men rather than God. Because of this, he is never comfortable unless there is a coalition of people working together. Consequently, it is only through human association and groups that he can feel safe and comfortable. If things do not work out in one group, he is forced to seek some other group to be a part of so that he feels safe, secure, and comfortable. If the home church is not big enough, he must go to some other church (often no matter what is being taught) because he is not comfortable except in a group.

" 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' God calls upon His people now to consecrate all their powers to His service. He would have every household become a home church … . None are to place themselves under the guidance of human beings; for God has not ordained this. He bids us look to One and depend upon One who understands our needs, and is able to supply them from His abundant fullness." *Australasian Union Conference Record*, October 14, 1907

Symptom 6

The double-minded man has no spiritual foundation of his own, walking instead in the light of another's torch. Why do you believe what you believe? Some people believe what they believe because that is what they were taught by their Bible teacher or by the evangelist they trained under or by some theologian. All these people may know the truth, but you must know the truth for yourself, not just what someone else believes and teaches, or you will not endure through the shaking.

> *The principles of error are constantly changing, while the principles of truth are stable and firm as God Himself.*

"Many of those who profess the truth have received it because someone else did, and for their life they could not give the reason of their faith. This is why they are so unstable. Instead of weighing their motives in the light of eternity, instead of obtaining a practical knowledge of the principles underlying all their actions, instead of digging down to the bottom and building upon a right foundation for themselves, they are walking in the light of another's torch, and will surely fail." *Counsels on Diet and Foods,* 196

Symptom 7

The double-minded man deals in man-made tests. "Men will arise speaking perverse things … bringing sacred truth upon a level with common things … . The devisings of men's minds will invent tests that are no tests at all, that when the true test shall be made prominent, it shall be considered on a par with the man-made tests that have been of no value." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, 1064

Popular Man-Made Tests

- You must have your name on the conference church roll or your name is not written in the Lamb's book of life.
- You must address God by Hebrew names.
- You must profess faith in and give your tithe and all your financial support to the church organization or you are robbing God's treasure house.
- "The Lord gave me this impression (or "sign") and therefore, I know this is the Lord's will." Some people can tell you of many signs and impressions they have received and multitudes have followed these undependable tests. Some stupendous mistakes have been made by Adventists because they have depended on "signs" and "impressions."

"Whenever I have been called to meet fanaticism in its varied forms, I have received clear, positive, and definite instruction to lift my voice against its influence. With some the evil has revealed itself in the form of man-made tests for ascertaining a knowledge of the will of God; and I was shown that this was a delusion which became an infatuation, and that it is contrary to the will of the Lord. If we follow such methods, we shall be found aiding the enemy's plans. In times past certain among the believers had great faith in the setting of signs by which to decide their duty. Some had such confidence in these signs that men went so far as to exchange wives, thus bringing adultery into the church." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 28

"As God's commandment-keeping people we have a most sacred work to do in making clear, simple, and plain the spiritual basis of our faith. All need to become familiar with the requirements of God for this time. Influences of various kinds and orders will come in to sway the people of God from the saving tests for this time. But there will be brought in a vast amount of man-made tests that have not the least bearing upon the work given us of God to prepare a people to stand with the whole equipment of the heavenly armor on, without leaving off one piece. The word of God and His down-trodden law are to be made prominent in so marked a manner that men and women, members of other churches, shall be brought face to face, mind to mind, heart to heart with truth. They will see its superiority over the multitudinous errors that are presented and are pushing their way into notice, to supplement if possible the truth for this solemn time. Every soul is taking sides. All are ranging themselves either under the banner of truth and righteousness or under the banner of the apostate powers that are contending for the supremacy." *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 7, 92, 93

Symptom 8

The double-minded man speaks evil of his brethren who will not be turned from the truth to his present opinion. He will call them all sorts of names and epithets such as

schismatic, "ignorant of theology or history," divisive, back-biter, wishy-washy, filled with hatred against him—in short, he blames his troubles on his brethren who do not agree with him.

"Satan is at the head of fallen principalities and powers, and is the ruler of the darkness of this world. Day and night he is plotting against God and against those who are seeking to obey the truth. He transforms himself into an angel of light, and makes darkness appear as light, and light as darkness; and he seeks continually to lead unstable souls to unite with him in thinking evil and in speaking evil of those who will not be turned from the truth. He is described in the Scriptures as a liar, a destroyer, a tormentor, an accuser, a murderer, and it will not be difficult to discern on which side a soul is fighting, or under what leadership he is moving, if he is found accusing and condemning others. If men and women have been placed so that they have gained influence, and they use that influence to further Satan's designs, they are uniting with the great adversary and apostate." *The Review and Herald*, December 11, 1894



Symptom 9

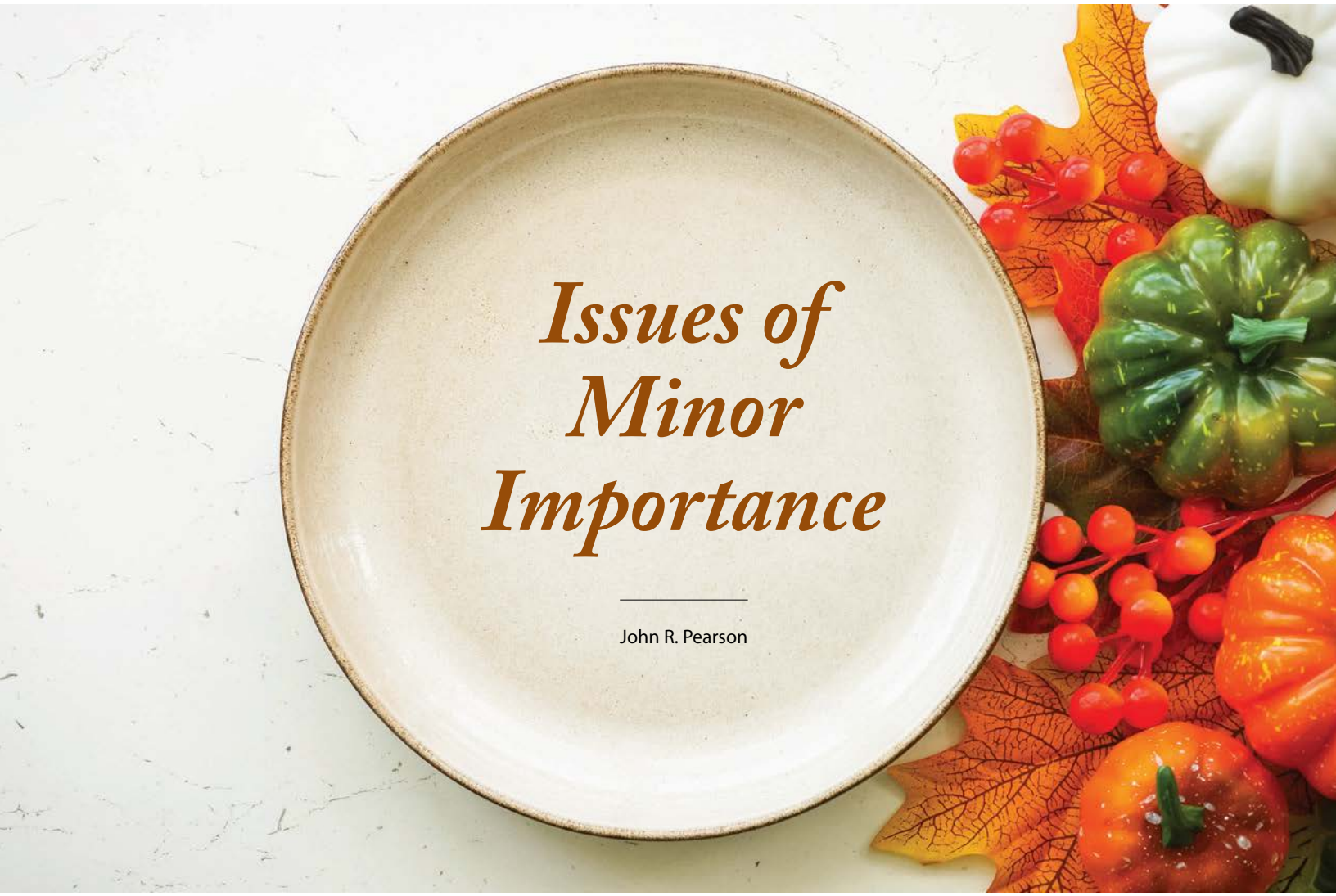
The double-minded man says anything that comes into his mind. He strongly advocates something, then strongly advocates just the opposite, and then denies what he formerly advocated. One Sabbath he attends a home church and vilifies the church organization. A few Sabbaths later he states that your name must be on the conference roll or it probably will not be in the book of life. This is double-mindedness at work.

To a double-minded minister, Mrs. White wrote: "When a man gives evidence that he is sound in principle, when he is of good repute among those where he is best known, when his character is one whose influence will be Christlike, he should be admitted to fellowship and confidence without hesitancy. But he whose works show him to be unstable, who says one thing and does the very opposite, is careless of his words and influence, bringing out of his heart the evil things lurking there, such a one will profane both men and God. He will say anything that comes into his mind, whether he knows it to be falsehood or truth. There is a mixture of good and bad in his character, and he speaks just as he feels without studying the influence his words must have upon those who believe him to be a true minister of the gospel. They have heard him speak as Christ's ambassador, and therefore, they will either regard his sins lightly or their confidence in him as a devoted servant of Christ will be destroyed. The minister of Christ should be circumspect, he should understand human nature." *Pamphlets #28 Elder Daniels and the Fresno Church*

"One day you will stand in the pulpit and strongly advocate the testimonies which God has sent to His people; in a few days, if you feel like it, you do your best to unsettle faith in them, among those with whom you associate; and then in a day or two you are advocating the testimonies again. Now, my brother, are you anchored anywhere, or are you not more like the waves of the sea, tossed to and fro, unstable, unreliable, moved not by principle, but by emotion? Will not your work be of the same character? Will it not ravel out? Both you and your wife are under the reproof of God. What are you going to do about it? Will you draw nigh to God? Will you set your own house in order? Will you unitedly make earnest work for eternity? Or will you throw down the yoke of Jesus, refuse to lift His burdens, and choose to be independent, perverse, willful, uncontrollable? … You often deny what you have said or done." *Pamphlets #96 Testimonies on the Case of Elder E.P. Daniels*

"Before the great trouble shall come upon the world such as has never been since there was a nation, those who have faltered and who would ignorantly lead in unsafe paths will reveal this before the real vital test, the last proving comes, so that whatsoever they may say will not be regarded as voicing the True Shepherd. The time of our educating will soon be over. We have no time to lose in walking through clouds of doubt and uncertainty because of uncertain voices." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1002 LM

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Issues of Minor Importance

John R. Pearson

"Also, He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" ' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:9–14

In Acts 11, there is an account of Peter's reporting to the newly-formed Christian church about the conversion of Gentiles into the Christian faith. Verse 1 states, "… the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."

At this time, the Christian church was developing and organizing, and as you can imagine, there were those who felt the need to cling to as many of the previous rituals as possible—some out of Pharisaical authoritarianism and some simply out of adhering to tradition.

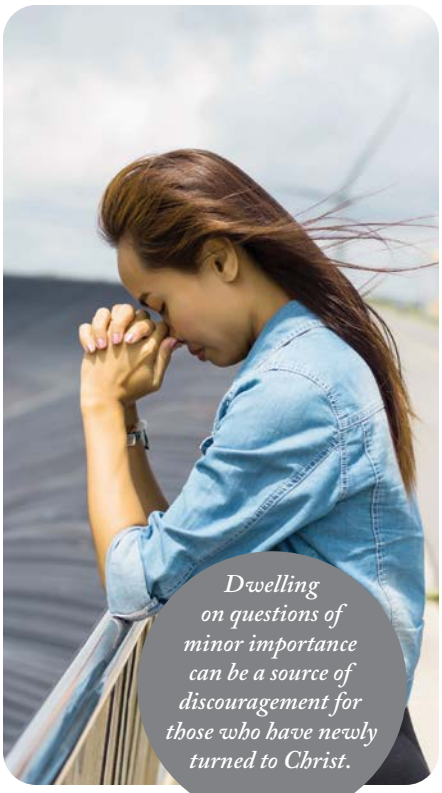
Then we see in Acts 15, after many other miracles occurred showing that the gospel was opened to the Gentiles, Peter and James both participated in sharing this good news with the church, along with the fact that the ceremonial law and the rite of circumcision were no longer to be part of the newly-organized church's religious practices.

In describing this event, Inspiration states the following:

"Peter's address [recorded in Acts 15:6–11, regarding the opening of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles] brought the assembly to a point where they could listen with patience to Paul and Barnabas, who related their experience in working for the Gentiles. 'All the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.'

"James also bore his testimony with decision, declaring that it was God's purpose to bestow upon the Gentiles the same privileges and blessings that had been granted to the Jews.

"The Holy Spirit saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts, and the mind of the apostles regarding this matter was as the mind of the Spirit of God. [In other words, they were yielding to the influence of the Holy Spirit.] James presided at the council, and his final decision was, 'Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.'" *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194



Dwelling on questions of minor importance can be a source of discouragement for those who have newly turned to Christ.

James' decision confirmed that the leaders in this "new" movement should not trouble the new converts by requiring adherence to the requirements of the ceremonial law.

The inspired narrative, after refuting the claim of the Catholic Church that Peter was the first pope, continues:

"In this instance, James seems to have been chosen as the one to announce the decision arrived at by the council. It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, should not be urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them. James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ." Ibid., 195

Further Examination

It is clear from this passage that dwelling on questions of minor importance can be a source of discouragement for those who have newly turned to Christ.

Mrs. White considers several things to be matters of "minor importance," including eating, dress, recreation, fashion—each, of course, having an appropriate and important context which provides further clarity to what aspect each of the matters concerns. For example, we see in Gospel Workers, 139, "such matters as eating and recreation are of minor importance," it is important to determine through further study under what circumstances this statement applies.

Researching the phrase "minor importance" in the writings of Mrs. White, results in such statements as these:

"Vanity, fashion, and matters of minor importance are allowed to absorb the attention, and the physical and moral education of the precious children is neglected." *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, 60

"It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance." *Counsels for the Church*, 335

"Nicodemus came to the Lord, thinking to enter into a long discussion with Him concerning points of minor importance … ." *Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, 72

"It means that the time usually spent in matters of minor importance should be spent in searching the Scriptures, that you may know how to labor successfully in the work to which you are appointed. It means that you must become acquainted with the Spirit of God. It means that you must do much praying, and have much serious thought as to how you may put to use every capability of your nature, and carry forward the work of God effectively." Ibid., 68

We can clearly see from the above and following quotations that there is a danger in allowing matters of minor

> *It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance.*

importance to assume more importance and significance than they should.

"The fast-fulfilling signs of the time declare that the great day of the Lord is right upon us. In that day shall it be said of any of us, 'This man was called by God, but he would not hear, he would not give heed. Again and again, the Spirit moved upon his heart, but he said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." This man saw the Saviour's sacrifice in a beautiful light, but some matter of minor importance came in, and his heart was captivated. When the Spirit spoke again, the call was not respected. Every gracious, heavenly influence was dismissed?'" *The Review and Herald*, March 10, 1904

"It is the desire and plan of Satan to bring in among us those who will go to great extremes—people of narrow minds, who are critical and sharp, and very tenacious in holding their own conceptions of what the truth means. They will be exacting, and will seek to enforce rigorous duties, and go to great lengths in matters of minor importance, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law—judgment and mercy and the love of God. Through the work of a few of this class of persons, the whole body of Sabbath keepers will be designated as bigoted, Pharisaical, and fanatical. The work of the truth, because of these workers, will be thought to be unworthy of notice." Ibid., May 29, 1888

Just as the early Christian church sometimes had challenges in differentiating between saving truths and things of minor importance to those new to the faith, so too did the early Adventist church. How to resolve such situations was addressed in this way:

"We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He and the Father are one.

"Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer, and without conversation with others, study the point of difference, asking light from heaven." *Christian Experience and Teachings*, 193

The following quotation better explains why it is important not to let matters of minor importance be the all-consuming drive in our religious walk.

"To those who followed Him [Jesus] He explained the word of God so clearly that they loved to be in His company. He led their minds from the inferior things of earth to the holy principles of truth and righteousness. He prepared them to understand what is comprehended in transformation of character after the divine similitude. His words encouraged faith. He carried the minds of His hearers from this world, with its busy cares, to the higher, nobler world, which so many had lost sight of. He showed that every moment of life is fraught with eternal significance. He declared that the things of this world are of minor importance in comparison with the things of the world to come." *Lift Him Up*, 90

So, let's not get worked up about things of minor importance. Let's turn away from the things of this earth—things of minor importance—and instead, set our minds on things above, not on things here on the earth. Let us be like the tax collector and not the Pharisee. LM

John R. Pearson *is the office manager and a Steps to Life board member. He can be reached by email at johnpearson@stepstolife.org or by phone at 316-788-5559.*

No More Death

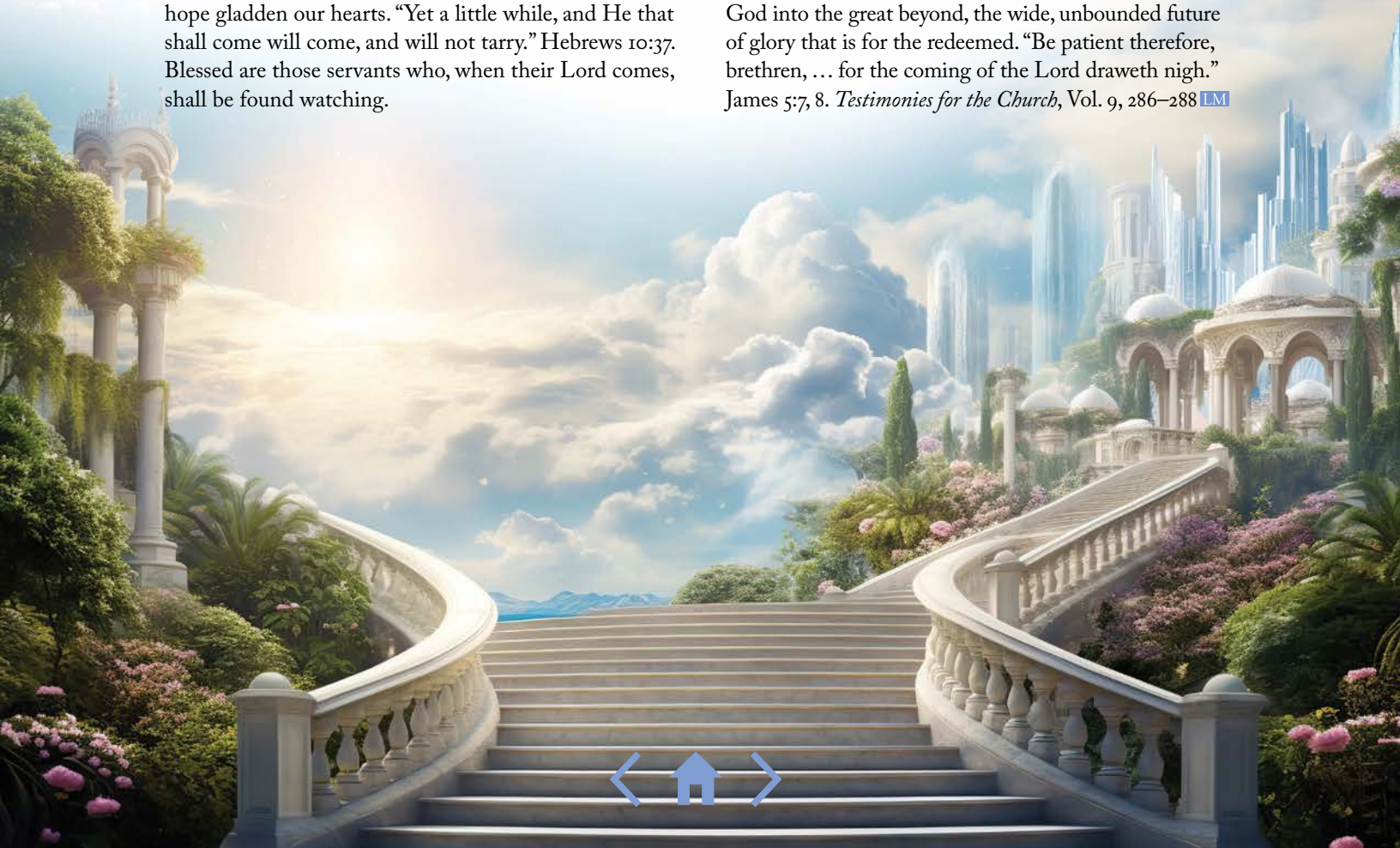
"No more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."
Revelation 21:4

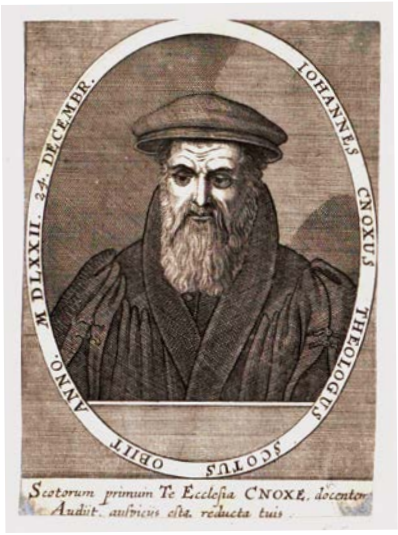
Pain cannot exist in the atmosphere of heaven. In the home of the redeemed there will be no tears, no funeral trains, no badges of mourning. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isaiah 33:24. One rich tide of happiness will flow and deepen as eternity rolls on.

We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world. He has opened the gates of paradise to all who receive and believe on Him. To them He gives power to become the sons and daughters of God. Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Hebrews 10:37. Blessed are those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching.

We are homeward bound. He who loved us so much as to die for us hath builded for us a city. The New Jerusalem is our place of rest. There will be no sadness in the city of God. No wail of sorrow, no dirge of crushed hopes and buried affections, will evermore be heard. Soon the garments of heaviness will be changed for the wedding garment. Soon we shall witness the coronation of our King. Those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer's glory in the kingdom of God.

It will not be long till we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence, all the trials and sufferings of this life will be as nothingness. … "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Look up, look up, and let your faith continually increase. Let this faith guide you along the narrow path that leads through the gates of the city of God into the great beyond, the wide, unbounded future of glory that is for the redeemed. "Be patient therefore, brethren, … for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James 5:7, 8. *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 286–288 LM





John Knox (1514–1572)

John Knox and the Reformation of Scotland

Ken McCaughey

Scotland, before the ninth century, was inhabited by savage tribes who practiced the rites and worshiped the same gods as the Assyrians. This country had no harbor where ships could put into port. Because of this, no mariner visited this land, ensuring that Scotland would remain an isolated country for many years.

"Scotland had no centralized government. The prince bishops owned about one half of the land, and the secular nobility owned or controlled the other half. The king had very little power. He had no standing army of his own and no personal body-guard, but had to depend on the feudal militia for protection and support." Lars Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church*, 312

Caesar had attempted to conquer Scotland without success. His efforts were followed by missionaries who were more successful in gaining a foothold. Columba, born in 521, began evangelizing the northern and western parts of Scotland, as well as England, from the island of Iona off the Scottish coast.

Catholicism Enters Scotland

In the twelfth century, the light that Columba had cast in Iona was waxing dim, paving the way for Roman Catholicism to establish itself in Scotland. This did not come about as the result of the conversion of the inhabitants of that land, but by the power of the king. The men, as well as the system, came from another land.

The limits against holding public offices imposed upon ecclesiastics of other countries, such as France, were not set up in Scotland. "Bishops and abbots filled all the great posts at court, and discharged all the highest offices in the state." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, Book 24, 467

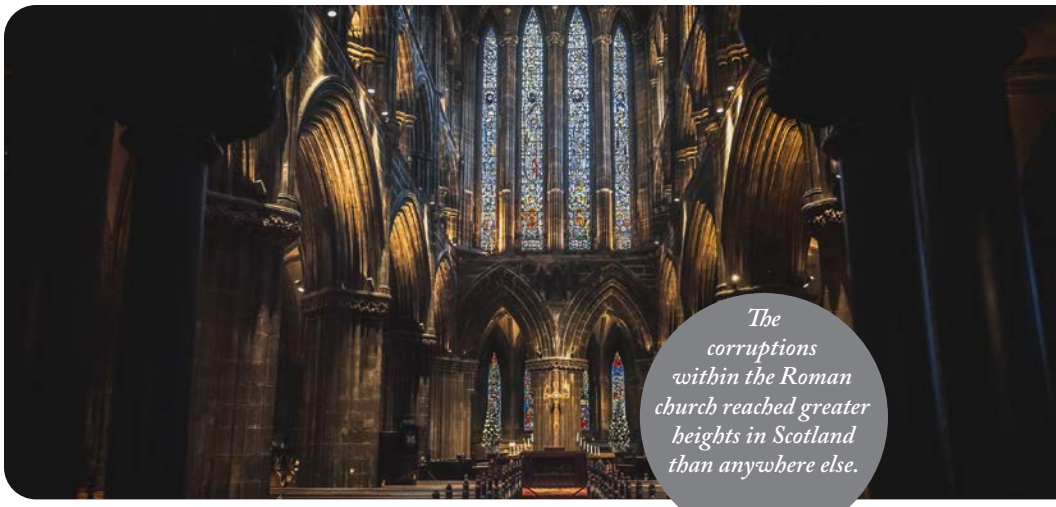
Darkness covered the land, but there was a glimmer of light, and Pope John XXII complained that there were heretics in the land. The first martyr, John Resby, was burned in 1407. He was an Englishman and a follower of Wycliffe. Others followed him to the stake in the next few years. The University of Saint Andrews was founded in 1413. A requirement for the Master of Arts degree was that the applicant must agree to defend the Roman Church against all accusers.

Defenders of Scottish Freedom

The defenders of Scottish freedom and the friends of Protestant reform merged to form a strong party which was friendly toward England. The secular nobility saw that the Reformation would aid them in crushing the power of the detested prince bishops. A large number of the prominent noble families openly accepted Protestantism.

It is here that John Knox enters the picture. It would be this man in whose hands would rest the continuation and success of the Reformation in Scotland.

Knox's parents were financially well off enough to give him a liberal education. He first entered grammar school in Hadington where he learned the principles of the Latin language. From there, in 1529, his father, sent him to St.



The corruptions within the Roman church reached greater heights in Scotland than anywhere else.

Glasgow Cathedral, Scotland.

Andrews University of Glasgow, the most celebrated seminary in Scotland. The curriculum in this institution of learning consisted of the philosophy of Aristotle, scholastic theology, canon and civil law, and the study of Latin.

The studies in scholastic philosophy were not satisfying to him, so he turned to the study of divine truth and the labor of the ministry. At the end of his studies, he received the Master of Arts degree, and then taught philosophy for a time. His abilities excelled those of his master in the dialectic art. In 1539, at the age of 25—younger than the age required by the canons of the church—he was ordained a priest.

Not satisfied with the things he was reading from the excerpts of the ancient authors, he decided to go to the authors themselves. Jerome and Augustine appealed to him. Jerome led him to read the Scriptures in their original language. In the works of Augustine, he discovered sentiments quite opposite to the Papal church. "Augustine and Jerome led Knox to the feet of the Greatest. The future reformer now opens the Sacred Oracles, and he who had once wandered in the dry and thirsty wilderness of scholasticism finds himself at the fountain and well-head of Divine knowledge." Ibid., 483

In 1543, as a result of this study, Knox turned from scholastic theology to evangelical religion. He renounced the Roman Catholic church and commenced his career as a Reformer.

Before Knox had embraced the Reform doctrine, a light was beginning to shine in Scotland, and Patrick Hamilton was moved by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Reform doctrine. He went to Germany and spoke with Martin Luther, then went to the Protestant university in Marburg to study the Scriptures. Because the writings of Luther were so eagerly read, the Parliament, in 1525, prohibited the printing and distribution of his literature.

After completing his studies, Hamilton had an irresistible desire to return to Scotland where he exposed the corruption of the popish clergy. Because of this work, he soon came to the attention of the Roman Catholic authorities. Arrested by order of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, Hamilton was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. George Wishart followed him into the flames.

Their teaching of the reform faith came to the attention of the Cardinal whose only goal was to completely control all Scotland. His efforts to destroy the heretics did not turn out as he had hoped, instead adding fuel to the fire. For every martyr who perished, a little company of followers arose to fill his place. From this time on, the Reforma-



tion in Scotland was dependent upon the political power in control.

The corruptions within the Roman church reached greater heights in Scotland than anywhere else within the western church. "Superstition and religious imposture, in their grossest forms, gained an easy admission among a rude and ignorant people. By means of these, the clergy attained to an exorbitant degree of opulence and power; which were accompanied, as they always have been, with corruption of their order, and of the whole system of religion." Thomas M'Crie, *The Life of John Knox*, 20

Half of the wealth of Scotland belonged to the clergy, although most of it was in the hands of a few who had control of the larger body, because they had taken advantage of the ignorance and superstition of the masses. "The ignorance of the clergy respecting religion was as gross as the dissoluteness of their morals. Even bishops were not ashamed to confess that they were unacquainted with the canon of their faith, and had never read any part of the sacred Scriptures, except what they met with in their missals." Ibid., 21

Reforms Begin

It can be said that the Reformation in Scotland began with the entrance of Tyndale's New Testament into that country, the circulation of Luther's and Reformed writings, and by returning students from universities on the Continent and in England. By act of Parliament in 1579, all the people had access to the Bible in their own tongue.

John Knox became well known as a powerful preacher. In his preaching, he proclaimed that the Roman Catholic Church was the synagogue of Satan and that the pope was the antichrist. Knox began his career as an educator at the seminary of St. Andrews in 1547, which lasted only a short time. A call came to him from the Protestant ministers of Scotland to join them as a public speaker. He at first declined, saying that he had not been called to that employment, but a short time later he accepted. His preaching was so successful that many at St. Andrews and in the towns surrounding the university, were won to the Protestant cause.

In June of 1547, a French fleet captured the Castle of Saint Andrews, and Knox was taken prisoner, confined to the galleys for the next two years. The Reformation in Scotland seemed to came to a standstill with Knox out of the country.

Upon his release in 1549, he moved to England where he preached for a time in Berwick, but always he wrote to his countrymen encouraging and instructing them. It was here he met and married Marjory Bowes who bore him three children before her death. From Berwick, Knox went to London and busied himself with preaching against the corruption within the church as well as nurturing the followers of the Reform.

Because of the anger he aroused in the leadership of the Roman church, Knox left England in 1554, and sailed to Dieppe in France. He remained there for a time meditating, preaching, studying, and writing letters of encouragement to those reformers remaining in Scotland, before going to Geneva, Switzerland.

Knox returned to Scotland in 1556, preaching against the Catholic mass and begging the Queen-regent Mary of Guise to support the gospel, but she refused and Knox was forced to flee to Europe. When Elizabeth became Queen of England in 1558, he returned to Scotland.

However, Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots, denounced Elizabeth as an illegitimate usurper, and proclaimed herself as the rightful queen of England. Mary's claim threatened to bring both Scotland and England under the control of France. Knox began preaching powerful sermons, proclaiming that Scotland must be free and upholding the idea that the secular power was not to control the religious. "Wherever Knox went, his preaching was like a match set to kindling wood." Lars Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church*, 315

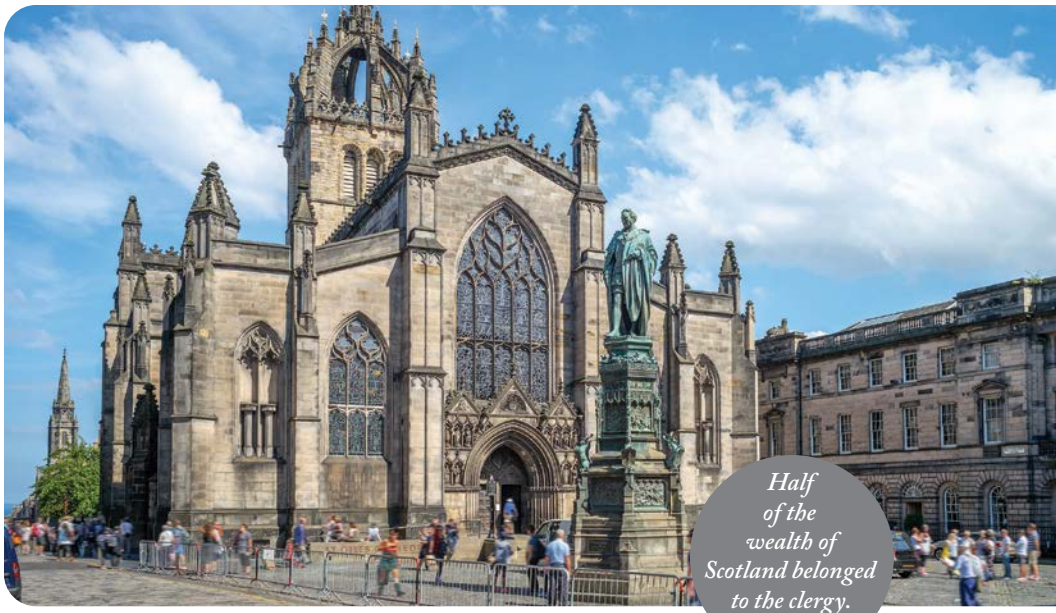
The Scottish people revolted against the Catholic Church, breaking images, storming and looting monasteries, and commanding priests to cease saying mass. The result of all this "rebellion" on the part of the people was that Mary Stuart ordered French troops to put it down. Knox encouraged the people to meet force with force and the combat ended in a draw. France then sent reinforcements in order to maintain her hold on Scotland.

Knox appealed to Queen Elizabeth to send a fleet to resist the French. She sent both an army and a fleet to help the Protestants in Scotland. Knox worked as chaplain and liaison officer negotiating with the English government so that the cause of Protestantism might continue to be victorious. The presence of an English army induced the French to withdraw and leave the government of Scotland under the control of the Council of Lords. The treaty was signed on July 6, 1560, shortly after the death of Mary of Guise, and stipulated that all foreign troops and arms should be removed from Scotland and that no Frenchman could hold any important office of state.

In April of 1557, two men from Edinburgh arrived with a letter of invitation asking Knox to return to Scotland and continue the work of reform. They told him that the followers of the Reform doctrine remained steadfast, and their adversaries were rapidly losing credibility among the Scottish people. He accordingly secured a replacement for himself in the church, set his affairs in order, and returned to Dieppe, in preparation for sailing to Scotland.

However, before he sailed, further news arrived of a different nature from the first intelligence he had received, telling him the Roman Church had gained new power in Scotland and things were not as good as first related to him. Therefore, Knox spent some time traveling in France and preaching.

In December, he returned to Geneva. During the following year he was engaged, along with several other men, in translating the Bible into English. Their Bible became known as the Geneva Bible.



Half of the wealth of Scotland belonged to the clergy.

St. Giles Cathedral on Royal Mile in Edinburgh.

In January of 1559, Knox left Geneva for the last time. "The nation had now found what it needed, a man able to lead it in the great war in which it was entering." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 490

Following this treaty, the most important parliament met on July 1, 1560. It was attended by a large number of barons, nobles, and lords—Knox being among them—and it abolished the celebration of the mass and the jurisdiction of the pope. The law against the mass was so strong that any offender was threatened with the death penalty on the third conviction.

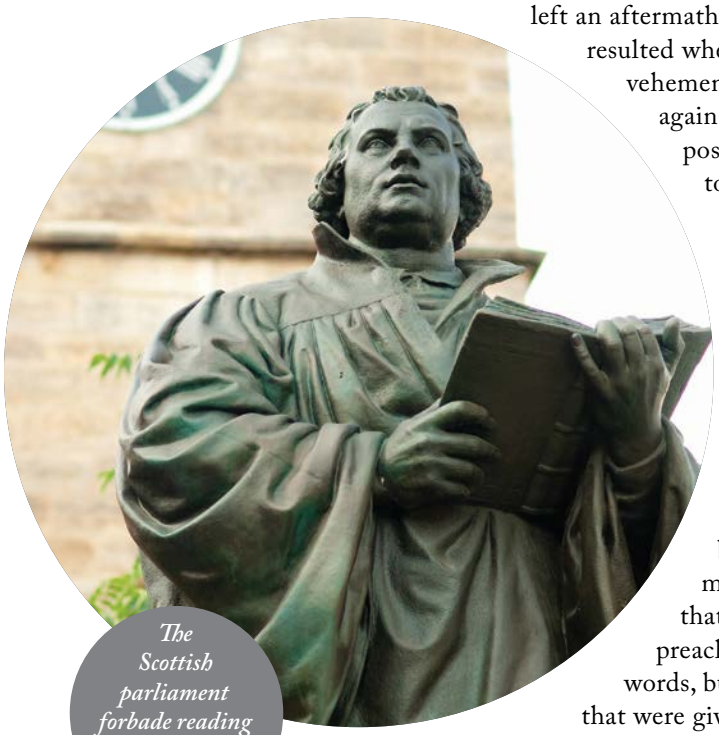
Knox became the church leader in Scotland and at the request of Parliament he prepared a confession of faith, the *Confession Scoticana*, which was adopted on August 17, 1560. The following week the Parliament passed the Laws of the Estate resulting in the complete rupture with Rome. In January, 1561, the Parliament adopted the "First Book of Discipline" which had been written by Knox.

"The system worked out by Calvin was applied to the entire nation. In each parish the pastor and the presbyters constituted an administrative and disciplinary board. The presbyters were elected by the congregation. In the larger centers meetings for discussion were held which later developed into 'presbyteries.' Pastors and congregations within specified regions were governed by synods, and overall was the 'General Assembly.'" Lars Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church*, 316

Knox and Mary, Queen of Scots

"Knox had still another battle to fight. Mary, Queen of Scots, the unfortunate Mary who by her own unwise acts lost her crown and later her life, returned from France as a widow at eighteen, in August, 1561. She was determined to restore Scotland to the Catholic Church.

"The most dramatic period of Knox's life doubtless falls during her reign as he tilted and sparred verbally with Mary when she repeatedly summoned him into her presence. The first such skirmish resulted when Knox condemned the mass which she had celebrated her first Sunday after arriving in Scotland. He had said that one mass was more terrible to him than 10,000 armed invaders. Five times, some say six, she called him before her.



The Scottish parliament forbade reading Martin Luther's books.

"The second occasion was Knox's sermon against the persecution of the Huguenots in France, an event Mary celebrated with a ball at Holyrood. The next also concerned the mass. The fourth, which left an aftermath of peril, resulted when Knox had vehemently spoken against her proposed marriage to a Catholic, the son of the king of Spain. This time she dissolved in tears and sobs as she railed against him; but Knox maintained that he was not preaching his own words, but the words that were given him out of the Scriptures." Gideon D. Hagstoz, *Heroes of the Reformation*, 86

"It would have but little availed Scotsmen in the nineteenth century if Knox had wrought up their fathers to a little political enthusiasm, but had failed to lead them to the Bible, that great awakener of the human soul, and bulwark of the rights of conscience. If this had been all, the Scots, after a few abortive attempts, like those of misguided France, to reconcile political freedom with spiritual servitude, would assuredly have fallen back under the old yoke, and would have been lying at this day in the gulf of 'Papistrie.' Discarding this narrow visionary project, Knox grasped the one eternal principal of liberty, the government of the human conscience by the Bible, and planting his Reformation upon this great foundation stone, he endowed it with the attribute of durability." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 515

While the Reformation in England dealt with the freedom of the throne from the supremacy of the pope, in Scotland the reform movement was concerned primarily with the religious center.

"The Reformation in Scotland seems to have been accompanied by greater violence than elsewhere in Europe. It has been stated that the corruption of the Catholic Church had reached a greater height in Scotland than in any other country, unless it was Italy." Gideon D. Hagstoz, *Heroes of the Reformation*, 85

On August 24, 1560, Parliament abolished the Pope's jurisdiction along with the mass, and rescinded the laws in favor of the Romish church.

"Knox's idea of the church was, in brief, a divinely originated, a divinely enfranchised, and a divinely governed society. Its members were all those who made profession of the gospel; its law was the Bible, and its king was Christ." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 496

Mary Stuart, queen of Scots, was a strong supporter of the Roman Catholic Church and did all she could to stop the Reformation in Scotland. She used everything within her power to gain her ends, not excluding deceit, flattery, and force. She would stop at nothing to get what she wanted. Knox met with her on several occasions to answer the charges laid against him, but he felt no fear because he knew that he stood on the banner of truth.

In August of 1561, she arrived and took the reins of government into her own hands. She proceeded to consolidate her power and established the Roman Catholic religion as supreme in the land. In December of 1563, Knox was put on trial for treason, among other things, before the council and queen Mary. The future of Knox and the Reformation in Scotland hung in the balance at this trial. The great Scottish reformer was acquitted and Mary, because of her indiscretions, was imprisoned and removed from the throne.

"The two master-qualities of Knox were faith and courage. The fundamental quality was his faith; courage was the noble fruit that sprang from it." J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 514

By the year 1567 a new monarch, the infant James, came to the throne of Scotland with the Earl of Murray, a close friend of Knox,



The Catholic University of Saint Andrews was founded in 1413.

as regent. The Parliament ratified all the acts that had been passed in 1560, accepting the Protestant faith as the religion of the country, and abolishing papal jurisdiction. "From this point Knox could look back over the battles he had waged and the toils he had borne, and contemplate with thankfulness their issue in the overthrow of the Papal tyranny, and the establishment of a scriptural faith in Scotland." Ibid., 511

The years 1568 and 1569, were the happiest years in the life of the Reformer and the most prosperous for his beloved country in that century. All was going well for the church, and she was enlarging her borders. His last years were spent in opposing the introduction into the Presbyterian church of the Tulchan bishops, which were unique to Scotland.

He objected to the institution of this new order of ecclesiastics into the church because he believed it to be a robbery of the patrimony of the church, and because it was an invasion of the Presbyterian equality which had been settled in the Scottish Kirk. His opposition delayed the introduction of this arrangement until the year of his death.

In 1570, Knox, never enjoying a strong constitution, became very feeble. A stroke of apoplexy affected his speech and necessitated his removal to Saint Andrews where he had to be lifted up into the pulpit to preach. He continued preaching until he could no longer do so due to weakness. On November 24, 1572, John Knox breathed his last and was laid to rest.

"From the time that he embraced the Reformed doctrines, the desire of propagating them, and of delivering his countrymen from the delusions and corruptions of popery, became his ruling passion, to which he was always ready to sacrifice his ease, his interest, his reputation and his life. An ardent attachment to civil liberty held the next place in his breast, to love of the reformed religion." Thomas M'crie, *The Life of John Knox*, 207

The void left by the death of Knox was more than ably filled by Andrew Melville (1545–1622). Melville was one of the greatest teachers and administrators of his day. It was under his guidance that the educational system in Scotland was established, making it one of the most noted systems anywhere in the western world.

Melville carried on a running, uphill battle for the firm establishment of the Presbyterian form of church government free of all secular control because the people and ministers were not strong enough to establish sufficient power in the Parliament and other ruling bodies to completely eliminate the Roman prelates from maintaining a firm control over the secular arm of the government. He not only opposed the Roman prelates in Scotland but he also had to deal with the king, James VI. For it was this James whose first goal was to obtain the throne of England, which he did upon the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, and then to make the Roman Catholic Church supreme in both countries. This war for supremacy he waged to his death in 1622.

"The first part of the mighty task which awaited Protestantism in the sixteenth century was to breathe life into the nation … The second part of the great task of Protestantism was to make the nations free … . It was not the state in Scotland that gave freedom to the church: it was the church that gave freedom to the state." Ibid., 530, 531

Reprinted from June and July 1997 *LandMarks*. LM

That Other Angel

Clues – NKJV

Clues

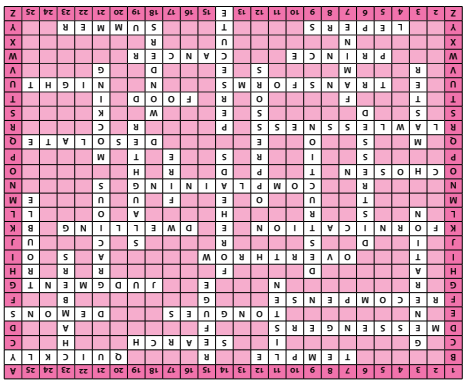
B7 I heard a loud voice from the _____. .....Revelation 16:1
B20 Behold, I am coming _____ and My reward is with Me. .....Revelation 22:12
C14 You will find Me when you _____ for Me with your whole heart. .....Jeremiah 29:13
D2 The _____ returned and told Jacob Esau, his brother, is coming. .....Genesis 32:6
E11 They will speak with new _____. .....Mark 16:17
E21 They are spirits of _____ performing signs. .....Revelation 16:14
F2 I will _____ their deeds on their own head. .....Ezekiel 9:10
G18 The earth is preserved until the _____ and perdition of ungodly men. .....2 Peter 3:7
I7 If it is of God, you cannot _____ it. .....Acts 5:34–39
K2 The kings of the earth have committed _____ with her. .....Revelation 18:3
K16 Babylon is a _____ place of demons. .....Revelation 18:2
N9 There was much _____ among the people. .....John 7:12
O2 Many are called but few are _____. .....Matthew 22:14
Q18 Your house is left to you _____. .....Matthew 23:38
R2 Because _____ will abound the love of many will grow cold. .....Matthew 24:12
T16 We will eat our own _____ and wear our own apparel. .....Isaiah 4:1
U5 Satan himself _____ himself into an angel of light. .....2 Corinthians 11:14
U21 The _____ is coming when no one can work. .....John 9:4
W5 Michael shall stand up, the great _____. .....Daniel 12:1
W14 Their message will spread like _____. .....2 Timothy 2:17
Y4 Heal the sick, cleanse the _____, raise the dead. .....Matthew 10:8
Y18 The harvest is past, the _____ is ended.....Jeremiah 8:20

Down

B11 Call upon Me and pray to Me and I will _____ to you. .....Jeremiah 29:12
B15 God is our _____ and strength. .....Psalm 46:1
B23 Enter your _____ and shut your doors behind you. .....Isaiah 26:20
C3 All these things will come upon this _____. .....Matthew 23:36
G21 O Lord be _____ to us.....Isaiah 33:2
G25 It is the time of Jacob's _____ but he shall be saved out of it. .....Jeremiah 30:7
H9 When they say peace and safety then sudden _____ comes upon them. .....1 Thessalonians 5:3
H14 The image to the beast causes all to receive a mark in their _____. .....Revelation 13:16
J6 Jacob was afraid and _____. .....Genesis 32:7
J19 You _____ the fatlings, but do not feed the flock. .....Ezekiel 34:3
M12 Children are their _____ and women rule over them. .....Isaiah 3:12
M17 He performs great signs making _____ come down from heaven. .....Revelation 13:13
P21 Others _____ said, They are full of new wine. .....Acts 2:13
Q3 The _____ of the house has risen up and shut the door. .....Luke 13:25–27
R14 When they _____ you in this city, flee to another. .....Matthew 10:23
S18 False prophets will show great _____ to deceive. .....Matthew 24:24
T7 I will send a _____ on the land of hearing the word of the Lord. .....Amos 8:11

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Answer Key:





Victory on the Pillow

A few minutes after Dorothy went to her bedroom to get ready for bed, Mother saw her come out, walk without a word through the living room, through the kitchen, and out the back door. Just a minute or two later, she saw the girl come in again, close the back door firmly behind her; then go straight through the kitchen and living room and into her bedroom without a "Hello" or a "Hi" or even a glance in her Mother's direction.

Something strange was going on, Mother was sure, for she had never seen Dorothy behave like this before. She got up from her chair and started for the bedroom to ask a few questions; then she thought better of it and sat down again. Dorothy would probably tell her all about it in her own good time.

As it turned out, Mother found the answer sooner than she had expected. Next morning when she went into Dorothy's bedroom after she had left for school, she saw a note lying on her pillow. She picked it up and started to read what it said; but as she read, her eyes misted over and her mind seemed to go back to events that had taken place more than six months before.

Back about that time, Dorothy had asked her mother if it wouldn't be all right for her to wear a bracelet. "Some of the other girls at school are getting them," she explained.

"But you remember what the Bible says about jewelry, don't you, dear?" Mother said. "You've memorized that text in 1 Timothy 2:9 that says that women should dress modestly, without 'gold, or pearls, or costly array.'"

"But Mother," Dorothy said. "It's just a bracelet."

"I know dear," Mother said. "But bracelets are jewelry."

Mother saw a scowl come over Dorothy's face, and it felt as if a great knife were being cut into her heart. For up to this time Dorothy had always been willing to accept her mother's counsel.

Mother watched as the weeks went by, and she was glad to notice that Dorothy never wore a bracelet. Then after about three months there was a story in a magazine she had received at church about jewelry. She read it, and thought it was very good. She asked Dorothy if she had read it.

"Mm-huh," Dorothy nodded.

"What did you think of it?" Mother asked.

"Mmm," Dorothy grunted.

Mother guessed that Dorothy hadn't yet given up the idea of buying a bracelet. She slipped an arm around Dorothy's shoulders and said, "Please pray about it, dear."

Dorothy squirmed out from her mother's arm and walked off.

Mother determined to pray harder than ever. She did not realize what was going on in Dorothy's mind. She did not know, for instance, that Dorothy had gone out and bought herself a bracelet and was wearing it whenever she was away from the house. Dorothy knew she shouldn't wear it. She knew she ought to get rid of it. But she wanted to wear it so much. She prayed about it. She thought through what the Bible said. It was a tremendous battle, and it went on for six months.

Now Mother, still standing by Dorothy's bed, blinked the mistiness from her eyes and read the note she had found on the pillow.

"Dear Mother: You don't know it, but six months ago I bought a bracelet, and I've been wearing it when you weren't around. I've prayed a lot about it, and at last I've gotten the victory. Last night I took the bracelet outside and threw it in the garbage can. I'll never wear one again. Your loving daughter, Dorothy."

Mother was so happy when she read that, that she dropped a tear right in the middle of the note paper.

I'm wondering if there is some victory you need to win. With Jesus' help, why don't you win that victory today? Then put a little note on your pillow, telling Mother all about it. What a lot of happy mothers there could be tomorrow morning!

"In every temptation He [God] will be at our [your] side to give us [you] the victory." *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1891

40 *Favorite Children's Stories*, Lawrence Maxwell, ©2009, 98–100 LM



Nothing More Than Feelings



Have you ever found yourself in a situation that after serious reflection you realized you shouldn't be in? Have you looked at the situation and wondered, "How did I get here? How did I allow this to happen?"

Too often, we discover that we have allowed our feelings to be in control of our thoughts and actions. Feelings can be stronger than our common sense, logical thought and conclusion, knowledge gleaned from intense study and actual life experience. Feelings can make you do things you never thought you would.

Take a look around our world today. TV, streaming, online gaming, social media, books, magazines, even word of mouth all can cause us to do illogical, impractical, illegal, and harmful things. Why? Because we allow our feelings to take over.

Words, feelings, emotions, all have their place, but they must all be kept under the control of our spiritual nature. Have you ever intensely wanted something, although you knew it wasn't something you should have or be doing? Have you felt the Holy Spirit speaking to you, telling you this will only hurt you if you keep going? Have you asked the Lord to give you what you wanted and He said no, so you stopped praying because you couldn't ask Him for something He is telling you will hurt you, but you want it so much you can't give it up? Friends, our feelings will lie to us.

"Impressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and impressions. These are not safe guides." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, 413

"You are guided by your feelings and are governed by your experience. … Feelings are a poor criterion, especially when under the control of a strong imagination and firm will." Ibid., Vol. 3, 68

"The religion of Christ is not a religion of mere emotion. You cannot depend upon your feelings for an evidence of acceptance with God, for feelings are variable. You must plant your feet on the promises of God's word … and learn to live by faith." *In Heavenly Places*, 126

Friends, first we must keep our eyes focused above. Second, we must bury ourselves in the study of the word of God. Third, we must never, never give up prayer. The more we want to reject praying, is the time we most earnestly need to engage in it. And lastly, we must grab the out-stretched hand of God and plead that He will help us to surrender ourselves to Him and His will; seeking every day to turn away from the feelings of our sinful nature and to determine to allow the transformation only He can make in our lives.

"The whole Bible is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Received, believed, obeyed, it is the great instrumentality in the transformation of character." *The Signs of the Times*, October 10, 1906

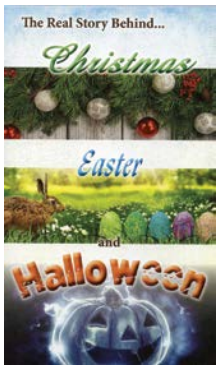
"Behold in the cross of Christ the only sure guarantee for individual excellence and success." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, 1112

"God's only standard of righteousness [His law], [is] the only sure test of character." *Maranatha*, 214

"It is God's purpose that we should be educated by providential experience and be habitual learners, building securely on Jesus Christ, the only sure foundation, which will stand fast forever. … We must claim His righteousness by living faith, and depend on Him and abide in Him alone. … This will scatter our self-sufficiency, our pride and vanity, to the winds." *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (1987), 364

Remember, the Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end, is the way of death." Proverbs 14:12 LM

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November Sermon of the Month

Will You Succeed?

John J. Grosboll

Denying self. Taking up your cross. Following. This is the mystery of the Christian religion. If you save your life, you will lose it. But if you practice self-denial—lose your life—then you will get it back.

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

From the Desk *of* Pastor John J. Grosboll

November

Dear Friend,

Cain said to the Lord, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The answer to that question, is yes, every one of us is our brother's keeper—we are obligated to share with them what we would like to have them share with us if our circumstances were reversed.

"God has committed to His people a sacred trust. 'We are laborers together with God.' 'As Thou hast sent Me into the world,' said Christ, speaking of His disciples, 'even so have I also sent them into the world.' In the formation of character, we are to represent the One who gave His life for the world, and if we are alert, we shall see, on the right hand and on the left, opportunities to speak words for the Master." *The Review and Herald*, August 15, 1907

"If we neglect these opportunities, the time will come when there will be spoken to us by those we have not warned, words of reproach and bitterness: 'You knew of these terrible judgments that were coming. We were associated together, but you did not tell us. Why did you not warn us, that we might have escaped?' May God help us that we may not have upon our garments, because of our neglect, the blood of souls!" Ibid.

"Divine love has been stirred to its unfathomable depths for the sake of men, and angels marvel to behold in the recipients of so great love a mere surface gratitude. Angels marvel at man's shallow appreciation of the love of God. Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. This is the wrath of the Lamb. To those who claim fellowship with Christ, yet have been indifferent to the needs of their fellow men, He will declare in the great Judgment Day, 'I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Luke 13:27." *The Desire of Ages*, 825

Your brother in sharing the gospel,



Pastor John J Grosboll

Alone with Jesus!

Alone with Jesus! Oh, how sweet
To sit, like Mary, at His feet,
To look into His loving face,
And feel the touch of His embrace!
His hand in mine, my hand in His,
Before He speaks on gracious word,
I look, and know He is my Lord.
The chief among ten thousand He
Is now to me, and e'er will be.
Upon His bosom let me rest,
And feel I am supremely blest.

Alone with Jesus! Oh, how sweet
To meet Him at the mercy-seat!
To tell Him every doubt and fear,
Pour all my sorrows in His ear!
And then, assured of pard'ning love,
To rise all care and sin above,
And from the foolish world retire,
Resting on Him, my soul's desire.
He seems so near, so very near,
He is so dear, so very dear,
That earth recedes, and, lifted high,
I seem to soar above the sky.

Alone with Jesus! Oh, how sweet!
My heart is full, my joy complete.
He speaks, and oh, such words I hear,
So full of wisdom and good cheer!
Love in His eye, love in His voice,
How can I but in Him rejoice?
He condescends to speak to me,
And says, "Dear one, I died for thee."
Then shall I not in prayer and praise
My tribute to the Saviour raise?
But sweetest far, with Him alone,
To hear him say, "Thine art My own."

Peter Stryker, D.D. in *Christian Work*
from *The Review and Herald*, July 3, 1900



2026 Kansas State Fair

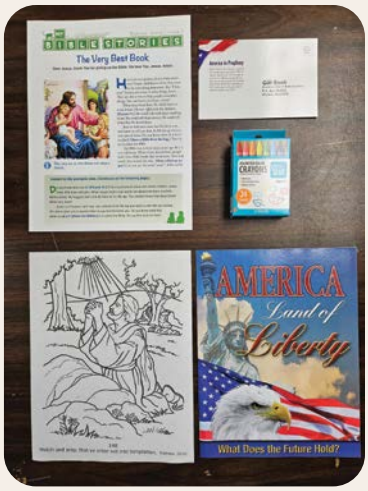
It's that time of year again and Steps to Life and the Prairie Meadows Church of Free Seventh-day Adventists manned a booth at the Kansas State Fair this last September. By the Lord's grace, we were able once again to have a double booth display, just as we have for the last 30 years.



John Korponay and Bonnie Rankin serving the public at the Steps to Life booth.



Many fairgoers stopped by the booth with interest in the literature.



A packet of crayons and coloring books were ready for the children. Plus a bonus magazine for their parents.

John Korponay

This year we experienced a heightened interest in the books and other materials we offered free to fairgoers. Unlike years past, many folks didn't just glance and walk on by, but instead, they stopped, looked, and gratefully received the material and/or books. Let me share with you some of our experiences.

One young woman stopped and was curiously looking. We engaged her in conversation and she seemed very spiritually-minded. We talked about the theme of our booth, which was stated on our banner, *God's Solution to Our Problems: the Ten Commandments*. She left, but later that day and the next she came back and brought a friend each time to listen to our discussions.

An older man stopped by and was arguing that we do not need the commandments if we have Jesus. We told him that when Jesus comes, he would have to explain to Him why he didn't keep God's law. So, he just moved on from our booth.

An interesting argument, isn't it? Jesus was the law in human form, living the character of God, and teaching through His words and life that God means for us to keep His law in every respect. So, if you have Jesus living in your heart, then you will be changed and keeping the law will be a natural outworking of that change.

We were very happy for the many people who looked at our banner and affirmatively acknowledged the truth with a nod. Many, including young people, came by our booth to tell us that they had taken materials and books last year, had read them, and were coming back for books they had missed before.



One of the most popular books continues to be *The Great Controversy*. The new cover is very attractive and draws the eye.

Fairgoers are patriotic people. They love America's history and want to learn more. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity to point them to the Author of history!

Pastor John Grosboll

Evelyn and I were manning the booth when a couple approached the table. The gentleman reached his hand across the table to shake mine. As he shook my hand, he said, "I'm not a church-going man, but I have watched your program on Sunday mornings." We talked for a while and he asked me what book I would recommend to him. I handed him *The Desire of Ages* and told him to start with it, but then he should follow it up with *The Great Controversy*. He took both books and with a smile, I thought, of anticipation, he and his wife went on their way. I didn't get his name, but please pray for this man and his wife.

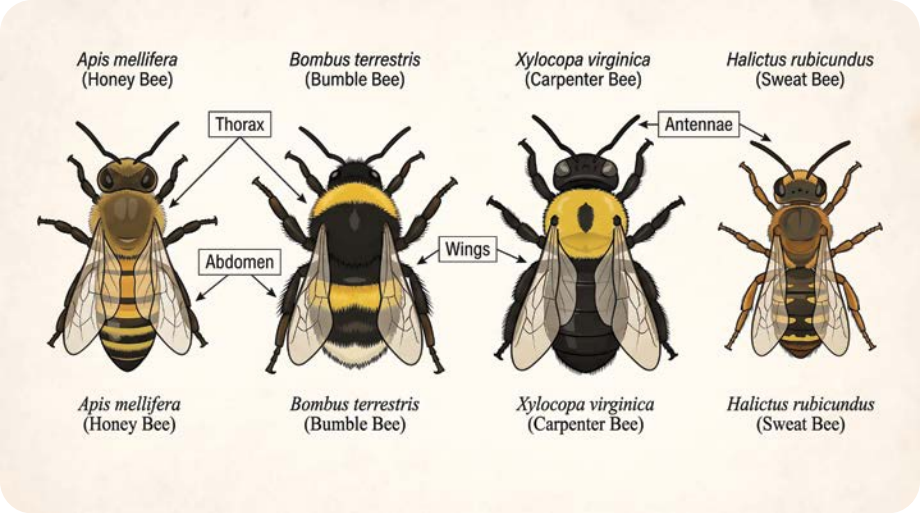
In addition to the books and other materials available at the booth, we have, for the last few years, handed out children's and youth packets. Each children's packet contains: a color page and crayons, and a child's Bible lesson. The youth packet contains: a Bible lesson designed for teenagers, and a crossword puzzle with a highlighter and pen. Both packets also include a magazine for the parents and a card to send in for more materials, books, and Bible studies. This helps to include the children and young people who might not yet be ready for the free books and Bible studies, and it also provides a way to get something into the hands of the parents if they are not interested in taking a book or talking with the staff manning the booth. This year, we handed out 800–1,000 packets. LM



The Carpenter Bee

The carpenter bee (Xylocopa genus) is named so because it burrows into dead wood or bamboo to make its nest, although one species in the subgenus Proxylocopa, prefers digging tunnels in certain soils. They especially prefer bare, unpainted softwoods like pine, cedar, redwood, and cypress. The body of this enormous genus is black, often with yellow hairs or stripes starting on the chest (thorax) and extending down to the abdomen, and is ½" to 1" long, often living up to three years. People who don't know much about bees often confuse the carpenter bee with the bumble bee. These bees can live up to three years.

Certain species of the carpenter bee can be found in parts of Asia, India, and Europe. There are two species of the carpenter bee that can be found in the eastern part of the United States. Three other species are more widely found in the West.



The bee makes a nest by tunneling into wood, bamboo, and other hard plant materials. Their bodies vibrate as they scrape their mandibles against the wood. Each nest has a single entrance—a circular hole roughly the size of a dime on the underside of a limb or bench—with multiple tunnels heading away from it. They do not eat the wood particles, but instead use them to build partitions within the nest. The nest is used as a nursery and storage space for the pollen/nectar on which the brood will survive.

Mating occurs in the spring and the female will lay her eggs in late spring or early summer. In relation to the size of the female, her eggs are quite large and some can be the largest eggs among all insects. Late summer into fall, the new adult bees mature. Everyone shelters in the tunnels during the winter until spring.

Males are harmless because they have no stinger, but they will hover and dive-bomb to make you believe they can sting. And while females do have a stinger, they are docile and sting only if handled or provoked. The sting is painful and there will be swelling, but unless you are allergic to bee stings, there is no concern.

A brood of carpenter bees can cause significant damage to wood. If they find a particularly favorable nesting area, they will return year after year. Filling holes and entrances are only temporary solutions to eliminating them and pesticides are only minimally successful. Their nests also attract woodpeckers who, in search of a delightful, sunny afternoon snack of bee larvae, will then cause greater damage in its attempts to reach the nest.

The bee is a highly effective pollinator, especially valuable in the early spring and late fall when there are fewer pollinators at work. They are able to buzz pollinate. Once they land on a flower, they vibrate their back muscles so loudly that the sound energy shakes the plant and releases the pollen from the flower. In North America, eastern carpenter bees pollinate 15% of agricultural crops—especially eggplant and tomato—and are generalist pollinators visiting many types of flowers resulting in biodiversity and ecosystem stability. Despite the damage they cause to wooden structures, they are considered beneficial insects to have around for their pollinating work. The key to controlling the damage is to manage the bees. Providing alternative wood sources in gardens or away from the house, can keep the benefits the carpenter bee provides, without having to sacrifice your home.

Sources: *wikipedia.org/wiki/Carpenter_bee; fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/pollinator-of-the-month/carpenter_bees.shtml; gardenia.net/guide/carpenter-bee; bernardspest.com; irescue-bees.com/do-bees-that-work-as-carpenters-qualify-as.html* LM

Did You Know?

The wings of the carpenter bee are a dark, smoky-tinted color, appearing almost black. But in certain light refraction, the wings will take on a metallic blue-purple or smoky purple sheen. However, wing color is not a defining trait for carpenter bees.



According to a study done at Cambridge in 2004, bees can recognize and differentiate between human faces. They recognize their beekeeper over everyone else.



An Amazing Power Plant

Our brain produces electrical impulses which are the power sparks for all the actions that take place in the body. These impulses travel through neurons producing rhythms known as brain waves. Electrical impulses travel from neuron to neuron, using hundreds of thousands of neurons to transmit and perform a specific function. Brain wave activity can be observed using an electroencephalogram, or EEG.

Since the invention of the EEG, numerous studies have explored the relationship between brain waves and different states of consciousness. We know that different brain wave patterns are extensively related to different states of consciousness, such as intense concentration, alertness or wakefulness, deep sleep, vivid dreams, drowsiness, relaxation, hypnosis, altered states of consciousness, and so on.

In general, there are four main types of brain waves: alpha, beta, theta, and delta. These different types of brain waves are described below, in order of decreasing activity.

Beta Waves

These waves are produced when the brain is awake and engaged in mental activity. They are broad waves and have the highest transmission speed of the four. Their frequency ranges from 14 to 35 hertz (Hz, not the rental car). They denote intense mental activity. When a person is giving a speech, studying, working on a math problem, or engaged in similar mental activities, his/her brain is emitting beta waves.

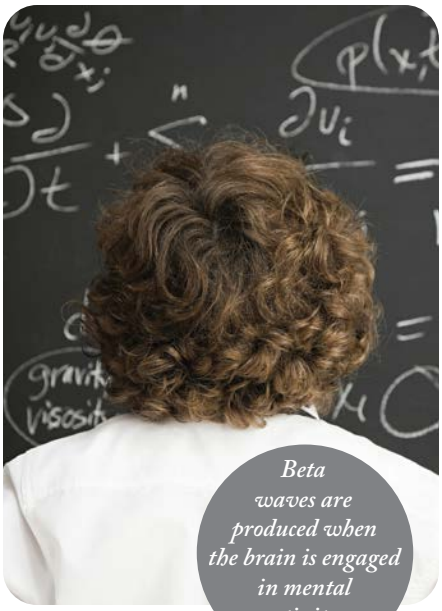
Alpha Waves

Alpha represents a state of low brain activity and relaxation. These waves are slower and have a greater amplitude (the maximum extent of a vibration or oscillation) than beta waves. Their frequency ranges from 8–14 cycles per second (cps). A person who has finished a task and sits down to rest is often in an alpha state. In the same manner, the mental activity of someone who is taking a walk while enjoying the scenery generates this wave pattern.

Theta Waves

These are waves of even greater amplitude and a lower frequency of 4–8 Hz. A person enjoying a deep calmness will be found in this state, as well as someone who, after driving some distance, suddenly realizes he or she is home, but doesn't remember the last few miles.

It is said that this wave pattern allows a state of inspiration where new ideas and creative solutions are created. It is a state in which tasks have been automated; attentional and conscious control for their execution is no longer needed, allowing the subject to mentally distance themselves from them. That is, their mind is "somewhere else," or as sometimes said, the person is "daydreaming."



Beta waves are produced when the brain is engaged in mental activity.

Delta Waves

These are waves with the greatest amplitude spectrum (the magnitude of the frequency components of a signal) and the lowest frequency reached, giving readings between 1.5–4 Hz. Delta waves are generated during a state of deep sleep. When we go to sleep, our brain waves successively transition from beta waves to alpha waves, next reaching the theta waves, and finally arriving in the delta waves. During sleeping time, brain waves switch from one brain wave to another in cycles that last for about 90 minutes.

Amazing, isn't it? Such a wonderful assurance of how God is willing to empower our mental and physical energy.

"The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results.

"He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have.

"Every effort made for Christ will react in blessing upon ourselves. If we use our means for His glory, He will give us more. As we seek to win others to Christ, bearing the burden of souls in our prayers, our own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of God's grace; our own affections will glow with more divine fervor; our whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful.

"The value of man is estimated in heaven according to the capacity of the heart to know God. This knowledge is the spring from which flows all power. God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind; and He is ever seeking to bring the human mind into association with the divine. He offers us the privilege of cooperation with Christ in revealing His grace to the world, that we may receive increased knowledge of heavenly things.

"Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity." *Reflecting Christ*, 156 LM



Reasons for the Incarnation:

An Exhaustless Theme

John J. Grosboll

Concerning the incarnation, Ellen White said that the story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. It is a deep subject you can study for the rest of your life and still continue learning more and more.

When we study the life of Christ, we find that in His human nature He rendered perfect obedience to the absolute and sovereign will of His Father.

There are several interesting prophecies in the Old Testament about the incarnation of Christ and His assumption of humanity.

"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.'" Psalm 40:6–8

God's desire for His children was that they would never sin but He made provision to pay the price for sin when it happened. It was also never His desire that we should be caught in cycle of sinning and confessing, sinning and confessing.

If a person studied, understood, and believed Psalm 40:8, he or she would not be part of the confusion in Adventism today about the nature of Christ. Christ's obedience to His Father was not a forced obedience. It was in His heart to do what was right. Ellen White says that nobody could watch Jesus as a child and think that He was just like other children. He had within Him the desire to do what was right. Mary delighted to see this.

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." John 5:19–23, 26, 27

Jesus is not speaking here of Himself as the Son of God. He is speaking of Himself as the Son of man. In His divinity He had life in Himself, but He also was granted to have life in Himself even as the Son of man. This is a marvelous idea. "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead." 1 Corinthians 15:21

The incarnation of Christ is a wonderful and marvelous revelation to us of our Father in heaven. We see that we have a personal God who is not neutral. We see that all the members of the Godhead have committed themselves to save every sinner who does not resist the pleading of the Holy Spirit. If we are redeemed from sin, then we will be redeemed from death because sin is what causes death. We are saved by a God who loves us enough to die for us.

"For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

"Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.



The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme.

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:14–21

Jesus came into this world to bring all of mankind back into harmony with God. His mission was to come to those who were enemies of God and change their hearts so that they would become friends of God. He came to subdue everything, everyone to Himself.

How would He do this? Jesus had wisdom. He had strength. But that's not what He used. Jesus came to this world to reveal to this fallen world, the whole universe, not what Satan wanted mankind to believe about God, but the true character of God.

The incarnation of Christ had to happen:

1. To reveal the character of God.
2. To vindicate the character of God.
3. So that God can be just and still forgive (justify) the sinner.
4. To reveal to both the unfallen and the fallen universe the true character of Lucifer.
5. To show us by His example how to live in a way that would result in reaping life's best results.
6. So that the fallen human race would have an all-powerful mediator that could not only forgive sins, but remove a person's sins and restore him to the same kind of nature that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden before their fall.
7. To cleanse the entire universe from the blight of sin and guarantee that sin would never again arise.

"Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature and quiet in its operation, yet strong and mighty in its purpose to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful. Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to Himself. Wisdom and strength He could command, but the means He employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 2, 135, 136

"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself,

> *I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.*
>
> *Psalm 40:8*

by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." Colossians 1:19, 20

The finite intelligence of created beings, whether angels or men, can settle nothing in regard to the sin problem. Satan destroyed faith and trust in the character of God by those he deceived and then, he attempted to usurp the throne of God.

" 'How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! " 'For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."' " Isaiah 14:12–14

Satan attempted to destroy the moral authority of God by lying about His character. In the rebellion of sin, man cannot undo what Satan has done to deceive him for thousands of years. Only God Himself could prevent the unending consequences sin has brought into our universe.

"He [Satan] had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself. Therefore, it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God's government was just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all." *The Great Controversy*, 498

"Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated." Ibid., 498, 499

God could have destroyed Satan at the beginning but Inspiration says that would not have solved the problem.

If God could not destroy Satan and his angels in the beginning because the loyal angels would not understand, it logically follows that He would not do so until they did understand. Sin, and the rebellion it causes, is not completely dealt with by punishment alone, leaving the rebel unchanged in attitude. But by the incarnation of Christ, sin and rebellion stand exposed. There is no more excuse for their existence. Christ broke the power of Satan and disproved the lying charges made by him.

"In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, 'Why hast thou rebelled against Me, and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?' the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.

"The cross of Calvary, while it declares the law immutable, proclaims to the universe that the wages of sin is death. In the Saviour's expiring cry, 'It is finished,' the death knell of Satan was rung. The great controversy which had been so long in progress was then decided, and the final eradication of evil was made certain. The Son of God passed through the portals of the tomb, that 'through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Hebrews 2:14. Lucifer's desire for self-exaltation had led him to say: 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: ... I will be like the Most High.' God declares: 'I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, ... and never shalt thou be any more.'

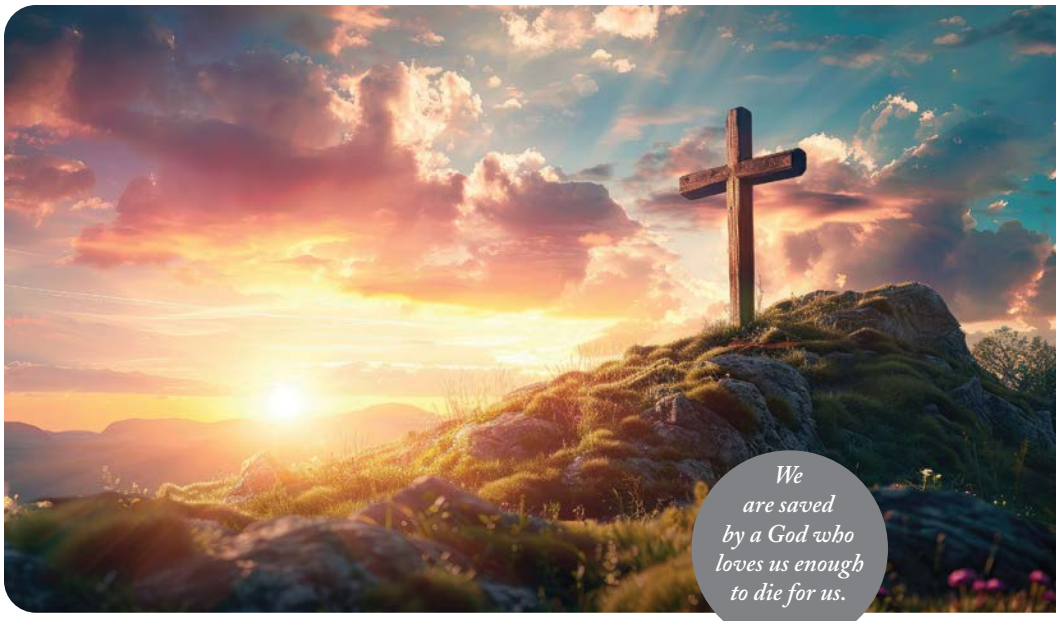
"The whole universe will have become witnesses to the nature and results of sin. And its utter extermination, which in the beginning would have brought fear to angels and dishonor to God, will now vindicate His love and establish His honor before the universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. Never will evil again be manifest. … The law of God, which Satan has reproached as the yoke of bondage, will be honored as the law of liberty. A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom." Ibid., 503, 504

So, the incarnation of Christ vindicated the Father's character and publicly exposed and condemned before the universe the whole sinful order. "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in [the cross]." Colossians 2:15

At the present time, the royal authority of God is not yet fully established. There are still millions of human hearts in our world who are in rebellion against God's sovereign will. That's why we still pray the Lord's prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Is the Lord's prayer going to be answered? Yes, it is. Christ, through His representative, the Holy Spirit, stands in the center of all the discord in our world, in your family, in your church, where you work, in society, and among nations seeking to bring all of God's creation into oneness in subjection to His Father.

In Christ is the long-suffering power of love by which He seeks to unite all His creatures to their Creator and bring them into unity with their Creator and with one another.

"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For 'He has put all things under His feet.' But when He says 'all things are put under Him,' it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." 1 Corinthians 15:24–28



Christ must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet, until He has subjected all rule, authority, and power to Himself. It's coming.

Matthew contains the history of Jesus' miraculous birth and genealogy from the standpoint of Joseph. The gospel of Luke contains the miraculous events concerning the supernatural incarnation of Christ through Mary's viewpoint.

In Jewish culture, a couple about to be married was first formally betrothed to one another. This was done in the presence of witnesses and contracts were signed. If any man had sexual intercourse with that woman after she was betrothed, and if they were in a city, they were both stoned. If they were in the country and she couldn't yell for help, only the man was stoned. This was the situation that Joseph and Mary were in. They had already been betrothed to one another, all the formalities were complete, all the "t"s crossed and the "i"s dotted, and she was with Child.

Joseph could do one of two things. He could publicly disgrace her by exposing her. He could quietly divorce her. Or he could stay with her. All these thoughts filled his mind as he fell asleep that night. But God already had it all worked out for Joseph, and He sent an angel to explain it to Him.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, and angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.'" Matthew 1:18

Did you see the important part of this explanation? Mary's child was conceived

by the Holy Spirit. That's important, isn't it? It establishes for Joseph that he has no reason to divorce Mary. Providence was involved. But there is something else, even more important, that is part of the angel's message. It answers the question, Why did Jesus have to be born into this world?

We have already seen that throughout His life as a man, Jesus would reveal God to the world. This revelation would show all of mankind exactly who God is. It would expose the heinous lies Satan told and continues to tell about God's nature to those who will listen for what they really are. Jesus, living as a man with a character identical to the character of God, would demonstrate, once and for all, God's true character.

"Satan attempted to destroy the moral authority of God by lying about His character."

But there is one last reason that the incarnation of Christ is so important. Jesus had to come to this world as a man in order to save us. There was no other way.

The Bible says over and over again that with God there is no partiality, that He is a Being of strict, perfect justice and equity. He could not forgive sin unless the price for sin was paid, and the price of sin is death. Death is not something that God forces upon you. Death is a natural result of sin.

God's law is a law of life (Romans 7). The people that have never broken the law will never die. However, those who have broken and are breaking the law will, if Christ had not stepped in, end up dying. Had He allowed Adam and Eve to bear the price of their sins, they would have died that very day; but Jesus said, "No, I will take your place." The plan of redemption, the provision for a Saviour, had been in place long before the selfishness and pride in Lucifer's heart manifested itself in the courts of heaven.

"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Romans 3:25, 26

Because Christ paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross, God is able to forgive without being unjust.

The price for our sins could not be paid by an immortal God. In His immortal state as the second person of the Godhead, Christ could not pay the price for our sins because He could not die. However, by uniting His divinity with humanity (a human body), it was then possible for Him to die and the redemption price for humanity could be paid. We need to never forget, friend, that a divine judgment on sin was necessary. The Son of God voluntarily took upon Himself man's humanity—his mortal flesh—in order that He might bear the penalty of God's judgment against sin.

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14, 15

Taking upon Himself our mortal flesh, Jesus sought to change those with enmity against God into friends of God. To do this, He had assumed our nature. He became flesh and blood to ransom those who were in bondage to sin, Satan, and death. Satan's kingdom was a kingdom of sin, bringing death upon mankind; but Christ's death destroyed the authority and rule of Satan and the kingdom of sin. Redemption could not be decreed, not even by heaven. Christ came to confront and overcome Satan, the prince of this world, in the arena of human temptation and suffering.

"Jesus answered and said, 'This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.' This He said, signifying by what death He would die." John 12:30–33

The Greek is very explicit here. Some translators translate it, "I will die to draw the whole universe to Myself" or "I will die to draw all to Myself," not just all men but the whole universe.

Has God come to our world in the person of Jesus Christ to save us? Only the God who created us could redeem us. The schemes tried by human beings to rehabilitate sinful man are in conflict with God's efforts to save man through Jesus Christ.

The incarnation of the Son of God places before all of us the greatest alternative that has ever been devised. What is this alternative?

We can choose for Jesus, as the second Adam, to become the Head of our life, thereby receiving redemption and eternal life through Him alone. But this choice and resulting surrender must be made here, or there will be no eternal life for any of us.

"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

Christ has revealed to us a perfect picture of what God is really like and what He has done to redeem us. Every human being is invited to become a child of God through the redemption made available by Jesus.

"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Galatians 4:3–7

When you come face to face with Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, you are coming face to face with God. This will soon happen to everyone in the world—saved and unsaved. God will show a panorama and the entire history of the great controversy will be spread across the sky. Christ's life and death will be displayed in detail, and every unsaved member of mankind will come face to face with their Creator. And as He looks at them, in a moment, every cherished and unconfessed sin they have ever committed will come to their consciousness. There will be nothing to say.

But if your sins have been blotted out and you are no longer sinning, you will be able to stand face to face before your Creator, thanking and praising Him for dying to pay the price for your sins.

"All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. … the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence—the image of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 754



Love cannot live without action.

Friend, if what we've looked at here doesn't convince you, then nothing will convince you.

"That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19

The question we now must ask ourselves is, "Am I reconciled?" The power of His love is drawing you. If you don't resist it, you will be drawn to Him, you will love Him for what He has done to save you, for the opportunity to have eternal life, and you will follow Him, obey Him, serve Him, and worship Him.

We should never forget nor allow ourselves to be deceived by the devil. Jesus cannot be our Saviour unless He is also our Lord, the One who holds the highest place in our hearts. May we never hear the words Jesus spoke to the Jews.

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" Luke 6:46

There's no answer to that question. There's no good reason. If you call Him Lord you should do what He says.

God, through His infinite love, has done everything possible to save us, but love requires a response. In the universe, the Creator loves His creatures but the creatures must love and obey their Creator.

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

"God waits to bestow the blessing of forgiveness of sins, of pardon for iniquity, of the gift of righteousness upon all who will believe in His love, and accept of His salvation. Christ is ready to say to the repenting sinner, '… Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.' Zechariah 3:4." *Our High Calling*, 38 LM

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November 29 – December 5, 2026

That Other Angel and the Loud Cry

Key Text

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." Revelation 18:4

Study Help: Selected Messages, Book 2, 113–118; *The Great Controversy,* 603–612

Introduction

"The light that was shed upon the waiting ones penetrated everywhere, and those in the churches who had any light, who had not heard and rejected the three messages, obeyed the call and left the fallen churches." *Early Writings*, 278

Sunday

1 THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCHES

1.a. What condition is prevalent before the close of probation? Revelation 18:2

Note: "This scripture [Revelation 18:1, 2] points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844." *The Great Controversy*, 603

"[Revelation 18:1–5 quoted.] Thus, the substance of the second angel's message is again given to the world by that other angel who lightens the earth with his glory. These messages all blend in one, to come before the people in the closing days of this earth's history." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 116

1.b. How does prophecy depict the state of the churches in these last days? Isaiah 4:1; Revelation 17:5; 18:5

Note: "With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings which God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the Decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at nought in the contempt placed upon His word and His people." *The Great Controversy*, 603

Monday

2 "ALL WILL BE UNMASKED"

2.a. Besides the present work for the church, what other work—especially under the latter rain—must the angel of Revelation do for those who are still in darkness? Revelation 18:4

Note: "God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and 'receive not of her plagues' (Revelation 18:4). Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: 'Come out of her, My people.'" *The Great Controversy,* 604

2.b. What evils will be unmasked under the work of that other angel? What crime of Babylon will then be revealed? Revelation 18:3, 24

Note: "As the time comes for the loud cry to be given, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. … Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of a union of church and state, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked." *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, 424

Tuesday

3 SIGNS AND WONDERS

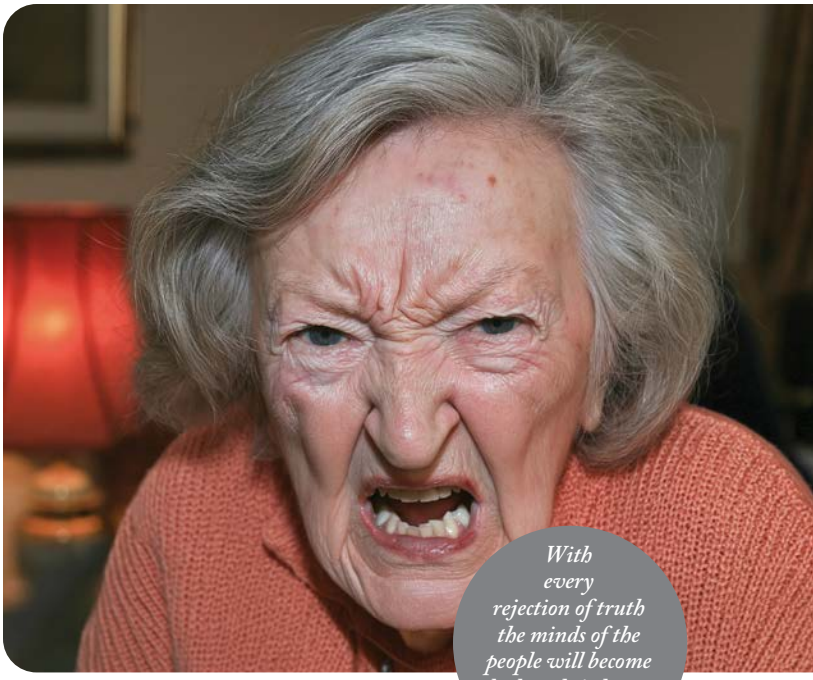
3.a. What signs attended the work of the early disciples and will again be revealed in the last phase of the closing work? Mark 16:17, 18, 20

Note: "Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side, doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 126

"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. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers." *The Great Controversy,* 612

3.b. What signs will also be wrought by the power of Satan? Matthew 24:24

Note: "Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand." *The Great Controversy*, 612



Wednesday

4 FAITHFUL SERVANTS

4.a. What qualifications will God use in His work? James 2:5; 1 Corinthians 1:26–28

Note: "The Lord says, I will take illiterate men, obscure men, and move upon them by My Spirit to carry out My purposes in the work of saving souls. The last message of mercy will be given by a people who love and fear Me. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit' (Zechariah 4:6). We should give willing, devoted men every possible encouragement to go forward and in their humble way reveal their loyalty to principle and their integrity to God. Let them visit the people at their homes, and talk and pray with the unwarned regarding the soon-coming Saviour. Let them take a personal interest in those whom they meet. Christ took a personal interest in men and women while He lived on this earth. He was a true missionary everywhere He went. His followers are to go about doing good, even as He did. By personal efforts to meet the people where they are, coarse and rough though some of these people may be, humble house-to-house missionaries and colporteurs may win the hearts of many to Christ. In their unpretentious way they can reach a class that ministers generally cannot touch." *The Review and Herald,* September 21, 1905

"Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 80, 81

4.b. Under what circumstances will warnings be given? Matthew 24:12; Luke 6:22; Revelation 13:11–17

Note: "The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges." *Testimonies for the Church,* Vol. 5, 463

Thursday

5 OUR GREAT CONCERN

5.a. What should be our great concern while the door of probation is open? John 9:4

Note: "The end is near, stealing upon us stealthily, imperceptibly, like the noiseless approach of a thief in the night. May the Lord grant that we shall no longer sleep as do others, but that we shall watch and be sober. The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, and all who now choose to be laborers together with God will triumph with it. The time is short; the night soon cometh when no man can work." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 135

5.b. What vital factor should be found in our efforts to warn the world? Matthew 5:16

Note: "The world can only be warned by seeing those who believe the truth sanctified through the truth, acting upon high and holy principles, showing in a high, elevated sense, the line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and those who trample them under their feet." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 980

"It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.

"Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 419

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1 **Describe the external work of the angel of Revelation 18.**
2 **What will be unmasked under the loud cry?**
3 **Why must we be cautious regarding the signs and wonders to occur?**
4 **Point out some details about the people who will give the loud cry.**
5 **What will be the most important factor in giving the final warning?**

December 6 – 12, 2026

With or Without the Seal?

Key Text

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14

Study Help: Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 7, 150–160; *The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890

Introduction

"The great mass of the world will reject God's mercy, and will be overwhelmed in swift and irretrievable ruin. But those who heed the warning shall dwell 'in the secret place of the Most High,' and 'abide under the shadow of the Almighty' (Psalm 91:1)." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 167

Sunday

1 WHEN THE LOUD CRY SOUNDS

1.a. What did Jesus say about the final triumph of the gospel? Matthew 24:14. What means, in the hands of that other angel, will be instrumental in convincing many honest souls?

Note: "In a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7, 140

"More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications." *Evangelism*, 693

1.b. When the distribution of publications is prohibited, what work will still be permitted?

Note: "I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work." *Evangelism*, 523

Monday

2 HOW SATAN WILL ACT

2.a. What arguments did the Jewish leaders use against Jesus and His message? John 7:12, 20, 47, 48. How will their example be imitated and by whom?

Note: "In amazement [thousands upon thousands] hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, Are these things so? the ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord,' the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it." *The Great Controversy*, 606, 607

2.b. How will Satan come to those who reject the truth and what will be the result? 2 Corinthians 11:14

Note: "In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world." *Evangelism,* 365

"Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ; and he does not come to man in a hideous form, as he is sometimes represented, but as an angel of light. He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?" *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, 1105, 1106

Tuesday

3 HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL WORK

3.a. How did the Holy Spirit use one member of the Jewish Council to defend the cause of God? Acts 5:34–39. How will this be repeated?

Note: "While many of our rulers are active agents of Satan, God also has His agents among the leading men of the nation. The enemy moves upon his servants to propose measures that would greatly impede the work of God; but statesmen who fear the Lord are influenced by holy angels to oppose such propositions with unanswerable arguments. Thus a few men will hold in check a powerful current of evil. The opposition of the enemies of truth will be restrained that the third angel's message may do its work. When the final warning shall be given, it will arrest the attention of these leading men through whom the Lord is now working, and some of them will accept it, and will stand with the people of God through the time of trouble." *The Great Controversy*, 610, 611

3.b. What was the result of the Holy Spirit's work in the early days? Acts 2:47. How will this also be repeated in the last days?

Note: "The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side." *The Great Controversy*, 612

Wednesday

4 TWO DESTINIES

4.a. What will happen to those who have known the truth but have not humbled their hearts before the Lord? Luke 13:25–27. Whose example will they follow? Acts 2:13

Note: "There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. 'Why,' they say, 10 'should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?'—Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.'" *The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1890

4.b. When the door of probation is already closed to those who have rejected the truth, to whom is the door of mercy still open? Jeremiah 29:12, 13

Note: "Oh, that the people might know the time of their visitation! There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, 97

Thursday

5 A CLASS "WITHOUT THE SEAL OF GOD"

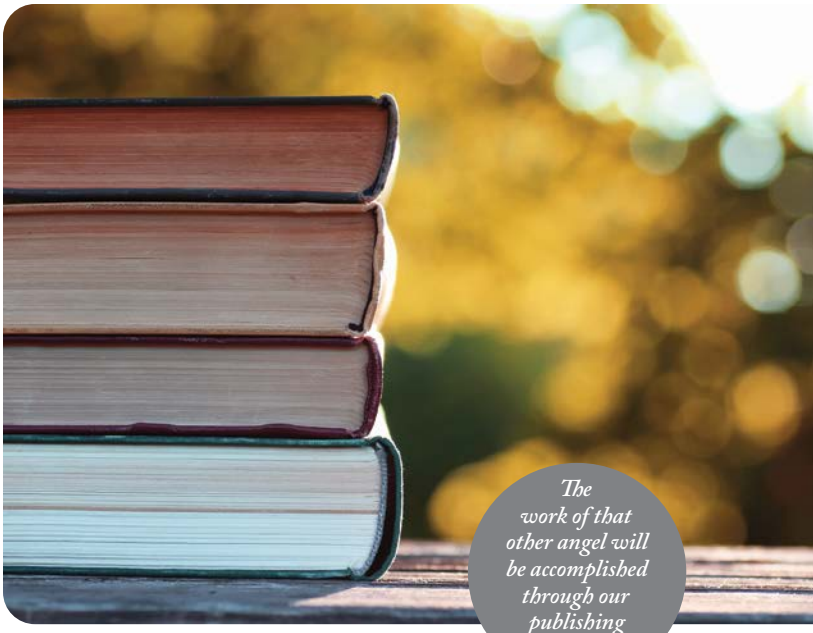
5.a. While the faithful few are still sighing and crying, what will the leaders who have not lived up to the truth do? Isaiah 3:12; Ezekiel 34:2, 3

Note: "[The] humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 210, 211

5.b. Why will many professed Sabbathkeepers be left without the seal of God, and what will they receive? Ezekiel 9:5–7, 10

Note: "The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions His messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands: 'Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.'

"Here we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had



The work of that other angel will be accomplished through our publishing houses.

stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus 'Peace and safety' is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together.

"The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 211

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Name some significant tools in the hands of that other angel.**
2. **In what ways will the enemy be deceiving souls?**
3. **Describe ways in which the Holy Spirit will promote the truth.**
4. **During the proclamation of the loud cry, what distinction will exist between two classes of believers in the three angels' messages?**
5. **What will be the end of those who cry "Peace and safety" in these last days?**

December 13 – 19, 2026

The Decree and the Close of Probation

Key Text

"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11

Study Help: The Great Controversy, 635–652; *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 349–354

Introduction

"When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death." *The Great Controversy,* 490

Sunday

1 ALL ACCOUNTABLE

1.a. To what extent will knowledge of the glory of the Lord be made known in the world? Habakkuk 2:14

Note: "The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of worldwide extent and unwonted power is here foretold." *The Great Controversy*, 611

"Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 415

"When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 111

1.b. How limited will the reception of the last message of salvation be? Matthew 22:14; 7:14; Luke 17:29, 30

Note: "The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win." *The Desire of Ages*, 636

Monday

2 A UNIVERSAL DECREE

2.a. What effect will the loud cry finally have upon those who oppose it?

Note: "When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of Revelation eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake from slumber." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 983

"At the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth." *Early Writings,* 33

"The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message." Ibid., 279

"As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By

every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite." *The Great Controversy*, 607

2.b. What decree will be issued against God's faithful commandment keepers immediately before the close of probation? Revelation 13:15, 16

Note: "The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. …

"The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently." *The Great Controversy*, 604, 605

"When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, 216

Tuesday

3 DECEPTION AND DISAPPOINTMENT

3.a. What is pronounced on those who trust in man? Jeremiah 17:5

Note: "Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. … We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises." *The Great Controversy*, 622

3.b. What is the lament of those who wait too long to repent? Jeremiah 8:20

Note: "All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.

"Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the *result* of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed." *The Great Controversy,* 620, 621 [Author's italics.]

Wednesday

4 THE DOOR OF MERCY CLOSES

4.a. What declaration will be made in the heavenly sanctuary when probation closes? Revelation 22:11, 12. How are we warned about determining when probation will close?

Note: "God has not revealed to us the time when [the third angel's] message will close, or when probation will have an end. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children; but let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the councils of the Almighty. …

"The opportune time for us to work is now, just now, while the day lasts. But there is no command for anyone to search the Scriptures in order to ascertain, if possible, when probation will close. God has no such message for any mortal lips." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 191, 192 (1894)

4.b. Concerning the close of probation, what lesson should we learn from the antediluvians? Matthew 24:37–39; 2 Peter 3:5–7

Note: "The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the Flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. 'So,' says the Saviour, 'shall also the coming of the Son of man be' (Matthew 24:39). Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men." *The Great Controversy*, 491

Thursday

5 SUDDEN DESTRUCTION

5.a. After the cross, what was withdrawn from the Jewish nation and what did they continue practicing? Matthew 23:38; John 16:2. By whom and how will their example be repeated?

Note: "When God's presence was finally withdrawn from the Jewish nation, priests and people knew it not. Though under the control of Satan, and swayed by the most horrible and malignant passions, they still regarded themselves as the chosen of God. The ministration in the temple continued; sacrifices were offered upon its polluted altars, and daily the divine blessing was invoked upon a people guilty of the blood of God's dear Son and seeking to slay His ministers and apostles. So when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not. The forms of religion will be continued by a people from whom the Spirit of God has been finally withdrawn; and the satanic zeal with which the prince of evil will inspire them for the accomplishment of his malignant designs, will bear the semblance of zeal for God." *The Great Controversy*, 615

5.b. What will come upon the inhabitants of the earth when the Holy Spirit is fully withdrawn? 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Note: "The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old." *The Great Controversy*, 614

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **How can we show through our lives that there is a hell to shun and a heaven to win?**
2. **Give evidence as to why the death decree will be enacted as a result of the loud cry.**
3. **What warnings should we heed before the time of trouble?**
4. **What effect should the truth have upon our lives before probation closes, and why?**
5. **What deception, which involved the Jewish nation, will be repeated?**

December 20 – 26, 2026

The Time of Trouble

Key Text

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book." Daniel 12:1

Study Help: Early Writings, 282–289; *The Great Controversy*, 635–652

Introduction

"While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent." *Early Writings*, 280

Sunday

1 WHEN THE TIME OF TROUBLE BEGINS

1.a. What will come upon the people of God when the decree is issued against them? Jeremiah 30:5–7; Daniel 12:1

Note: "A decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble." *The Great Controversy,* 615, 616

1.b. Why is the time of trouble compared to the anguish of Jacob? Genesis 32:6, 7, 24–28. What will be the main cause of affliction for God's people during this time? What assurance should we obtain now?

Note: "Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise: I 'will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world' (Revelation 3:10). If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God's holy name would be reproached." *The Great Controversy*, 619

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me' (John 14:30). Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ." Ibid., 623

Monday

2 HORROR, DISMAY, AND DESPAIR

2.a. What comfort and assurance will the unsaved multitudes seek in vain during the time of trouble? Amos 8:11, 12

Note: "All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy. In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God's mercy which they have so long despised." *The Great Controversy,* 629

2.b. What will then be the feeling of these people? What distinction will be made clear? Malachi 3:18

Note: "It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God's holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have compared their characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God's people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised. With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse." *The Great Controversy*, 639, 640

Tuesday

3 "WOE TO THE INHABITERS OF THE EARTH"

3.a. Specify some of Satan's activities which will intensify during the time of trouble. Revelation 13:13; 16:14

Note: "Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures." *The Great Controversy,* 624

"Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive." Ibid., 625

3.b. What exclamation did John the Revelator hear concerning the culmination of Satan's work? Revelation 12:12

Note: "The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble." *The Great Controversy*, 623

Wednesday

4 THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD

4.a. What will come upon the world after the close of probation? Isaiah 28:21; Revelation 16:1

Note: "God's judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. … 'The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked' (Nahum 1:3). By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy.

"When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." *The Great Controversy,* 627, 628

4.b. For what will the wicked inhabitants of the world be responsible, and what plague will be poured out as a result? Revelation 16:4–6. Compare Matthew 23:35, 36

Note: "By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets." *The Great Controversy,* 628

Thursday

5 LIVING BY GOD'S PROMISES

5.a. While the remnant people of God are threatened with destruction, what promises will encourage them? Isaiah 33:2, 16; 26:20, 21

Note: "The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied." *The Great Controversy*, 629

"What are the chambers in which they are to hide?—They are the protection of Christ and holy angels. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. They are in different companies, and in all parts of the earth; and they will be tried singly, not in groups. Everyone must stand the test for himself." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* Vol. 4, 1143

5.b. What song will the triumphant company of saints be able to sing after their deliverance? Psalm 46:1–3; Revelation 15:1–3

Note: "A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity in the very face of death. They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song. 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.' Psalm 46:1–3." *The Great Controversy*, 639

"And they sing 'a new song' before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had." Ibid., 648, 649

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What is foremost in the minds of God's faithful few during the time of trouble, and how are we to prepare now for that time?**
2. **What despair will soon come upon the rejecters of God's mercy?**
3. **By what authority are all miracles and miracle-makers to be measured?**
4. **How will God deal with those who have spilled the blood of His faithful servants?**
5. **What song is each of us now learning to sing?**

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Black Beans

The black bean is a member of the legume family, the edible seeds of a plant that includes other beans, peas, and lentils. Because of their hard, shell-like appearance, they are also known as turtle beans or frijoles negros, which translates from Spanish as to black beans. Despite the name, the skin of the black bean is actually a very deep purple.

Out of all beans, black beans are the fifth most popular dry bean in the United States. They are loaded with vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, iron, and antioxidants, and have been linked to reductions in disease risk.

Black beans are considered the healthiest of beans, having the highest antioxidant count and "potent inhibitory activity" against human colon, liver, and breast cancer cells. Not only are they high in antioxidants, but they are high in ergothioneine, an unusual amino acid that protects our DNA and acts as an intramitochondrial antioxidant.

Black beans have been shown to benefit people with type 2 diabetes due to their ability to decrease insulin resistance. The high levels of potassium in beans may lower the risk of stroke.

Black beans are especially high in a specific type of fiber called prebiotics, which are essential for optimal gut health. Prebiotics serve as food for our healthy gut bacteria, which are pivotal to the health of the entire microbiome. Gut microbiome health has been linked to the health of several body systems, from brain health to immune health, to cardiovascular health and beyond.

Black beans have a creamy, nutty, and mildly sweet flavor. Add them to tacos, burritos, enchiladas, and haystacks, or mix them into soups, chili, salads, burger, smoothies—even brownies!

Sources: *health.clevelandclinic.org/benefits-of-black-beans; nutritionfacts.org/topics/black-bean; realsimple.com/health-benefits-of-black-beans-11919888*



Fruit | Vegetables | **Legumes** | Nuts/Seeds | Grains

Barbara's Black Turtle Beans

Ingredients

1 large onion, finely sliced
2-4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tsp. ginger, finely grated
4 large tomatoes, peeled, chopped
2 sticks celery with leaves, finely sliced
1 large carrot, finely diced
¼ cup olive oil
2 cups cooked black beans
1 Tbs. fresh basil, chopped
2 tsp. fresh oregano, chopped
1 Tbs. tomato paste
½ tsp. maple syrup
2 tsp. Celtic salt

Process

Lightly sauté onion over low heat until slightly golden. Add garlic, ginger, tomatoes, celery, carrot, and olive oil, and very gently simmer over very low heat, covered, until carrots are tender, about ½ hour. Add beans, herbs, tomato paste, maple syrup, and salt. Add a little water if too thick. Stir and lightly simmer another 5 minutes. Serve with brown rice or quinoa and a fresh salad.



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