

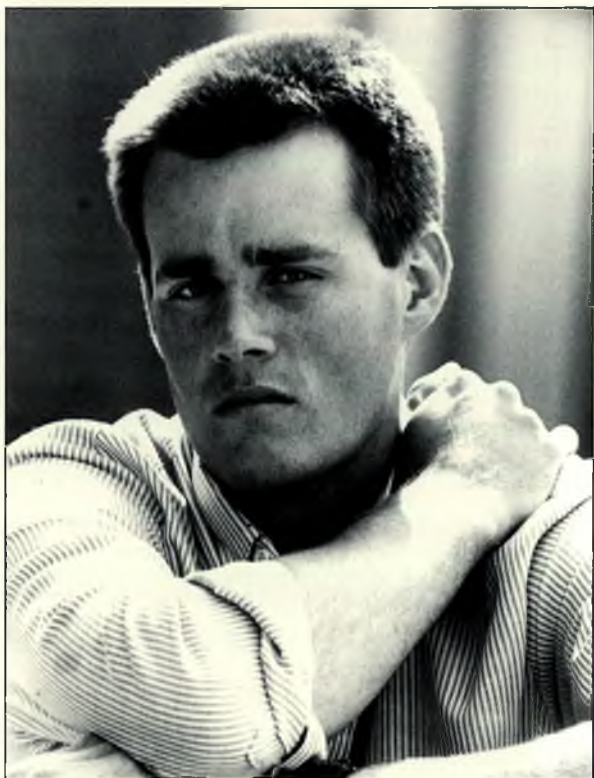
# COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

A General Conference Church Ministries Publication

October-December 1988

## Faith's Foundations Part 2





## Can I make the grade?

Confession time.

I'll have to admit, I wasn't your all-star scholar during high school.

Truth is, for a lot of classes, I didn't work as hard as I should have. Now I want to take engineering. But with four years of math and physics classes ahead, I'm not sure.

I ask myself, "Ed, can I make it?"

Yes, I think I can. With my determination and help from my instructors.

That's why I'm going to Walla Walla College. They have a learning and writing center where I can get help if I need it. Who knows, before long I may even be making the dean's list.

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# Faith's Foundations Part II

1. Baptism .....	4
2. The Lord's Supper .....	14
3. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries .....	24
4. The Gift of Prophecy .....	34
5. The Law of God .....	44
6. The Sabbath .....	54
7. Stewardship .....	64
8. Christian Behavior .....	74
9. Marriage and the Family .....	84
10. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary .....	94
11. The Second Coming of Christ .....	104
12. Death and Resurrection .....	114
13. The Millennium and the End of Sin .....	124
14. The New Earth .....	134

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He says, "I utilized friends and fellow church members as models for much of the art work in this issue. That, and the fact that the doctrines are such an important part of the church, was an inspiration to me."

Garet's twin brother, Devin, provided the art work for the previous issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

Lesson 1, September 25—October 1

# Baptism

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:3, 4, NIV).



# Go Ye and Baptize

by Linda Dick

Clear blue sky beckoned us through the classroom windows. A glorious autumn day, perfect for a game of dodge ball against the seventh-graders. In eighth grade I adored dodge ball.

"The following people will stay in during recess," Mr. Crawford was saying, "Linda Dick and Derrick Miller. The rest of you may go on out to the dodge-ball court."

Angry and puzzled, I walked slowly to the teacher's desk. An older man in a gray suit and tie smiled beside Mr. Crawford.

"Elder Smith would like to talk to you for a minute," said Mr. Crawford. "Then you may come outside."

I knew why Elder Smith wanted to see me. At 14, reared an Adventist, I had not yet been baptized.

When we were alone Elder Smith said, "Linda, how old are you?"

I knew he already knew or he wouldn't be talking to me. I answered, "Fourteen."

"Most children your age are already baptized. Linda, don't you want to go to heaven?"

What? I thought. If I weren't baptized I couldn't go to heaven? Surely God didn't want me to fake it, to get wet in front of people and let them think I felt what I didn't feel. Wouldn't

He see into my mind and know that I was trying to believe in Jesus? Trying to learn to love Him? "I didn't know I had to be baptized to go to heaven," I told Elder Smith.

"Oh, yes. If you love Jesus you must be baptized into His church."

So that's what baptism was all about—joining the church. Well, I figured I was already going to church with my parents. I'd never been to another church except when sightseeing. All my friends were Adventists, even my sister. And if I said, "Yes, I want to be baptized," Elder Smith would let me go out to the dodge-ball court. So I did.

Elder Smith was excited. He squeezed my shoulder and leaned closer. "Shall we pray?"

Make it quick, I thought. The dodge-ball game will be over before I get out there. I closed my eyes.

"Dear Lord," prayed Elder Smith in his quivering voice, "Thank You for coming into Linda's heart."

I didn't hear any more. I opened my eyes and stared at his shoes.

What does baptism really signify? Is it necessary for salvation? Must it be public? These are some of the questions our lesson study this week will address.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Romans 6:3, 4

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Linda Dick is director of college relations at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

# Baptism

by Charles Freidline

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 14.*

## **1. Baptism as a symbol of commitment, signifying our acceptance of God.**

Baptism is a public declaration that we have died to our old desires and are being raised to a new commitment to Jesus Christ.

"At that time Jesus arrived from Galilee and came to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. 'I ought to be baptized by you,' John said, 'and yet you have come to me!' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so for now. For in this way we shall do all that God requires.' So John agreed" (Matt. 3:13-15, TEV).

John had been baptizing people who were repenting of their sin and committing themselves to God's way. It was out of this crowd that the sinless Jesus stepped up to John and asked to be baptized. John was flabbergasted! He tried to talk Jesus out of it. He pointed out that Jesus should baptize *him*. Jesus had *nothing* to repent from. Nevertheless, Jesus insisted because He wanted to identify Himself with the Father. There must, then, be intrinsic value in the act of baptism beyond the idea of repentance. The events that accompanied Jesus' baptism suggest that the public proclamation of commitment to God was an important function of baptism. It is clear from the following events that God:

- a. Chose this event to publicly proclaim Jesus as His own Son.
- b. Sent the Holy Spirit to fill Jesus and equip Him for the ministry.

Baptism is usually presented as a public event in Scripture (the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch may be an exception). This would suggest that baptism is a ceremony in front of witnesses to solidify and witness to a commitment that has been made to Christ. Perhaps baptism is similar to a wedding,

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Charles Freidline is professor of chemistry at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.



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during which the bride and groom publicly affirm their commitment, which was really made earlier. In the baptism ceremony we signify allegiance to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), thereby identifying ourselves with God.

*In what specific ways did you commit yourself to God at the time of your baptism?*

**2. Baptism is associated with the receiving of the Holy Spirit, which signifies God's acceptance of us.**

"These people have received the Holy Spirit, just as we also did. Can anyone, then, stop them from being baptized with water?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:47, 48, TEV).

In the early church, receiving the Holy Spirit seems to have been associated with baptism. In the case of Jesus, the evidence of the Holy Spirit followed baptism, but in the case of Cornelius and the Gentiles gathered in his house, the Holy Spirit came on them prior to baptism. Jesus developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit all His life. But at His baptism the Holy Spirit was given in special measure for the ministry He was to perform. The visible signs of receiving the Holy Spirit that were present in the early church are rarely, if ever, seen today. Yet it may be that the receiving of special help from the Holy Spirit is still associated with baptism. God has, in any case, assured us that He will accept us. In the absence of visible signs or even "good feelings" we can know that God has accepted us because He has promised to do so! From such verses as John 3:16-18 and 1 John 5:11-13 it is clear that God accepts us because we commit ourselves to Him. Whether or not we *feel* accepted, we *are*, and were when we first made our commitment, even before declaring it in baptism!

*Are you good enough to be accepted by God? What is wrong with that question?*

**3. Baptism as a symbol of the resurrection.**

"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death" (Col. 2:12, TEV).

"You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God" (Col. 3:1, TEV).

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Baptism is symbolic of death, burial, and resurrection. First, it symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In baptism we identify ourselves with Christ in His death and resurrection. We are "buried with Christ" and then "raised with Christ." In this way we publicly say that we are identifying ourselves with Christ in all aspects of His life, death, and resurrection. His story becomes our history and His achievements become our claim to righteousness. Second, baptism symbolizes the death of our previous world view and the commitment to Christ's view. We are "buried" under the water, dying to the old way of life, and then are raised with Christ to a new way of living.

Colossians 3:1 phrases our commitment in the words "set your hearts on the things that are in heaven." Our focus is now to be on heaven. And why? Because Jesus and the Father are there—they are the ultimate objects of our affection. And that will make all the difference in our lives!

*How did your own life's focus change at your baptism, or with the decisions you made that led to your baptism?*

*Why is it important that we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus? Why is it not enough just to change our ways?*

# The Start of a Journey

by Aaron Hatfield

Is baptism a meaningless ceremony, or is it a necessary part of being a Christian? Baptism is a symbol, but a symbol of what?

## 1. Baptism symbolizes cleansing from sin.

"John [the Baptist] proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptized them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah's kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

"The repentant believer, who takes the steps required in conversion, commemorates in his baptism the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. He goes down into the water in the likeness of Christ's death and burial, and he is raised out of the water in the likeness of His resurrection—not to take up the old life of sin, but to live a new life in Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

"The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with Him by baptism, and raised out of the watery grave, in likeness of His resurrection, to live in newness of life."<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Baptism is a necessary step in the plan of salvation.

"Heaven and immortal life are valuable treasures that cannot be obtained without an effort on your part. No matter how faultless may have been your lives, as sinners you have steps to take. You are required to repent, believe, and be baptized. Christ was wholly righteous; yet He, the Saviour of the world, gave man an example by Himself taking the steps which He requires the sinner to take to become a child of God, and heir of heaven."<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

Recall the events surrounding your baptism. What of your baptismal experience would you want for your children one day? What would you like to change? How can the experience of baptism be made more meaningful?

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:

Romans 6:3-6

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

2. Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1113.

3. *Early Writings*, p. 217.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 40.

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Aaron Hatfield is a freshman theology student at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

# The Prerequisite to Baptism by Rich Carlson

## EVIDENCE

**Key Text:**  
**Mark 16:16**

The decision to be baptized is the affirming statement made by a believer to a group of fellow believers, declaring faith in God and belief in what Jesus Christ did to make eternal life secure. It is death to the old man of sin and a resurrection to a new life in Christ (Rom. 6:3-10). It is putting on Christ, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and the forgiveness of sin (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38). It is that one act above all other acts that confirms the beginning of a new life committed to following Christ.

It is an interesting phenomenon to note that each Biblical account of baptism recorded seems to be directly linked to the reaffirming of the "good news" of the gospel. Baptism symbolizes the freedom of having our sins washed away as Saul experienced (Acts 22:16); it symbolizes the reception of the good news about Jesus as experienced by the eunuch (Acts 8:34-38); and it symbolizes our acceptance of the life of perfect righteousness lived by Jesus (Matt. 3:13-17). Baptism was not the process of receiving membership into a specific church unless one is referring to the "Christian church" as a denomination; it was not the culmination or the graduation service from the successful completion of a set of doctrinal studies.

Even our most popular text about baptism, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, NIV), seems to indicate that the crucial element of, "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded" (vs. 20, NIV) comes after discipling and baptism.

The message from God's Word, presented prematurely, before a commitment has been made to the person of Jesus Christ, could be keeping searchers for truth from a proper prioritizing and perception of the relationship between the message and the Man. A commitment to following Christ provides the believer a reason and rationale for making the truths of God's Word a response to the Person who provided forgiveness, the new life, and the Holy Spirit. The new "disciple" now can begin the process of learning and growing in an understanding of God's will and way for his or her life. Linking the beginning process of baptism with the growth seen in more mature and seasoned church members places undue pressure on the growing process of the beginner.

The new believer must begin and grow with a solid "good news" message of the love and forgiveness of Jesus, leading him or her to repentance and a decision to follow the One who gave so much. Then and only then can he or she be exposed to

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**Rich Carlson is chaplain at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.**

---

the beautiful teaching of God's Word and His church. With kindness and nurturing, in patience and love, the beginner learns and grows to spiritual maturity.

The disciples kept teaching and instructing the early Christians, correcting them of their errors and showing them God's way. But they baptized them in response to an acceptance of the "good news" and the forgiveness and new life that was theirs. Their church grew. Ours seems to be losing far too many. Could this be a reason?

## **This Christmas Give a School**



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 24, you're giving desks, chalkboards and the chance for a brighter future to children in Curitiba, Brazil.

**Help Build a School in  
Curitiba, Brazil**

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING**

# To Be or Not to Be

by Joel Gueck and Tammy Maxwell

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Romans 6:4**

Once again your heart is pounding, your hands are trembling, your palms are sweating, and your mind is raging with a familiar question. It is Friday night, and the Week of Prayer series is drawing to a close. The speaker is inviting everyone to make a decision for the Lord and for baptism. Is that tugging at your heart from God? Are you ready to be baptized? How can you be sure when it's the right time?

Most of us have been in such a situation. Let's consider two important questions when contemplating baptism.

## **1. How do you know when you are not ready for baptism?**

Many people look for a new "feeling" when they are baptized. This can be dangerous because some people will not "feel" that they have been changed. Pressures come from parents and pastors for us to be baptized. When you decide to be baptized, it should be your own choice. Many times all your friends seem to be making the decision for baptism, and you feel left out. It may be better to be left out than to be baptized for the wrong reason. You are not ready for baptism when you want to do it because of feeling, pressure, or wanting to be part of the action.

## **2. How do you know when you should be baptized?**

Baptism is a commitment to God. Making a decision to follow Christ means changing the direction of your life and following His way as revealed in the Bible. Baptism is a public statement that these are your desires. When you are ready for such a change you are ready for baptism.

The question concerning the right time to be baptized is a touchy question. When considering the matter, analyze your motives and spend much time in prayer. When you do, the Holy Spirit will clearly convict you when the time is right to be baptized.

---

Joel Gueck and Tammy Maxwell are both students at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

# The New Me

by Bruce R. Coston

## OPINION

Key Text:  
Ezekiel 36:25-27

The whole of Christ's mission unfolded in the Jordan the day He was baptized. His death for the atonement of humanity's sin; the burial for all eternity of our sins, which Christ bore with Him to the grave; and Christ's victorious resurrection, which ensured the success of the plan of redemption; were all foreshadowed (see Rom. 6:3-7).

John the Baptist reluctantly placed Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter, under the waters of the Jordan. But it was Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who arose from them. This change from carpenter to Messiah made Christ's baptism a pivotal event in His mission of redemption.

The baptism of a Christian should be no less dramatic. Baptism represents not merely a change in perspective or an opportunity to make a public statement about a private relationship, but the death of one person and the birth of an entirely *NEW BEING!* (see Col. 3:9, 10; Eph. 4:20-24).

Although the death and resurrection of this new person may be physically symbolic, it is a spiritual and moral reality. For the private conviction and belief, which are publicly expressed by baptism, naturally result in changed behavior (see Ezek. 36:25-27; Ezek. 11:19, 20). The belief one experiences is the cause; the effect is a changed life.

The emphasis here should be on the cause (conviction and belief) and the effect (a new person) rather than on the physical demonstration itself (baptism). For it is obvious that one may be baptized without experiencing either conviction or change. Why, then, is baptism so important (see Mark 16:16)? Certainly this demonstration is not for those around us, who get truer indications of our convictions and beliefs by observing the changes they elicit. Nor is it for God, who understands that the ceremony and its symbolism is primarily for the benefit of the individual baptized. If the emphasis of this ceremony is properly placed it becomes a much more significant growth-promoting experience, than if it is presented merely as an advertisement of one's spiritual commitment.

We may each personalize our own baptism by realizing that it confirms our convictions and beliefs not only for others but for ourselves. When I understand the symbolism of death, burial, and resurrection as *MY* death, the eternal burial of *MY* sins, and the clothing of *MYSELF* with the resurrected Christ (Gal. 3:27), then my baptism can become pivotal for me as it was for Christ the day He was baptized in the Jordan.

---

Bruce R. Coston is a veterinarian practicing in Rochester, New York.

Lesson 2, October 2-8

# The Lord's Supper

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17, NIV).





# Participants in Guilt and Victory

by Bruce R. Coston

The Last Supper was unbearable for Judas. It brought strain on all the disciples; but for Judas it was particularly uncomfortable. The profits from his betrayal had already been receipted. Things were in motion and there was nothing he could do. In effect, Jesus was already in the hands of the Jewish leaders.

As the Supper progressed Judas became more and more uneasy about his plan. When Jesus knelt on the rough timbers at Judas's feet and gently began removing his sandals, the servile act starkly contrasted with the character that Judas was trying to develop in Jesus. The incongruity struck him. This was not a position in which the next head of state should be found. And as Judas vainly attempted to avoid Jesus' searching eyes, a nagging doubt began to germinate in his mind. Surely not! Surely he had not misunderstood.\*

Judas also found it disconcerting when Jesus referred to the bread and the wine as His own body and blood. As a loyal and well-trained Jew, Judas knew that the Passover celebrated the deliverance from the angel of death. How could Jesus apply it to . . . Slowly and with an awful clarity the realization dawned on Judas's

mind that Christ's literal body and blood would provide deliverance for mankind. As it did, his nagging doubt blossomed into sheer frantic terror. He, Judas Iscariot, would be responsible for the death of the Messiah!

Each word of the feast became an accusation, each glance a glaring indictment. Even the simple action of reaching for a piece of bread identified him as the betrayer. For Judas, the Last Supper became an intensely uncomfortable, guilt-ridden ceremony. With tight jaw and clenched fists, which he hoped would be interpreted as indignation, Judas left the upper room.

Had Judas lived to hear that Jesus had risen from the grave, perhaps he would have understood the whole significance of the Last Supper. But Judas only experienced the condemnation. Of course his actions made him a participant in the death of the Saviour. Ours do too! Of course he was guilty. So are we! But maybe Judas would have realized that Jesus' resurrection made it possible for him also to experience the victory that the broken body and the shed blood provided. For Judas, it's too late. But it's not too late for you and me.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
**1 Corinthians**  
**10:16, 17**

\*There is no scriptural evidence to indicate that Judas actually understood the significance of the Last Supper; so this scenario is strictly illustrative.

Bruce R. Coston is a veterinarian practicing in Rochester, New York.

# The Lord's Supper

by Ralph E. Neall

**LOGOS Theme:** "The Lord's Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ-like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 15.*

## 1. The Importance of Humble Service (read Matt. 20:20-28; 18:1-4; 23:8-12)

*"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them. . . . Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your servant."* (Matt. 20:25, 26, NIV).

This week's lesson begins with a problem that most of the world does not even recognize as a problem. The disciples were planning a revolution, organizing political parties, and arranging their offices in the future kingdom. They all knew it's better to be in office than out, and higher offices carry more authority than lower ones.

What could be more normal? We see it on TV every four years. Armies, corporations, and governments—even churches—are organized like pyramids, with many little people down below and a few great ones up above. Leaders lead; followers follow. How else could we get anything done?

But now we see Jesus turning worldly standards upside down. In His kingdom it is not high position, but lowly service, that is counted great. Not the one who pushes himself ahead, but the one who urges others ahead; not the "adult," but the "little child," who is beloved of the Father (see Matt. 18:1-4).

Jesus Himself is the example. Although He came to save the world, He refused all offices in it. Since He did not put himself ahead, He went down to apparent defeat on the cross. His victory came through His death.

*How can one get ahead if he does not put himself ahead? Is Jesus' standard practical for today?*

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## 2. The Ordinance of Humility (read John 13:1-17; 15:1; Titus 3:5-7)

*"He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him." "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him'" (John 13:5, 15, 16, NIV).*

Jockeying for position in Jesus' kingdom, the disciples came to partake of the Last Supper. Tawdry and cheap in His presence, how could they see His principles? How could He give them insight? Only by doing the work of the slave whom they had forgotten to call.

And so in quiet dignity He rose from the table, poured water, and began to wash their feet. In profound astonishment the disciples watched this new definition of greatness. It was too much for Peter. Feeling that Jesus was degrading Himself, he refused His service. But then he learned that the basin was a means of salvation (see John 13:8-11). If Peter refused the lower cleansing, he refused the higher, as well. Only by accepting the principle of service could he be one with Christ.

Earthly kingdoms are symbolized by crowns and scepters; Jesus' kingdom is symbolized by towels, basins, and crosses. Jesus remained their Master and Lord, but He gave new meaning to the terms. From now on "master" and "slave" would be one before God.

*Would it be right for a president of a corporation to wash the feet of a garbage collector? What do you expect the ordinance of foot-washing to do for you?*

## 3. The Institution of the Lord's Supper (read Matthew 26:26-28, 39; 1 Cor. 11:23-30)

*"Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant.'" "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me'" (Matt. 26:27, 28, 39, NIV).*

The acted parable now takes on wider meanings. The symbols shift to bread and wine and cups. There is an exchange of cups. We drink His cup; He drank ours. His cup is filled with blessings; ours is filled with curses. His cup is forgiveness, peace, joy, service, and life. Ours is sin, bitterness, suffering, and death. No wonder He prayed that it might be taken from

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Him! He drank ours so that we could drink His.

When we came into the church we were baptized into Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. We accepted His history as our own, just as a new citizen accepts the history of our country for his own when he is naturalized. Taking part in the Supper, we renew our pledges; we proclaim His death, both in history and in ourselves, until He comes.

*What do you expect to happen when you partake of the Lord's Supper?*

#### **4. The Spiritual Meaning of the Lord's Supper (read John 6:51-63; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; Heb. 7:27, 28; 10:14)**

*"Is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17, NIV).*

We all know that partaking of the bread and the cup symbolizes feeding on the words of Jesus. We receive life through His word. It is not so widely known, however, that the bread also represents the church as the body of Christ. Paul makes it clear in this verse that the communion service calls us to unity in that body. This may be his meaning also in 1 Corinthians 11:29, where he warns that some eat and drink judgment on themselves by not discerning the *body of the Lord*.

The references in Hebrews to Jesus' dying "once for all" climax in Hebrew 10:14. Jesus' sacrifice is so adequate that He "has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." "Made perfect" here means *justified*, and thus *counted perfect* in God's sight, if we are also "being made holy."

*Can you really dare to believe Hebrew 10:14 applies to you personally?*

#### **5. The Lord's Supper in the Heavenly Kingdom**

*"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom'" (Matt. 26:29, NIV).*

The Lord's Supper points not only to His death but also to His wedding banquet in the kingdom. No lover ever longed for his bride as our Lord longs for us. The blessings we enjoy now, symbolized by the bread and the cup, are only a foretaste of what will be in that glad day. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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# Adventists and the Communion Service

by Ellen White

The following quotations reveal the Seventh-day Adventist attitude to and manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper.

**TESTIMONY**  
Key Text: Mark  
14:22-26

## 1. The Lord's Supper is not a sorrowful occasion:

"The Communion service was not to be a season of sorrowing. This was not its purpose. As the Lord's disciples gather about His table, they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings. They are not to dwell upon their past religious experience, whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are not to recall the differences between them and their brethren. The preparatory service has embraced all this. . . . Now they come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Believers should not absent themselves:

"All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.'<sup>2</sup>

## 3. All who wish to take part should be invited to:

"Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches (1 Cor. 5:11). But beyond this none are to pass judgment.

". . . There may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They should not be forbidden. . . . None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present."<sup>3</sup>

## 4. Only unfermented wine is to be used:

"The unfermented wine that He provided for the wedding guests was a wholesome and refreshing drink. This is the wine that was used by our Saviour and His disciples in the first Communion. It is the wine that should always be used on the Communion table as a symbol of the Saviour's blood. The sacramental service is designed to be soul-refreshing and life-giving. There is to be connected with it nothing that could minister to evil."<sup>4</sup>

## 5. Only unleavened bread should be used:

"Bread that is leavened must not come on the communion table; unleavened bread is the only correct representation of the Lord's Supper."<sup>5</sup>

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 659.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 656.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Temperance*, p. 97.

5. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090.

# From Passover to Present

by Dennis Ray

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
1 Corinthians  
10:16, 17

It has long been the view of the Christian church, as supported by the Gospels, that the Lord's Supper has ties to the Jewish Passover. On the surface, this observation appears to be nothing more than a bare fact in what has become an important act of worship in the Christian church. It is only after taking a look back in time that we see how Jesus used the Last Supper in combination with the Jewish Passover to turn the hearts and minds of his disciples that evening, and how these two rituals should affect us today.

The Gospels of Mark and John both show a direct link between the Last Supper and the Jewish Passover. Mark states that the supper that evening was the actual Passover celebrated by Jesus and His disciples. According to John, the meal was a prelude to the Passover, which was yet to come. The Passover kept by the Jews had many exceptions to the one originally introduced in Exodus. It was a yearly ritual in which all Jews participated. To celebrate the Passover people would divide themselves into groups either by family or as friends. Each group appointed one member as its leader. In the evening the group members assembled themselves on couches in a reclining position. The group leader began the Passover by pronouncing a blessing over a cup of wine from which he and the others drank. The group members proceeded with a ceremonial hand-washing and prayer. A meal followed, which consisted of unleavened bread, lamb, and bitter herbs. The leader played an important role in initiating the eating, and there was significance in what was eaten. The Passover ceremony concluded with a prayer and singing of the "Great Hallel."\*

As the disciples prepared for the Lord's Supper that evening, they expected the proceedings to be similar to the typical Jewish Passover. They were a group of friends with a designated leader. They each drank from a cup of wine that was passed around, and they broke bread together. They even ended this celebration with a prayer and hymn. It was through the newness and variations on the Passover theme that Jesus spoke to the hearts and minds of His disciples that evening.

As indicated by the Gospels, the disciples were awed by the way in which Jesus' words made the traditional ceremony seem new. They were seeing the old rituals of the Passover in a new light based on a new act of divine redemption. While the bread and cup reminded them of God's deliverance from Egypt, it now signified their Lord's broken body and shed

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blood for deliverance from sin. The Passover took place once each year. Now they were instructed to partake more frequently, "as often as ye . . . drink of this cup." He didn't specify how often they were to partake, but His words suggested a greater frequency than once a year. Jesus' words "this is my body" completely changed the significance of the bread. They were surprised to learn that partaking of the broken bread was the closest possible union with their master. The cup, which represented His blood, was to signify the promise foretold in Jeremiah 31:34, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (NKJV). Christ's shed blood was to be the culmination of what He had been preaching during His ministry, forgiveness of sins. This fulfillment of promise was as beautiful then as the blood on the doorposts was to the children of Israel in Moses' time.

### **REACT**

1. How do the emotions and remembrances of people celebrating the Lord's Supper today differ from those that stirred Jesus' disciples 2,000 years ago?

2. What should the SDA Church of 1988 do to instill additional meaning into the foot-washing service?

3. Agree/Disagree: The Lord's Supper, as celebrated by SDA Christians today, is a stagnant ritual with little meaning. Discuss.

*\*Smith's Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 11, pp. 1680, 1681.*

# Remembering a Ritual

by Lilya Wagner

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Mark 9:33, 34**

About a decade ago I clipped an article from *Insight*. It had been a prize winner, but that's not why I saved it. I saved it because of a valuable point the author made about a ritual that had become routine for me, and therefore almost pointless.

The author, Glen Isaac, remembered going to a Communion service. Bored and wishing he hadn't come, he was suddenly startled out of his spiritual lethargy by an unexpected request. Richie, a newly baptized, mentally retarded church member, wanted Glen to share the ordinance of humility with him. Richie's face was twisted, his body malformed, and his feet crippled. But when Glen knelt to serve him, he happened to glance up. Richie, he wrote, was watching the process with wonder. Glen recalled finishing the ceremony with awe. "I had discovered new meaning in this routine ritual," he wrote, because he had seen what it could mean to someone experiencing its full impact for the first time.

The entire Communion service has, perhaps, become mundane to many of us. We may remember that it symbolizes Christ's sacrifice for us, but beyond that, the practice of Communion probably holds little significance. Maybe we should do a bit of remembering:

**1. To wash the feet of guests was the chore of a slave.**

The roads of Palestine, and the footwear of ordinary people, contributed to dirty feet. There were water pots at the door of every house, and guests would be assisted in cleaning up as they arrived. Jesus and His friends had no servants, so Jesus gave His disciples an example they could never forget. How He behaved toward them is how we should behave toward one another—and not just in the ritual washing of usually clean feet!

**2. The Communion service symbolized a covenant.**

This wasn't an agreement between humans, but between God and people. It cost Christ His life to reestablish this friendship between God and humanity—to revalidate the original agreement.

**3. The Communion service was a sacrament.**

A sacrament can be a very ordinary thing, but one to which we have attached greater meaning than usual. One might keep a batch of souvenirs to remember a loved one. Worthless stuff, perhaps, but these disparate items may have great meaning to the hoarder. So it was with the Communion service—it was to be a symbol by which memories could be revitalized.

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# Communion

by Blaine Fults

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" was what the Jews asked in John 6:52, NIV, and it's a question many have asked since then. What did Jesus mean when He said in Matthew 26:26, "This is my body"?

I can still remember clinging to my mother and hearing the bells ringing as the priest elevated the "Host," or bread wafer, at mass. As I asked what it meant, my mother held me up so I could see and whispered something about the bread being changed into Jesus' body. Later, in parochial school, I learned that this was called "transubstantiation," in which the substance of the bread and wine is said to be completely transformed into the body and blood of Jesus.

That concept was never really challenged until my high school German-class trip when my German host-family invited me to the Lutheran Sunday service. Because the service was similar to the mass, I felt somewhat at home. Then, after the homily, we sang a hymn and stepped into the aisles. I turned to go up for Communion and was shocked to see everyone leaving. "It can't be over. We haven't had Communion yet!" I thought, as I reluctantly turned to leave. Outside, my host explained that they didn't have Communion every week, something I just couldn't grasp then with my Catholic mind.

Contrary to the Catholic view, Luther felt that the substance of the bread and wine were still present in Communion and were vehicles which somehow contained Christ's body and blood. This view became known as "consubstantiation." Some enthusiastic Reformers felt that Luther hadn't gone far enough, and felt that the bread and wine were merely symbols to help bring to "remembrance" what Christ did for us (Luke 22:19). Some even felt the symbols should be done away with, in favor of inward, spiritual communion. Luther said that he "would rather eat the body of Christ with the papists than eat bread with the enthusiasts."\*

We, too, must ask ourselves how we are to receive Jesus in the ordinances of Communion. Should we reverence the emblems as we would Christ? Should we not even have outward symbols, and focus exclusively on the Scriptures and what they tell us of how Christ died for us and will come again?

I would like to suggest a moderate approach, avoiding either extreme. We should neither worship the emblems nor downplay their significance.

## OPINION

Key Text:  
John 6:51

\*Gonzales, Justo L. A  
*History of Christian Thought* (Nashville:  
Abingdon Press, 1975),  
vol. 3, p. 59.

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Lesson 3, October 9-15

# Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men"' (Ephesians 4:7, 8, NIV).



# Be What You're Not?

by Wesley E. Amundson

There is one in every congregation. It was not that James was obstinate or uncooperative. He was always there at the church when the church was engaged in a churchwide or conference-wide program, but somehow he always "arranged" to have a phone call that urgently requested his expertise at the hospital. Once or twice was understandable and a seeming coincidence, but every time? No way! And I vowed that, if it was the last thing I would do, I would get James involved during the upcoming Ingathering campaign. But I failed. Those "calls" took him away every night just as he would be assigned a territory. In spite of a forced smile and a few words muttered such as, "It's all right, James; I understand," I was frustrated. Really frustrated! Why the sham of "intended" participation while we both came to know those calls would arrive on cue?

But after Ingathering, what a change. When the rest of the church members settled back in their church pews, James shifted into high gear arranging communitywide programs at the local hospital, high school, and Adventist church. He

was engaged in outreach programs, from smoking, weight control, cardiac and stress clinics, to vegetarian cooking schools. While others rested, James worked.

I came to see things from a new perspective, and the experiences with James set me to thinking and studying about the second most important subject you will study as a Christian (the first is the crucifixion, resurrection, and mediatorial ministry of Christ).

This week you will discover, as I did, what spiritual gifts really are—that they are special and varied attributes distributed by the Holy Spirit to *every* member for use within the context of the community of believers. You will also discover what they are not—namely, talents, fruits, or Christian roles. These clarifications are necessary so that you can begin to live and function within the liberating atmosphere of the Biblical concept of spiritual gifts.

So, you see, James taught me a valuable lesson through his good intentions and his departures on cue. I came to perceive that he wanted his pastor to come to an understanding of the meaning of spiritual gifts.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Ephesians  
4:7, 8

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# Getting Ready to Work

by Mark B. Regazzi

**LOGOS Theme:** "God bestows on all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 16.*

Rom. 12:6-8	1 Cor. 12:8-10	1 Cor. 12:28	1 Cor. 12:29-30	Eph. 4:11
Verse 6 Prophesying (1) 7 Serving (2) Teaching (3) 8 Encouraging (4) Contributing (5) Leadership (6) Showing mercy (7)	Verse 8 Message of wisdom (8) 9 Faith (10) Gifts of healing (11) 10 Miraculous powers (12) Prophecy Distinguishing between spirits (13) Speaking in different kinds of tongues (14) Interpretation of tongues (15)	Verse 28 Apostles (16) Prophets Teachers Workers of miracles Gifts of healing Healing others (17) Administration (18) Speaking in different kinds of tongues	Verse 29 Apostles Prophets Teachers Working miracles 30 Gifts of healing Speaking in tongues Interpreting of tongues	Verse 11 Apostles Prophets Evangelists (19) Pastors (20) and Teachers

Before reading any of the comments ask yourself these questions:

1. If you were a member of the church in Rome and knew of the spiritual gifts that Paul had listed for you, what would be your reaction to learning that he had written different lists to Corinth and Ephesus?

2. If you had to make an organized list of the spiritual gifts how would you do it? Would you just number them in the order that they appear? Or is there some other organizational principle?

3. Some of the gifts have different names in other versions,

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particularly the KJV. Why? What can you learn about some of the gifts from the various titles given them in different versions?

4. Which spiritual gifts do you have? How do you know that?

#### COMMENTS:

While a mere listing of the spiritual gifts may not seem to be too exciting or helpful for the Christian walk, a little careful observation may result in some beneficial insights.

What are spiritual gifts? From the list it appears that a spiritual gift has to do with Christian activity, on behalf of individuals and the church, but, since we all know people who are gifted teachers (#20) or administrators (#18) but not Christians, we should ask whether the gifts are limited only to Christians. A definition for spiritual gifts found in the third volume of the *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, page 1483, provides some help: spiritual gifts are "the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on Christians for special service."

The observant reader who understands human nature will soon discover that some of the gifts are enhancements of already-existing talents, and some are special endowments for which no previously existing talent was found. Teaching and administration may be enhancements, while both gifts that relate to tongues and the gift of miraculous powers may be endowments. An enhancement takes a person's talent and magnifies it. Often this comes about because of one's growing Christian character: a wholeness to life, an elimination of bad habits and sins, a healthiness, a caring about others. On the other hand, as a result of the new life in Christ, one is often enabled to do things for which one has no natural ability apart from the Christian walk. This is a special endowment. While Paul seems to show the greatest interest in the question of spiritual gifts, Peter may help us to organize the gifts: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:10, 11, NIV). The following list divides the spiritual gifts of serving others. Included are definitions that are not meant to be comprehensive, but indicative of the differences between the gifts and the practical application of the gifts. It needs to be said at this

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point that even the gifts of speaking are also gifts to be used to serve others.

I. Gifts of speaking

- A. Prophesying: speaking for the Lord
- B. Teaching: explaining Christian doctrine
- C. Encouraging: challenging and enabling others to live for Christ
- D. Message of wisdom: relating spiritual insight
- E. Message of knowledge: relating spiritual information
- F. Distinguishing between spirits: recognizing good and evil spirits among claimants to the prophetic gift
- G. Speaking in different kinds of tongues: speaking in foreign languages
- H. Interpretation of tongues: telling what the previous gift meant
- I. Evangelists: proclamation of the good news

II. Gifts of serving others

- A. Serving: being able to meet others' needs
- B. Contributing: giving until it hurts and it doesn't hurt
- C. Leadership: going forward for Christ and taking others with you
- D. Showing mercy: being kind
- E. Faith: a special understanding of God's will for special tasks
- F. Gifts of healing: making others whole
- G. Miraculous powers: doing wonderful deeds
- H. Apostles: being specially commissioned missionaries for the Lord
  - I. Helping others: knowing what to do to assist someone else
  - J. Administration: being able to organize the church for service
  - K. Pastors: shepherding/caring for the flock

The listing of the gifts like this demonstrates some problems: (1) Should leadership, apostles, and administration be gifts of speaking or of service? (2) Should faith go into the list of gifts of service, or is it separate? and (3) If each person has his/her own gift, then why does every Christian have to contribute to the church when only some people have the gift of contribution?

The answers are: It is difficult precisely to define and categorize any spiritual gift; and we are all called to speak for God, ministering to others, teaching them God's word, en-

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couraging them, and being merciful (etc.), but some have been specially gifted by God's graciousness to carry on these tasks in an especially effective way. It would be natural for any Christian to be jealous of another's gift, but this is expressly forbidden (1 Cor. 12:15-26); each is to glorify God with his/her own gift.

One can see from reading the lists that the gifts cover a wide range of activities and are not always extraordinary; some are rather humble, quiet, and occasional. It would be a reasonable conclusion, since Paul did not write the same list to each church, that there is no master list of gifts. It is probable that some spiritual gifts may not even be listed in Scripture. (Those who compose tests of spiritual gifts often include hospitality or music.)

The reader should also read the contextual material surrounding each list: (see Rom. 12:3-5, 9; 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-10, 12, 13).

*What is 1 Corinthians 13 doing in the middle of the section on spiritual gifts?*

Each gift has a separate function in the body of Christ, much as the parts of the body have separate functions. When one part is missing or not functioning properly, then all the rest are affected. There is diversity in gifts, work, and service, but unity in one God, one Lord, one Spirit. Not all Christians are to do the same work, but all are to do their special work. The gifts are meant to last to the second coming of the Lord, when all Christians will have achieved a unity of faith—that is becoming “mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13, NIV).

# Spiritual Gifts

by D. G. Rand

## TESTIMONY

Key Texts:  
Ephesians  
4:7, 8

"To every man God has given 'according to his several ability.' . . . None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man is equally honored by the improvement of each trust, whether it be great or small."<sup>1</sup> "All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised. . . . There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."<sup>2</sup>

"If they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them the channel for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe."<sup>3</sup>

"God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places, and all may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming."<sup>4</sup> "God had given light through the gifts placed in the church, which would instruct, counsel, guide, reprove, and warn."<sup>5</sup>

"God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts. One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God, because He works with the laborer."<sup>6</sup>

"As in the natural, so in the spiritual world: every power unused will weaken and decay. Activity is the law of life; idleness is death. . . . Employed to bless others, his [man's] gifts increase. Shut up to self-serving they diminish, and are finally withdrawn. He who refuses to impart that which he has received will at last find that he has nothing to give. He is consenting to a process that surely dwarfs and finally destroys the faculties of the soul."<sup>7</sup>

"God dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. He bestows one gift upon one, and another gift upon another, but all for the good of the whole body. . . . The recognition of this plan will be a safeguard against emulation, pride, envy, or contempt of one another. It will strengthen unity and mutual love."<sup>8</sup> "In the Lord's plan human beings have been made necessary to one another. To every one God has entrusted talents, to be used in helping others to walk in the path of right. It is by unselfish service for others that we improve and increase our talents."<sup>9</sup>

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.
2. *My Life Today*, p. 37
3. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.
4. *Gospel Workers*, p. 481.
5. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 93.
6. *Gospel Workers*, p. 483.
7. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 364.
8. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 315.
9. *In Heavenly Places*, p. 287.

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# Gifts From God

by James J. North, Jr.

"Charisma" is generally viewed today as that ability or aura by which persons inspire enthusiasm and attract support.<sup>1</sup> Bill Cosby has it. Entertainment and sports stars perform media commercials because they have it. TV evangelists make full use of this engaging attribute. To the evangelists and to many other Christians "charisma" is much more than an engaging attribute. Some, called charismatics, take their name from this Greek word and take pride in "speaking in tongues" as a manifestation of it. *Charisma*,<sup>2</sup> as used by Paul, is "a gift (freely and graciously given), a favor bestowed."<sup>3</sup> The plural, *charismata*, designates both all the gifts dispensed in the church by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 31)<sup>4</sup> and "gifts (*charismata*) of healing" (verses 9, 28, 30).

Paul approaches this topic when replying to a Corinthian letter (1 Cor. 7:1). He introduces this subject (12:1) with the phrase "now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren." Literally, this phrase is "now concerning *spiritualities*, brethren."<sup>5</sup> "Gifts" was added because of the context. This introduction strongly indicates that Paul is repeating a term used by the Corinthians, the term "spiritual/spiritualities," in the Greek, *pneumatikon*. Paul opens with this term but switches to *charismata* (v. 4), evidently preferring a more concrete word. "Charisma" comes from *charis*, "the word for God's grace, explicitly expressing God's action in giving the gifts and empowering their exercise. Paul reuses *pneumatika* in 14:1 after he has clarified the points of divine origin, bestowal, and diversity. In only one instance is the meaning of *pneumatika* crystal clear, and that is in the one occasion where it is placed in tandem with *charismata*. In Romans 1:11 the two words are used together in the phrase "that I may impart to you some *spiritual gift*" (NKJV). Thus the "spiritualities" or "spiritual gifts" of 12:1 and 14:1 are defined by *charismata* as divine endowments whose genuine exercise God alone determines, empowers, and disciplines.

## REACT

If God is always consistent in His Word and with Himself, how can we know when displays of the "gifts" are genuine? What is the nature of the relationship within which we receive the genuine "gifts?"

## EVIDENCE

### Key Text:

1 Corinthians

12:1

1. *New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (Delair Publishing Company 1984), p. 170.
2. Kurt Aland, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1983). All transliterated Greek words are from the Greek in this reference.
3. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, trans. and eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 887.
4. All Biblical references are from the RSV.
5. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966), p. 65.

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# Practice Makes Perfect!

by D. G. Rand

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**2 Corinthians**  
**8:12**

An all-important question about spiritual gifts is SO WHAT? The Snow-Thro company's model 2DKL snow-removal unit moves four cubic feet of snow per minute. Don't expect a landslide business from the good citizens of Miami, Florida. Personal snow-removal equipment is not useful for them. Utility is the key. Is it practical? Will it allow my life to impact positively on others? That's the all-important question. Are spiritual gifts able to help me serve others?

No individual Christian can say he or she has no ability that is not helpful to God's cause. To do so is to say that God is untruthful. The use of spiritual gifts is beneficial to the body of Christ in general and each member in particular. The opposite corollary is awesome (see Matt. 25:14-30, NKJV).

Let me state negatively a positive principle of our Christian life. We cannot enjoy God's full blessings in this life by ignoring spiritual gifts. These gifts have always been available, and perhaps we did not recognize their importance. As long as any of us can remember, church members have been urged to give Bible studies, visit the sick, care for the needy, befriend the friendless, let Christ be seen in one's day-to-day living. None of these things can be done without spiritual gifts.

Are you asking about the relevancy of spiritual gifts? You might as well ask about the appropriateness of breathing, eating, or sleeping. There is no physical life without the latter, and the spiritual life diminishes to nothing without the former. Without spiritual gifts, the church cannot fulfill its destiny in this world (see Eph. 4:12, 13, TLB).

The following gift is used to illustrate principles that include any gift or gifts a person may possess. "Let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows in distress help them cheerfully" (Rom. 12:8, Phillips). One's love for God is seen in his treatment of others, and is also indicative of the kind of person he is. As Christians behold the sympathy and compassion of Christ, they emulate it in their relationships with others cheerfully and without personal aggrandizement. They become better people as they put into practice what they see in Christ, and the church is strengthened by the testimony of their lives. Practice on a daily basis the principles of what you believe. The man with five talents gained five more because he used what he had. He applied and practiced his talents. The man with one talent lost it because he would not use it. No application, no practice. Practice makes perfect! Use it or lose it!

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# The Wise Use of Talents and Gifts

by Mildred B. Case

When I study the subject of spiritual gifts and ministries, I am made aware anew that God has a special plan for each person born into this world. However, the ultimate fit between the gift and the implementations of that gift to its God-intended use can occur only when the individual discovers his or her special talent, then dedicates that talent to the Lord. When this occurs not only does the individual utilize the natural inherent gifts but in the process of dedicating them to God these gifts are multiplied, which can mean the gift is improved or increased. The parable of the talents illustrates this concept (see Matt. 25:14-30).

I wish that what we know today about personality temperaments had been known when I was growing up. Today personality temperaments are more widely understood and studied by parents and teachers. The text "Train up a child in the way *he should go*" (Prov. 22:6, NIV) indicates that when dealing with children and young people in their developmental years it is important to help them discover *their* gifts and talents that are God-given and inherent. Parents and teachers who are aware of the different temperaments can identify the inherited temperaments of children, and intervene to help them overcome their weaknesses and maximize their strengths, at an age when change is easier. There are various tests available for high school and college students that help identify their natural abilities for career-guidance purposes, if this has not occurred earlier in their experience.

I have observed the practice of hiring summer-camp staff and individuals to work in an office, based on their gifts and temperament. The result was a smoother-running program and a happier staff. In this way the individual is a contributing "member," and the organization, or "body," experiences growth, development, and unity, which, in turn, brings honor and glory to God.

God can and does work miracles every day in using our talents that we bring to Him. He can turn water into wine (John 2:1-11). He can make a donkey talk (Numbers 22:28). But, from the study of spiritual gifts this week, it is evident God gives each individual special gifts to be used in a special place in His master plan. More would be accomplished with greater satisfaction if, early in life, individuals had help discovering their God-given gifts and then would prayerfully seek to develop and increase those gifts, in order to fill their role within the "body" that God had planned for him or her.

**Mildred B. Case is assistant professor of nursing at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.**

## OPINION

Key Text:

Matthew 25:29

Lesson 4, October 16-22

# The Gift of Prophecy

“ 'Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful' ”  
(2 Chronicles 20:20, NIV).



# Ready to Make a Defense

by Roger W. Coon

A Pacific Union College student was returning to campus from Sacramento on a Greyhound bus when the driver stopped at Davis, a few miles out, to discharge passengers from the state capital and pick up new riders for Vallejo.

An attractive University of California/Davis coed got on; and, finding an empty seat next to the PUC student, she sat down, almost immediately engaging him in friendly conversation.

Both were Christians, and it usually doesn't take long for one disciple to discover another, whether in a store, on the street, or in a bus. He casually inquired as to her religious affiliation, and she named a prominent Evangelical denomination. She promptly returned the question, and he grinned, "I'm proud to tell you I'm a Seventh-day Adventist."

"What a pity," she murmured, utterly shaking his complacency.

"What do you mean?" he

asked in astonishment.

"Well, it's a pity you belong to a church that doesn't believe the Bible," she responded kindly yet soberly.

"Why, we *do* believe the Bible," he protested, with some warmth, sensing she wasn't "putting him on."

"No, you don't," she persisted. "Doesn't Paul say in the New Testament that women should keep silent in church? Well, your church was *founded* by a woman. Worse yet, she broke this commandment of God on nearly every one of your Sabbaths, for 70 years. You don't belong to a church that *really* believes the Bible," she smiled, ruefully.

Well, how can a Bible-believing Seventh-day Adventist always be "ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15, NASB)?

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Isaiah 8:20

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# The Gift of Prophecy

by Robert W. Olson

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 17.*

For thousands of years God communicated with His people through men and women called prophets. The prophetic gift was to be renewed in the last days. God always keeps His promises.

## 1. The Need for Prophets

*"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isa. 59:2).*

When Adam and Eve came from the hand of God on the sixth day of Creation week, they were sinless and enjoyed open communion with their Maker. But after their disobedience this was all changed. No longer innocent, they could not exist in the presence of a sin-hating God.

Because of His infinite love for the human family, even in their fallen condition, God did not forsake our first parents, but immediately put into operation the plan of salvation. "As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour."<sup>1</sup> "The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, 'Let the punishment fall on Me, I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance.'<sup>2</sup> Adam and his descendants would be given opportunity to repent of their sins and to come again into fellowship with their Maker. Though face-to-face communion was no longer possible, God nevertheless found a way to make His will known to the human family.

## 2. God's Spokespersons (read Jer. 1:1-19; Gal. 1:15, 16)

*"Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee" (Jer. 1:17).*

God spoke to His people through the ministry of angels (Gen. 19:15), by means of the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:21), through dreams (Gen. 28:10-15), through the impressions made by the Holy Spirit upon their hearts and minds (Isa. 30:21), through His created works (Rom. 1:20), and

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through His prophets (Amos 3:7).

The prophet was unique in that, as a living person, he could confront men and women with God's messages. Further, he could put those messages in permanent, written form.

Many Biblical prophets, both in the Old and in the New Testament, asserted that God had called them to bear His admonitions to the people. Not all made this formal claim; nevertheless, Christians have for centuries recognized that all Scripture writers, from Moses to Malachi and from Matthew to John the Revelator, spoke and wrote on God's behalf under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### **3. The Message of the Prophets (read Luke 24:13-27; John 20:31)**

*"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).*

The scarlet-colored thread that runs through the writings of the Old Testament prophets is the promise of the Lamb who would shed His blood for the sins of the world. In similar vein the central theme of the New Testament writers is that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Lamb of God, who died on the cross to save us from the penalty of sin. He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies that pointed to His sacrificial death. By accepting Him as Saviour and Lord, sinful man can be reconciled to his heavenly Father. The prophets always inveighed against sin, but they also directed the sinner to the Sin-bearer. Theirs was a Christ-centered ministry.

### **4. The Source of God's Messages to Man (read Rev. 1:1, 2; 19:10)**

*"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, . . . and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ" (1:1, 2).*

The book of Revelation, as well as all Scripture, originated in the mind of God. The Father communicates with the world through His Son, so His instruction and His appeals are also called "the testimony of Jesus." "The testimony of Jesus" means the testimony or witness borne by Jesus. It is Jesus testifying, or the self-revelation of Jesus by way of the prophets. In Revelation 19:10 the testimony of Jesus is called the spirit of prophecy. The entire Bible—the writings of all the prophets—represents the testimony of Jesus to His people.

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## 5. The Gift of Prophecy in Post-Biblical Times (read Eph. 4:8, 11-13; Rev. 12:17; Joel 2:28-32)

*“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:11-13).*

Some non-Adventist Bible scholars hold that the gift of prophecy ended with John the Revelator. Their reasoning runs like this: Prophets were called to write the Bible; the Bible is now complete; therefore, we don't need prophets anymore. But the apostle Paul declared that the gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of prophecy, would continue until Christians come into a state of perfect unity and Christlikeness. In other words, we may expect the gift of prophecy to be found in the church at any time preceding the second coming of Christ. Only then will the gifts of the Spirit no longer be needed.

In fact, according to Revelation 12:17, God's true church in the last days of this world's history will have two identifying marks: They will be a commandment-keeping people, and they will be blessed with a renewal of the testimony of Jesus. The Seventh-day Adventist Church meets the specifications of this prophecy. The prophet Joel also predicted the existence of the prophetic gift in the last days. (see Joel 2:28, 29).

## 6. Women Prophets (read 2 Kings 22:8-20)

*“And the king commanded . . . Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me. . . . So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess” (2 Kings 22:12-14).*

King Josiah and all his principal advisors recognized that Huldah was God's special representative in their midst. Going to God for counsel meant going to Huldah's house. Both in Old and New Testament times God gave the gift of prophecy to women, as well as to men. None of these women prophets are known as scripture writers, but all are called prophetesses. In addition to Huldah we read of Miriam (Acts 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Anna (Luke 2:36), and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

Since God used women, as well as men, as His special spokespersons in Bible times, and since the testimony of Jesus is to be renewed in the remnant church, it is both logical and scriptural to hold that He might call a woman instead of a man to the prophetic office in these last days. And that is exactly what He did in the ministry of Ellen G. White.

1. *The Desire of Ages*,  
p. 210.  
2. Ellen G. White Com-  
ments, *SDA Bible Com-  
mentary*, vol. 1, p. 1085.



# The Prophets' Role

by Paul A. Gordon

In her first book, *Experience and Views*, published in 1851, Ellen White clearly stated her understanding of the role she was to take: "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the *'last days'*; not for a new rule of faith, but [1] for the comfort of His people, and [2] to correct those who err from Bible truth."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout her 70 years of ministry, Ellen White demonstrated these two roles over and over again. Her first vision, for example, provided "comfort" for the disappointed Adventists who had expected Christ to return to earth on October 22, 1844. She saw that "the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. . . . If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe."<sup>2</sup>

There was "correction" for those same Adventists who tried to set new dates for Christ's return. She said: "Different times were set for the Lord to come, and were urged upon the brethren. But the Lord showed me that they would pass by."<sup>3</sup>

What did a prophet "see" in vision? When she described what she had seen in her first vision about the great controversy between Christ and Satan, Ellen White tells us about some of what she "saw."

1. She saw events. Speaking of Jesus' resurrection, she said: "I saw the Roman guard, as the angelic host passed back to heaven, . . . raise themselves to see if it were safe for them to look around."<sup>4</sup>

2. She saw the character of people: "I saw that Luther was ardent and zealous, fearless and bold in reproofing sin, and advocating the truth."<sup>5</sup>

3. She was permitted to go behind the scenes, observing Satan: "I saw Satan and his angels seeking to shut . . . divine light from the people of God."<sup>6</sup>

In a most informative letter to J. N. Loughborough in 1874, Ellen White revealed several important facts about visions.

1. There was variety. "The Spirit of God has come upon me at different times, in different places, and under various circumstances."<sup>7</sup>

2. There was no human control. "My husband has had no control of these manifestations of the Spirit of God. Many times he has been far away when I have had visions."<sup>8</sup>

3. She could not "choose" to have a vision. "It is utterly false that I have ever intimated I could have a vision when I

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:

Ezekiel 21:1, 2

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pleased. There is not a shade of truth in this. I have never said I could throw myself into visions when I pleased, for this is simply impossible.<sup>9</sup>

4. She did not welcome visions (nor did many Bible prophets). "I have felt for years that if I could have my choice and please God as well, I would rather die than have a vision, for every vision places me under great responsibility to bear testimonies of reproof and of warning, which has ever been against my feelings, causing me affliction of soul that is inexpressible. Never have I coveted my position, and yet I dare not resist the Spirit of God and seek an easier position."<sup>10</sup>

1. *Early Writings*, p. 78.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 1,  
p. 72.

4. *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1,  
p. 68.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

7. *Selected Messages*,  
vol. 3, p. 37.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 37.

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# Testimony of Jesus

by George E. Rice

"Spirit of Prophecy" is a familiar, Seventh-day Adventist term. While it may be meaningless to others, this term conveys for us a clear picture of God's special gift to His remnant people.

Seventh-day Adventists base their understanding of the ministry of Ellen G. White on two key texts in Revelation (12:17 and 19:10), along with other supportive passages. Revelation 12:17 says the remnant people will keep the commandments of God and possess the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 19:10 tells us that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

"Testimony of Jesus" can be understood in either of two ways: (1) bearing witness (testimony) to or about Jesus (in Greek grammar an objective genitive), or (2) possessing the testimony that comes from Jesus in the form of the prophetic gift (subjective genitive). The majority of commentators understand the phrase in Revelation 12:17 as an objective genitive, and speak in terms of the church's witness to Jesus. This position is reflected in numerous Bible translations; for example, "bear testimony to Jesus" (RSV), "bear witness for Jesus" (Jerusalem Bible), "give witness to Jesus" (NAB), "Maintain their testimony to Jesus" (NEB). This understanding of the phrase excludes the idea that the testimony of Jesus is the prophetic gift.

There are one or two rare exceptions (e.g., Robert Mounce\*) who say "the testimony of Jesus" in 12:17 is a subjective genitive. But they do not understand the phrase as speaking of the prophetic gift. Rather, the testimony of Jesus was the witness of His life and the content of His preaching. It is this witness that the church possesses.

Seventh-day Adventists understand the phrase "testimony of Jesus," in both 12:17 and 19:10 as a subjective genitive, i.e., a testimony given by Jesus to His chosen messenger who, in turn, conveys this message to His people. This is the meaning in 19:10, and this verse is the basis for interpreting 12:17. This prophetic gift, it is believed among Seventh-day Adventists, has manifested itself in the last days in the work of Ellen G. White.

## REACT

Can the term "Spirit of Prophecy" be used exclusively for God's last-day prophet?

## EVIDENCE

**Key Texts:**  
**Revelation**  
**12:17; 19:10**

\*Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 247.

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# A Unique Influence and Method

by Elbio Pereyra

## HOW TO

Key Text:  
1 Thessalonians  
2:13

In one of the churches in Brazil the pastor and the church board met and agreed to offer the members a study course in family life. *The Adventist Home* by E. G. White would be the textbook, with the help of a study guide. The board members were distressed, however, because they could not find a qualified instructor in the church.

One of the board members spoke up. "There is a very good and able woman in town who could teach the course, but she is a Roman Catholic; in fact, she is an ex-nun."

"How can we ask a Roman Catholic to teach the course about *The Adventist Home* in a Seventh-Day Adventist church?"—questioned another board member. After some discussion, they agreed to get more information from the lady herself. They made the request, after giving her a copy of the book and the study guide.

She was surprised and perplexed that the local Adventist leaders would invite her to teach this course. Notwithstanding, she did not decline the invitation immediately. "Give me a day to think about it," was her answer, "and to take a look at the book, the guide, and the manual of instructions."

The next day when the church leaders returned, the woman was decisive: "If you will have me, I will help you teach the course!" Halfway through the course the ex-nun admitted to her Adventist friends that she was convinced they taught the truth. To make the story short, when the course was finished she had enough knowledge of our message that she requested baptism.

The best way to share with others the benefits of the gift, and to convince others about the genuineness of the Spirit of Prophecy, as manifested in Ellen G. White, is not by presenting arguments only. We have to study her writings on our own. Then the Holy Spirit, who spoke through her, will speak to us. The same principle applies to those outside the Adventist Church. Books like *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy* will be used by the Spirit to quicken reason, intellect, and heart, as in the case of the Catholic ex-nun.

## REACT

How does the timely message through Ellen G. White speak to your heart? How could you be instrumental in reaching other people with the message of Ellen G. White?

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# Guaranteed Success

by Tim Poirier

Paradoxically, Ellen White seems to present strong arguments as to why her writings are not needed. First, she wrote that "additional truth is not brought out."<sup>1</sup> Second, she urged, "Bring your evidences, clear and plain, from the Word of God."<sup>2</sup> Third, she stated that we "would not have needed the *Testimonies*" if we had made God's Word our study.<sup>3</sup> Put all together, these statements tell us that the Bible is completely sufficient for revealing the truths of salvation and that nothing she ever said or wrote could supplant its position as "the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience."<sup>4</sup> So why the gift of prophecy?

The same apostle who wrote that Scripture is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man [and woman] of God may be complete, equipped for every good work," also wrote that prophets were in the church "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, . . . that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Eph. 4:11-14, RSV).

Paul realized that no scripture verse could have helped Ananias to determine whether he, Paul, was disguising his real purposes by claiming to have had a new experience on the Damascus road (see Acts 9:10-16). Likewise, Philip could not find any Biblical text telling him whether he should approach the treasurer of Ethiopia at the risk of his life (see Acts 8:26-29).

The Author of the Bible has done more than leave us with a book of timeless instructions. He has also sent an ever-present "Comforter" to guide us "into all the truth" and to show us "things that are to come" (John 16:13, RSV)—to take that instruction book and apply its principles to our present needs.

The testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10) never supersedes His written Word, but, proceeding from the same Source, it spells out applications of principles, points out dangers, describes areas of deficiency, and highlights the result of choices that could work for or against the great plans God has for each of us.

God gives us the freedom to ignore such spiritual advantages, to follow our own inclinations, and painfully to learn our lessons through trial and error; but He would rather that we escaped such setbacks by being receptive to the messages of those who have been divinely selected to bring success to the people of God.

**OPINION**  
**Key Text:**  
**2 Chronicles**  
**20:20**

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 605.
2. *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 29.
3. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 605.
4. *The Great Controversy*, p. vii.

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Lesson 5, October 23-29

# The Law of God

"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law" (Romans 3:31, NIV).



# Love Is the Law

by Lynn Andrews

We had been walking in circles around the church for so long now that I was beginning to wonder whether the walls, like the ones at Jericho, would fall down at the sound of my voice.

"What are you trying to say?" I asked finally.

We rounded the corner, and he stopped walking.

"When I got back to the dorm last night," he began.

"About eleven?" I interrupted.

"Yeah." He paused, and I noticed that he was pale. In the year we had dated, I'd never seen him this pale. "When I walked into the lobby Diane was waiting for me. She said, 'Let's go for a ride.'"

"Just the two of you?" I asked, wondering how he had dodged the strict academy curfew. "Where did you go?"

"Up to the field where you can see deer sometimes."

"But you didn't come back until 1:00 a.m.!" I exclaimed.

"How do you know?" he asked, his voice tight.

"Because Diane set off the alarm when she sneaked back into the dorm. She's lucky she doesn't go to school here." I paused, then asked, "Did you see any deer?"

"No." He turned to face me, his breathing loud.

"So? What did you do?" I persisted.

"More than we should have."

As long as I live I'll never forget those words. In that instant I saw a photographic layout of what had been unformed lines in my mind before.

"I could hit you," I said.

He turned then, and what he said next stunned me. "I love you."

"You love me?" I felt as if I were forcing the words through a meat grinder. Hurt and anger turned to amazement. "You expect me to believe that?"

Tears wrestled with his lashes, and he brushed them away. "I'm sorry. You know I never meant to hurt you. You know I love you."

The funny thing was, I knew he was telling the truth. "Loving me doesn't give you the right to betray my trust," I said, feeling nauseated.

"But I love you," he insisted.

Those words have never had less meaning for me than they did then. What, to me, was the worth of love without action? What, to God, is the worth of a proclamation of faith not supported by obedience to His law?

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

**INTRODUCTION**  
Scripture:  
John 14:15

\*Lynn Andrews is a pseudonym.

Lynn Andrews\* is a student at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

# The Law in the Old and New Testaments

by Helmutt Ott

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God's covenant with His people and the standard in God's judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow men. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 18.*

## 1. The Law in the Old Testament

*"And Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, 'Keep silence and hear, O Israel: this day you have become the people of the Lord your God. You shall therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day'" (Deut. 27:9, 10, RSV).*

This passage contains several significant concepts that are essential to a correct understanding of the role the law plays in the believer's relationship with God.

- A. God gave His laws to—and demanded obedience from—those who already were His people and who participated in His covenant of grace. Deuteronomy 9:4-6 and 7:7,8 further indicate that God's redemptive act and the covenant relationship He established with the Israelites were based not on their own goodness, righteousness, or merits—for they had none—but on the love and faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God. Clearly, then, neither the law itself nor the Israelite's obedience to it played a causative role either in their redemption from slavery or in their participation in God's gracious covenant.
- B. The phrase "You shall therefore obey the voice of the Lord your God. . ." shows that, for God's people, His commands and statutes were not optional, but mandatory. In fact, they constituted the standard that determined an Israelite's right to continue as a covenant member of God's people. Violations of God's law could result in being

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cut off from the community of Israel (Num. 15:30, 31), or even in death (Ex. 21:14).

- C. The laws regulating the everyday behavior of God's people were only one aspect of the "commands and statutes" they were expected to obey. The other aspect was His instructions concerning the sanctuary service, which, as a type of the gospel, provided the means by which they could secure God's forgiveness (see Leviticus 4-6).
- D. To be forgiven meant that the punishment God had pronounced on the transgressor of the law did not fall on the sinner. He was not cut off, but remained a member of God's people in good and regular standing just as if he had not violated the law at all. True, he had sinned and was guilty of breaking his covenant with God, but because he availed himself of the atonement provided, the sanctuary overruled the condemnation of the law. It replaced the law's verdict of guilty, based on his unsatisfactory works, with one of justified, or nonguilty, grounded on the service that prefigured the vicarious death of Christ. Consequently it was an Israelite's relationship to the sanctuary that ultimately decided his fate, for it was the sanctuary—not the law—that had the final word concerning his personal standing with God.

## **2. The Law in the New Testament**

The dynamics we observe in the Old Testament are also present in the New Testament.

- A. Participation in the redemption God provided in Christ is possible only through faith, not through works (see Titus 3:5-7). Sonship belongs to those who have faith in Jesus Christ, and the inheritance—eternal life with all that it entails—is given to those who are children of God through faith in Christ (Gal. 3:29—4:7; Eph. 1:5; John 1:12). In fact, one sure way to be "severed from Christ" and fall "away from grace" and thus lose participation in the benefits of the covenant of grace—such as forgiveness and access to Christ's imputed righteousness—is to expect from the law what only Christ can provide (Gal. 5:4).
- B. Jesus stated plainly that He had not "come to abolish the law and the prophets . . . but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17). He did not come to free us of the responsibility to live
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morally right, or to abolish the righteous principles that govern God's creation so that we may please our sinful nature at will. The laws that regulate our relationship to God, to our fellow human beings and to God's world are as binding today as they ever were.

- C. True obedience involves more than abiding by the letter of the law. Those who keep to the law must also become obedient to the demands of "the gospel of our Lord Jesus" which alone can make them partakers of Christ by faith (2 Thess. 1:8; Acts 6:7; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:5; 1 John 5:11, 12). *Without this faith participation in the redemptive work of Christ, no amount of law-keeping will be able to reconcile them to God, grant them the right of adoption, or give them access to the Father's eternal inheritance.*
- D. It is therefore extremely important that we allow both the law and the gospel to play the specific role God intended each to have. If we want definite principles to guide our behavior as God's children, then we must come to the law. There we find God's distinction between what is right, true, and loving and what is sinful. However, if we want our death sentence to be removed, our condemnation to be revoked, our sin to be forgiven, and our names to be written in the Lamb's book of life, then we must be obedient to the gospel. For although the law can help us to live morally right, only the gospel of Jesus Christ can grant us eternal life.\*

\*This LOGOS section is extracted from the book *Perfect in Christ* by Dr. Helmut Ott, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald 1987).

# Ultimate Results

by Tina Frist

In the minds of some Christians, obedience to the law of God is negatively related to denial, limitations, and failure. According to Ellen White, these individuals are not understanding or experiencing the positive results of following God's plan. "There are many who, though striving to obey God's commandments, have little peace or joy. . . . Such ones do not correctly represent the sanctification that comes through obedience to the truth. The Lord would have all His sons and daughters happy, peaceful, and obedient."<sup>1</sup>

God had His children's best interests at heart while designating laws for them to follow. "God has given us His holy precepts, because He loves mankind. To shield us from the results of transgression, He reveals the principles of righteousness. The law is an expression of the thought of God; when received in Christ, it becomes our thought. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. God desires us to be happy, and He gave us the precepts of the law that in obeying them we might have joy."<sup>2</sup>

The choice of obedience is a personal decision. Outcomes, which inevitably follow choices, should be considered before the decision is made. "Every 'Thou shalt not,' whether in physical or moral law, contains or implies a promise. If it is obeyed, blessings will attend our steps; if it is disobeyed, the result is danger and unhappiness. The laws of God are designed to bring His people closer to Himself. He will save them from the evil and lead them to the good if they will be led, but force them He never will."<sup>3</sup>

Christians need to look beyond today's limitations and see the future advantages of living lives in harmony with God's will. "Through obedience to the laws of Jehovah, the human family may become a united, happy family in the city of God; but there is no room there for those who have no regard for the will of the Lord. All who will may gain everlasting life, but they must gain it by accepting the law of God as their guide in this life instead of seeking to follow their own laws. . . . To those who will live a life that is in harmony with the Father, Christ will impart the virtues of His life."<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

Am I measuring the reasons for my obedience (or disobedience) against the limitations of the law?

Or am I considering the ultimate happiness that can be mine as promised by an all-knowing God?

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:

Ecclesiastes

12:13

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 563, 564.

2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 308.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 445.

4. *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 47.

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# The Universal Moral Law

By Kent D. Boyle

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
Romans 3:31

Romans 3:31 poses a question that the believers in Rome obviously had to face. Is it possible to nullify the law of God? If we look at the moral law as regulations to inconvenience, in that line of thought, we might think that we can nullify the law. But if we understand the law as immutable, whatever we do, we cannot change it.

The universe is governed by physical laws. Scientists observe the universe to understand the laws that keep things working in order. Deists and transcendentalists study the physical world, nature, to understand themselves. If scientists and philosophers alike realize there are physical laws that are unchangeable, would it not be logical to conclude that there is a moral law that also is unchangeable?

C. S. Lewis in the first section of his book *Mere Christianity* goes to great lengths to explain how this moral law is understood by all mankind and is unchangeable: "Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining 'It's not fair' before you can say Jack Robinson."\*

God's moral laws are perfect (Psalm 19:7), and people in a perfect state would naturally keep them just as the world keeps rotating, no questions asked. But all the Christian world will agree that humanity has degenerated from its original condition, so it is logical that the perfect law and people do not agree. This is why God directed mankind back to Himself through the life of Christ. He was our substitute, and His agent, the Holy Spirit, transforms us slowly back into harmony with God's law.

It is a pity, then, that some people feel we are no longer "under the law." It is true that the law has no power to save, but it was never intended to. The law exists because it is true! For us to try and nullify the law would be like trying to change the law of gravity—it is impossible. Besides, who can think of a society that allows murder and theft? Even if there is such a society, no one wants to be murdered, and no one wants things stolen from him or her. We can only deceive ourselves, thinking that the law has changed, when only our perception of the law is different.

\*C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), pp. 18, 19.

## REACT

Why is it that people can generally agree about *most* of the Ten Commandments but do not include *one*?

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# Curves and Commandments

by Werner Stavenhagen

What shall we say the kingdom of God is like?

It is like a man driving a car along a curvy mountain pass. Ignoring road signs that tell him of upcoming sharp curves, he races along, squealing wheels around corners and complaining as he passes slow drivers.

With pride he whips around an S-curve only to meet head-on with a semi-truck. It's the ditch or his life. Miraculously he lands in the ditch.

With no way out, he signals for help. Car by car passes by. Finally a rickety old '52 Dodge truck pulls gently around the curve. A young man with grease on his hands steps out. Without a word he wraps a blanket around the shivering man. Then he pulls the man's car out of the ditch. After starting the engine he listens to the idle with a mechanic's perceptive ear. "Brother," he says, "it sounds as though you need a new engine. It so happens that I have a mint condition '52 engine." With a smile he adds, "Of course you'll have to take it slower around the corners."

When we ignore God's road signs, the Ten Commandments, we show a lack of trust in Him—the one who put them there. We end up in the ditch and learn the soiled truth of Romans 3:20, "Through the law we become conscious of sin" (NIV). That's when we know we need Jesus, the "fulfillment of the law" (see Matt. 5:17, NIV).

We look to Him and, being comforted, we want to keep the law. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). Suddenly we see the law as a warning from a thoughtful, caring Person. In fact, the law is an exact representation of Him and how He lived while on earth. It dawns on us that the road signs of God's law give us freedom from worrying about potential accidents and help us enjoy the skyline view of daily living.

But how do we do it? We need new engines, we need the Holy Spirit. "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek. 11:19, 20, NIV).

The how to's are as follows:

1. Daily ask for the Holy Spirit to live in you.
2. Daily study the life of Christ, the fulfillment of the law.
3. Don't try to hide any part of your life from God. Talk to Him and express all your thoughts. To use the analogy of Ezekiel 11, let God remove your stony heart. Don't

## HOW TO

Key Text:  
James 1:25

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fight to have chips of stone left in your heart. Keep the engine fine-tuned. Take the curves with care and enjoy the view. And remember—if you see someone else stuck in the ditch, tell them you've got the phone number of a mechanic who can fix things just right: JESUS.

### **REACT**

Should you spend more time studying the Ten Commandments or the life of Christ? Why?

Look up James 1:25 and 2:12. How does the law give freedom? Why does this freedom demand action?

Rephrase each of the Ten Commandments, emphasizing the freedom they give you. Example: "By not coveting, I am free to . . ."

## **This Christmas Give a Hospital**



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 24, you're giving medicine, beds and Christian care to people living along Brazil's Amazon river.

**Help Build a Hospital at  
Manaus, North Brazil.**

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING**

# Balance for Your Life

by J. Scott Begley

In the book of Romans, Paul deals straightforwardly with the importance of the law of God and its correct place in our lives. Over and over, he reinforces his concern that the readers of his letter understand that "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law" and then reminds them that "rather, through the Law we become conscious of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

There is a familiar story about a tightrope walker who had run a line across Niagara Falls and had crossed it several times, to the amazement of numerous spectators, while pushing a wheelbarrow. After one particular crossing he turned to the crowd and asked for a volunteer to sit in the wheelbarrow while he pushed it across. After a long pause, during which people discussed the absurdity of this, one man stepped forward. The only advice the high-wire man gave him was, "Don't look down." As they got farther and farther out over the falls, the passenger began to sweat despite the cold, spray-laden updrafts that surrounded them. However, he gripped the sides of the wheelbarrow with white knuckles and sat motionless, staring straight ahead. After some time on the wire, the stunt man safely delivered him to the other side of that roaring chasm, to the cheers of the crowd.

Like that brave passenger, the only way we can get to the safety of heaven is by having faith in Christ to get us there. Our task is to let Christ balance us. God's law is just like the advice that the stunt man gave his passenger, because our obedience results from our faith in Christ, and isn't something we do to earn salvation. We ride a precariously balanced wheelbarrow that Christ is pushing toward salvation along the strong cable of His grace. If we lean too far toward faith and say that the law is null and void, we will lose our balance and fall. If we lean too far toward the law and our inherent ability to fulfill that law, we merely change the side of the rope on which we fall.

It is only by remaining still and balanced that we will reach our goal. Christ expressed His law in Matthew 22:37-40, when he replied to the question, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" by saying, "Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (NIV).

## OPINION

Key Texts:  
Romans 3:20-24; 11:5, 6

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Lesson 6, October 30—November 5

# The Sabbath

“ ‘Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath’ ” (Matthew 24:20, NIV).





# The Beauty of Sabbath

by Carole Huenergart  
& Brenda Martin

Have you ever really thought about the Sabbath? It was made for so many beautiful reasons. It was made for you; yes, you and God to spend quality time together.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Matthew 24:20

In the beginning, God created  
The heavens and the earth,  
In six days He labored and  
Gave us our first birth.

On the seventh day He rested from  
the work which He had finished;  
This was His example to us  
So that we can be unblemished.

But the seventh day is the Sabbath  
of the Lord our God,  
This day is our one day journey;  
Together with Him we trod.

The Sabbath day is blessed by God;  
He also hallowed it,  
A day for man to come apart,  
Our lives to re-commit.

He made it separate from other days  
As a sign that He is Lord,  
To keep His day, be sanctified,  
To depart we can't afford.

The Sabbath was created for us,  
A rest from all our toil,  
To come apart and spend with God,  
And to our God be loyal.

The day of the Lord is honorable,  
The Sabbath, a delight,  
If in our lives we put Him first,  
He'll fill us with His might.

The Sabbath day was made for man,  
And not man for the Sabbath;  
Therefore this shows the Son of Man  
Is Lord of every Sabbath.

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Sabbath is a day in which  
We fellowship with others,  
Reflecting on His word to us  
And sharing with our brothers.

God has given the Sabbath day  
To focus on helping people,  
To reach outside to other folks  
Who don't meet under our steeple.

Sabbath is a special day  
Made for us—communion,  
To spend time with each other, and  
With Him make reunion.

Therefore this day that God has made  
So beautiful and blessed,  
Can be spent by us in His own way,  
Full of His holy rest.

It's a wonder that we do not spend more time contemplating the Sabbath and its Creator. Instead, we are often too busy with thoughts of what we can do to make Sabbath happy and not of what God can show us that is special on His day.

# The Sabbath as Heart of the Gospel

by Norman R. Gulley

LOGOS

**Theme:** "The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 19.*

The Sabbath, even from its inception, unfolds the very heart of God's salvation plan for mankind.

## 1. What is the gospel invitation? (read Matt. 11:28-30)

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (11:28).*

Jesus launched His ministry on a Sabbath. He read from Isaiah's scroll, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed" (Luke 4:18, NIV). Before Him were the most serious practitioners of the day. Their bondage was not just to Rome, but to religion. They literally toiled under the heavy burdens—self-imposed. And no weight hung so heavy as their Sabbath keeping. Their Mishna contained 600 rules and regulations for Sabbath observance—occupying 39 columns!

It was to these burden bearers that Jesus gave the great invitation, "Come unto me—and rest" Not only was this call given on a Sabbath but Jesus picked out Sabbaths to illustrate the inner meaning of His invitation. Sabbath came to reveal the very heart of the gospel. Before exploring this fact, let's go back to the first Sabbath, then look at the three Sabbath texts in the Old Testament, and then return to Christ's use of the Sabbath to teach the gospel.

## 2. Creation Sabbath (read Genesis 2:2)

If God is omnipotent, all-powerful (see Gen. 17:1; Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:19), then He could have created everything instan-

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taneously—in the twinkling of an eye. At the words “let there be everything”—the world and all therein could have appeared. So why did such an all-powerful God take six days to create? Because of the Sabbath. Unlike the month and year, which are rooted in the moon’s and sun’s rotational cycles, the week is rooted not in nature, but in Creation week.

Creation week can be viewed as moving toward its climax in the Sabbath. After clothing the world with vegetation, God made many animals to be companions to man, then He made man and woman to be companions to each other at a higher level, then He made the Sabbath so that humans could have special time for companionship with Him. For mankind was not merely made for companionship with animals or with fellow beings—mankind was made for God. The first Sabbath was Adam and Eve’s first full day of life. That day was spent in fellowship with Christ, after which, from this vantage point, they went down into the work of their first week. Communion issuing in work is the very heart of the gospel. It is termed faith that works by love (Gal. 5:6).

### **3. How do the three key Sabbath texts in the Old Testament compare? (read Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15; Ezek. 20:20)**

The Ten Commandments, as first written (Exodus 20) issue from the context of the Exodus (see 20:1). Israel keeps the commandments in grateful response for their freedom from slavery. The Sabbath resting in Jesus was to epitomize this relationship. For God had done something for them that they could never have done for themselves. He took them out of Egypt, opened up the Red Sea, and destroyed the Egyptian army—the greatest in the world at the time. Little wonder that when the Ten Commandments were rewritten, the keeping of the Sabbath is not just in memory of Creation, but in memory of the liberation from Egypt (Deut. 5:15). Both miracles—Creation and liberation—open up the heart of the gospel, as the creative and freeing activity of Christ.

*Ezekiel calls the Sabbath a sign of sanctification. What is sanctification? It is freedom from our greatest enemy, self, our personal exodus liberation, and a re-creative work of Christ within.*

### **4. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath? (read John 5:1-18)**

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How long had the infirm man languished at the Pool of Bethesda? Thirty-eight years—five years before Christ came to earth! Why did Jesus not wait one more day to heal him? Why heal him on the Sabbath? He wanted the restored man to ever associate His gift of life with the Sabbath gift. The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), for his benefit, and not man for the Sabbath—as the toiling Jews believed. Christ's saving miracles turned the Jewish idea of Sabbath upside down. The Sabbath was to be considered as beneficial for humans as any miraculous healing.

**5. Why did Jesus die on a Friday? (read Luke 23:50-56; 24:1)**

On crucifixion Friday, when Christ cried out, "It is finished," His redemptive sacrifice was complete. He had finished His salvation mission (living and dying for us) just as He ended His work of Creation on Creation Friday. On those two Fridays the world had its first and second Adams. On those two Fridays two worlds were launched, the first one, and the redeemed one (see Romans 5). The first full day to follow both Fridays was a Sabbath to celebrate the finished work of Christ.

Resting in Christ's finished work is the very heart of the gospel, for we are just as dependent upon Christ for salvation as we are for our existence. This parallelism between Creation and redemption argues strongly for the Sabbath's continuance beyond Calvary. God planned for the crucifixion to precede a Sabbath just as surely as He planned humanity's creation to do the same—both were to emphasize the importance of the Sabbath for mankind in Creation and in redemption.

**6. Is the Sabbath an eternal command? (read Heb. 4:1-11; Isa. 66:22, 23)**

According to the book of Hebrews there remains a seventh-day rest for God's people 40 years after the cross (Hebrews was written approximately A.D. 70). Hebrews is talking primarily about rest in general for Christians, but secondarily about the Sabbath-day rest. Isaiah tells us that on the new earth, after the millennium, the Sabbath will be a time when all flesh will come and worship God.

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# “Oh Day of Rest and Gladness”?

by John Dysinger

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Genesis 2:2, 3

“Great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath, and God desires that the Sabbath day shall be to us a day of joy. There was joy at the institution of the Sabbath. God looked with satisfaction upon the work of His hands. All things that He had made He pronounced ‘very good.’ Genesis 1:31. Heaven and earth were filled with rejoicing. ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Job 38:7. Though sin has entered the world to mar His perfect work, God still gives to us the Sabbath as a witness that One omnipotent, infinite in goodness and mercy, created all things. Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.”<sup>1</sup>

“In order to keep the Sabbath holy, it is not necessary that we enclose ourselves in walls, shut away from the beautiful scenes of nature and from the free, invigorating air of heaven. We should in no case allow burdens and business transactions to divert our minds upon the Sabbath of the Lord, which He has sanctified. We should not allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character even. But the mind cannot be refreshed, enlivened, and elevated by being confined nearly all the Sabbath hours within walls, listening to long sermons and tedious, formal prayers. The Sabbath of the Lord is put to a wrong use if thus celebrated. The object for which it was instituted is not attained. The Sabbath was made for man, to be a blessing to him by calling his mind from secular labor to contemplate the goodness and glory of God.”<sup>2</sup>

“When the Lord delivered His people Israel from Egypt and committed to them His law, He taught them that by the observance of the Sabbath they were to be distinguished from idolaters. . . . As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God’s people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors.”<sup>3</sup>

## REACT

How does the Sabbath become a day of joy to us? If not, why?  
How does our Sabbath observance distinguish us as loyal subjects or as transgressors?

John Dysinger is assistant chaplain at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 349.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 583.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 349, 350.

# Essence of the Sabbath

by Kevin Gepford

The fog of night hung like thick wool mist to the earth against a faint glow in the east. Serenely a man and a woman woke as the still of night vaporized into a brilliant dawn of dewdrops and songbirds. This was the first day of the rest of their lives, and it was holy. Yesterday God had talked about the Day of Rest, but to Adam and Eve its meaning was nominal. Soon enough, though, the Sabbath would be a precious relic of their once endless moments with God.

Enter the twentieth century. Witness a thousand diversions of a bored world. Satan has improved his act, since no one believes in talking serpents anymore, but he claims the same notion from Eden: "Keep looking, buddy, and you'll find the thing that really makes life good."

Solomon did precisely that. And after trying out philosophy, possessions, wives, amusements, and knowledge, he reached the conclusion that without God's help people cannot find what is good for them to do.\* God is the only one who can make people happy and whole. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, NKJV).

The Bible teaches that every principle of right living is aimed at restoring our original image, marred at the beginning of time. Renewing the vitality of Eden is God's real purpose, and He has specified the best way that this can happen: seek to view life from His perspective. Consider His words: "Listen diligently to Me, and eat [do] what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live." "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace" (Isa. 55:2, 3, 12, NKJV). This is the outcome of "doing it" God's way. Truth bestows life, and when we believe in truth we are filled with completeness. Only God knows what we need to restore our original personhood. Only He can convince us that the Sabbath is **inseparable** from His body of truth and that our lives are fragmented without it.

The Sabbath lifts our heads above the pollution of pain, frustration, and exhausting labor. It is designed to bring happiness to our lives (see Isa. 58:13, 14). Sabbath observance is integral to experiencing maximum living and maximum Christianity.

## REACT

Do the rewards of the Sabbath go beyond qualitative issues?

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
John 10:10

\*Charles Swindoll,  
*Living on the Ragged Edge*, p. 6.

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# The Sabbath— A Blessing?

by Kevin Powell

## HOW TO

Key Text:  
Isaiah 58:13, 14

“But why can’t I . . . ?” is an all too familiar phrase asked by many young people. “Because its Sabbath!” comes the answer. This unfortunately has made many people have an unhealthy—even negative—concept of the Sabbath. It is ironic that the very Sabbath sanctified at Creation has become a curse to some.

Dos and don’ts have clouded many minds about the Sabbath. Should I do this? Should I do that? A list is formulated, at least in mind if not in written form. Then, when someone asks you to do something or the opportunity arises for you to go somewhere, you go over your preformulated list of dos and don’ts and see whether they are “sabbathy” or not. Then sooner or later the phrase “I wish it weren’t Sabbath, so I could do this” pops out of your mouth or at least becomes a prominent thought in your mind. Such a situation forces the Sabbath to be perceived radically differently from the way it was intended to at its inception. The Bible reveals that the Sabbath can be a blessing as ordained in the beginning. The following suggestions can help you make Sabbath more of a blessing.

### **1. Realize that the Sabbath was made for your enjoyment and benefit.**

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, NASB) is how Christ put it. Think of that! It’s not merely something to be slavishly observed, but is for our benefit. A special time for an uplifting, invigorating experience with our Saviour and Creator.

### **2. Imitate Jesus’ exemplary actions on the Sabbath.**

Jesus allegedly “broke” the Jewish Sabbath when He healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18) and when at the synagogue He restored a man’s withered hand (Mark 3:4, 5), but He summed up true Sabbath keeping with His question “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm?” (NASB). Jesus made it plain that Sabbath was a time to do good for others, and Paul quoted Jesus as saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35, NASB). To experience a full blessing on the Sabbath, we should follow Jesus’ example of doing good for others.

### **3. Accept Jesus’ offer of rest.**

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28, NASB). The Sabbath in the commandments is not to stop us from having “fun,” but it does allow us to slow down from our toilsome work and busy lives and reflect on God’s creative and redemptive work.

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Kevin Powell is a junior religion major at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.



# Personal Opinion of the Sabbath

by Eric Tanner

While growing up in a small Southern town in Georgia, I was very faithful in Sabbath School attendance. However, the Sabbath meant no more to me than putting on my "good" clothes and seeing a few familiar faces that I had not seen all week. I gave little thought to the true meaning of the Sabbath.

As I grew older I began to question the Sabbath and wanted to know whether it was the correct day to worship. I began to study the Bible more closely and read books such as the writings of Ellen G. White. I then became truly convinced that Saturday *is* the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath is celebrated as a memorial of Creation.

The Bible tells us to "remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. . . . For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11, NIV).

One way I've found that helps me capture a spiritual state of mind is fellowship in nature. On the weekends I often will gather up friends and head to the wilderness. Here, with the sounds of a running stream or noise of birds chirping, I can concentrate on my Maker. My friends, too, feel more at ease sharing experiences that have brought them closer to God. In such surroundings I feel as though God is putting His arm around us, bringing us closer to Him as a personal friend.

Ellen G. White says, "By communion with God in nature, the mind is uplifted, and the heart finds rest."<sup>1</sup>

Earlier on in the same paragraph, Ellen G. White says that Christ Himself withdrew "from the confusion of the city to the quiet of the fields and hills. . . . And during His ministry He loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens. . . . Here, surrounded by the works of His own creation, He could turn the thoughts of His hearers from the artificial, to the natural."<sup>2</sup>

I'm not suggesting in any way to give up going to church. I'm only suggesting nature as one way a person can draw closer to the Lord. Nature has had a tremendous impact on the way I live and relate to others and to Christ. My suggestion is that if you have not found the Sabbath to be a personal blessing, then maybe you should try spending a few hours in nature.

## OPINION

Key Text:

Exodus 20:11

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1. *The Desire of Ages*,  
p. 291.  
2. *Ibid.*

Lesson 7, November 6-12

# Stewardship

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV).



# Wasting Our Greatest Resource

by Steve Daily

Traditionally, the Adventist doctrine of stewardship has been defined in a rather narrow context. A survey of various doctrinal statements throughout the history of our movement reveals that good stewardship has generally been defined as paying an honest tithe and giving generous offerings, and this aspect of stewardship certainly needs to be emphasized in Adventism today. To a lesser degree we have also identified our doctrine of stewardship with how we take care of our bodies through temperance and healthful living.

But from my perspective problems with each of these aspects of stewardship can be traced to the fact that we as Adventists are wasting our greatest resource. Consider the following dialogue:

Student: And Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and" "preach this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 28:18; 10:7, 8, NIV).

Professor: Which, being interpreted, means that Jesus gave very specific powers to a select group of

individuals, under conditions that obviously differ quite notably from our situation today.

Student: But Jesus not only sent out the 12 and the 72 to proclaim His power by performing signs and wonders and preaching the gospel, He also empowered His church with the Holy Spirit so that its message of salvation would be accompanied by mighty works.

Professor: How can any human being do greater works than Christ Himself? Don't you see that the Scriptures need interpretation? That is why we have trained theologians in the church.

Student: Maybe that is where we differ. It is my understanding that God has given a different interpreter of the Scriptures.

Professor: And who might that be?

Student: According to Jesus, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13, NKJV). Maybe that is why we are so hesitant to truly open ourselves up to the gift of the Holy Spirit—because we don't listen to the Holy Spirit often enough.

I wonder how accountable God will hold us for our lack of stewardship with regard to this important gift?

**INTRODUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Colossians**  
**3:23, 24**

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# Stewardship

by Richard Rice

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 20.*

The doctrine of stewardship has a problem—its name. *Stewardship* is a word we hardly ever use. In fact, the last time I heard the word *steward* was on a ship in the Aegean Sea. At dinner the night before our cruise among the Greek islands came to a close, the cruise director asked us to express our thanks to the chief steward and his assistants, "who had done so much to make our voyage a pleasant experience." She was right. The cabin stewards had made beds, changed towels, cleaned floors, and replenished ice water throughout the trip. They deserved our applause. But unless we are flying or floating, most of us have little use for the word *steward*, and even less for the word *stewardship*. The expression is more familiar and more helpful in other ways too.

A recent newspaper item deplored the decline of service in America. In business after business, it seems, nobody really cares about the customer. If you need your car fixed, plan on several trips to the shop. It's unlikely they'll do it right the first time. If you get the food you ordered in a restaurant, consider yourself lucky. Many people don't. It isn't just America's problem, of course. There are times when everyone finds the idea of service unattractive. Invited to serve himself in a restaurant once, a famous Russian ballet dancer threw his plate against the wall. "Nureyev does not serve himself," he shouted. "Nureyev is served." His behavior was extreme, but we all know how he felt. The feeling is as old as sin. In fact, the feeling is the essence of sin. Lucifer's basic attitude boils down to a single defiant sentence: "I will not serve." The original rebel found it "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven," as John Milton put it.

On the other hand, there is something pathetic about those who never learn to serve. We feel sorry for people who are doted on their entire lives. In the days of the British Empire

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certain provincial English women were proud they did not know how to make tea. It showed they always had servants to do the job. In ancient China scholars let their fingernails grow to great length in order to advertise the fact they never did manual labor. Service was something beneath their dignity.

But not knowing how to serve can be a real disadvantage. I know a woman who loves socializing but finds it hard to entertain, because she simply hates doing dishes. When she was growing up her widowed father always hired someone to do the household chores. Cleaning up a kitchen was something she never had to worry about, and doesn't like worrying about now. Another girl I know married a man whose cultural bias prevents upper-class people like himself from working. But since his money is tied up in a country overseas, they have nothing to live on, so she struggles to support them both while he enjoys his leisure.

These observations on service can help us to appreciate the distinctive perspective that Christian faith brings to the topic. The Biblical doctrine of service contains several important themes.

### **1. Service Is Basic to Human Existence**

To begin with, the Bible reveals that service is basic to human existence. Along with all the privileges God gave Adam and Eve, He also gave them some important responsibilities. They were instructed to be fruitful and multiply. Adam was placed in a garden in order to till it and keep it. These early passages indicate that the fundamental human situation is one of responsibility to God. They reveal that God has a claim on this world and its resources and on us and our resources. God did not abandon His creation. These verses also show that serving God is a privilege rather than a burden. When God gave human beings dominion over the things He made, it was not because the world was something for which He no longer had any use, like trash by the side of a road. It was to affirm the value of human service, not to depreciate the value of creation.

Consequently, service is what gives meaning to life. In one of his books, British writer J. G. Ballard tells the story of a 10-year-old English boy who was separated from his family when World War II broke out in China.<sup>2</sup> On his own in Shanghai, he managed to survive by using his wits and by working to help other people. Having someone to take care of, he discovered, is almost the same as having someone to take care of

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you. It gives you a reason for living. The principle is universal. We all need to be needed. Studies show that elderly hospital patients who have pets waiting for them at home typically recover more quickly than those who don't. Having someone who needs them makes the difference. Service is basic to human life.

## **2. The Character of Service**

Most discussions of stewardship also mention the rewards that it entails. Malachi 3:10 often appears in this connection: "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse," God promises, and "I will . . . pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (RSV).

The idea is Biblical of course, but the notion of a reward for service raises some serious questions. In the thinking of some people, it destroys the meaning of service to talk of reward. Service is its own reward, they insist, or it isn't really service. Those who work for the purpose of gaining a reward aren't serving anyone but themselves. Their effort is simply an expression of self-interest. It doesn't deserve to be called service.

These misgivings are well-founded, because there are lots of people whose service is motivated by a desire to get something out of it for themselves. They read that God promises His blessings to those who serve, so they serve in order to gain the blessings. "God prospers tithepayers," they reason, "and I want prosperity, so I'll pay my tithe."

The problem here is a confusion of consequence with motivation. There is a connection between service and reward. In a world created by a just and loving God, the good life is the moral life—a life of service to God and humanity. According to the first psalm, God blesses the person who lives a godly life: "In all that he does, he prospers" (verse 3, RSV). But such statements are designed to tell us what sort of person God is. They are not intended to provide the basic motive for our behavior. On an individual basis, the good deed-good result rule doesn't always hold. Sometimes good people suffer, as the book of Job graphically demonstrates, and sometimes bad people prosper—a problem addressed in Psalm 73. So, it is a serious mistake to view service as a means of getting something we want.

What really counts as far as God is concerned is self-forgetful service—gifts in which the giver forgets himself or herself. Those blessed by the Son of man in Jesus' great parable of the last judgment were strangely unaware of what they had done. "When did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and wel-

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come thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?" (Matt. 25:37-39, RSV). The point is not that they have defective memories. The point is that reward was not prominent in their thinking. What they cared about was hungry, thirsty, lonely, naked people. Getting a reward for helping them was the last thing on their minds.

Given the essential posture of humanity mentioned above, we should also note that the ultimate object of service is God. Our role is to serve; His role is to be served. In this regard many Christians need a Copernican revolution in their thinking. They put themselves at the center of their universe. Instead of serving God, they want God to serve them; and the primary concern in their religious life is to get God to do something for them. The theme of their prayers is not, "Thy will be done," but "My will be done." Obviously, this attitude is light-years away from the spirit of Jesus, who said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (John 4:34, RSV). For Him, serving God was life itself—as natural and important as eating.

### 3. Jesus Is the True Example of Service

When we mention Jesus' service, our thoughts typically run to His momentous sacrifice at Calvary. But just as remarkable—in some ways more remarkable—was the unselfishness that characterized His daily behavior. It is one thing to risk your life in one heroic display of compassion. It is quite another to live day in and day out with the welfare of others uppermost in your mind. But that is exactly what Jesus did. After one of His most exhausting days of ministry, for example, Jesus was concerned, not about His own need for rest, but about how hungry His listeners were. And on the night of His own greatest struggle with temptation, His heart went out to His unprepared disciples.

Service was the essence of Jesus' life. In fact, some scholars even believe that the service character of Jesus' ministry provides an explanation for His death. It is not easy to determine just why the leaders of His day opposed Jesus so strongly. What provoked them most of all may have been His willingness to accept the elements of society they steadfastly excluded. Jesus' care for the down-and-out, for the refuse of mankind, may have generated the opposition that ended with His crucifixion. He followed the path of service to the bitter end.

1. *Paradise Lost, The Portable Milton*, ed., Douglas Bush (New York: Viking Press, 1949), Book 1, line 263.
2. J. G. Ballard, *Empire of the Sun* (London: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1985).

# Intelligent Christians

by Gary Chartier

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Ecclesiastes  
9:10

For Ellen White, stewardship meant accepting God's sovereignty over *all* of our lives—not only our money but our time and talents, as well. In these selections, she emphasizes the importance of being stewards of the abilities God has given us.

"God has entrusted to each one capacities and powers, that they may be returned to Him enlarged and improved. All His gifts are granted to us to be used to the utmost. He requires every one of us to cultivate our powers, and attain the highest possible capacity for usefulness, that we may do noble work for God, and bless humanity. Every talent that we possess, whether of mental capacity, money, or influence, is of God, so that we may say with David, 'All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.'

"Dear youth, what is the aim and purpose of your life? Are you ambitious for education that you may have a name and position in the world? Have you thoughts that you dare not express, that you may one day stand upon the summit of intellectual greatness; that you may sit in deliberative and legislative councils, and help to enact laws for the nation? There is nothing wrong in these aspirations. You may every one of you make your mark. You should be content with no mean attainments. Aim high, and spare no pains to reach the standard. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

"Many have felt, 'Well, it doesn't matter if we are not so particular to become thoroughly educated,' and a lower standard of knowledge has been accepted. And now when suitable men are wanted to fill various positions of trust, they are rare. . . . What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. While religion should be the pervading element in every school, it will not lead to a cheapening of the literary attainments. While a religious atmosphere should pervade the school, diffusing its influence, it will make all who are truly Christians feel more deeply their need of thorough knowledge, that they may make the best use of the faculties that God has bestowed upon them. While growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will groan under a sense of their imperfections, and will seek constantly to put to the stretch their powers of mind, that they may become intelligent Christians."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 82.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 117, 118.

## REACT

Can we "groan under a sense" of our own "imperfections" and still have a healthy self-esteem?

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# The Steward and Judgment

by Dexter A. Richardson

We speak of the stewardship of time, money, possessions, talents, and others. The impact of such a discussion is expanded and elevated when we speak not only of stewardship but also of the steward. When we relate steward and stewardship together, it resembles an artist who takes out his array of oil paints on his palette and begins to paint a beautiful picture on canvas. In the same way, when we speak of a steward in the proper sense, it adds life and color to the meaning of stewardship.

The term *steward* is found both in the Old and the New Testament. In Genesis 43:16, 19 and 44:1, 4, Joseph's steward is literally "man over his house." In 1 Chronicles 27:31 and 28:1, the stewards are the officials in charge of David's property. In Daniel 1:11, 16, the guard who was put in charge over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah is a steward.<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament the use of the word *steward* is further developed. Not only is it used in a literal sense as in the Old Testament writings, but it is also used figuratively. (See Luke 12:42, 16:1, 3, 8, as examples of its literal use. See 1 Corinthians 4:1, Titus 1:7, and 1 Peter 4:10 as examples of its figurative use.) The most commonly used word in the New Testament for steward is *oikonomos*.<sup>2</sup> The term is found rather infrequently in the New Testament, outside of Luke 16. The steward was the manager or administrator of the estate.<sup>3</sup>

Faithfulness is the primary requirement of a steward, because he deals with that which belongs to another.<sup>4</sup> The steward was a servant given the task of administration over his master's property, with his responsibility being to devote his time, ability, and energy to his master's interest, not his own.<sup>5</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Paul reflects upon the faithfulness required of a steward. The thought that Paul brings out in 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2 is that a steward must be found reliable, because he or she is entrusted with the very things of God. This teaching is not original with Paul, for Jesus in the parable of the talents taught this same concept (see Matt. 25:14-30). As Christians, we are all stewards under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We have been entrusted with the very things of God, whether it is in the area of time, possessions, or talents. Our primary allegiance is to God, and not to ourselves or this world. The overwhelming evidence of Scripture is that a steward is considered to be a co-worker with God, invested with responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:

1 Corinthians  
4:1, 2

1. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 443.

2. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 938.

3. *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), vol. 10, p. 52.

4. *Ibid.*

5. F. F. Bruce, ed., *New Century Bible, 1 & 2 Corinthians* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 1971), p. 46.

6. Douglas W. Johnson, *The Tithes: Challenge or Legalism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 39.

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## Salt and Light by Swasti Bhattacharyya

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Matthew 5:13-**  
**16**

Can a movie star be a Christian, much less a pastor? After all, acting is dealing with the make-believe world. The environment, including the people, that surrounds an actor is no place for a man of God. Clifton Davis heard all this and much more. In his early years he made his way into the Hollywood scene and found acting was his special talent. After rededicating his life to God and becoming a pastor, he still believed acting was his gift. So he pursued it, and is now one of the stars on the TV comedy "AMEN." In a chapel talk he gave last year, he left us with an important message. God has given each of us different gifts. These gifts will open doors for us that no other could walk through. Also, the more unique our gift, the more responsibility we have to develop it. So what do acting and gifts have to do with stewardship?

*Stewardship* is often a term associated with the giving of tithes and offerings. Though management of money is one aspect of stewardship, there are other ways in which we can be God's stewards. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus calls us "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." He wants us to shine before all men so when they observe us and our actions they will glorify our Father in heaven. God made us stewards over our talents and abilities. It is with these gifts that we can be the channels through which His love can flow to touch the lives of others.

God entrusted each of us with these special talents. Combine them with our individual dreams, and we become a powerful part of the body of Christ. All of us in our different areas of interest will be "the salt." Charles Swindoll once said, "If we are the salt of the world, what are all the salt shakers doing in the same place?" Like many of us, Clifton Davis had a dream. His gift and desire led him into the world of acting. Here he was one of the few "salt shakers." In his field he comes in contact with so many who will be able to get a glimpse of God as never before.

So maybe you are into business, graphic design, medicine, or agriculture. That's great! God can use each of us in any of these fields. So many people feel they have to put aside their own dreams and desire to "follow God's will." But often it is God who gives us those dreams. When we develop those dreams to their fullest potential, we glorify Him.

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# More Than Tithes and Offerings

by Gary Chartier

When you hear *stewardship* you probably think about tithes and offerings. That's the way Adventists have traditionally used it, after all. But I think the Bible, as well as thoughtful Christians throughout history, has seen it a little differently. How much you give to the church is important, to be sure. But it's not as important as how much you give to God.

Following Judasism, Christianity is a religion that's hostile to the whole idea of a "sacred" sphere of life as opposed to a "secular" one. Scripture urges us to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5, NKJV). That doesn't mean that every thought ought to be, or needs to be, of an explicitly religious nature. What it *does* mean, though, is that Christian values and commitments must inform our decisions in every area of life. It means that, when a scientist who is a Christian works in her lab, she asks herself not only about the importance of her project to the company for which she works, but also about its significance for God and God's world. It means that a Christian politician thinks not only of his own reelection, but about the needs of his constituents in light of Scripture's commands.

We could go on indefinitely, of course. But instead, let's look at one example—what Christians call the "doctrine of vocation." The doctrine of vocation holds that we must view our work, no matter how "secular," as an opportunity to praise and serve God. Based on the idea that God called human beings to develop societies to meet the needs of one another, and recognizing that God's children have a diversity of talents to employ for their mutual betterment, this doctrine has two clear implications.

1. We need not feel guilty about holding down a job "in the world." Paul may have mended tents to support himself as a preacher; but Daniel and Joseph worked full-time as chief ministers of world powers.

2. Our jobs must be evaluated on the basis of how they contribute to achieving God's purposes. Countries clearly need businesses that supply goods and services to people who need or desire them. But that doesn't mean that working for *every* company in *every* situation is appropriate for you as a Christian. What, for instance, about a multinational that exploits a Third World nation's valuable resources without benefit to that nation itself, or a corporation that pollutes the environment?

Stewardship is a lot bigger than we probably think most of the time. It takes in all of life. That's because we're *God's* stewards; and all of life is God's.

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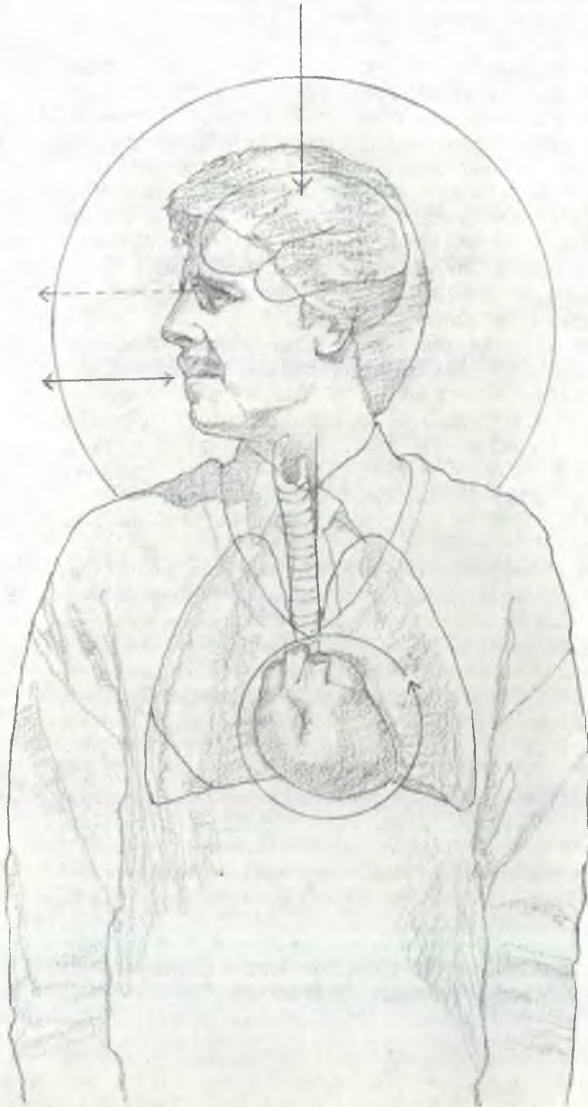
## OPINION

Key Text:  
2 Corinthians  
10:5

Lesson 8, November 13-19

# Christian Behavior

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, NIV).



# Pertaining to Salvation

by Paul Mallery

This week's lesson may be dangerous to your spiritual health. All too often in the Adventist community, "theological" discussions wind up arguing over jewelry, moviegoing, or other standards. (I suppose strictly speaking, one might call these "metallurgical" discussions.) But unless you are sure you have Christ in your life, you would do better to read one of the Gospels or *Steps to Christ*. I have spent—no, make that wasted—many hours arguing over standards: whether it is right or wrong to go to place X, the morality of eating food Y, and wearing item Z.

Not that I don't enjoy a heated theological discussion: I'm sure Paul and Barnabas had a few, and I can picture the apostles staying up late one night arguing over the Biblical basis for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. But standards have a way of getting out of hand. Last summer I was leading a Sabbath School discussion on standards, and

the group concluded that if we have Jesus in the center of our lives, the rest will fall into place. Not five minutes after this, we were right back to arguing over going to movies and wearing jewelry.

Are movies and jewelry so important to us that we find them more attractive than Christ? Keep Christ at the center, for if Christ is in the center, the circumference will take care of itself.

So if you believe in Jesus Christ and His salvation, then feel free to discuss the jewelry policy, as well as policies X and Y—if you truly have Christ, jewelry, doing X, and eating Y will not be a problem, and this article will be a source of discussion, not argument. But if not—if you have doubts about the saving grace of Jesus Christ—then, instead, spend time praying and reading the Bible. And maybe your next theological discussion can talk about God instead of precious metals.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
1 Corinthians  
6:19, 20

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# Christian Identity and Christian Behavior

by Richard Rice

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 21.*

As we have seen, salvation involves a fundamental change in personal identity. Those who receive salvation are "born again," "justified," and "sanctified"; indeed, they have already begun "eternal life" (see 1 John 3:14). Their situation is completely transformed, and they stand in a totally new relationship to God. Moreover, this transformation is entirely the gift of God. Human beings do nothing to deserve it or contribute to it; all they do is accept it.

By itself, this would be plenty of cause for rejoicing, but it is only part of the good news. Salvation involves a transformation in concrete human life, as well as a change of identity, and affects what we do, as well as what we are. Indeed, it is impossible to be a Christian and not have it show in the way we live. This is the point of James's letter (see James 2:14-26).

To understand the Christian life, we need to grasp the basic relationship between Christian identity and Christian behavior. To put it briefly, what a Christian does is a consequence of what he is, not a condition of it. A Christian leads a praiseworthy life because God has saved him, not because he hopes God will save him. What he is, is basic, or prior, to anything he does.

We see this in the use Paul makes of indicative and im-

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perative forms of speech. As you may recall from studying grammar, indicative sentences make statements; they tell you what is the case. Imperative sentences give commands; they tell you to do something. In Paul's letters, the imperative material typically follows the indicative material, as an effect follows its cause. He usually begins by reminding his readers of all that God has done for them. Then he tells them how they ought to live, as a consequence of the fact. In Romans, for example, in the first five chapters he discusses justification by faith in Christ as a gift from God. Then he urges his readers to live lives free of sin: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions" (Rom. 6:12, RSV). Resistance to sin results from the new status sinners acquire before God.

We see the same pattern in his other letters. When Paul discusses the way Christians should behave, he describes it as a consequence of their new situation: "I therefore . . . beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1, RSV; cf. Gal. 5:13, 14; Col. 3:1-16). In short, Paul's message on practical Christian living is this: "Become what you are!" "Now that you are God's children, live like it."\*

### **1. Life in the Spirit**

Besides urging Christians to live a certain way, Paul also identifies the inner dynamic that enables them to do so. For Paul, the Christian life is "life in the Spirit." The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is both a sign of salvation and a motivating power. The Spirit assures us of our salvation; we know that we are God's children because of the Spirit he has given us (Rom. 5:5; 8:14, 16; 2 Cor. 1:22; cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13). In addition, the presence of the Spirit yields a rich harvest of fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22). Therefore, all the good a Christian does is the effect of the Spirit's presence in his life.

### **2. Human Effort in the Christian Life**

Since divine power makes it possible for us to live godly lives, some people conclude that human effort has no role to play. They believe that the only thing we can do is let God control our activities. Once we have surrendered completely to him, good works will automatically appear in our lives, totally as the effect of His power. In fact, if we do put forth effort, one argument goes, it only reveals our failure to trust God

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completely, and the works that result are not really "good works" at all. According to this view, then, there is no place for human endeavor. Divine power and human effort are mutually exclusive.

Instead of the "either-or" of this position, the Bible supports a "both-and" view of the relation between divine and human effort in the Christian life. We see this in the frequent use of the imperative in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. Christians are plainly commanded to behave a certain way; they are told to do some things and to abstain from doing others. In one letter, for example, Paul addresses husbands, wives, children, slaves, and masters, along with his Christian readers in general. In each case, he gives specific directions as to how they should act (Eph. 5:21—6:20). The natural conclusion is that Christian living involves personal endeavor, putting forth effort and trying to accomplish certain things.

We also find testimonies of strong personal effort on the part of the Biblical writers themselves. Again, Paul's letters contain some striking statements. "Straining forward to what lies ahead," he states in one passage, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14, RSV). He even compares his exertion to that of an athlete: "I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:26, 27, RSV). From verses like these it appears that personal effort played an important role in Paul's own experience.

\*In a stimulating discussion of the doctrine of justification, Gerhard O. Forde argues for combining the death-life metaphor found in Paul's writings with the familiar moral or legal metaphor of justification in order to achieve a more adequate view of salvation (*Justification—A Matter of Death and Life* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982], p. 3). According to Forde, the death-life metaphor puts a new construction on the role of works in the Christian life. In answer to the perennial question, "We have to do something, don't we?" Forde replies, "NO! In fact that is no longer the question. Now the question becomes, 'What are you going to do now that you don't have to do anything?'" (*Ibid.*, p. 33).



# A "Peculiar" People

by Steve Daily

A recent nationwide study in the *Journal of Public Opinion* surveyed the attitudes that Americans currently hold toward twenty-one different religious groups in the United States. I was personally a bit dismayed to find that Adventists were generally perceived in a negative light, comparatively speaking. Of the twenty-one groups mentioned, we were ranked as number nineteen, with only spiritualists and Jehovah's Witnesses ranking lower in the public's perception.

As Adventists it is easy to respond to such a study by saying, "We were not raised up by God to be a popular movement. We are a prophetic movement—'a peculiar people.'" There is no problem with this line of reasoning as long as we define "peculiar" in a Christ-centered context. If only people looked at us as Adventists and said, "Those people are so peculiar—look at the way they are filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Oh, how they love one another, why are they so service-oriented, Christ-centered, Bible-based, and Spirit-filled?" This is a "peculiar" that we could be proud of. But the reality is that most people tend to see Adventists as peculiar because we are perceived as being socially isolated and preoccupied with externals. Jesus was not preoccupied with externals. To be a "peculiar people" in the sense that Peter defined this term is to adopt the radical lifestyle of Christ. Ellen White defines Peter's use of peculiarity in this context in the following passage:

"Those who will carry out in their lives the instruction given to the church through the apostle Peter will receive power from above. We are to live upon the plan of addition, giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure. We are to represent Christ in all that we say and do. We are to live His life. The principles by which He was guided are to shape our course of action toward those with whom we are associated. . . .

"Why are many of us so weak and inefficient? It is because we look to self, studying our own temperaments and wondering how we can make a place for ourselves, our individuality, and our *peculiarities*, in the place of studying Christ and His character. . . .

"My brethren, let us put all this aside. We have no right to keep our minds stayed on ourselves, our preferences, and our fancies. We are not to seek to maintain a *peculiar* identity of our own, a personality, an individuality, which will separate us from our fellow laborers. We have a character to maintain, but it is the character of Christ."<sup>\*</sup>

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Titus 2:14

<sup>\*</sup>*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 186-188 (italics supplied).

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# Winning Is Everything

by Jon-Erik Prichard

## EVIDENCE

**Key Text:**  
**Colossians**  
**3:23, 24**

It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game. You can hear that renowned statement uttered on almost any playground in North America. Often, this declaration is equated with a superior ethical standard, yet it is only a half-truth.

In the game of life, winning is not a part-time goal, but rather, a necessary requirement. To understand fully this concept we are compelled to ask what constitutes winning. If a person uses God-given talents to gain great personal wealth on earth but despises family, friends, and neighbors, is he or she then to be considered a winner? Conversely, if a person utilizes talents for the good of mankind, gives generously to charities, and assists friends whenever possible, yet never amasses wealth of any sort during a brief stay on earth, can we chide him or her for being a loser? Is the straight-A student who carefully observes all the dorm rules and commits his/her life to denominational employment necessarily a winner? And is the SDA college dropout who refuses to define religion in terms of external standards and serves humanity by becoming a sanitation engineer (garbage man/woman) necessarily a loser?

Jesus was not a winner by any human standard of behavior or measurement that our culture values today. By this world's standards He was a loser—academically, financially, socially, occupationally, and through every other measure of human status. He was a “fool on the hill,” a hated criminal who died young at the insistence of His own people. A man who was foolish enough to teach that winning was giving up your own life in service for others.

Paul also defines *winners* and *losers* from kingdom perspective. In 1 Corinthians 9:25, 26 he talks about the gifted athlete who is a winner from a human perspective because he wins popular recognition and is crowned with a golden wreath. But from God's perspective such goals and motivations are identified with “losers” because they do not last.

The “winner,” according to Paul, is one who sets his/her sights on the eternal finish line and is motivated by the promise of eternal rewards that cannot be corrupted.

## REACT

If Jesus and His disciples were considered “losers” from the world's perspective because of their behavior—should we as professed Christians feel comfortable if we aren't seen as “losers” by the world?

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# There Must Be a Better Way!

by Terry Clem

While I was ministering in a small town in the hills of Tennessee, knowing I was a minister, the people of the town would often tell old-folk tales about ministers from years past. One that stuck with me was about a minister who was riding his horse near a steep ledge one day. It seems that the horse, for some unknown reason, lunged forward and threw the preacher over the edge of the cliff. Luckily, there was a small branch sticking out, which the preacher grabbed at the last minute. Hanging there, he began to yell for help. He yelled, "Is there anyone up there?" After a moment of silence a voice answered, "Yes. Do you believe?" The preacher said, "Who are you?" The voice answered, "I'm God. If you believe, just let go of the branch." The preacher, clinging to the branch for a few more moments looked up and yelled, "Is there anybody else up there?"

Though this little story carries a lot of humor, how often have you asked yourself as a Seventh-day Adventist, Rules, rules, rules; isn't there anyone else up there who isn't going to require me to keep all these rules? The bigger question might be, Is there anyone else up there who could help me keep the rules of Christian behavior? Many of us have grown up trying to keep the rules in our own strength. As a result, many have become frustrated and given up on God. There must be a better way. I believe that through an understanding of our relationship with God we will discover that He has provided a better way.

## 1. Attitude

Many times as Christians we have a problem with what we can and cannot do because of our attitude. The psalmist said, "I desire to do your will, O my God, your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8, NIV). When God is first in our lives it is a lot easier determining what is right and wrong.

## 2. Relationship

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15, RSV). When in love, one does not ask how much one can get by with and still be loved. Rather the question is, What more can I do because I love?

## 3. Concern

What is my main concern as a Christian? If I take the title of Christian, then it will be for God and others. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble" (1 Cor. 10:31, 32, NIV).

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**1 Corinthians**  
**10:31**

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# Spiritual Health

by Jeff L. Anderson

## OPINION

Key Text:  
1 Cor. 6:19, 20

The key text for today's lesson (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) is anathema to a society that encourages individuals to view themselves as self-serving entities whose sole duty lies in sensory gratification and economic aggrandizement. Though many might wish to believe otherwise, the pervasive "me generation" attitudes of modern society have not, like the plagues of the Exodus, left the followers of God untouched. In his recent bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind* the author, Allan Bloom, laments the tragic apathy toward the sacredness of life so often demonstrated by young people today. This lack of empathy for the intrinsically human need to acknowledge God as Creator and Sustainer of all life has, unfortunately, been the cause of much heartache even among those brought up in traditional Adventist homes.

Many youth in today's church feel the charismatic pull of a world in which fixed principles are no longer in vogue and where intemperance can be rationalized away as a method for self-actualization. "Let go!" "Be original," "Be yourself" and other beer commercials of that kind only heighten the resolve of many Christian young people somehow to reconcile a pursuit of worldly pleasure and God's plan for their lives. Those who succumb to tendencies such as these neglect the simple truth that our bodies are not our own but belong to God (see 1 Cor. 6:19, 20). To honor God fully one must acknowledge that on the basis of what He has done for us, God holds the deed to our lives (Col. 1:14, 16, 17). Accordingly, it is incumbent upon us to live lives that bring our existence into harmony with the discipline of Christ, who desires only the best and most wholesome life possible for us.

Those who would follow God's precepts and enjoy the lifegiving benefits His counsel affords would do well to consider the nature and necessity of temperance. God, after providing salvation through redemption for humanity (1 Peter 1:15-19), has not left us in doubt about how He wants us to treat our bodies. We have been bought with a price, and a recognition of God's ultimate sacrifice should instill in us the desire to glorify and preserve the object of His love—ourselves. In other words, just as we are made stewards of temporal belongings and God-given talents, so we have been instructed to be assiduous caretakers of our earthly bodies.

By adhering to the standards of a temperate lifestyle, a Christian will make manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), and fulfill what the apostle Peter deemed a most basic tenet of Christlike virtue (2 Peter 1:5-7). Our failure to em-

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brace the principles of godly temperance and its practical application in one's life places us onto the terra incognita of moral relativism and paves the way for the eventual decay of the body and the spiritual malaise of the soul.

**REACT**

Is it possible to observe a truly Christian lifestyle if one is not constantly seeking the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

## This Christmas Give a Hospital



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 24, you're giving medicine, beds and Christian care to people living along Brazil's Amazon river.

**Help Build a Hospital at  
Manaus, North Brazil.**

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING**

Lesson 9, November 20-26

# Marriage and the Family

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18, NIV).



# The Braided Cord of Humanity

by Ron and Karen Flowers

Going to visit Grandma Ida defies believable description. At the age of 80 she took a bad fall. Since then her mind has wandered freely through time. Some days she's bright-eyed and eager to talk. Other days she's sleepy and tells you without the polite constraint of younger years that you can "Get the \_\_\_ out of here!"

Some days she sits all day on the bench outside her door with her coat on and a quarter clutched in her fist, waiting to catch the train to London. Other days she prisses for weddings and church dinners she's already been to once—a half-century or so ago.

On still others, she phones at unearthly hours and awakens you with awkward questions like "Are you coming to my funeral today?" while but a few hours later she may assume all the authority of bygone parenthood and correct your grammar and remind you that she is still your mother—whether she is or not—and you haven't gained a year on her yet. But more often than not she hasn't a clue who you are, though she's asked you and you've told her a dozen times in as many minutes.

There really isn't any reason why you'd go to visit her

except you're family. Her world has lived and died, and though it is part of your blood and bone, you know little more about it than you know of the world of the pharaohs. And it is useless to ask for help from Grandma Ida now, for the orbits of her mind rarely touch present interrogators for more than a moment.

You gather now in Grandma's room in the nursing home, wishing you could call her back, but reconciled that in the four-generations picture you will have on next year's Christmas cards, only the family will know Grandma's smile reflects nothing of present joy.

But never mind, the flow of family living has turned you from the past to the present. But one can't help wondering,<sup>1</sup> as Russell Baker continues in his Pulitzer-prize-winning autobiography, *Growing Up*, "about . . . [your] own children and their children, and children in general, and about the disconnections between children and parents that prevent them from knowing each other. Children rarely want to know who their parents were before they were parents, and when age finally stirs their curiosity there is no parent left to tell them. . . .

"These hopeless end-of-

**INTRODUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**1 John 3:18**

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the-line visits with my mother made me wish I had not thrown off my own past so carelessly. We all come from the past, and children ought to know what it was that went into their making,

to know that life is a braided cord of humanity stretching up from time long gone, and that it cannot be defined by the span of a single journey from diaper to shroud."<sup>2</sup>

1. Adapted from the first chapter of Russell Baker, *Growing Up* (New York: Congdon & Weed, Inc., 1982).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.



# The Promise Is Everything

by Ron and Karen Flowers

LOGOS

**Theme:** "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of this ideal, marriage partners who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Parents are to bring their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving disciplinarian, ever tender and caring, who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 22.*

The pages of the book of Exodus chronicle the fickle faith of people who would not keep a promise. Only a short time after pledging themselves to God, and in the absence of Moses, who is in a mountaintop conference with Him, the Israelites prevail upon Aaron to lead them in the creation and worship of a golden calf. It is a shocking commentary on the fidelity of a nation that has so recently known miraculous deliverance and intervention at the hand of One who longed to lead them from such false worship to an experience of covenant closeness with Himself.

Then, in a move more dramatic than any Paramount production, the scene shifts from the idolators in their revelry on the plain to a somber Moses on the mountain, who hears God make a most unsettling announcement: "I have seen these people, . . . and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them" (Ex. 32:9, 10 NIV).

What makes this statement astounding and incomprehensible is that it seems so uncharacteristic of God. His covenant faithfulness to His people through good times and bad is a

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cherished theme of Scripture. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness," writes Jeremiah (Lam. 3:22, 23, NIV). God's faithfulness is such an integral part of His nature and character that it becomes His hallmark.

His unchangeableness and loyalty to His covenant people is so basic to Hebrew thought that it forms the foundation upon which all binding agreements, oaths, and promises are made between groups of people, between friends, and between husbands and wives. Covenants between human parties always involve God in a vertical and spiritual dimension. Jonathan makes a covenant with David (1 Sam. 18:3) which is considered to be made "before the Lord" (1 Sam. 20:8; 23:18). Marriage, likewise, is considered a covenant between a man and a woman and God (Mal. 2:14; Prov. 2:16, 17).

Then what should we make of this out-of-character proposal to destroy Israel? Is God being serious, is His anger real, or is this hyperbole? Could there really be a chink in the armor of God's faithfulness to His people? The text would suggest that Moses took God seriously. And his response to the Lord has profound significance for our study this week about the Christian family.

While there are many social and psychological forces that provide a rationale for living in families, as Christians we believe that marriage and family is a commitment that reflects the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship God has with His people. Commitments of this quality are in short supply in our time.

One young woman wrote, "John and I propose to live together for a year. . . . For people to change and grow they must be part of an open system and not one that becomes locked in, which is much more likely to happen in marriage. In time we hope our relationship will grow sufficiently to be strong enough to include the external bond of marriage in a long-term commitment."<sup>1</sup>

What is often misunderstood by those who shun commitment is that marriage and family relationships cannot grow toward the ideals we expect apart from the "all or nothing" promise we make when we say, "I do." Further, a covenant is not made because there is no doubt or uncertainty; rather, this kind of covenant promise is prepared for difficulties in a relationship. One author suggests, "In some ways the wedding vows would be stated better and more realistically if they

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said, 'I take you to be my lawfully wedded spouse with the full knowledge that you are weak as I am weak; that you will be unfaithful as I will be, if not in actuality, then in fantasy; that there will be times when you will disappoint me gravely as I will disappoint you. But in spite of all of this, I commit myself to love you, knowing your weaknesses and knowing the certainty of betrayal.'<sup>2</sup> The covenant ensures that the relationship will remain intact even if positive feelings about it are not always present.

What if God had not made His covenant with His people? What if He had held back, waited a while, watched to see whether the relationship would grow to the place where He felt He could pledge Himself to it and not be embarrassed? What if He had not pledged to love, accept, forgive, and sacrifice Himself for us? As Paul reasons in 1 Corinthians 15:17 about the resurrection of Christ (which came about because of God's covenant with us), "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (NIV). Without His activity in our behalf, without the assurance that He is committed to seeing us through, we would have no hope. We live on the strength of His promise.

The experience of God and Moses on Sinai sets the whole matter of promise and covenant in bold relief. It causes us, as it did Moses, to consider, "What if . . . ?" It enables us to see how utterly crucial constancy and commitment are to relationships, and to realize that if God fails, then all that Christianity stands for is annulled. And that if we go about our lives as if promises and commitments make no difference, then the tapestry of our faith and the fabric of our family life will unravel.

Few could intercede with Jehovah as did Moses, for few understood the mingling of His justice and mercy. Later in earth's history, on another mountain another Mediator would fully unveil why Moses could plead then as he did. Through the sacrifice of Christ, God made atonement for all our broken promises and made possible the constancy of His own. Even in the face of God's holy wrath at the unkept covenant in the valley below, Moses discerned the hope of His mercy. On the strength of that he pleaded, "Lord, you promised . . ." Then, as now, the remembering of a covenant can cover a multitude of sins and make way for renewal in our marriages and family relationships.

## REACT

How does the notion of "covenant" shape a person's relationships? Are some covenants more long lasting than others?

1. Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Committed Marriage* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 34, 35.

2. Dennis B. Guernsey, *The Family Covenant* (Elgin, Ill.: David C. Cook, 1984), p. 23.

# God's Family

by Ron and Karen Flowers

## HOW TO

**Key Text:**  
John 1:12, 13

"The close and sacred relation of God to His people is represented under the figure of marriage."<sup>1</sup>

"In order to strengthen our confidence in God, Christ teaches us to address Him by a new name, a name entwined with the dearest associations of the human heart. He gives us the privilege of calling the infinite God our Father. This name, spoken to Him and of Him, is a sign of our love and trust toward Him, and a pledge of His regard and relationship to us. Spoken when asking His favor or blessing, it is as music in His ears. . . .

"God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly be. It is immeasurable."<sup>2</sup> "He who made us ordained that we should be associated in families."<sup>3</sup>

"Those who are united by the ties of nature have the strongest claims upon each other. The members of the family should manifest kindness and the tenderest love."<sup>4</sup>

"[Humanity] is designed of God to be a blessing to society; and he cannot, if he would, live and die to himself. God has bound us together as members of one family, and this relationship everyone is bound to cherish. There are services due to others which we cannot ignore and yet keep the commandments of God. To live, think, and act for self only is to become useless as servants of God."<sup>5</sup>

"In Christ we are all members of one family. God is our Father, and He expects us to take an interest in the members of His household, not a casual interest, but a decided, continual interest. As branches of the parent vine, we derive nourishment from the same source, and by willing obedience, we become one with Christ."<sup>6</sup>

## REACT

What do you know about your own family tree, the roots from which you've come? What would you like to find out before there's no one left to tell you?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306.
2. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 141, 142.
3. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 203.
4. *Child Guidance*, p. 482.
5. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 339, 340.
6. *Evangelism*, pp. 352, 353.

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# Created for More

by Ron and Karen Flowers

We met at Thanksgiving my freshman year in college. It wasn't love at first sight, but we did enjoy the evening. But in time the early tugs of attraction between two personalities so different yet so complementary of each other became more like the forceful power of two giant magnets that refused to be held apart. Love was impatient and we wanted more.

The captivating thesis of Donald Joy's book *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* is that "God's relationship with human beings is one of intimate bonding, and . . . all human intimacies are 'rehearsals' for the ultimate reunion of humans with their Creator."<sup>1</sup> From birth we are bonding creatures, drawn first to mother. In time we seek the intimacy of one in whose presence we can be both fully known and fully loved and to whom we commit ourselves for life.

Ours is a society possessed with short cuts. We have little toleration for effort and long-range gratification. And that's one reason why for so many the intimacy that they want more than anything else has brought them instead confusion, heartache, and incredible pain. For the hard truth is that there simply are no short cuts to intimacy.

Somewhere along in early adolescence our development along the continuum of becoming an intimate person becomes much more complex. Intimacy takes on several new dimensions—physical, emotional, social, intellectual, even spiritual. In order to develop healthily, all these dimensions must grow together. But many of us have been so anxious to get to the end of the road that we fail to discover the charm and beauty of the path God designed we should travel, and the delicate balance between level of intimacy and level of commitment has been upset.

In his book *Intimate Behaviour*, zoologist Desmond Morris, who studies intimate behavior in the animal kingdom, cautions that "when steps are missed in the rush to . . . intimacy, the bond tends to be deformed and to break."<sup>2</sup> Joy's research confirms that intimate bonding, without the protection of covenant marriage, may well destroy the capacity for permanent intimacy altogether.

Next time you are with a boy friend or girl friend you really care about, and you find yourself wanting intimacy, remember that wanting more is not wrong. You are creatures created for more! But the "more" that you seek can be found only in completing the stages along the continuum of becoming an intimate person built into you by your Creator, who will never deny you any good thing.

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:

1 Peter 2:11

1. Donald M. Joy, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), p. 7.

2. Desmond Morris, *Intimate Behavior* (New York: Random House, 1971), quoted in Donald M. Joy, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God*, p. 41.

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# Who's Holding Your Trampoline?

by Ron and  
Karen Flowers

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**1 Samuel 18:1-3**

The first time I picked up Dr. Donald Joy's book *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* I read one chapter and put it away—the reading was too painful. At the moment, extended family relations were strained, and there were among our relatives several I could cheerfully have seen move to Siberia, with only the concern that it might not be far enough. But the threads of our lives are from beginning to end interwoven with the lives of those around us, most closely with those we call family. And the frightening truth is that human beings get sick, even die, if they are out of significant contact with one another.

Donald Joy offers this test of personality health. Picture a hand-held trampoline stretched taut on four sides by four groups essential to a healthy individual's support system: immediate family, extended family relatives, friends, and acquaintances. There must be high investment in these relationships. You must be in frequent contact and care deeply for one another. The tone of the relationship must be a positive, affirming one. These are relationships where score is never kept, but you both know you would make the sacrifice to be there for one another in a time of emergency. Without this network of 20 to 30 people, one side or another of a person's trampoline is left sagging, and the buoyancy necessary for healthy living is greatly reduced.

At times all of us find ourselves trying to function with an impoverished network. Perhaps you have lost a parent or broken company with a close friend. Perhaps you are new on campus, your family has relocated, or you have recently changed jobs. If you are concerned about your network, here are some things you can do:

1. Determine the reason for your sagging trampoline and take steps to restore the support you have lost. This may mean putting extra energies into making friends or repairing damaged bridges between you and your family.

2. Be willing to invest "enough time and energy into the people on all four sides of your hand-held trampoline to maintain [your] bona fide membership in the human race."\* We need one another. We have a responsibility to each other.

3. As you are choosing a life partner, remember you marry a family. Intimate living can be very difficult. But whatever challenges you face, you owe it to your partner, your children, even yourself to keep relationships alive and as well as possible. It's a matter of life and health.

\*Donald M. Joy, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), p. ix.

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Ron and Karen Flowers are associate directors in the Department of Church Ministries at the General Conference, specializing in family ministries.

# What Difference Does Jesus Make?

by Ron and  
Karen Flowers

Temperaments are widely varied in our family, and understanding and acceptance have not come easily. Inevitably, no matter how hard we try, agendas clash, differentness grates, tempers flare. And this Christian family struggles with the question "What difference does Jesus make?"

Perhaps you too have been disappointed with your family. Perhaps your parents just don't listen, or maybe they put you down or treat you like an expensive bother. Then maybe they're so busy there's no time to be a family. Perhaps your parents fight, or maybe you know about an affair. Perhaps you've lived with abuse. Perhaps your family has known divorce or untimely death. Maybe you feel under too much pressure to live up to the family name. Or maybe there are real skeletons in your family's closet—skeletons you're scared might get out, or worse yet, some that are out already and nobody will forget.

There's good news. Jesus' family was a mess too!

His family tree was so full of scandal it could have kept daytime TV on top in the ratings for months! There was deceit and hatred, untimely death, sibling rivalry, and murder. There was prostitution and adultery, incest and mixed marriage. There was poor communication, lack of parental interest, and open conflict. There was lawlessness, abandonment of religion, and despair, even to the point of suicide.

You can read all about it—the scandal sheet is open for all to see—in Matthew, the book that records the family tree of Jesus Christ. But the good news of the gospel is that families are not perfect, but, by God and by one another, they may be forgiven. And not only that, God can do incredible things with imperfect people.

But there's even more. The good news is that Jesus has taken upon Himself all the disappointments we have ever known in our families. He has become our Perfect Relative, One who will never disappoint. We can bring our families to Him. To His messy, disreputable family tree we can add our own—hurts, problems, disappointments, and all. And through Him our families can be redeemed. No situation is too difficult for Him.

When you face hard times in your family, you can talk with Jesus about it. You need not be concerned about what you say or showing your feelings. You can just get it all out in His presence and then bask in His comfort and listen for His words of encouragement and hope. He will teach you about forgiveness\* and set your feet on the road to personal healing.

## OPINION

Key Text:  
Isaiah 1:18

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\*For excellent reading see Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984).

Lesson 10, November 27—December 3

# Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

“ ‘In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead’ ” (Acts 17:30, 31, NIV).





# Christ's Ministry in the Sanctuary

by Richard M. Davidson

In academy and college I had learned the key texts on the sanctuary by rote and could perfunctorily draw the appropriate floor plans and charts and diagrams. In my early years of pastoral ministry I gave Bible studies and preached evangelistic sermons on the sanctuary.

It was stimulating to calculate publicly the 2300 days and expound on the various articles of furniture, but the sanctuary doctrine as a whole had never gripped me as a living reality. The thought of the investigative judgment brought me little or no peace.

No doubt one reason the sanctuary message did not grip me was that I had not yet understood the beauty and simplicity of the gospel. I preached for more than two years before I learned experientially the truth of justification by faith. But finally I saw that I could really have the joy of Christian assurance, that I could really know that I was accepted in the Beloved.

As the beauty of justification, sanctification, and glorification dawned upon my consciousness, I hungered to learn more. My attention turned to the Old Testament, and especially to the typology of the sanctuary service. It was there I discovered profound insights

into the gospel.

Shortly afterward the sanctuary doctrine became a storm center within the church. In the aftermath of the momentous Glacier View conference (summer 1980), questions were raised that I had never considered before—questions that struck at the heart of the historic Adventist understanding of the sanctuary, the 2300 days, and the investigative judgment. Because of these questions, several of my colleagues left the ministry and the church.

At that point I determined to study the sanctuary doctrine for myself, to get to the bottom of the issues.

The study of these past years has yielded not only better reasons for believing but deeper insights into the old truths. The sanctuary doctrine, once dry and irrelevant to me, has now come alive! I'm excited about the sanctuary, and yes, about the investigative judgment! Deeper study has not caused me to remove any pin or pillar of the old landmarks. Rather, close investigation has made the sanctuary truth shine even more brilliantly and revealed it in greater beauty and richness than I ever imagined I would find.\*

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Exodus 25:8;  
Hebrews 9:5

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\**Adventist Review*, Feb. 19, 1987, pp. 12, 13.

# Daniel's Three Visions of Christ

by William H. Shea

**LOGOS**  
**Key Text:**  
**Daniel 7:9-14**

**Theme:** "There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of the human probation before the Second Advent."—*Fundamental Beliefs*, number 23.

Seventh-day Adventists have long held that there is an intimate connection between Daniel 8 and 9. This is implied in Daniel 8:27 and 9:23. Adventists have also noted a direct parallel between Daniel 7 and 8 in terms of the nations treated and the little horn that followed them. These relations indicate that Daniel 7, 8, and 9 are all interconnected in one way or another. Since these prophecies provide the original base for Adventist teaching about the heavenly sanctuary, the connections between them should be studied carefully to determine what support they may provide that teaching.

A particular way in which the connections between these prophecies can be studied is to trace the theme of how God carries out His plan of salvation from the heavenly sanctuary. In these three chapters of Daniel the prophecies reach their climax and also reveal Christ in His role of sacrifice, priest, and king.

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### **1. Christ as Sacrifice (read Daniel 9)**

Daniel 9:24-27 tells us a number of things that were to happen to the Jews after they returned from Babylon. One of the greatest of these events was the coming of the Messiah. This prophecy describes various aspects of the Messiah's life, death, and work. It tells: (1) the time when He was to come, (2) the manner of His death, "cut off" or killed by other persons, (3) His rejection, for "no one shall be for him," (4) that He would make a final covenant offer to His people, (5) that He would bring the significance of the earthly Temple's sacrifices to an end, (6) that a great final atonement for iniquity would be made in His time, (7) that this would provide everlasting righteousness, and (8) that a new holy place, the heavenly sanctuary, would be anointed for (His) service.

Most of the events described in this prophecy met their fulfillment in the first century A.D. The atonement for iniquity and the everlasting righteousness provided by Christ's death, however, have been ministered to the people of the world from that time to the present. The place of operation of that ministry is the heavenly sanctuary. This is the sanctuary of Daniel 9:24 that was anointed for Jesus' use as our great high priest when He ascended there.

### **2. Christ as Priest (read Daniel 8)**

The flow of history described in Daniel 8 continues down to the medieval period when the little horn exercised its power. Its characteristics identify it as a religious power, and thus the conflict in which it engaged was a religious conflict. The objects it attacked in this conflict were fourfold; the "prince of the host" in heaven, the stars that comprised his host, his "daily" or "continual" ministry, and his sanctuary. These symbols are best interpreted by seeing Christ as the prince of the host, the saints on earth as the stars of His host, His heavenly high priestly ministry as the daily/continual activity, and the temple in heaven as His sanctuary.

The little horn attacked all four of these. The last three it attacked by persecuting the saints, by endeavoring to exercise earthly control over the Prince's heavenly ministry, and by obscuring the saints' view of the true sanctuary in heaven by exalting an earthly church. All of this negative type of activity is to be reversed when the sanctuary is cleansed, restored, and set right, according to Daniel 8:14.

The very nature of the plan of salvation is at the center of this conflict. With His ministry continuing in the heavenly

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sanctuary, Christ says that men and women should be saved in one way. With its earth-centered substitute for that ministry the little horn has told the people that they should be saved through *its* ministry. Only a judgment can make the final distinction between these two priesthoods and ministries and the people who have participated in them. That judgment is referred to in the words of the angel in Daniel 8:14, but it is described in the vision of Daniel 7:9-14.

### **3. Christ as King (read Daniel 7)**

Daniel 7 goes through the rise and fall of the four kingdoms and then focuses upon the activities of the little horn. The antidote for these activities was shown to the prophet, and this antidote was the judgment in heaven and the decisions that flowed from it. Two scenes were shown. The one described in verses 9 and 10 deals with the commencement of the judgment when God and the angels gathered to examine the records of heaven. The second scene emphasizes the ultimate outcome of this judgment. There will be appropriate rewards to the righteous and the wicked, but most important of all is that there will be a new ruler of the earth, and His reign—in contrast to the previous kingdoms—will continue forever, and it will encompass the whole earth.

This new ruler to come is described as one “like a son of man,” i.e., a manlike being. He also has divine characteristics. Thus the person who is worthy to rule the world forever is a divine-human being. There is only one person in all of the history of the universe who combines in Himself those characteristics, the God-man Christ Jesus. The emphasis at the conclusion of this prophecy is, therefore, upon Christ as King of kings who will rule for ever and ever.

### **4. Relations between Daniel 9, 8, and 7**

You may have noted that these three prophecies have been treated in reverse order. When God spoke to His ancient people He spoke to them in the way that they could best understand. They commonly reasoned from effect back to cause, while we reason from cause to effect. To reason from effect back to cause in this case is to reason from the final kingdom of God back to the events and activities that will bring about the final kingdom.

The time factors present in these prophecies point toward a similar relationship. Daniel 9 is the short prophecy that ended in the first century. Daniel 8 is the intermediate-length

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prophecy that ended in the 19th century. Daniel 7 is the long-length prophecy that will not meet its final fulfillment until the saints go marching into the kingdom. Connections with Daniel 11 support this same relationship. Daniel 9 connects with it at verse 22, Daniel 8 connects with it at verse 31, and Daniel 7 connects with it at verses 32-34.

Each one of these three great prophecies gives us a wonderful view of a particular aspect of the work of Christ. They are understood best when they are linked in reverse order providing us with pictures of Him first as the sacrifice, then as the priest, and finally as the king who will rule over us forever and ever. We become eligible to join the saints of the Most High in the last picture, when we accept the sacrifice of the first picture and we relate to the ministry of the second picture. Thus the prophecies of Daniel all center and focus upon Christ. Each picture presents an important aspect of His work for us in the heavenly sanctuary.

# The Control Center

by William H. Shea

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Psalm 103:17-22

"In the temple in heaven, the dwelling place of God, His throne is established in righteousness and judgment. In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood in the sinner's behalf. Thus is represented the union of justice and mercy in the plan of human redemption. This union infinite wisdom alone could devise and infinite power accomplish; it is a union that fills all heaven with wonder and adoration. The cherubim of the earthly sanctuary, looking reverently down upon the mercy seat, represent the interest with which the heavenly host contemplate the work of redemption. This is the mystery of mercy into which angels desire to look—that God can be just while He justifies the repenting sinner and renews His intercourse with the fallen race; that Christ could stoop to raise unnumbered multitudes from the abyss of ruin and clothe them with the spotless garments of His own righteousness to unite with angels who have never fallen and to dwell forever in the presence of God."<sup>1</sup>

"The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to 'the first dominion.' Micah 4:8. Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man's creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne."<sup>2</sup>

"All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 415.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 483, 484.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 488, 489.

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# Two Great Deceptions

by William H. Shea

When Satan deceived Eve with the statement "you will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4, NIV) he uttered the first great lie. Actually, two lies are present here. One has to do with the idea that human beings are immortal rather than mortal. The other involves the course of future events. God indicated that a certain present course of action would bring about a particular future result. Satan said, "No." These same arguments on the nature of mankind and the nature of prophecy are being raised now about Adventist teaching concerning a judgment taking place in the heavenly sanctuary.

Some of our non-Adventist friends have difficulty understanding Adventists on this point because of their belief in the immortality of the soul. Those who hold this view have a very different view about the judgment of human beings. If human beings are immortal and they go to their rewards—heaven, hell, or purgatory—at death, then they must be judged when they die. Any judgment that takes place after that is, therefore, meaningless to them. If, on the other hand the entire human race, excepting only a few and the generation of those alive today, is resting in the grave awaiting the call of the Lifegiver, then it is very logical to have a final summary judgment in heaven before Christ comes back to earth. This provides a cumulative accounting of what the plan of salvation has accomplished just before its rewards are bestowed.

When it comes to specialized prophecies like those of Daniel and Revelation, there are three main views among interpreters. There are those who put almost all of these events back in the past, either in Greek times for Daniel or in Roman times for Revelation. These interpreters are called preterists. There are also those who locate almost all of these events in the future. These people are quite naturally called futurists. Hal Lindsay's book *The Late Great Planet Earth* is one of the more extreme presentations of this kind of view. Seventh-day Adventists, on the other hand, believe that these prophecies have been fulfilled progressively through the course of history—past, present, and future. This type of interpretation is known as historicism.

Two brief points can be made about these different schools of interpretation. First, the historicist interpretation has the philosophical merit that it presents a God who has paid prophetic attention to all of human history; He has not concentrated on just one segment of it. Second, the historicist interpretation of prophecy was the common Protestant mode of interpretation from the Reformation to the nineteenth century.

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## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
Genesis 3:4

# The Day of Atonement

by Richard M. Davidson

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Leviticus**  
**16:15, 16**

So come with me to old Jerusalem. It is the Day of Atonement, the most sacred day of all the year. For ten days people have heard the blowing of the shofar, which calls them to repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur.

Now the great day has arrived. There is fasting all day; no food, no water. We make our way, walking down the middle of the deserted streets to the Great Synagogue.

As we slip into the synagogue, we are each immediately gripped to the very core of our being. The cantor sings movingly, plaintively, of repentance, accompanied by the choir's solemn strains. His voice quavers and cracks as he sings with deep emotion and, yes, choking tears.

Now the rabbi reads Scripture, but not the way we normally read. As he voices the prayers of the repentance of David, we hear deep, earnest sobs—sobs wrung out of a heart conscious of sin, crying out for repentance. Individuals offer prayers of confession with affliction of soul, not only for their personal sins but also for the sins of the whole people. Worshipers slip out of their seats, go to a brother and ask for forgiveness, and seal the reconciliation with an embrace.

About sunset we slip to the Western Wall. There the last prayer is said, and a hush falls over the people. Then comes the great climax—a mighty sustained blast of the shofar, reminding us of the ten days of repentance. In addition, according to Old Testament tradition, the shofar also reminds us of the ram provided as a substitute for Isaac on Mount Moriah. Now it signals the atonement—full and free. Repentance, substitution, joy!

The shofar blast is followed by spontaneous shouts of triumph and joy: "A good judgment!" "A good judgment!" Young and old break out into singing and dancing. God has judged, cleansed, made atonement, made free. The jubilee shofar is blown!

I long for us as a people to capture the fervor symbolized by the shofar in this, the antitypical Day of Atonement: the fervor of *repentance*, affliction of soul, putting away of sin; the fervor of *assurance* in the substitutionary death of Christ; the fervor of *joy* over a "good judgment" in Christ.

The Jerusalem shofar still resounds in my memory. May I invite you to hear the shofar echoing through the corridors of your imagination. The sound calls you to judgment, to repentance, to affliction of the soul, but also to assurance in the God of the sanctuary. And it calls you to anticipate expectantly the last jubilee.\*

\* *Adventist Review*,  
Feb. 19, 1987, p. 14.

**Richard M. Davidson is chairman of the department of Old Testament at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.**



# Priestly Mediator and Judge

by C. Mervyn Maxwell

First John 2:1 says that Jesus is our lawyer. He is our "advocate with the Father." First Timothy 2:5 calls Him our "mediator." And Hebrews 7:25 says that He "ever lives to make intercession" for us. Christ, then, is ever ready to plead our case before God as our Advocate and Mediator and Intercessor.

Yet—surprising as it may sound—Jesus has told us that He does not guarantee to intercede for us! "I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you" (John 16:26, RSV).

Whatever can He mean?

Jesus explains Himself by saying, "*For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father*" (John 16:27, RSV).

Evidently Jesus does not have to "intercede" for us in the way we may have imagined. He does not have to persuade God to love us; for, as He Himself makes clear, God already loves us.

A "mediator" is a person who helps other people understand one another and, if the people are not friends, helps them to become friends. The words of Jesus that we have just quoted from John 16:26 provide a beautiful hint as to Christ's true role as mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) between God and people: "The Father himself loves you, *because you have loved me* and have believed that I came from the Father."

One of the several ways, then, in which Jesus serves as mediator between God and humanity is in showing us what God is like, because it is so difficult for us to love a God whom we have never seen. God gave His only Son and sent Him into the world so that we could love the Son and, in the process of loving the Son, learn to love the Father, too.

There is no doubt that God is the Judge. God "will judge the world" (Acts 17:31)—but He will do it "by" the Man He raised from the dead.

In electing to follow this procedure, God has done a very beautiful thing. To the Son of man who "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, RSV) and who was "made like his brethren in every respect" and "suffered" under temptation (Hebrews 2:17, 18, RSV), to this Son of man who is also Son of God—God the Father, who is the Ancient of Days, says, "I am the judge, but My verdict will be whatever verdict You recommend."\*

## OPINION

Key Text:

Hebrews 7:22-28

\**God Cares*, vol. 1, pp. 116, 117.

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Lesson 11, December 4-10

# The Second Coming of Christ

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13, NIV).



# Abuse: Does It Justify Neglect?

by Gayle L. Saxby

We found ourselves discussing U.S. politics over dinner one day, for we were Americans abroad and it was presidential election time in the States. I was old enough to vote, and being full of youthful idealism, I had followed the campaign as closely as possible from afar. I had scrutinized each candidate and was ready to cast my vote like a responsible citizen. But, as I was explaining to our dinner guest, I couldn't vote.

"My absentee ballot arrived only yesterday, the day that it was supposed to be back in the States," I groaned.

He smiled as if remembering when he too had been full of youthful idealism. Then he said slowly, "I haven't wanted to vote for years, but if I were going to vote this year, I think I'd vote for \_\_\_\_\_." He stopped, waiting for me.

"Why?" I obediently queried.

He leaned back in his chair and looked at some faraway point that I could not see; then he looked straight at me again. "I'm tired of this old world, Gayle, and I just want to go home. \_\_\_\_\_ looks like the most likely candidate for passing Sunday laws and persecuting Sabbathkeepers, so I'd vote for him to speed

the Lord's coming."

I blame my skepticism about the soon-coming end of the world partially on this desire to escape from the world's ills without lifting a finger to help improve its conditions (even by just voting). I also blame it on ways that people have distorted the doctrine of the Second Coming by wishing for suffering and persecution. Yet I am beginning to see that just because some people distort the doctrine does not justify my ignoring it.

And I do ignore it. According to my mother, the feeling that "Christ will be here any second" was so prevalent when she was in college that she was secretly worried that she would not be able to graduate or marry before He came. But today, I hardly think about the possibility of Christ's returning and interrupting my future plans. I dare say the problem does not stop with me, either. It is widespread.

Is it possible to be truly Christian while ignoring the Return? Can we neglect the Second Coming and still claim to believe in the divinity of Christ and in divine revelation?

We must take a fresh look at the Return. We must learn what Jesus meant by His imperative, "Watch."

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Matthew  
24:32-35

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## Seventh-day . . . Adventist?

by Patrick B. Morrison

**LOGOS** **Theme:** "The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 24.*

The doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ is foundational to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The word *Adventist* in our denominational name means that we believe in the literal, personal, visible return of Jesus Christ. Though Scripture does not reveal the point and time designated for His coming, students of Scripture should not be surprised in the same way as the unwary.

The Second Coming represented hope to the earliest Christians and is still the Christian's hope for the future. Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are accounts of Jesus' own description of this climactic event.

Jesus' own introduction to the subject in Matthew 24 includes the following summary of signs preceding His coming. He predicts false Christs in verse 5, wars and rumors of wars in verse 6, international strife, famines, and earthquakes in verse 7, and these are described as only the beginning of sorrows. In verse 9 He begins with personal concerns: suffering and persecution for the gospel, false prophets in verse 11, lawlessness and waning love verse 12, and then the famous quotation, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NKJV). Thus ends Christ's introduction. But what is this end He is talking about? The personal trials He has just depicted? Or could it be the torn fabric of international unity brought on in part by disparity between nations partly as a result of the lack of essential resources? Christ's introduction to the subject has His followers' attention.

How does He continue? He complicates the issue for us, but not necessarily for the disciples, by mixing predictions related to their immediate future (i.e., the destruction of Jerusalem) with the parousia. When Jesus arrived on earth the first time

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He fulfilled exactly the prophecies related to that coming. For example, the seventy weeks of Daniel 9, the birth place in Micah 5:2, and so on. When He comes back the second time it will not be to a humble stable in a little town. Every eye will see Him and acknowledge Him (see Rev. 1:7). Readiness will be even more of an issue, since this time the unwary will have no opportunity to change.

It is further important to understand that this event and readiness for it is of such paramount importance that the "enemy of souls" exerts his best efforts to counterfeit and deceive on the issue (see Matt. 24:23-25). Jesus is adamant that his people be clear on this issue, so He gives further signs in the physical world to signal the "last days" and awaken the saints (see verse 29). The darkening of sun and the moon turning to blood on May 1780, and the star shower of November 1833 are long since past. The "powers of the heavens . . . shaken" is one item that most consider unfulfilled to this point, with much conjecture as to how it might be fulfilled. The almost universal reaction to Christ's coming is abject sorrow (see verse 30). To this point there is still not much joy apparent in Jesus' account.

"'And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other'" (Matt. 24:31, NKJV). Having painted a gloomy universal picture of conditions in the world, Christ at last brings release for His elect. It is a relief if you have involved yourself in His telling of the story. In terms of the physical realm, the Second Coming is overshadowed only by the actual creation of the earth in the beginning. In terms of the destruction of human life, it makes the universal Flood of Genesis 6 pale in significance (see Rev. 16:17-21).

Having listed the signs in the heavens and in human events, Christ states that the time of His coming is the province of "My father only." He places the event in the period of human history, but He does not pin down the time for the procrastinating speculator. In fact, He goes on to describe "mankind in general's" attitude in those last days even in view of all the signs—business as usual (see verses 37-39).

"'Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an

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hour when you do not expect Him'” (Matthew 24:42-44, NKJV). Christ suggests that even the most conscientious might get caught up in the “things of life” and discover—too late—their misplaced priorities.

It seems natural to dwell on Jesus' own account of the Second Coming, but perhaps a look at other descriptions will be helpful. Outside the Gospels, but still in the New Testament, you get the impression that the early church actually expected and longed for Acts 1:11 to be fulfilled in their lifetime. “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven'” (NKJV). And 2 Peter 3:10-13 has a definite tone of expectancy. It says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (NKJV). Jesus' statement in John 21:22 must have evoked an expectancy of the soon coming in the hearts of the disciples. “Jesus said to him, ‘If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me’ ” (see also 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5).

*If Jesus' earthly contemporaries were so anxious for His return, what should our attitude be? How could we put the Advent back into Seventh-Day Adventism?*

# Stay Ready

by Patrick B. Morrison

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Matthew 25

Readiness for the Second Coming is Jesus' great concern for His disciples after relating the prophecies of Matthew 24. In Matthew 25 Jesus gives strong suggestions concerning preparation for the Second Advent. The parable of the ten maidens, the parable of the talents, and a description of judgment—all, in their way, point out the necessity of readiness.

**1. Ten Maidens:** "We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, 'Behold, the Bridegroom!' and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven.

"In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching. It helped to swell the illumination for the bridegroom's honor. Shining out in the darkness, it helped to illuminate the way to the home of the bridegroom, to the marriage feast."<sup>1</sup>

**2. Talents:** "To His servants Christ commits 'His goods'—something to be put to use for Him. He gives 'to every man his work.' Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansion than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."<sup>2</sup>

**3. Judgment:** "Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, 'Love one another, as I have loved you' (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts."<sup>3</sup>

## REACT

What analogy would accurately depict how alert you are regarding the Lord's coming (a guy who's fallen asleep in front of the TV, an alert guard in a war zone, etc.)? Why?

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 413, 414.  
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 326, 327.  
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 641.

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# Everything Is Not the Same

by Patrick B. Morrison

## EVIDENCE

**Key Text:**  
2 Peter 3:3, 4

“Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3:3, 4, NKJV).

Virtually anyone who has associated himself with the belief of the imminence of the return of Jesus Christ has faced this question from “scoffers.” The “walking according to their own lusts” doesn’t seem to characterize every person who has raised the issue. “My parents and my grandparents—none of them believed they would ever grow up to pursue a career, get married, or have a family of their own. He still hasn’t come. I just don’t see much future in getting all excited about it.”

Is everything the same as it has always been? How much did travel technology change from 3,000 B.C. to A.D. 1850? How much has travel technology in comparison changed since 1850?

Consider communication. For how long has it been possible to know within days about major cataclysmic events on the other side of our globe? When did it become possible to know within seconds, minutes, or hours? For how long has it been possible to communicate any message worldwide simultaneously to virtually all parts of the world? How has travel and communication technology affected world politics?

How does the “pace” of your life compare with that of your father, grandmother, great-grandfather when they were your age? Was the pace of life for your great-grandmother that drastically different from that of her ancestors 25 generations before that? Everything is *not* the same!

What has happened in the spiritual realm? There is more theological material available today than there was available to any previous generation. But has our spirituality kept pace with our knowledge?

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:9, 10, NKJV).

Is it oversimplification to attribute the delay in Christ’s coming to God’s anxiety to save as many as possible? Who knows when God’s justice and mercy will come into such a

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balance that He decides—"enough is enough"? The fact is, there is neither time nor space to list all the signs and attitudes that will immediately precede the Second Coming. Further, it is important to remember that the best theologically and intellectually trained people during Christ's first advent rejected Him and became His accusers.

Writing in historically close proximity to Jesus' first advent, and from our perspective considerable historical distance from His second coming, Peter wrote, "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? . . . Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:11-14, NKJV).

Peter is giving his contemporaries the same counsel that has been preserved by providence for us, "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God." If it was good counsel then, what is its value now?

The means of salvation and the ideals of those who are heaven bound should never change. The issue is not necessarily "how soon will Jesus actually come?" as much as, "Am I ready for Jesus to come? And have I allowed His spirit to love other people through me enough to share the hope of His coming?"

## **REACT**

Why does it sometimes seem as if the Lord will never return? Why does He wait? What does this say about Him?

# Living and Waiting

by Gayle L. Saxby

**HOW TO**  
Key Texts:  
Matthew 24 and  
25

## I. Study Matthew 24 and 25

### A. Piece by piece

1. Look for all the instances where Jesus uses the word *watch*.
2. Read around each of these uses of the word *watch* and ask yourself, "What particular aspect of watching was Jesus emphasizing in this paragraph (or story)?" Make a list of these as you discover them.

### B. As a chunk

1. Read the passage (Matthew 24 and 25) in its entirety over and over, asking yourself, "What is Christ's basic philosophy of living in the face of the Second Coming?"
2. Stop reading chapters 24 and 25 only when you can write a statement that satisfactorily answers the above question. Integrate into your written statement the items from the list you made above.

## II. Apply

- A. Compare the way you presently live with the way your statement says Christ would have you live, in view of the Return. Note discrepancies between the two.
- B. Decide whether and how you will bring your lifestyle and the statement into closer alignment with each other.
- C. Ask God to help you carry out your intention.

## REACT

How conscious of the Second Coming must we be if we wish to be ready for it at all times? (See the parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13, especially verse 5.)

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Gayle Saxby is in the master of theology program at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

# Reaching the Major Goal

by Heather Lehmann

The Second Coming is not my major goal in life.

I live in a place and time that is dominated by goals, and I tend to live my life accordingly. I have an appointment book that outlines how I should spend each moment of my day and life; and I live—or at least I attempt to live—by that book. But the appointments and deadlines in my book aren't really goals. They're merely part of the blueprint that I've set up for reaching my goals.

In the same way, the Second Coming is not my major goal in life. It is a step in the process of reaching that all-important, colossal goal—getting to know my Saviour.

I often hear that I must prepare myself for Christ's return, as if getting to know Christ were a means to an end—being prepared for the Second Coming.

Indeed, Jesus puts great emphasis on the return in John 14:2, 3 when He tells His disciples, "I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back . . ." (NIV). I might be content to focus my aim on developing a relationship with Him for the purpose of making it at the Second Coming, but Christ does not stop there.

He tells me why He's coming back. "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (NIV). Consequently, I don't want to get to know Jesus so that I can be a part of the Second Coming and make it to heaven. Rather, I want to be a part of the Second Coming and the experience of heaven so that I can continue to build a relationship with Jesus.

I get off track when I view the tasks in my appointment book as my major goals, instead of a way of reaching those goals. In a similar sense, I get discouraged when I regard the Second Coming as my major goal and forget why I want to be a part of it. The Second Coming isn't my major goal in life, but it is an exciting step in the course of reaching that goal—a perfect friendship with Jesus Christ.

## REACT

What are your goals and priorities? How does the Second Coming fit into them for you?

## OPINION

Key Text:

John 14:2, 3

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Lesson 12, December 11-17

# Death and Resurrection

"For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21, 22, NIV).



# I Am Not Immortal

by Keith Mattingly

My daughter looked forward with more than normal anticipation to her twelfth birthday and upcoming baptism. We planned a full week of celebration with visiting grandparents, a party with 30 friends and relatives at a local restaurant, and a special reception to follow her baptism.

The celebration week began early with the ringing of our telephone. My brother-in-law's weary voice asked, "Where were you last night?"

"Off to get Grandma at the airport," I replied.

"Last night Nilde was driving home with four of our five boys. . . . There was an accident. . . . The boys are fine. . . . Nilde is dead!"

I learned a lot about myself in the next few days as I faced a time of heavy grief mixed with happy celebration. I learned what so many before me had learned; it takes a deep personal emotional experience with death in order really to understand it.

Adam and Eve, too, did not understand the horror of death until Abel was killed. They had observed leaves fall off trees, they had killed lambs, but the death of a son! Then the reality hit.

I once notified a young wife that she had suddenly become a widow, and her first reaction was that of

denial, "He really is not dead; please tell me he is OK." Up to that moment death had not been a reality; life appeared as if it would last forever. Only after I took her to see her husband's body in the hospital morgue did the reality of death begin to sink in.

Throughout the early years of my ministry I dealt with death professionally; it was my job to comfort. But somehow the meaning of death escaped me. Even when my grandparents died I was cool. They had lived a full life and were beyond physical prime. Somehow death seemed appropriate.

But when my sister-in-law was killed I faced a flood of questions that I thought I had answered. "Why, Lord?" "What's it like where she is?" "Why a mother who has children aged 6, 8, 10, 12, and 18?" "How do I handle burying my daughter's aunt on my daughter's birthday?" "How can this be fair?" "What about the future, not only for Nilde but more, for the boys?"

Yes, the personal experience finally taught me something. Under extreme pressure I had to grapple more realistically with difficult questions. There is value in facing the reality of death; I really am not immortal.

**INTRODUCTION**  
Scripture:  
1 Corinthians  
15:21, 22

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# Satan's Lie

by Keith Mattingly

**LOGOS Theme:** "The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later."—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 25.*

## 1. Satan and Death (read Genesis 3:2-4; Romans 5:12)

*"You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17, NIV).*

It was never God's intention that man should die. He warned man right from the start that death was a very real possibility, and He informed man how to avoid it, "Do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil." When tempted by Satan, Eve clearly stated she had heard the warning of God and added that the warning included the command not even to touch the tree. Satan contradicted God and asserted that man certainly would not die.

So who was right? From Genesis through Revelation the terms Satan, Sin, and Death are inseparably linked together. Even converted Christians who have been forgiven of sin and have renounced Satan die. God was right! Death is indeed the result of listening to and following the devil.

God may be right, but the devil never stopped his effort to lead man astray on the subject of death. Deception on this subject succeeded with Adam and Eve; why not try again? Since humans obviously do die, why not make death appear as a release, a moment wherein freedom is finally achieved. In order to support the "death as release" idea, Satan introduced the concept that all that is physical is bad and all that is spiritual is good. Death of the "wicked" body liberates the "good" spirit (or soul). Now the devil wins two ways. Not only does he persist with the original lie that humans do not die (the most important part of man lives on), but also he makes the body that God created look evil.

Does man continue to live when he dies? To answer this question we will look at the original creation of man, man and immortality, and what the Scriptures teach with respect to what happens when man dies.

*Is there any difference to the wicked or the righteous in death?*

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## **2. The Creation Formula (read Genesis 2:7, 19; 1:30)**

We discover in the above text two important points. First, the Creation formula is (a) a forming of the ground + (b) a breathing of the breath of life into the form = (c) a living soul (or creature). We can illustrate the Biblical view of Creation with this simple formula.

Ground + breath of life = soul (living being)

Second, all parts of the formula apply to both man and animal. Both are formed from the ground, both receive the breath of life, and both are called living beings. In fact, both man (Gen. 2:7) and animals (Gen. 2:19) are called living "souls." "Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: as one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal" (Eccl. 3:19, NIV). So, for both man and animals, there must be both a body (ground) and breath (of life) in order for there to be a "soul." Many confuse the soul and the spirit or breath and think of them as the same item, but the Creation account clearly draws a distinction between them.

An overall study of the Scriptures indicates that the Hebrew and Greek words translated "breath of life" or "soul" ("living creature") do not convey the idea of a conscious, ever-living entity capable of existing apart from the physical body. Neither the "breath" nor the "soul" are ever called immortal, nor are they indicated as indestructible. Both body and spirit are integral parts of the "soul." When there is no body or no spirit (breath) there is no soul. As the Creation formula clearly states, no part of a human lives beyond the death of his body. Satan may make his claims, but the theology of Genesis is definite—Satan is a liar.

## **3. Immortality (read 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54)**

The greatest dream of the devil has been to take the place of God (Isa. 14:13), especially God's immortality (not subject to death). But this is not to be, for though Satan has lived for thousands of years and may appear to be immortal, death for him is inevitable. Jesus pointed out that the fires of hell are reserved for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). To circumvent this judgment, Satan hoped to gain access to the tree of life through Adam and Eve and thus obtain immortality. But his attempt failed, for he ignored the fact that God, who alone is immortal (see 1 Tim. 1:17), had only granted Adam and Eve immortality on the condition of obedience (Gen. 2:17). Condi-

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tions for sinful man have not changed either; immortality is not an unconditional gift (1 Cor. 15:50). Man is not naturally immortal, but must look for a change to come into his experience before he is not subject to death (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

Evidently, though, the seeking of immortality is not evil, but appropriate (Rom. 2:6, 7). Jesus has brought us life and immortality through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10). John, the apostle, reminds us that the overcomer will eat of the tree of life (Rev. 2:7) and live forever. The key is obedience. Satan wants to rebel and be immortal. God can grant immortality only to "rebellion-proof" people. The call to seek immortality is a call to obedience.

#### **4. What happens when one dies (read Psalms 104:29; 115:17; 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; 12:7)?**

A review of the above texts points out that when one dies his body returns to dust, his spirit returns to God, and his soul is no more. The Hebrew word translated "spirit" can also be translated as breath. This breath is the same breath mentioned in Genesis 2:7 as the life principle that God put into the body, the result of which is a soul. This breath then is a gift of life from God that returns to Him upon death; it is not a separate rational entity from the body. Where does the soul go? The same place a light goes when you turn off the switch, it just goes out. The soul does not exist until God chooses to return His gift of life to a body. So, with a body as dust, breath that has returned to God, and a soul that has gone out, one who has died cannot think, praise God, or function in any way.

The Old Testament concept that death is a condition in which nothing happens, in which one is asleep (Job 14:10-12; Ps. 13:3) is further corroborated in the New Testament. Jesus described the death of His friend Lazarus as sleep (John 11:11-14). An interesting series of texts illustrates that King David sleeps in death. David was told that he would sleep with his fathers (2 Sam. 7:12). Paul pointed out that David fell asleep and was laid with his fathers (Acts 13:36), and Peter added that David did not go to heaven (Acts 2:34).

The concept that man in death is in a state of knowing nothing is a comforting doctrine. First, it is comforting that those who are dead are not harassed with knowledge of the misery of their loved ones. Second, the passing of time is so much faster for one who is asleep as opposed to the one awake.

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**5. The Dead Will Live Again (read John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:15-22; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).**

Death might be seen as something very negative when viewed as a state of nonbeing. However, Christ promised that this state of nonbeing is not eternal. One day all will be resurrected (John 5:28, 29). Evidently, Christ will reunite the life principle that returned to Him at death with a body, which will result in a living soul. Those who are asleep will be awakened (1 Thess. 4:13-18) at the second coming of Christ. What comfort! Christ's second coming is as close to you as your last breath.

Our God allows all, wicked and righteous, to sleep in their graves following their death. But the story changes for these two at the resurrection. The repentant sinner will be resurrected to live with Christ through all eternity. The unyielding sinner will be resurrected only to be cast into the lake of fire to suffer the second death (Rev. 20:14), a permanent death.

One of the most beautiful features of the resurrection is its transforming characteristic. We will not continue as we are in this sinful world, but will be changed (1 Cor. 15:52). Our bodies will have the same blessings as that of Adam before sin, the blessings of no disease and no death.

# Everyone Gets Saved Eventually, Don't They?

by Evie Yoder

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Romans 6:23

The following quotes briefly give evidence of two kinds of death and two kinds of resurrection, as well as their significance:

**First death:** "Christ represents death as a sleep."<sup>1</sup>

**Second death:** "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Romans 6:23. . . . 'I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.' Deuteronomy 30:15. The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is 'the second death' that is placed in contrast with everlasting life."<sup>2</sup>

**First Resurrection:** "The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection. . . . By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead."<sup>3</sup>

**Second Resurrection:** "Then Jesus and all the retinue of holy angels, and all the redeemed saints, left the city. The angels surrounded their Commander and escorted Him on His way, and the train of redeemed saints followed. Then, in terrible, fearful majesty, Jesus called forth the wicked dead; and they came up with the same feeble, sickly bodies that went into the grave. What a spectacle! what a scene! At the first resurrection all came forth in immortal bloom; but at the second the marks of the curse are visible on all. . . . All are seeking to hide in the rocks, to shield themselves from the terrible glory of Him whom they once despised."<sup>4</sup>

**The Great Deception:** "Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. . . .

"The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. . . . The divine sentence, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally. We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God."<sup>5</sup>

## REACT

What is the hope for sinners (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 388; John 3:16-21; Romans 6:23)?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 527.

2. *The Great Controversy*, p. 544.

3. Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1143.

4. *Early Writings*, p. 292.

5. *The Great Controversy*, p. 533.

Evie Yoder is a wife and mother of two active boys. Her husband, Norman Yoder, is a student at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

# Immortality

by Keith Mattingly

The following thoughts are taken from *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* by Oscar Cullmann.

The expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the belief in the immortality of the soul are not, in fact, corollaries at all, but a renunciation of one in favor of the other. Belief in the immortality of the soul is really a statement of "wish" for survival that involuntarily gives ground to the opponents of Christianity who constantly repeat that the faith of Christians is nothing more than the projection of their desires.

As we compare the deaths of Socrates and Jesus we find two different philosophies. Socrates thought of the body as only an outer garment, which prevents one's soul from moving freely and imposes on that soul a law that is not appropriate to it. Death, in fact, is the great liberator. Whoever fears death proves that he loves the world of the body and is hopelessly entangled in a world of the five senses. With sublime calm Socrates drank the hemlock and went to his death in complete peace and composure.

As Jesus looked forward to death "He began to be deeply distressed and troubled" (Mark 14:33, NIV). He was so thoroughly human that He shared the natural fear of death. Death for Him was not something divine: it was something dreadful. He knew that because death is the enemy of God, to die means to be utterly forsaken. For whoever is in the hands of death is no longer in the hands of God, but in the hands of God's enemy.

Jesus conquered death in His own death. Christ cannot obtain this victory by simply living on as an immortal soul, thus fundamentally not dying. He can conquer death only by actually entering the territory of death, a sphere of 'nothingness,' of abandonment by God.

And if life is to issue out of this genuine death, a new divine act of creation is necessary, an act that includes the equation body + breath = living soul. For Socrates no new act of creation is necessary. The body is indeed bad and should not live on; the soul needs no resurrection, for it never dies. Immortality is only a *negative* assertion: the soul does not die, but simply lives on. Resurrection is a *positive* assertion: the whole man, who has really died, is recalled to life by a new act of creation by God. Whoever paints a pretty death can paint no resurrection. Whoever has not grasped the horror of death cannot join Paul in the hymn of victory: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:54, 55).

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## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
Philippians  
1:21-23

# A Philosophy of Death

by Keith Mattingly

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Psalm 104:33, 34**

Have you ever taken the time to think about death? Webster states that death is a permanent cessation of all vital functions: the end of life. "Sure," you say, "I know about death; everyone dies." But do you really live as though you expect to die sometime? Most of us have expectations for life that are not consistent, rational, or orderly. And with our unrealistic expectations of life we are ill prepared to face the reality of death.

Before the advent of hospital care, dying patients had the opportunity to complete one final task—teach relatives and friends how to "die well." In the Middle Ages there were little books of devotions that gave a complete and intelligible guide to the business of dying. We moderns tend not to look at books like that, for all our conscious efforts are directed to the belief that life is unending. We become obsessed with self-preservation.

By confronting the fact that you will die, you can enhance the quality of your present life. First, the realization of the inevitability of death helps to understand more fully the horror of sin. No confrontation with death—no realization of the true nature of Satan. As you grapple with death, you agonize over that which causes it, sin.

Second, you better appreciate the value of life. How easy it is to take good health for granted! But when a cold comes and breathing is difficult, suddenly those moments of taking a free breath of air become precious. Crisis produces appreciation of the "taken for granted." Don't ever forget that life is limited, death is inevitable. And when death comes, life ceases; so live to the maximum while there is still life. With the psalmist declare, "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being" (Ps. 104:33, RSV).

Third, you become aware of the transient nature of ownership. You can make no use of your accumulations in death, so why focus so much on them in the present life?

Fourth, you gain cognizance of that which is durable. Material goods, degrees, and honors are no good to you in death, but you can leave behind a lasting legacy for others. You can lay a foundation upon which others after you can build tremendous results. The concept of service and self-sacrifice take on new meaning.

Fifth, you are driven to the One who overcame death. As you contemplate the certainty of death you have to admit your inability to arrest that certainty. But, praise God, there is One who met death head-on and overcame it!

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# Dealing With Death

by Ami Long

My grandmother suffered a severe stroke two years ago. Though her mind remained alert, she could neither walk nor talk. Not only did her disabilities frustrate her, but they frustrated the rest of the family. Visits consisted of trying to decode her pantomimed "conversation" and competing with the television for her attention. We often became annoyed with her lackluster attitude and then felt guilty and defensive about our own.

Recently "Nan" had another stroke, which left her bedridden and unable to recognize family members. Her sons and daughters-in-law are concerned that she be made as comfortable as possible. Visits to the hospital are frequent, but strained, as the relatives reassure themselves that Nan is still alive, still available, and still needs them.

Why is death so difficult to deal with? Why are loved ones often kept alive, though in great pain, when there is little medical hope for recovery? Why do we tend to avoid the subject of death until we are grimly reminded of its reality? We know that the righteous who die will sleep until they are resurrected and begin living with Christ. Yet, though we know our church's doctrine, it is often difficult to cling to in times of crisis. When a car accident claims the lives of several close friends or a house fire kills a young family or someone dies because of a strange combination of circumstances, we often ask God "WHY?" instead of taking refuge in what we know the final outcome will be. We wish to keep our friends around us. Are we not afraid of death because we are afraid of losing those we love?

We know why death occurs, "for the wages of sin is death," but we have been given a promise for the future that transcends death—"the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23, NIV). We have the privilege of family members and friends to love and to love us while on earth. And when our mutual love is rooted in God, then we have the assurance that our friendships will not be broken, but will continue into eternity.

## OPINION

Key Text:

Romans 6:23

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Lesson 13, December 18-24

# The Millennium and the End of Sin

"But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13, NIV).



# Interlude

by Gary L. McLarty, M.D.

In Revelation 20 we reach an intriguing point in Scripture. Just as events seem to be building to the climax of a grand finale, we arrive instead at an interlude of a thousand years, popularly known as "the millennium." This has been a fertile ground for imagination and controversy for nearly twice as long as the time period the prophecy itself contains.

All manner of fanciful interpretations have been proposed for this passage, as well as others more worthy of consideration. The exegesis of Revelation 20 is not entirely simple and straightforward. There are some questions to be wrestled with. But a pertinent statement concerning the controversy that swirls about the millennial prophecy is made by Mounce, "Judging from the amount of attention given by many writers to the first ten verses of Chapter 20, one would judge it to be the single most important segment of the book of Revelation. The tendency of many interpreters at this point is to become apologists for a particular view of the millennium. Without denying the significance of this important passage, it should not be elevated above such basic themes as the return of Christ, the final judgment and removal of all wicked-

ness, and the splendor of the eternal state."<sup>\*</sup>

With this in mind let us examine the most vital portions of the prophecy. Christ is presented as ruler with power to bind Satan. The people are divided into two groups: those who rise to reign with Christ and those who rise to be deceived by Satan. That which separates the two groups is the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 (see 20:4 cf. 14:9-12). This is the gospel, the message of justification by faith (Rev. 14:6; *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 372). The two resurrected groups assume the same roles they had previously. The saints have ruled with Christ by faith ever since He sat down at the right hand of Majesty. The wicked have already been deceived by the beast and his allies and have received the mark and worshiped the image.

Whatever answers are given in the remaining issues, we must not miss the importance of Christ's work of salvation. Prior to the renewal of all things, righteousness in this earth is available to all who have sinned. Today is the hour of salvation for Jew and Gentile. When Christ returns at the Second Advent probation has closed and there is no second chance for salvation.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
2 Peter 3:13

<sup>\*</sup>Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation in The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 351.

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# The End of Evil

by Larry Christoffel

**LOGOS** **Theme:** “The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever.—*Fundamental Beliefs, number 26.*”

The focus of the week’s lesson is on the 1,000 years of Revelation which we call the “millennium,” (Latin *Mille*, “one thousand,” and *annus*, “year”). This period is mentioned six times in Revelation 20 (verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

## 1. Events Associated With the Beginning of the Millennium

The millennium begins with the destruction of the wicked at the second coming of Jesus Christ, as symbolized by the final battle between the Word of God and the Beast, the False Prophet, and the kings of the earth (see Rev. 19:11-20). All the living wicked are slain at that time (Rev. 19:21; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8). At the second coming of Christ, the righteous dead are resurrected, and the living saints translated (Rev. 20:4-6; 1 Cor. 15:22, 23; 1 Thes. 4:13-17). Satan is seized, bound by an angel with a great chain, thrown into the bottomless pit, and contained there (Rev. 20:1-4; compare with Rev. 9:1, 2 and 11:7). Satan has no one to deceive during the 1,000 years, since none of the wicked are living during that time (Rev. 20:2, 5). The seven last plagues have reduced the earth to a chaotic state of ruin, the elements intended at Creation to bless humanity having become an ultimate curse (Revelation 16). The broken condition of our earth during the millennium is described by Jeremiah (see Jer. 4:23-27).

## 2. Events During the Millennium (read Revelation 20:4)

John sees “thrones” and those to whom “judgment was committed.” He also sees “the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.” (Rev.

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20:4, RSV; compare with Rev. 6:9-11). That John should focus upon the martyrs going through the "mark of the beast" crisis is not surprising, inasmuch as they now pass judgment on those who had persecuted them! The martyrs are not the only ones to whom judgment is committed (Rev. 20:4). According to 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3 we are told that "the saints will judge the world" (RSV). Judgment is given to the saints in the sense that they participate with Christ in the judgment of the wicked.

The saints reign with Christ for 1,000 years in heaven! In the book of Revelation the throne of God is always in heaven and the saints are described as being before the throne (see Rev. 4:1, 2; 14:1-3; 15:1, 2, etc.). Jesus has promised to take the saints to heaven, where He is preparing a place for them (see John 14:1-3). The saints reign in the sense that they participate in the reign of Jesus Christ, the King, and they are never again to be separated from His presence. Even now in the kingdom of grace (see Col. 1:13, 14), believers are considered a kingdom of priests (compare Ex. 19:6 and Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

### **3. Events at the End of the Millennium (read Revelation 20:7-10)**

The saints descend to the earth at the end of the millennium in "the camp of the saints and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9). The "beloved city" is a familiar representation of "Zion" or "Jerusalem" (see Ps. 78:68; 87:2). Revelation 21:1, 10 describes the "heavenly Jerusalem" coming down from God out of heaven. The figure of "camp" refers to a military installation, with reference to the final attack by Satan's forces.

The wicked of all ages come to life again (see Rev. 20:5). Satan is loosed from his prison inasmuch as the wicked are again available for his manipulations. He marshals them around Jerusalem for one last attempt to secure the earth for himself and for his followers (Rev. 20:7-9). His attack is stopped short as fire falls from heaven, consuming the wicked, and Satan is cast into the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:9, 10). That his punishment is said to be "day and night for ever and ever" is an indication of the finality of Satan's restraint. Never throne gain will he be permitted to torment God's people. (Compare Eze. 28:19 and Mal. 4:1-3 where the destruction of Satan and his followers is complete.)

Revelation 20:11-15 describes the great white judgment throne where all of the dead stand before God, the books are

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opened, and people are judged by what they have done. Obviously, this scene must take place prior to the destruction of the wicked (verse 9). Undoubtedly this is a flashback and amplification of the scene just prior to the destruction of the wicked. According to Philippians 2:9-11 every knee will bow to Jesus Christ, and this logically occurs after the white-throne judgment prior to the destruction of the wicked. None of the saints are in any way jeopardized by this judgment, for they are part of the first resurrection on which the second death has no power (Rev. 20:6). Death and Hades, the enemies of God's people (Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:14) are cast into the lake of fire, the last enemy being finally defeated (see 1 Cor. 15:26). Although the judgment is according to works, the decisive factor is whether one's name is found in the book of life (see Rev. 20:15; compare with 13:8).

*Can you suggest some of the thoughts that will go through the minds of those on both sides of the gates of the New Jerusalem at the end of the 1,000 years?*

## This Christmas Give a School



When you give money to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 24, you're giving desks, chalkboards and the chance for a brighter future to children in Curitiba, Brazil.

**Help Build a School in  
Curitiba, Brazil**

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING**

# The Millennium

by Snorri Olafsson

## 1. The Saints Reign With Christ and Judge During the Millennium

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' 1 Corinthians 4:5. Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, 'judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.' Daniel 7:22. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: 'I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.' 'They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.' Revelation 20:4, 6. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, 'the saints shall judge the world.' 1 Corinthians 6:2. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.

"Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people. Says Paul: 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' Verse 3. And Jude declares that 'the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.' Jude 6."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. The Testimony of the Redeemed

"The redeemed raise a song of praise that echoes and re-echoes through the vaults of heaven: 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.' [Rev. 7:] Verse 10. And angel and seraph unite their voices in adoration. As the redeemed have beheld the power and malignity of Satan, they have seen, as never before, that no power but that of Christ could have made them conquerors. In all that shining throng there are none to ascribe salvation to themselves, as if they had prevailed by their own power and goodness. Nothing is said of what they have done or suffered; but the burden of every song, the keynote of every anthem, is: 'Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.'"<sup>2</sup>

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Philippians  
2:10, 11

1. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.  
2. *Ibid.*, p. 665.

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# Millennial Views and Adventism

by Larry Christoffel

## EVIDENCE

Key Text:  
Revelation 20:5

There are three basic interpretations of the millennium of Revelation 20. *Premillennialism* places the second coming of Jesus Christ *before* the millennium. *Amillennialism* regards the 1,000 years symbolically as the period between the first and second comings of Christ. *Postmillennialism* places the second coming of our Lord at the end of the millennium, and envisions the millennium as 1,000 years following the conversion of the world, during which great spiritual and social progress is made.

Of course, there are variations within these different theories. For instance, some "amillennialists" understand the reign of the saints with Christ to be God's rule on earth through the church. Other "amillennialists" believe that the reign is that of the disembodied saints in heaven during the 1,000 years. Again, according to the "premillennialists" of the "dispensational" school, the church is raptured secretly at the beginning of a seven year period, which the saints spend in heaven. During this seven years, the great tribulation of Revelation 4-19 occurs on earth. According to that theory the actual millennium begins with Christ and the saints returning to earth at the time of the battle of Armageddon. During the seven years and throughout the 1,000 years, the covenant promises that God made to His chosen people Israel will be literally fulfilled. Those "premillennialists" of the "historical" school deny the secret-rapture theory and hold that the church goes through the final tribulation prior to the Second Coming.

Except for some "amillennialists," and Seventh-day Adventists, all of the various systems place the saints on the earth during the millennium. Adventism differs with the "amillennial" position, however, by insisting that the saints reigning in heaven are not merely disembodied souls, but are resurrected persons, body, soul, and spirit. It is interesting that "amillennialists" refute the other systems by insisting that the saints are in heaven during the millennium, using the same arguments that Adventists would use.<sup>1</sup> Their main argument is that the "thrones" of Revelation 20:4 and the saints in the book of Revelation are seen in heaven.

On the other hand, "premillennialists" refute the "amillennial" position by insisting that the "resurrection" of the saints (Rev. 20:4, 5) must be a "bodily" resurrection, and not a "spiritual one," where the soul goes to heaven at death.<sup>2</sup>

Robert G. Clouse has put us all in his debt by publishing a book in which advocates of the various millennial systems

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each makes a presentation, to which the representatives of the other schools of thought respond.<sup>3</sup> Although Adventism's view on the millennium is not included in the discussion, it seems as though only the position of Adventism will stand up Scripturally. The saints have physical bodies and are in heaven during the thousand years!

1. William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1967), pp. 230, 231. Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969, 1976), p. 236.
2. George Eldon Ladd (Ladd is a "historical millennialist"), *A Commentary on the Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 263-267. John F. Walvoord (a "dispensational millennialist"), *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, Ill.: The Moody Bible Institute, 1966), p. 298.
3. Robert G. Clouse (editor, with contributions by George Eldon Ladd, Herman A. Hoyt, Loraine Boettner, Anthony A. Hoekema), *The Meaning of the Millennium* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977).

# Sympathy for the Devil?

by Sique Tonstad

**HOW TO**  
**Key Text:**  
**Isaiah 14:16, 17**

Sixteen years ago the Rolling Stones made a song called "Sympathy for the Devil." Their concern for his welfare seemed genuine, but that was hardly a surprise. Long before that song their music had echoed an unmistakable fondness for his values and well-being.

I am not about to suggest that God shares the attitude of the Rolling Stones toward Satan, but I cannot but feel that there is plenty of sympathy for the devil in the way God has related to his enemy through the years. The millennium is yet another strange and shocking milestone in that odyssey. How else can we explain that Satan is given an additional thousand-year lease on life after the long great controversy is all but wrapped up—another thousand years? If I were in charge, I would not have given him another day, let alone a thousand years.

Instead of calling in the firing squad, God calls in the jury. He wants the case to be reviewed thoroughly before the final verdict is passed and put into effect. It is an awesome thought. He submits His approach to sin and Satan to be scrutinized by human beings for a full thousand years. No action is taken against Satan until after the millennium. Neither man nor angel is made to suffer the second death until every one of the saved has had a chance to become familiar with the cases of deepest concern to them.

A waste of time? Would one month do? Ten years? As I write this, I am preparing for my own very real encounter with the court right here on our old, wasted planet. A man's life is going to be reviewed in detail, especially one fateful day in that man's life. It will take at least three weeks to cover that ground. We will hang on every word that will be uttered during the proceedings, all ears, all eyes, intensely focused on the outcome when all the evidence has been presented. Thousands of hours have been spent in gathering evidence. The issue at stake is twenty-five years of a man's life. What then when eternity is at stake, the gain or loss of life itself?

A thousand years . . .

When they are over, Satan is unchanged. Repentance belongs to this side of the millennium. Prophecy has it that nobody makes any drastic changes in opinion or stance during that period. That makes today the moment of choice. Tomorrow—the millennium—is only the moment of review.

But the review is reassuring. Scanning the bloody pages of history, nobody is about to join the refrain of the Rolling Stones' hit record. There will be no sympathy for the devil.

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# On the 'Second Death'

by Snorri Olafsson

The "second death" is something almost beyond our comprehension. The "first death" makes no distinction between those who are good and those who are evil. That is why it is not a sign of God's disfavor or anger when somebody dies at a younger-than-expected age. The "first death" is reversible. But the "second death" is "an everlasting death—a death that will last forever, from which there will be no hope of a resurrection"\* Not only can the wicked never be brought back to life again, but they will have to suffer while dying. Can a truly loving God do this? This is a question that burns on our lips even now.

I am so thankful that we will have 1,000 years to ask Jesus why not only the obviously evil ones, but perhaps some of our loved ones, will die eternally. God wants us to be convinced that the flames of the "second death" represent an act of love and not of hatred. We cannot understand this fully here on earth because "now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12, NIV).

Why does the millennium last 1,000 years? For most this is probably much more time than they need to be convinced that God is loving and righteous. But He wants even the slowest and most questioning of us to be satisfied.

Thus, the 1,000 years are for the benefit of the saints. God knows everything from the beginning. The angels have had no doubts since their Lord was crucified on Calvary. The wicked will be asleep.

After the millennium we will see that even the "mildly sinful" ones have the same spirit as those who crucified Jesus. They are ready to join hands with Satan attacking our beloved Saviour. "They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves" (Rev. 20:9, NIV). God has no other choice. With tears in His eyes, He will act. "Fire came down from heaven and devoured them" (Rev. 20:9, NIV).

## OPINION

Key Text:

Revelation 20:5, 6

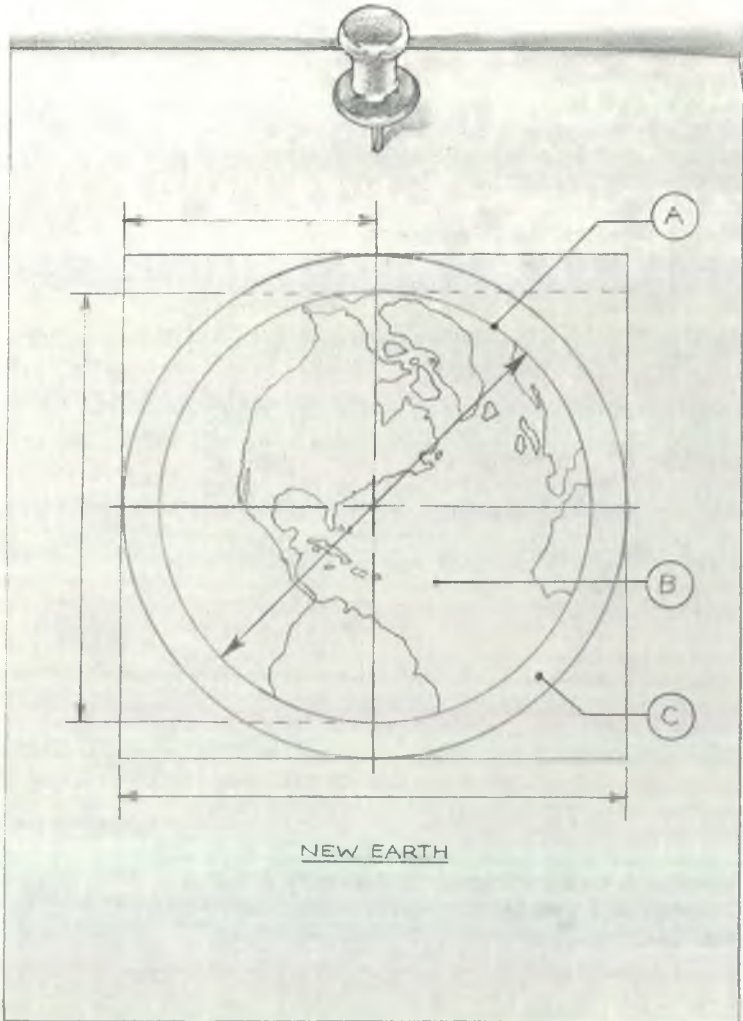
\*Early Writings, p. 51.

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# The New Earth

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:1, 2, NIV).





# The Poster Episode

by Graham Bingham

The poster said, "What and Where Is Heaven?" It advertised the second night's meeting of a crusade being held by the local conference evangelist. Yours truly was just a young ministerial intern who had been assigned the task of walking from store to store asking for permission to place our poster in their shop window. And there were 200 posters to put up. The evangelist was at home *praying* and *working* on his sermons, so he couldn't help. And since I was the only other member of the team, recently out of college and not ordained, the evangelist had commissioned me to do the job. I won't mention how many posters were trashed.

While I was working in one large department store with sticky-tape in one hand and poster in the other, a man walked up and said, "Are you the fellow who's going to tell the people where heaven is located?"

I explained to him that I was not the person he was looking for, but I knew of the man he had in mind. He replied, "Nobody knows where heaven is. Heaven is only speculation."

I'm not the first person to have an experience like that because Dwight Moody once told a friend that he was going to speak on "Heaven—What and Where Is It?" His friend looked disappointed and said, "Why don't you speak to us on a subject that is sure, and not one that is only speculation?"

"If God did not wish for me to speak about heaven He would not have said so much about it in His Word," answered Moody.

Heaven is referred to 740 times in the Bible. Despite the fact that it is mentioned so frequently, all the average person knows of heaven is that it is up there somewhere. Where, they are not quite sure. Perhaps on the "beautiful isle somewhere." Many believe that, once there, you sit on a fluffy white cloud and play a golden harp. One fellow said, "If that's what heaven is like, then I don't want to go there." Personally, I don't blame him, nor would I.

Where is heaven? What is it like? When will it happen? These are some of the interesting questions discussed in this week's lesson.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Revelation  
21:1, 2

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# The New Earth

by Norman R. Gulley

**LOGOS** **Theme:** On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever.—*Fundamental Belief, number 27.*

The new earth, like Creation, and the new birth, and resurrection, is a creative event that only God, not humans, can realize. The new earth is no more the product of mankind's endeavors than the incarnation. In fact, the new earth, with the redeemed, is the final actualization of Christ's salvific plan. The cosmic controversy will be over, and its negative results will be forgotten. But its positive results, the human life and death of Jesus, will be forever the study of once-fallen and unfallen beings, for they will realize, with ever-increasing insight, that all truth about God is best seen as it is in Jesus. For theology, or the study of God and His relationship to His creatures, is the study of Jesus Christ.

## 1. New Heavens and a New Earth (read Revelation 21:1—22:5)

The first two chapters of the Bible present the creation of a new earth, and the last two chapters do the same. There are two Greek words for new, *neos*, new in point of time (Matt. 9:17; 1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:10), or *kainos*, new in point of quality. *kainos* is used in Revelation 21:1, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (RSV). Whereas the original Creation was new in point of time, this one will be a purified and refurbished re-creation of the existing heaven and earth, and not *creatio ex nihilo*.

The renewed earth will have some radical changes—no sea as we know it today (Rev. 21:1), no death, mourning, crying, or pain (Rev. 21:4), no temple (Rev. 21:22), no sunlight or moonlight in the city (Rev. 21:23), no shut door, no night (Rev. 21:4), and no death (Rev. 22:3). The new (*kainos*) Jerusalem will come down from heaven to earth (Rev. 21:2, 3). God will come to dwell (*skene*, tent or tabernacle, of John 1:14) with men. Thus the throne of God will transfer from heaven to earth. Planet Earth is not only refurbished, it becomes exalted. It transcends its pre-fall status. It becomes the control

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center of the universe. This is the logical outworking of God's salvific plan. Having become also human, He has more than saved, or restored, mankind; they are, and will be, exalted.

In the new earth, the river of life flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1, RSV) and runs parallel with the city street, with the tree of life forming an arch over it, from roots on both sides (Rev. 22:2). Every month it bears new fruit (Rev. 22:2). The redeemed will see the face of Christ, and His name will be on their foreheads—i.e., they will be like Him (Rev. 22:4). It is this last fact that is the most remarkable. The redeemed will be renewed. They will be like Jesus. It will then be true, "the meek . . . will inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5, NIV).

The gospel prophet spoke God's message of this coming future, "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. 65:17, NIV). The redeemed will build houses and live in them and plant vineyards and eat the fruit. "My chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands" (Isa. 65:21, 22, NIV). "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me' declares the Lord, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,' says the Lord" (Isa. 66:22, 23, NIV). What a picture of permanence and security! No more building and someone else inhabiting, no more planting and someone else reaping, no more end to life, and ever more a Sabbath meeting each week with Christ.

## **2. Image of God Fully Restored**

The creation of mankind has again taken place on the last day—not of Creation week, but of history on this sin-planet. We speak of the Second Advent, when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible will put on incorruption (see 1 Cor. 15:53). It will be "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52, NIV). "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16, NIV).

Christ again creates (or re-creates) His people. Instantly, they are restored to Adamic, or original, perfection. Seventh-day Adventists do not believe this includes height. Yet ours will stand in the perfection of Adam's day in every other re-

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spect—which means more comprehensively perfect than they have ever experienced. For they reflect the image of God perfectly in body, mind, and spirit.

### 3. The Uplifted Christ

If Paul could write of the Christian experience in our world, "There is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:11, NIV), then it is even more true of the new earth. The redeemed will look up to Jesus as the only One who bridged the terrible gulf gouged by sin. He alone crossed the chasm between God and humanity and closed the division between all people. During pre-Advent history, Christ was all that mankind ever needed. He was all the salvation that was possible. In the new earth, He will be their eternal fulfillment. Apart from Him there is no meaningful everlasting life. Throughout eternity, Christians will ever hunger and thirst for more of Jesus—more understanding of His human life and works, more communion with Him, more time of witnessing with Him to unfallen worlds—becoming more and more like Him. They will live for and with Christ. To them, He will be everything forever!

Then it will come to pass that "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15, NIV). In that kingdom "the former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (Isa. 65:17, NIV). Gone forever is sin, sickness, sorrow, loneliness, guilt, misunderstanding, frustration, tension, terror, stress, divorce, and death. There forever is love, acceptance, joy, peace, and life. Jesus has made the difference. Heaven, the new earth, is more than a place. It is a Person. Eternal life is to be with Him. Christ will be seated on a throne. His people will surround Him, bursting into triumphant praise, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise" (Rev. 5:12, NIV). The anthem will sound and resound throughout the universe as all peoples of every planet, and angels from heaven, join the redeemed in praise and thanksgiving to Jesus. All cry out, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

*What is the one thing you are looking forward to doing in heaven? Why is this so important to you?*

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# From Lions to Friend

by Mike Boyko

## TESTIMONY

Key Text:  
Revelation 20:12

Since a small boy I have wanted to be a part of the group that experiences heaven and the new earth. At first it was so that I could play with lions and bears. As I grew older I wanted to experience a place without pain, where there will be only happiness. Ellen White sums up my feelings: I now look for perfect communion with my Maker and my Friend. "There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together 'the whole family in heaven and earth' (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. . . .

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>*The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.

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# Homesick at Home

by Bruce Wilcox

## EVIDENCE

**Key Texts:**  
Luke 9:57;  
John 14:3, 4.

Christianity makes many claims, some of them bordering on the enigmatic. One of these is the claim that Christian doctrines furnish us with the best description going of reality, that they make sense out of life as it is lived. In his book *The Everlasting Man*, G. K. Chesterton, speaking of the Christian creed, says, "But in answer to the historical query of why it was accepted and is accepted, the answer for millions of others is my reply; because it fits the lock; because it is like life."

For many of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrines it is immediately obvious how they furnish us with accurate descriptions of reality, and with valid prescriptions on how to live. They pass what we might call the "so what" test. It may not be quite so obvious with *Fundamental Belief, number 27—The New Earth*. Yet it does seem to me that this doctrine makes sense out of what is otherwise a very strange kind of experience. That experience I call the sensation of being homesick at home.

I believe Jesus knew about this firsthand, and expressed it to the man on the road when he said "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20, NIV). Remember that Jesus identified with humanity when He became a human being. He was acquainted with the full range of human experience (when He was cut, did He not bleed?). In addition to the homelessness of poverty, I believe He knew the feeling of homelessness that is a part of just being human.

I am basing this part of my argument on my own experience. As far back as I can remember I have, in one sense, felt myself to be homeless. I am always looking for a home. This in spite of having loving parents, a happy childhood, a good marriage, deeply satisfying work. I can feel homesick in the home where I have lived for more than 20 years. I can imagine a home that is better and more satisfying than anything I have ever known or heard about.

This feeling is triggered by a variety of things. I felt it one afternoon when I heard Peggy Lee on my car radio singing "Is That All There Is?" I feel it when reading certain books, the books I turn to when my spirit unravels and needs to be knit back together: *All Creatures Great and Small*, *The Egg and I*, *The Tales of Narnia*. The feeling itself is described with great poignancy in *Thunderhead* by Mary O'Hara: "Rob, if you go away from your own place and people—the place you spent your childhood in, all your life you'll be sick with homesick-

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ness and you'll never have a home. You can find a better place, perhaps, a way of life you like better, but the home is gone out of your heart, and you'll be hunting it all your life long. You must feel that as well as I.' Out of a deep silence his answer came. 'I do. It makes me quite desperate sometimes.' " I found a description of that place I'm looking for in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*: "Frodo was now safe in the last homely house east of the sea. That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, 'A perfect house, whether you like food or sleep or storytelling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.' Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness." But the last homely house is in Middle Earth, and I can't go there.

I don't believe I am alone in this feeling. Take, for instance, the great popularity of Garrison Keillor's news from Lake Wobegon. A writer in *Newsweek* explained it thus: "One by one over 13 years listeners came to see that Lake Wobegon is the place we all come from. 'Garrison had to have been there in our home and listened to all that was going on,' a listener in New Jersey wrote. 'People just cannot be that much alike.' The lovely thing that 'Prairie Home Companion' proved was: Yes, they can. We are. And once a week, for just a few minutes, we could all go home again."

God created us with appetites, and those appetites are meant to be satisfied. We get hungry for food, thirsty for water, lonely for companionship, and homesick for home. In this sermon *The Weight of Glory*, C. S. Lewis suggests that this appetite for a home beyond anything we can find in this world is a "pretty good indication that such a thing exists, and that some men . . . will enjoy it." For that matter, we have it on the very highest authority that these longings do have an object, and they will be satisfied. Jesus promised, "I am going to prepare a place for you. . . . And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am" (John 14:2, 3, TEV).

G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man* (New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1955), p. 254.  
Mary O'Hara, *Thunderhead* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1973), p. 31.  
J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1965), p. 296.  
C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans-Publishing Company, 1974), p. 6.

# Break the Evil Spell

by Bruce Wilcox

**HOW TO**  
**Key Texts:**  
**Philippians**  
**3:20, 21;**  
**Isaiah 55:1, 2**

Worldliness is an evil enchantment. It seeks to deceive us into believing that there is nothing beyond this world, that the ultimate good of humankind is no more than we can accomplish here, that we cannot, after all, ever go home again. Unless we break the spell, it will cause us to deaden our appetite for our real home with money, power, sex, alcohol, prestige, BMWs, art, music, science, education, or anything else that comes to hand.

A sturdy belief in the doctrine of the new earth, leads to patterns of thought and behavior that are the antidote for worldliness.

This world is not all there is. Nothing earthly lasts forever, but for Christians there are some things that will last forever.

**1. We practice homemaking.** As little children we prepare for adulthood by playing house, we prepare for the new earth by making homes. We make places where love, acceptance, and nurturing go on. We help the literally homeless to make homes for themselves. We take care of the earth; we conserve resources. We value things only as they promote well-being and happiness. We take time to develop good relationships in which we reinforce the best in each other.

**2. We develop relationships with heavenly intelligences.** "With the word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose. . . . He may dwell in this world in the atmosphere of heaven, imparting to earth's sorrowing and tempted ones thoughts of hope and longings for holiness; himself coming closer and still closer into fellowship with the Unseen, like him of old who walked with God, drawing nearer and nearer the threshold of the eternal world, until the portals shall open, and he shall enter there. He will find himself no stranger. The voices that will greet him are the voices of the holy ones, who, unseen, were on earth his companions—voices that here he learned to distinguish and to love. He who through the word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven's companionship."<sup>7\*</sup>

**3. We practice living by the rules of our new home.**

We begin, however imperfectly, to practice the law of self-sacrificing love, because that is how we expect to live in our new home.

\**Education*, p. 127.

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# Greatest Joy and Highest Education

by Erwin R. Gane

Since the early Christian centuries, there have been those who have been attracted by the superior physical and material circumstances that will persist in the eternal kingdom of God. To them Christianity offers ultimate satisfaction of the carnal cravings of the human heart. What could be more appealing than cities glittering with precious jewels, inhabited by beings in perfect health, whose most strenuous activity is the donning and doffing of golden crowns! What could pander better to human taste than the promiscuous supply of earth's most delicious fruits! What could be more stimulating to one's cultural predilections than a constant environment of scintillating beauty, and enthralling, exalted music!

You will have to forgive me for finding such a scenario of celestial bliss substantially unsatisfying. Admittedly the Bible presents a picture of magnificence and physical prosperity in the new earth, far surpassing anything that our constricted little human minds could possibly imagine (see Isaiah 11; 35; 65; Revelation 21; 22.) Nevertheless, it seems to me that we have lost the real import of the Bible message when we exalt the physical and material over the spiritual and intellectual joys of the earth made new. It is natural for suffering humanity, ground down by physical disease and degradation, economic lack, and the necessity of tireless labor, to bolster its flagging spirits by constant reminders of a coming world order in which all those barriers to happiness will be conspicuous by their absence. I imagine, however, that if Paul were here he would hasten to say, "I will show you a still more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31, NASB).

What is the real contrast between earth as it is and earth as God intends to make it? The Bible message throughout focuses on God, His love, His character, the opportunity for fallen humans in the here and now to become like Him, so that in the hereafter they may have unrestricted fellowship with the Divine (see 1 John 3:1-3). The redeemed will behold "the King in his beauty" (Isa. 33:17) with no covering veil between, because in this preparatory life they allowed His Spirit to impart to them His righteousness (Rom. 8:9, 10). His name in their foreheads represents the total commitment of their minds to the holy principles of His divine life and government.

But our greatest joy as transformed humans will be to travel throughout the realms of illimitable space, repeating with unmatched eloquence and spiritual exaltation the story of infinite love manifested on Calvary's cross.

## OPINION

Key Text:

1 Corinthians

12:31

Erwin R. Gane is the senior editor in the Department of Church Ministries at the General Conference.

Next Quarter's Lessons

# God's Handbook on Worship

## Study of the Book of Leviticus

For readers who have not yet received a copy of *COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY* for first quarter 1989, here is a summary of the first two lessons.

### Lesson 1: Windows on Salvation

*Scripture:* Insights on Leviticus from the New Testament. Hebrews 11:4, 7; 10:1-4; Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39.

*Theme:* God's method of saving sinners is the same in all ages. Salvation comes through faith in the Saviour whom God provided to pay the penalty for our sins.

### Lesson 2: Outcasts Made Clean

*Scripture:* Leviticus chapters 12-15

*Theme:* In Scripture leprosy is used as a symbol of sin. Anesthetic and corrosive, its "issues" display the working out of poisonous principles. The cleansing ceremony focused on Christ's ministry of healing and resulted in the restoration of lepers to full fellowship with God and man. Only the grace of Christ can cleanse us from the inner contamination of sin.

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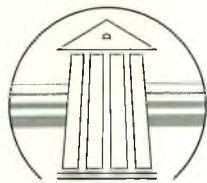


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