

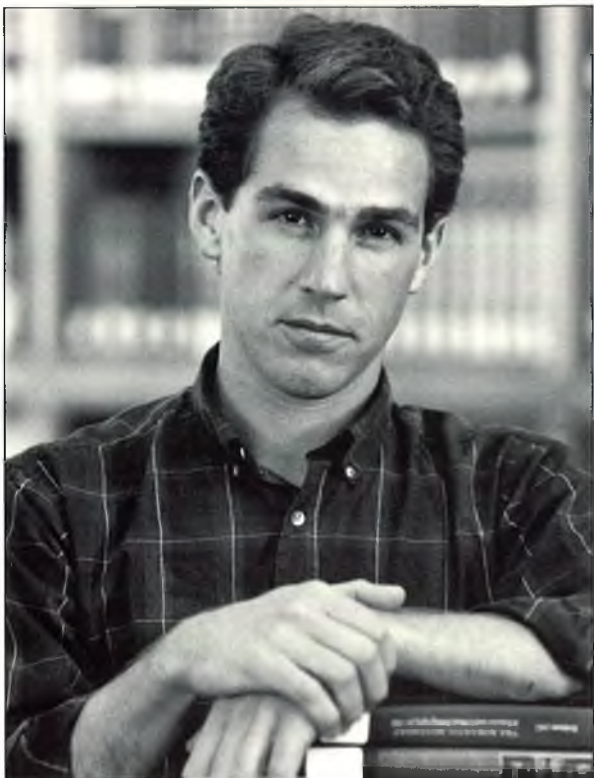
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

A General Conference Church Ministries Publication

January-March 1989

God's Handbook on Worship The Book of Leviticus





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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

Facts You Should Know

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is based on the conviction that there is transforming power in the Word of God and that one important way of tapping into that power is through group study. It is prepared with Adventist college students and young adults particularly in mind. Its purpose is to provide this group with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed together each week in Sabbath School.

Additionally, many who use the adult quarterly find that the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, since it deals with the same topics as the adult, enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist colleges and universities, along with young-adult church groups, work together in producing the quarterly. The writing at each school is coordinated by the campus chaplain's office. Approximately 200 individuals contribute to the quarterly each year.

Circulation of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is about 25,000.

Pointers for Study

1. The Bible passage to be studied for each week is indicated in bold on the introduction page (Sunday's lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

2. The Bible passage for the week is divided into sections on the Logos pages (Monday's lesson). When studying this section, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in the bold headings before reading the comments beneath the heading.

3. Read the remainder of the sections for the week with the perspective you have gained by your own study of the Biblical passage.

4. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the quarterly:

Introduction (Sunday) is designed to get your attention and focus your thinking on the week's theme.

Logos (Monday), as described above, is a guide for direct study of the Bible passage for the week.

Testimony (Tuesday) presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.

Evidence (Wednesday) approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective. It is likely to be the most "scholarly" article of the week.

How To (Thursday) discusses what the "theory" in the lesson means for day-to-day living.

Opinion (Friday) is a personal viewpoint on the lesson, meant to encourage further thought and discussion.

5. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.

The CQ and the Church

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is the General Conference-approved quarterly for the collegiate/young adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church. Particularly in the Evidence and Opinion sections, views are expressed which are only individual opinion, not official denominational positions.

LEVITICUS—GOD'S HANDBOOK ON WORSHIP

What would you list as some of the greatest needs in the life of an ordinary person today? Do you think freedom is one of those great needs? Most of us want to be free from the pressures that destroy or demoralize us. The Israelites in Egypt groaned under the burdens laid on them by the Egyptians. As a people they desired liberty from the oppressor's hand.

Most of us would place food, clothing, and shelter on the priority list of basic human needs. God supplied all of those needs for the Israelites, even during the desert wanderings. Manna fell from heaven; water came from the rock; their clothes and shoes never wore out.

The worship of the true and living God is one fundamental human need that might be placed high on our priority list. "Restless are our souls, O God, until they find rest in Thee."—St. Augustine. God wants us to make worship an essential experience in life. "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the Lord's house'" (Ps. 122:1, TEV).

God knows that humans need to worship. As a continual reminder of this great spiritual need, the Lord instructed Moses to build the tabernacle in the center of Israel's camp. Three tribes were to be on each side of the tabernacle. God would not be hard to find! The Israelites would be constantly reminded of Him every time they emerged from their tents. But Israel, as a corporate body, needed to be taught how to worship. To meet this need, God instructed Moses to write Leviticus—God's handbook on worship. As you study Leviticus this quarter don't look on the book as a mere repetition of endless rules, regulations, and rituals concerning worship. Rather, try to view the book as a basic resource on corporate worship—our Christian inheritance—from the Hebrews.

Lesson 1, January 1 - 7

Windows on Salvation



“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship” (Hebrews 10:1, NIV).

Sunday, January 1

Of Mowing, Muscles, and More Important Matters

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Hebrews 11:4, 7; 10:1-4; Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39

It was hot, and I struggled to push our large, cantankerous lawn mower through the tangled greenery we euphemistically referred to as our front lawn. It was an ambitious undertaking, since I was a rather undersized preschooler not quite tall enough to reach the handle. In spite of this, I managed to make good progress by grasping the reinforcing crossbar below the handle and using this to pilot the machine. I walked proudly, conscious of the looks from passersby. Who said I was too small to mow the grass? I was big enough!

Suddenly, my forward motion came to an abrupt halt. Puzzled, I pushed even harder, but to no avail. I grew angry and threw myself at the bar, my tennis shoes churning up the grass beneath my feet. Still the mower sat, idling placidly, as immobile as Plymouth Rock. Frustrated, I jammed my hands in my pockets and stalked away, turning to give the mower a parting glare, and immediately it became apparent to me where the difficulty lay. My father, who had been walking behind me the whole time pushing the mower by the handle, had chosen that moment

to go and get a drink.

Needless to say, it became clear to me how necessary my father's assistance was to the progress of the mower, and when a few moments later he began to push the machine by himself with no appreciable loss of momentum, I began to realize that all the "help" I had been giving him had really done little to aid the mowing process, and may very well have hindered it.

I retired to the shade of a nearby bush and watched with new-found admiration as my father finished mowing the lawn.

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship" (Heb. 10:1, NIV).

Jesus Christ has to do the pushing. He will ask us to walk along, but only as a token of our willingness to let Him do the work. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:12, 13, NIV).

The sooner we realize that all *our* self-sufficient attempts to work alone only result in our own discouragement and frustration, the faster *Jesus* can finish the job.

by Christopher V. Cassano

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Windows on Salvation

LOGOS

Theme: *God is consistent in His method of salvation. Salvation has been through faith in the Saviour whom God provided, but to whom humanity must personally respond. Prior to the cross, the center of history, people were saved by faith in a coming Saviour. We, living after the cross, are saved by faith in a Saviour who has come.*

Since sin, God's offer of salvation has been consistently available. What has been humanity's response to this provision? How has this response to salvation been viewed? Do both Testaments, Old and New, convey identical perspectives of it? The focus of this study is limited to only one of these questions—the New Testament perspective on humanity's response to salvation.

1. Abel's Response (read **Genesis 4:2-5; Hebrews 11:4**)

How does the New Testament view the response of Abel, the first martyr, to God and His requirements?

In Matthew 23:35 Jesus summarizes Israel's response to their prophets and teachers. As He does, He gives a pertinent evaluation of Abel designating him "righteous Abel." What greater tribute could Abel have than for Messiah to evaluate his response to salvation and characterize him as righteous?

While Jesus' statement views

Abel as righteous and emphasizes his martyrdom, it does not explicitly suggest why he was regarded thus. The author of Hebrews settles this question, however. First, he says that Abel's faith, focused on God's saving promise, motivated him to offer "a better sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4, NIV). Second, he says that Abel was commended as a righteous man when "God spoke well of his offerings." How and when did God speak well of Abel's offerings? Further, why did He respond thus to Abel's offerings?

It appears that when God responded with favor to Abel's offering and with disfavor to Cain's He spoke eloquently concerning not only Abel's offering but Abel himself. The experience of these two brothers is crucial in categorizing a person's response to the gospel. While Cain symbolizes disobedience and disregard for God's authority and sovereignty, Abel depicts obedience, faith, and respect for God's role in human affairs. Abel represents a willingness to accept God's solution to humanity's problem while Cain depicts a desire to offer his own solution. Cain's system was a system of salvation by works. But what is being emphasized here is salvation through acceptance of Christ's righteousness. The lamb that Abel offered and Cain bypassed depicted Christ—the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Their experience teaches that there is a reward for each response; faith in and accep-

by Bertram Melbourne

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tance of the Lamb of God receive divine approval, while disregard to the Lamb results in divine displeasure. People are not obliged to accept God's provision, but we must face the consequences of our choice. This is precisely the point John makes when he warns his readers to shun Cain's attitude (see 1 John 3:12). Cain murdered Abel "because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous" (NIV). Cain made his choice but was unwilling to face its consequence.

Which of these two courses will I adopt for my life?

Can I truly understand why Cain acted so violently against his brother? Are there instances when I am tempted to see my problems in others rather than in myself? What are some of these instances?

2. The Response of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs

The experience of two patriarchs—Noah and Abraham—and one matriarch—Sarah—will be cited. The New Testament pictures Noah as a person of righteousness and contrasts him with his contemporaries, thus typifying humanity's response to God's provisions. When warned "of things not yet seen," a coming deluge, Noah believed God, despite the unprecedented nature of the predicted event, and took precaution by building an ark of safety (see Heb. 11:7). Besides, he became a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) when he proclaimed his faith in God's way of salvation to his contemporaries. They disbelieved and were destroyed. His faithful acceptance of God's solution guaranteed him a share in the righteousness of Christ.

Am I still willing in this "now generation" to put God's word or my faith in it above the opinions of my contemporaries? Are there instances when a twentieth-

century opinion or position should be regarded as more authentic than Scripture?

Abraham, as the progenitor of the Jewish nation, has a unique place in Scripture. Paul calls him the father of the faithful and says that God announced the gospel to him (Gal. 3:8). Interestingly, the gospel he received was universal and not particularistic in scope, for through him *all* the nations were to be blessed. The gospel was designed for all nations, and Abraham and his descendants were to be God's agents through whom it would be communicated. Jesus makes an apparently curious statement regarding Abraham. He says Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing His day, saw it, and was glad. Now, when did Abraham see Jesus' day? Didn't Abraham die some two thousand years before Jesus' birth? How then could he have seen Jesus' day?

Lenski suggests that Jesus' statement is a **mashal**,¹ "a veiled and pointed saying which is sometimes equal to a chidah or riddle,"² with a hidden or veiled meaning. He sees a key to understanding it in the words Abraham "exulted" and "was glad." These words point to an experience in Abraham's life for which he was glad in anticipation and in realization. Lenski identifies this event as the promise of Isaac and the realization of his birth. He sees this event bringing gladness to Abraham, as well as giving him a vision of Jesus' day. He says: "Then and there, in that event, Abraham saw with his own eyes what Jesus calls 'my own day.' Then and there the day of Jesus began. In that wonderful gift of Isaac the very person now speaking to the Jews began by an action of his a deed both astounding and infinitely blessed, his own saving manifestation."³

In addition to this perceptive thought by Lenski, it is possible to see a link with the events recorded in Genesis 22. Abraham could have exulted to see the day when the covenant made with Adam and renewed with him (Abraham) would be realized in the coming Saviour. Certainly the day of his promised son's arrival could have served as a reminder of that joyous event. He could have seen that day (Jesus') with gladness when he was given a unique preview of the substitutionary death of Christ. As he stood there on Mt. Moriah, knife in hand, listening to the voice that spoke, and as he found the ram caught in the thicket and sacrificed it "instead of his son" (Gen. 22:13, RSV), Abraham could have caught a glimpse of the substitutionary death of God's Son on that very mount, which he was prefiguring, and could have rejoiced. Interestingly, he named the place "Jehovah-jireh" meaning: "On the mount of the Lord he will be seen,"⁴ or "The Lord will provide" (NIV).

How did Abraham respond to God's revelation of salvation? In addition to saying he was the father of the faithful, and that he was glad to see Christ's day, the New Testament says he was an obedient and faithful anticipator of the promises (Heb. 11:8-13).

Paul in his allegory in Galatians 4:22-27 uses the matriarch Sarah to represent the heavenly Jerusalem. In this allegory our response to salvation is evident. The descendants of the slave woman, Hagar, are not according to promise and are not the type of family to which the Galatians should aspire to belong. The descendants of the free woman, Sarah, are free children of promise, however, and are a desirable family. Those who belong to Hagar act from fleshly impulses and strive for salvation by works

apart from Christ. Those belonging to Sarah are conceived by promise and through their acceptance of God's words are saved by faith.

The author of Hebrews also sees Sarah as an exemplary figure in Jewish history. As such, he highlights her faith. He asserts that though she was past child-bearing age she was able to conceive because she considered God to be a faithful keeper of His promises (Heb. 11:11). Her faith and God's rewarding of it qualified her for a place in the New Testament's hall of fame (Hebrews 11).

Are these stories of the ancients relevant to us in the twentieth century? How may we benefit from their experiences?

3. The Response of Israel

The covenant made to Adam; renewed with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; was also renewed with Israel. When Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage God dramatized the salvation process for them in the sanctuary services. The perspective of the New Testament is that this dramatization was not the reality itself, but pointed to a greater reality—the salvation process instituted by God, directed by heavenly agencies, and climaxing in the death of His Son. Hebrews 10:4 suggests that the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were limited in that they could not effect the perfection of the people. If they could, that very attainment of perfection would render the sacrifices obsolete. Thus the very need for repeated sacrifices for sin re-enforced the need for a more permanent cleansing agent than the blood of bulls and goats. These rituals and sacrifices were mere shadows (general outlines⁵), not even images (exact replicas⁶), of the real. They only anticipated

“the good things to come” (Heb. 10:1, RSV). What were these “good things to come”? Bruce perceptively says they “embrace the unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ and His present high-priestly ministry, which carry with them eternal redemption and uninhibited access to worship the living God.”⁷

Rather than employing symbols for their intended purposes—building faith and anticipating these “good things to come”—Israel prided in the Temple structure, became absorbed in the rituals, and slipped into unfaithfulness. God’s design for them to become an exemplary people through whom salvation would go to the nations (Isa. 56:6, 7) was never realized. Their faith was never fully awakened (Heb. 4:1, 2). Consequently, they rejected the Saviour and were themselves rejected (Rom. 11:13-24).

4. The Response of the Early Christians

During the earthly ministry of Jesus, His disciples never grasped the full implications of His mission. Enlightenment came for them when they encountered the resurrected Lord and remembered His words. These encounters were so transforming that doubting Thomas exclaimed: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28); and Peter could stand up on the Day of Pentecost and publicly proclaim Jesus as the realization of the hopes of Israel and charge the establishment for killing Him (Acts 2). The point is that the salvation event evoked such an authentic faith in the early Christians that they were transformed from doubters and cowards into bold proclaimers who allowed themselves to be beaten, imprisoned, persecuted, and martyred for their faith. They had indeed experienced the good things that had been long anticipated.

Stephen, the first Christian

martyr, was the foremost in recognizing the implications of the death of Jesus and its relationship to the Temple rituals. He saw that the “good things to come” that had been anticipated were realized in Jesus, and as such there was no need for the repeatable sacrifices of the Temple. Jesus had made a once-and-for-all-time sacrifice, which could make one perfect and which guaranteed salvation. Stephen saw Christ as the Great High Priest who ministered in the real sanctuary. He therefore proclaimed this truth (Acts 6:13, 14) which angered the establishment and so they killed him.

5. The Modern Christian’s Response

The book of Leviticus depicts God’s dramatization of the plan of salvation for ancient Israel. One purpose of the book of Hebrews was to lift the focus of Jewish Christians from the Jerusalem Temple, now obsolete and soon to be destroyed, to the greater reality that it typified—where their hope lay. Repeatedly the author lifts the vistas of his struggling and persecuted readers from their immediate circumstances to the right hand of majesty where their High Priest and substitutionary Lamb is seated and is ministering on their behalf. Repeatedly he presents Jesus as the focus of their gaze (Heb. 3:1-6; 4:14-16; 12:1, 2, etc.) and invites them to approach Him confidently, for He is a high priest who has solidarity with them, who understands their lot, and who can empathize (2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:5, 6; 6:19, 20; 7:22-26; 9:11-15, 24; 10:19-22, etc.)

While contemporary Christians are not attached to a sacrificial system made obsolete by the death of Jesus, we are struggling Christians like the first readers of Hebrews. Even if our faith is not now being challenged by persecu-

tion, it is being challenged by secularism, modernism, materialism, evolution, and a host of other problems. We too, therefore, need the message of this book. We too need to look to the sanctuary from which God and Christ lead out in the plan of salvation; we need to maintain our relationship with our elder brother Jesus, who entered into solidarity with us, who now represents us, and who

has provided the means for our salvation. We need to fix our gaze on Him so He can guide us safely through the experiences of the future.

Is my gaze fixed on Jesus or is it set elsewhere? What do I need to do as a Christian to have my gaze permanently fixed on Jesus? Is this something I can do for myself or does Christ have to do it for me?

1. R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), p. 668.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 668, 669.

4. See the margin of the RSV on Genesis 22:14. Compare Lenski p. 668 where it is rendered, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

5. *SDA Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), vol. 7, p. 459.

6. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New London commentaries (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965), p. 226.

7. *Ibid.*

Tuesday, January 3

The Law and Christ

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Hebrews 11:4

You might ask, How will the study of Leviticus help in my relationship with Christ? Surely those laws have no significance in the twentieth century. Surely, you think, if I love the Lord, that is good enough. But "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). Understanding the law is important because it is only then that we can understand Christ's role in the plan of redemption.

"Abel grasped the great principles of redemption. He saw himself a sinner, and he saw sin, and its penalty death, standing between his soul and communion with God. He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law that had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous, and his offering accepted."¹

"Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favor with God."²

God does not need sacrifices or laws to make Him love us, but He wants us to understand the importance of trusting Him. We follow by faith even if we don't understand, even if it doesn't seem to make sense. "True faith, which relies wholly upon Christ, will be manifested by obedience to all the requirements of God."³ Faith is made perfect by works.

So the knowledge of God's law and what it means will help us better to understand God's plan of salvation, which is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, regardless of whether we practice the rituals and rites of Leviticus.

REACT

Knowing the importance of God's law in the plan of salvation, how can you make it more personal in your life?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 72.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

by Winnifred Poey

Winnifred Poey is majoring in medical technology at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Before the Written Law

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Galatians 3:6-9

In 1888 and in the years following, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was engaged in a controversy similar to what Paul addressed in Galatians 3: Faith or observance of the law as the means to salvation. It was important for the early Christians to see that faith preceded the written law and that it was an integral part of the law that Jesus was to fulfill. Abraham's faith preceded the written law, so Paul cited him as an example of one whose faith in God brought salvation (Gal. 3:6-9, NIV).

The book of Genesis, chapters 12-24, records Abraham's progression of faith. Genesis 12 reveals the first of the covenants between God and Abraham. By faith Abraham left his country, and God promised to make him "a great nation" and "all peoples on earth will be blessed" through him (Gen. 12:2,3, NIV). Paul refers to this promise as an announcement of the gospel in advance. (Gal. 3:8, NIV)

The covenant of Genesis 12 announces the gospel, and the dramatic incident of chapter 22 details the way in which Christ would fulfill the covenant. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a test of his

faith in God. The story is familiar: Abraham and Isaac journey to worship. Isaac asks his father where is the sacrificial lamb? Abraham replies, "God will provide." An angel prevents Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, and they find a ram caught in a thicket. Abraham proves his faith in God; the covenant is renewed.

Abraham's test of faith allowed God to give a preview of the plan of salvation. The parallels between Abraham's test of faith and Jesus' test of faith are plain. Peake's Commentary on the Bible states, "... a whole constellation of images emerges: the father giving the son, the son yielding himself up to the father's will, all the symbols of sacrifice, the knife, the wood, the altar, the ram of the burnt-offering; already, at the very outset of the salvation history, through the faith and obedience of one man, the whole pattern of redemption is prefigured."* Abraham's faith in God's ability to provide the sacrifice renewed his covenant with God, creating a chosen people that would reproduce both the law and the fulfillment of the law.

By showing that the faith of a person who preceded the written law was sufficient for salvation, Paul was able to say, "So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith" (Gal. 3:9, NIV).

*Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley, eds., *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963), p. XXII.

by Cindy McMillan

Cindy McMillan was a senior at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, when this article was written.

Thursday, January 5

Beyond Theory: Salvation as Person

HOW-TO

Key text: Hebrews 8:1-5

On our campus when we plan a social or Sabbath School program, or school curriculum, we do it in committee. We talk about what will attract and what will work. We are guessing, proposing, citing studies, offering anecdotes from the past. Then we try our corporate plan, sometimes reluctantly, sometimes discarding peremptorily what doesn't seem to work.

When God planned a curriculum to teach us about salvation, I wonder whether He listed alternative plans. Is the sanctuary one of the alternate plans chosen for a crowd of slaves with limited background?

It seems pretty revolting to a person who cringes at the sight of a dead mouse in a trap or a raccoon recently done in by a car on the highway. Is it designed to make us cringe?

It seems rather remote to the person in the pew hearing the preacher's heady talk about faith. What is faith? It's something I can't see, feel, or hear. This is tough stuff to understand.

The wilderness sanctuary is a mere academic matter to a student learning to name the coverings of the building and naming the north (or is it south?) wall as the spot for the candlesticks. After a student has

sat through a dozen sanctuary lectures, the device can become pretty routine.

That is the problem with much of our worship. Both the rituals and the information have become routine. What can make this study significant instead of revolting, remote, or academic?

God must be troubled by our misuse of this divine device. How can we proceed beyond the device to discover the Dispenser of salvation? The process should stay close to a probing inquiry about the Person. Try these questions and add some of your own:

1. Was working out a plan of salvation a challenge to God? (If not, what in the universe would be a challenge to Him? Can you imagine a God who finds no challenges in existence?)

2. Did God think up and discard plans as we do when we embark on an ambitious plan? Or does His perfection mean that He just knew every answer without considering it?

3. Did God say, "Shall we let the rain fall only on the just?" Did He discuss the alternatives?

4. What do the Old Testament's daily, weekly, and yearly rituals—time-consuming and reflective in nature—say to a frenetic, twentieth-going-on-twenty-first-century person?

5. What behavior would God favor if my enlightened view of the sanctuary offends my brother or sister?

by Edna Maye Loveless

Edna Maye Loveless is a professor of English and communication at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, January 6

“Which Blade in a Pair of Scissors Is More Important?”

OPINION

Key Text: Acts 13:39

“Give me the Bible . . . but . . . un . . . uh . . . just leave out Leviticus.” We “moderns” like to cut and paste our Bibles. Leave us the stories, the quotable quotes, and 1 Corinthians 13, but please “leave out all the blood and guts, thunder and lightning, thou shalt and thou-shalt-nots of the Old Testament.”

Today it is the sophisticated “in” thing to debunk EVERYTHING—religion included. And certainly recent events have given us little reason to be unduly idealistic about television’s big-name preachers: Oral Roberts, Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Jimmy Swaggert, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell—all have contributed no little to make religion a laughing-stock. And comedians, from Johnny Carson and the Church Lady on down, have had a veritable field day at guffawing at the incredible antics of our contemporary Elmer Gantry.

God must be saddened by all this.

Well, what does all this have to do with our personal salvation? Good question. Ironically, the answers are so unbelievably simple that they totally escape most theologians. In this age of fine print and obsessive litigation, we find ourselves unable to cope with simple answers. There’s got to be

a catch somewhere—salvation cannot be that simple! Why, look at the millions of printed pages dealing with this “highway to heaven,” the thousands of sects and denominations—each claiming inside information about the heavenly treasure map.

But after we sift through this blizzard of printed pages, we finally reduce all this down to two simple questions: Am I saved by faith? or Am I saved by works?

Incredible, isn’t it, that the issue is this simple—or is it? We snicker at the legalism of the Old Testament Jews because most of us would rather accept the “easy” salvation of the New Testament. We imply that God is a jolly, affable, glorified Santa Claus who is too kind and lovable to shut the door on anyone. Of *course* we are saved by faith! Aren’t we? But, like the existentialists, we hedge our bets. “Just in case I am perchance wrong—perish the thought!—I’d better make sure there are enough good works deposited in my heavenly savings account to cover the debits brought about by my side trips into sin.” On the surface, most of us accept Christ’s death in our behalf as a sublime act that paid the ultimate price—but deep down, we seriously doubt that salvation could really be that easy.

It isn’t.

Salvation is a free gift, but yes, it is conditional. “Aha! So there is fine print after all.” No, not fine

by Joe L. Wheeler

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print; it's too obvious for that.

What do you mean?

I mean that heaven cannot—in any conceivable way, shape, or form—be earned. If I decide that I've just got to have eternal life, no matter what the price, I won't get it.

How's that?

Well, it means that I must fall in love with God the Father and God the Son and desire above all things to be near them throughout the timeless eons of eternity. It means that I will both love the God who forgets not the wounded sparrow or battered prostitute and fear the God who rains death on Sodom, Sennacherib, and those who presume too much, such as Uzzah who tried to "help" God out (or contemporary conceptions such as those depicted in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Too many of us are spiritual gigolos: lusting for the golden city and eternal life, but not in love with Christ at all!

Love and respect, adoration and fear; without these heaven is not even a remote possibility.

Are you implying that there is some sort of price tag on salvation? No, but this acceptance inescapably produces a certain kind of behavior. Airline pilots will understand the principle—instantly: in order to steer the aircraft through fog and storm, they follow the radio beam to the desired destination; in order to be with God, we must likewise tune in to the heavenly transmitting station—and lock in.

When you study the biblical texts listed with this lesson, you will notice the duality: God is love and God should be feared; salvation is a gift but acceptance mandates a changed lifestyle. I feel C. S. Lewis, perhaps the most profound Christian thinker of the age, captures it best in his master-

piece, *Mere Christianity*.

- "God has been waiting for the moment at which you discover that there is no question of earning a pass mark in this exam, or putting Him in your debt."—Page 125.

- "Asking which is more important, faith or actions, is like asking which blade in a pair of scissors is more important."—Page 129.

- "If a man's self is not kept clear and bright, his glimpse of God will be blurred—like the moon seen through a dirty telescope."—Page 144.

- "God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy."—Page 172.

- "When we Christians behave badly or fail to behave well, we are making Christianity unbelievable to the outside world."—Page 173.

Which one of us has not, at one time or another, sung that familiar litany: "What's wrong with doing this? What's wrong with doing that?" I personally feel we have failed, as a church, to provide a valid answer. The only one that makes any kind of sense to me is this: we are the sum total of that to which we are exposed, or, as Tennyson put it in "Ulysses," "I am a part of all that I have met." C. S. Lewis expresses it through an unforgettable metaphor:

- "Human beings judge one another by their external actions; God judges them by their moral choices . . . Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that changes into something a little different than what it was before . . . the mark which the action leaves on that tiny self which no one sees in this life but which each of us will have to endure—or enjoy—forever."—Pages 85, 86.

Lesson 2, January 8 - 14

Outcasts Made Clean



“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, NIV).

Sunday, January 8

Perfect to Love

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 John 1:7, Proverbs 10:12

The song about the doll was definitely the worst.

A very empathetic child of just-past-4, I puzzled often over the pictures in an ancient "Raggedy-Ann and Andy" songbook my mom sang from as she ironed clothes. Mom's voice was happy as she sang, and I knew they must be good songs, but to me they were very sad.

There was the song about Wooden Willie, who had a huge knot-hole in the middle of his head (about which folks teased him until he wisely discovered it could be disguised by wearing a hat). And there was the song about the tired old horse who had at one time smashed Grandpa Cole's buggy to bits on a pole, but now was too tired to eat or sleep. There was the Raggedy-Ann doll squashed into the attic trunk "for fifty long years with her legs doubled over her ears," and the Cheery Scarecrow who, unable to move about or run, stood in the field day after day, patient and smiling.

But the song about the doll was definitely the worst. She was not a china doll or a soft rubber doll, my mother told me, but one of those dolls that had real glass eyes that if you poked them might drop back and be lost inside her head, and skin that might crack

and peel off, and arms and legs attached inside her body by rubber bands, which, if twisted too violently, might break, causing her arms and legs to drop off.

I studied the picture of the be-draggled doll and tried, with difficulty, to understand her huge, joyful smile.

"I'm just a doll, a worn-out doll," the song began;

"My arms and legs are missing, and that's from so much kissing!

I sometimes feel my face will peel

but I don't care at all.

"I've lost an eye, but should I cry

if I have one dress only?

Why, I am never lonely!

I'm loved the best of all the rest;

A happy doll am I!"

Not until many years later, having, I suppose, more defects and fewer dresses myself, have I found true joy in a love that erases the label "outcast," that hides imperfections beneath atoning blood, and that, as Solomon puts it, "covers all sins" (Prov. 10:12, NKJV). And for all of us, from the most nearly perfect to the very poorest, and nakedest, and blindest among us, who come to grips with a God who forgives and loves and cleanses beyond the external, there will assuredly come a time when we too can confidently say, "I'm loved the best of all the rest; a happy man/woman am I!"

by Joy Cassano Coleman

Joy Cassano Coleman is secretary to the chaplain of Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Leprosy of Sin

LOGOS

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 humanity. Only the grace of Christ can cleanse us from the inner contamination of sin.*

1. Defiled by Sin (read Leviticus 13:1-46)

"When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease . . . then he shall be brought to . . . the priest, . . . and the priest shall examine the diseased spot'" (Lev. 13:2,3, RSV).

When you begin to examine leprosy and how it typifies the sin problem, you encounter lessons that are most distinct. The whole process, from the discovery of leprosy to the cleansing that followed the cure, foreshadows the central truths of the gospel, namely humanity's ruin and God's remedy.

A. The beginnings of leprosy—leprosy was usually hereditary. Sin began with Adam and Eve and has continued ever since.

B. Leprosy begins within the interior of the body. Leprosy is often in the system as many as a dozen years before it becomes evident. How exactly like sin! Nero

and Hitler were once infants possessing apparent innocence. Who would have suspected that in those gentle forms were latent seeds that would develop into tyranny and vice that still astound the world? Judas Iscariot was one of the disciples. Who would have suspected the treachery lurking in his soul—unknown even to himself? In bold, daring Peter, who volunteered to die for the Master, there existed the roots of oaths and lies.

"Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12, RSV). The taint of leprosy is within. Nothing but watchfulness and grace can keep it from breaking out in all its corrosive and wasting power.

C. The first visible signs of leprosy are very small, almost not worth considering. It generally is a small pustule, a rising of the flesh, a red spot similar to that made by the puncture of a pin. From this, the living death of the leper is developed.

No one can tell to what extent the smallest sin may lead. The worst and darkest iniquities grow out of the smallest beginnings. "How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!" (James 3:5, RSV).

Bore a small hole through the breast of a dam, and you will have a breach that will extend to the foundations—carrying the work of years to ruin in a day. Start a little stone rolling from the precipice of a mountain, and it creates a virtual landslide. Utter one sinful word, and it can

by Dale L. Walker

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lead to a whole train of sins.

D. Leprosy is gradual in its development—it does not fully break out at once. It is only by degrees running through a course of years that leprosy makes its victim into a living embodiment of putrefaction and death. No one is a confirmed criminal instantly. The devil did not become a devil overnight.

Character is a process of growth. There is always gradation and process from the lesser to the greater. Every transgression makes it easier for the next one. The alcoholic never dreamed of becoming the person he or she now is. A little social indulgence, a little convivial enjoyment, a little to raise the spirits, is what laid the foundation for ruin. From these beginnings, apparently harmless in themselves, came inevitable ruin.

David, looking where he should not have looked, was already on the road to committing adultery. This led to the murder of Uriah. Sin is progressive; if we give ourselves to it there is no way of knowing what wickedness may result.

E. Leprosy is a loathsome and offensive disorder. Every vein of a leper runs with putrid blood. His head is heavy and full of pain, his countenance is sallow, deathlike; his hair hangs dry and lank; his gait is slow and tottering. The victim of leprosy is an object of abhorrence.

Is it not so with sin? Sin is a tainted clog to all the currents of life. Sin is a filthiness of flesh and spirit. It is putrid uncleanness. "From the soul of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it" (Isa. 1:6, RSV).

F. In ancient times there was no earthly cure for leprosy. Leprosy was beyond the reach of physician or priest. Sin is a problem that cannot be cured, a cancer that cannot be extracted, except

by the direct power of divine grace. All the waters of Damascus, all the penance in the world cannot remove it. Once it is in the system, God must purge it out or it will remain there to fester and destroy.

Study the cases of Miriam (Numbers 12:1-6, 9, 10) and Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27). How do you deal with the concept of leprosy as "the finger of God"? Is this an accurate portrayal of God? Why or why not?

2. The Defilement Cleansed (read Leviticus 14:1-32)

"This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing. . . . The priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination" (verses 2, 3, RSV).

Whenever Jesus healed lepers He sent them to the priests to be examined (Luke 5:13, 14 and 17:11-14). There were two reasons for the examination by the priest. One was so that the individual could be restored to the social and religious privileges of a Jew. The other more closely typified the beauty of the gospel.

The second reason was so that he or she could be declared a cured individual. A judgment was to be sought for an exemption from the sentence that had been rendered because of leprosy. Notice two of the statements made in Leviticus 14:3, "The priest shall go out of the camp" and "the priest shall make an examination." Let's study these two statements.

The first statement was not simply a matter of precaution. After all, the victim of leprosy had to be pretty certain of his or her cure before he or she could have the opportunity to be examined. A deeper significance is here revealed. The first motion of our salvation is from God. "God

shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, RSV). In the story of the prodigal son, we read that while the prodigal son was "yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him" (Luke 15:20, RSV). Jesus came, not halfway, nor even nine tenths of the way; He came *ALL* the way.

The second statement, "the priest shall make an examination," emphasizes the respective roles of the priest and the leper. The priest accomplished everything—the leper did nothing at this point except come to the priest to be judged clean. This is reiterated in Leviticus 14:7 where the priest "shall sprinkle . . . [and] he shall pronounce him clean." The same applies in the process of justification (see Rom. 3:23-25).

The ceremony using two birds (Lev. 14:4-7) typifies the death and resurrection of Jesus by which we now receive justification, and the process of sanctification begins. One of the two birds was slain. This typified the sacrifice of Jesus in dying for human guilt. "Without the shedding of blood there is not forgiveness of sins" (Heb. 9:22, RSV).

The second bird was dipped in the blood of the slain bird, thereby typifying the resurrection

of Jesus. Note that 10,000 birds let loose would have availed nothing for the leper. It had to be the bird that had been dipped in the blood of the first bird, thus bearing the significant token of the accomplished atonement. The second bird flew into the heavens, scattering the gracious drops of cleansing and salvation. The two birds show how our sanctification and justification proceed from Jesus' cross and resurrection.

Even though the victim of leprosy is declared cleansed (Lev. 14:7), we see in verse 8 the process of cleansing by the leper himself or herself. It is the same with sanctification. We are indeed justified entirely by the work of Jesus, but a process of purging remains to be done. In this process we cooperate with Christ, using the strength that only He can impart. Unless an active holiness purifies our hearts and lives we miscarry the process of salvation. Paul puts it: "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1, RSV).

How does the cleansing of the leper typify our cleansing from sin? What is the role of God and the role of a person in salvation? How are the two to be correlated?

Tuesday, January 10

The Great Physician

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 1 John 1:9

In the days of the Jewish nation leprosy was a dreaded, incurable disease. It was a disease that would separate one from friends and loved ones. According to Ellen White, "Of all diseases known in the East the leprosy was most dreaded. Its incurable and contagious character, and its horrible effect upon its victims, filled the bravest with fear."¹

"It was regarded as a judgment on account of sin, and hence was called 'the stroke,' 'the finger of God.' Deep-rooted, ineradicable, deadly, it was looked upon as a symbol of sin."²

It was considered among many of the Jews, that when a person became ill—whether from leprosy or some other major ailment—it was the result of some terrible sin that had been committed by the individual or by his or her family. As in the case of the leper, cast out of the realm of normal society, forced to announce his or her own presence with cries of "unclean, unclean!" he or she was considered a degenerate unworthy to be considered human. This was the practice toward all who were stricken with this dreadful malady.

Although shunned from society, the leper had faith to believe that Christ could and would heal him. Even in our sinful state, it is because of our great need and the "approachableness" of Christ that we can come to

Him. Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."³ "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."⁴

When the leper asked to be healed by Christ, Christ did not react with horror. Jesus, in His gentle manner, merely laid His hand upon the man and replied, "I will; be thou clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.⁵

In healing the leper, Christ offered encouragement to many others stricken with the dreaded disease; but the significance of the healing extended farther than this. Ellen White points out, "The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin."⁶ Not only did Christ illustrate His work in cleansing, but He also displayed His power to forgive sin. "It was to manifest His power to forgive sins that the miracle was performed."⁷ For it is only through Christ that we, as sinners, can be cleansed. Jesus is always willing to cleanse those who want to be rescued from sin.

Although it is always Christ's desire to heal, "in some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was

by James R. Jones

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the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask; but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life.¹⁸

REACT

1. Does Christ offer His healing power to all who come to Him in time of need? Are there any exceptions? What does this say to us about our attitude toward people?

2. Because we are sinners in what form are we stricken with leprosy?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 262.
2. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 67.
3. Galatians 1:4.
4. 1 John 5:14, 15.
5. Matthew 8:3.
6. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
8. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 70.

Wednesday, January 11

Diagnosis, Not Dissection

EVIDENCE

Key Text: James 4:12

Time after time the Israelites were directed to present their problems to the priest for diagnosis. Plainly, the people involved knew that there was trouble, because of the inflammation of the skin or discharge from their bodies, but they still needed external validation of the nature of their illness. In constructing an analogy between ourselves and sin, we also need validation and guidance. Just as we instinctively overestimate or underestimate our health problems, we regularly misjudge ourselves in the business of sin. Outside help is a must if we are to keep ourselves in proper perspective. Where is our help to come from?

Each one of us needs the counsel and guidance of other people. Some feel a greater need, and some a lesser need, and the need should be satisfied. It follows that everyone will, sooner or later, be put into the role of either seeker or dispenser of help. Great care is demanded in either case because this whole process can easily become a disaster. Selfish or unthoughtful advice will completely destroy whatever good that might have been done. Careless contribution to gossip may cause permanent hurt. Many of us, needing thoughtful and wise counsel without a judgmental setting, have chosen to deal with persons outside the church. This should not be so, but it often is.

Think about the results of a judgment badly done. The result of being pronounced unclean was: "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp" (Lev. 13:45, 46, NIV). Necessary and proper to prevent the spread of an infection, but what a tragedy if the priest made a mistake!

And mistakes were made then as now. The priests were charged with making the judgment—they *had to*, we do *not*, and we are repeatedly enjoined from being judgmental (see James 4:12).

The Israelites had no effective means of curing the diseases that befell them. The priests were not directed to bring about healing. They simply certified that the recovered patient was well. It is at this point that we feel compelled to depart from the analogy between our sins and their diseases. Every one of us must be ready and willing to go out of our way to help others. God's love, properly applied to our lives, will make us kind, gentle, and understanding. We must be responsive to the expressed needs of others. Ideology and scriptural theory is generally an inappropriate response. What we need to present to our friends is the wise and understanding spirit that comes from having cultivated God's love in our lives.

by Donald G. Jones

Donald G. Jones is professor of chemistry at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

A Shower a Day. . .

HOW-TO

Key Text: John 13:8, 9

Dirty salt water dripped from my finger tips as I trudged up the walk. My head pounded, and my feet ached. At the door, I paused to read the mercury. Ninety-seven degrees in the shade. The glass of cool water my father handed me disappeared into the dry wash that was my throat. My sweat-soaked clothes were left in a pile on the kitchen floor, as I headed for the shower. After nine hours of pushing a lawn mower in Washington's summer humidity, it was time for thirty minutes in a refreshing cold shower.

Most of us are familiar with the power of the shower. The ability of water and soap to make us feel like a new person. In academy some had to be taught the pleasures of a bath so that others could breathe in comfort.

In the passages of Leviticus are outlines of ceremonial cleansing. When you read these, they make good sense from the point of personal hygiene. Bathing is required after childbirth, rashes, skin disease, sex, menstruation, and illness. All clothing and bedding touched by the unclean were to be washed. Today we understand the importance of cleanliness.

This was not the only reason why the Israelites were ordered to bathe. These actions had ceremonial value, as well. They provided a daily reminder of the cleansing that the soul needs. As

the sacrifices in the tabernacle pointed to Christ's death, so the ceremonial washing pointed to the washing away of the filth we live in—washing by the cleansing blood of the Saviour.

Our daily physical cleansing routine can symbolize our spiritual one.

First, a daily shower. It's important to start each day with a shower of God's love. That daily walk and talk with Him gets the day started off right. Children hate baths, but once they find the power that it brings they don't want to skip a day. A daily devotional provides similar rejuvenation for the spirit.

Second, wash your hair. Our heads take a bit more care than the rest of our body. We need to massage our scalps and condition our hair to keep it healthy. Mental stimulation by active study does the same for the brain. As we read God's Word, and research His teachings, we come to know Him more intimately.

Third, brush your teeth. Sometimes the most difficult part of personal hygiene is the vigorous brushing of teeth. It's time-consuming and makes your gums bleed, but if you want to keep your teeth you've got to work at it. Christ calls us to live for Him. That's not always easy to do. We have to watch for nasty little habits that sneak in and make holes in our souls. We have to inspect around each tooth and scrape and rinse the crud away.

by Glen W. Milam

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Friday, January 13

Make-believe Religion

OPINION

Key Text: Galatians 2:20

We claim to be members of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. We wear this title with pride. We have been known as the people of the Bible. A movement that calls attention to Bible prophecy, specifically to the Second Coming.

What once was a movement has now become a church. Consequently, we let the ministers worry about spiritual growth while we settle down into comfortable pews and play church. Therefore, many people feel that if they attend church on Sabbath this will suffice for the rest of the week.

As a result of playing church, we are less concerned about spirituality and more concerned about issues. We endlessly debate such issues as women's ordination. It is as if the sin problem has been eradicated and Christ's second coming is no longer imperative.

If we concentrate only on issues and do not accept Christ fully and believe totally in His power to cleanse us from sin, we have a "make-believe religion."

A major aspect of a "make believe religion" is to separate one's spiritual beliefs from one's behavior. I have heard young people say, "What I do with my body has nothing to do with my salvation." If this is the case, then we are fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and not walking in the

Spirit (Gal. 5:16, NKJV).

However, Christ wants to cleanse us from all defilement as He did with the lepers. An inspired writer said, "The forgiveness of sins is not the sole result of the death of Jesus. He made the infinite sacrifice, not only that sin might be removed, but that human nature might be restored, rebeautified, reconstructed from its ruins, and made fit for the presence of God."*

Jesus wants you to believe and obey His Word. Not to play church, but to participate in the gospel. Unless the gospel is alive in your life everyday, you have a "make-believe religion." The reason why we make the separation between Biblical values and behavior is that many of us have an intellectual religion. Christ's teachings are in our head but not in our heart. We would like to follow OUR own way and not the way of the cross. To the lepers and to us Jesus says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24, NKJV). If this is our intense desire, then we can be sure we will not have a make-believe religion, but we will be a part of the great movement that eagerly awaits the return of the Great Healer and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

REACT

Does God personally intervene in my life?

* *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 537.

by Grant Leitma

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Lesson 3, January 15 - 21

Strange but Eloquent Symbols



“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1, NIV).

Sunday, January 15

Sacrifice!

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Roatan, Honduras! Where was this island? What types of activity would fill my days? Were the political tensions something I needed to be concerned over? Would I have to endure the pain of shots? Would I have the modern conveniences of home or would I truly be camping for ten days? These and many more questions plagued my mind as I accepted the responsibility of sponsoring a short-term mission trip. As I learned more about the work projects that were planned, my fears subsided.

Looking back on those ten days, I wonder why I was so concerned about such trivial matters as whether I would have a warm shower or be able to curl my hair. Everything worked out better than I dreamed. I worked in the kitchen (where I felt right at home) assisting two island ladies. The political tensions weren't on the island. No shots were required.

I believe that the Lord had a mission for each and every one of us. His only request was that we were willing to fit into that plan by offering ourselves and our talents. What a small "sacrifice"!

This week's lesson deals with a different aspect of sacrifice. In Leviticus, a clearer revelation is made, linking the sacrifices to the

Saviour. Through the different animals offered as a sacrifice; through sprinkling the blood various places; through the teaching and mediation of the priests, Israel was to gain insight into how to approach God.

"The sanctuary service was clearly symbolical and hence temporary, for there is no necessary relation between the blood of bulls and goats and the forgiveness of sin. The sacrifices were all typical and had little virtue in themselves. But they did foreshadow good things to come, and thus served a vital purpose. Rightly understood, they led men to God. They conveyed lessons of the seriousness of sin, of the need of confession, of the majesty of law, of the holiness of God, of His great love for fallen man, and of the preparation necessary to stand in His presence."*

Reading the first three chapters of Leviticus made me wonder why God would institute a system of sacrifice requiring the shedding of blood. The chief reason for the sacrifice was to cause Israel to hate sin just as God hates sin. This visual method was meant to leave a lasting impression in their minds.

What would phrases like Lamb of God, the sacrifice slain, our sin offering, the light of the world, Christ as high priest, and others have in common, if it weren't for the light that Leviticus sheds on them?

*SDA Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association), vol. 1, p. 694.

by Kari Shultz

Kari Shultz is the assistant dean of women at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Essentials of True Worship

LOGOS

Theme: *The burnt offerings, meal, and drink offerings, were designed to teach that all we are and all we have come from Christ and belong to Christ.*

An Old Testament scholar introduces his commentary on the book of Leviticus this way: "Leviticus is a book that is read all too infrequently by the Christian Bible student. Being a rather technical priestly work which deals to a large extent with the rituals and sacrifices of the old covenant, it is commonly imagined to have little relevance for those living in the age of grace.

"A closer study of Leviticus, however, provides the reader with remarkable insights into the character and will of God, particularly in the matter of holiness. . . .

"Leviticus is thus a work of towering spirituality, which through the various sacrificial rituals points the reader unerringly to the atoning death of Jesus, our great High Priest."*

1. Burnt Offerings in the Tabernacle (read Leviticus 1:1-17)

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Lev. 1:4).

The burnt offering is also called the whole burnt offering (Ps. 51:19), because the whole of

the offering was burnt on the altar. It represented a total commitment to the Lord.

a. What do we learn about God as we read about the offerings?

(1) God is very specific about the ways that worshipers should approach Him. It is not for us to choose the way; God prescribes the method. For example, if God says we are to keep the Sabbath day holy, and the seventh day is the Sabbath, it is not for us to choose another day in the week as the Sabbath.

(2) God tells us of what we ought and ought not to do (note Lev. 2). Information is given to all the people, not to the priesthood alone. Contrast heathen nations, where ritual is known only to the priest.

(3) God allows for individual differences. Not everyone can afford a bullock; hence a sheep or goat will do, or even a pigeon. Sacrifices are costly, but not beyond the reach of every worshiper.

(4) God leaves it to the individual, not only to choose the type of offering but to choose when to offer it. Religious duties are related to religious needs and to experience. Worship is not a matter of form or ceremony; it is a matter of inner responses to specific situations.

b. The burnt offering in relation to the Christian.

The all-sufficient burnt offering for the Christian is Jesus Christ. This does not mean that grace is cheap for the Christian. Just as believers in the God of

by G. Arthur Keough

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Israel needed to present a comparatively costly sacrifice to atone for their sin, so Christians, if their faith is to be meaningful, must dedicate all to Christ.

Furthermore, worship can be acceptable to God only on the basis of confession and forgiveness of sin. We are all sinners, but only forgiven sinners can raise their voices in worship and praise.

2. The Meat Offering (read Leviticus 2:1-16)

"And the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Lev. 2:2).

The term *meat* as used in the King James Version can easily be misunderstood. Hence the Revised Standard Version uses the word *cereal*. But even "cereal" can be misunderstood these days as a breakfast food. New International Version, Good News Bible, and The New English Bible use the word *grain* for this offering.

The grain offering usually accompanied the whole burnt offering, and so it was natural that its description should follow immediately after that of the burnt offering in Leviticus 1. A similar phrase is used for both offerings, that they are "a sweet savour unto the Lord." There is no suggestion that the Lord partakes of the offering, as was understood by the heathen. The Lord notes the attitude of the worshiper, and He is pleased with the person's acceptance of God's provision for salvation. It gives Him the opportunity to do what He longs to do—to forgive and to re-create.

As in the burnt offering, the grain offering is described in detail. The offerer knows what he or she has to do, and so does the priest. The offerer cannot function alone, and the priest needs an offerer to be able to function.

There is perfect blend in mutual relationships.

In the case of the grain offering, the priest is a beneficiary in something that is very holy. It is something that must be eaten in the sanctuary, on holy ground. The relation of the Christian to the Lord is one of sacred intimacy. The Lord knows and accepts the gift as something very special, very personal and therefore very sacred.

A portion of the grain offering went on the altar as a memorial to God, a gift recorded in heaven. It also went to supply the needs of the priest. Thus also the Christian presents himself or herself for service that is wholly acceptable (Rom. 12:1, 2), and he or she provides for the ministry of the priest, or the clergy (1 Cor. 9:13, 14).

Two articles were not to be offered with the grain offering: leaven and honey. Jesus referred to leaven as part of the process of baking bread; it permeates the whole loaf and makes it lighter and more palatable (Matt. 13:33). But Jesus also said: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," referring to their false teaching, which sometimes permeated all doctrine (Matt. 16:6). Thus leaven could symbolize the good and the bad. Leaven was not to be used during the feast of the Passover, suggesting the need for haste (Ex. 23:15). Honey was a sweetener and a luxury. The land of Canaan was described as a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8). Although honey is a food, it can also be used in the process of fermentation, in the making of intoxicating drinks.

One article of diet had to be included in the grain offering: salt. Salt is a symbol of hospitality, preservation, and purity. Jesus referred to His disciples as the "salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). Salt is an essential element in most

dishes, making food palatable.

3. Peace Offerings (read Leviticus 3:1-17)

"It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood" (Lev. 3:17).

The fat of an animal was considered a delicacy, but the children of Israel were told not to eat it. Modern science has indicated the wisdom of this prohibition. At the same time, offering what might be considered the best to the Lord, was safe and proper.

The Hebrew word for "peace" in peace offering is translated "fellowship" by the New International Version and "shared" by The New English Bible. The offering was indeed shared with the priest and with the family as part of a feast, a fellowship meal. But the Hebrew word is related to the word *peace* in Hebrew, *shalom*, a word that connotes more than absence from war and strife; it means health and prosperity, wholeness and salvation.

This offering could relate to a number of experiences: confession, fulfillment of a vow, or thanksgiving (Lev. 7:12, 16). For

the Christian, Jesus is our peace, and that means health and salvation (Eph. 2:14).

This offering could be an animal, male or female (contrast the burnt offering, which had to be a male, or a bird). But like the two previous offerings it is described as "a sweet savour unto the Lord" (KJV), or "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (NIV). In other words, God was pleased with the implicit obedience of the worshiper in paying attention to ceremony, and with his or her relationship to the divine plan of salvation, one of acceptance and gratitude.

The animal had to be a perfect animal, and the blood had to be sprinkled at the altar. By placing the hands on the head of the animal before it was sacrificed, the worshiper acknowledged that only through the One whom the animal foreshadowed could any proper approach be made to the God of heaven.

The ritual of Old Testament times adds considerable light to the relationship that must exist between the Christian and the Lord. Far from being passé, it is pregnant with lessons for our relationships today.

*R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, D. J. Wiseman, General Editor), p. 9.

Tuesday, January 17

Christ—Our Sacrifice

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Genesis 22:1-14

Even before the sacrificial system was formally presented to Israel, Abraham had a glimpse of its purpose. "It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial, was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no voice to cry, 'It is enough.' To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life."¹ "As the purpose of God for the redemption of the race was unfolded to Abraham, the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his heart, and his darkness was scattered."²

In Leviticus we see all the details of the sacrificial system. Once more, God wanted to portray the beauty of the gospel. "In patriarchal times the sacrificial offerings connected with divine worship constituted a perpetual

reminder of the coming of a Saviour, and thus it was with the entire ritual of the sanctuary services throughout Israel's history. In the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day, by means of types and shadows, the great truths relative to the advent of Christ as Redeemer, Priest, and King. . . . The sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic ritual were pointing toward a better service, even a heavenly."³

So the sacrificial system was designed to be a blessing to Israel; it was to keep their minds fixed on their complete dependence on Christ for salvation. Once Israel lost sight of that purpose, the sacrificial rites were empty. "They were unable to discern the deep spiritual significance of their symbolic service. In their self-righteousness they trusted to their own works, to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of relying upon the merits of Him to whom all these things pointed." They were unable to discern the deep spiritual significance of their symbolic service. "Wanting the Spirit and grace of God, they tried to make up for the lack by a rigorous observance of religious ceremonies and rites. . . . Those who were really desirous of serving God, and who tried to observe the whole law as enjoined by the priests and rulers, groaned under a heavy burden."⁴

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

2. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 683.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 684, 685.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 708, 709.

by Eslyn Howard

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A Blood Substitute

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Leviticus 1:4

"The notion of substitution is that one person takes the place of another, especially in order to bear his pain and to save him from it. Such an action is universally regarded as noble. It is good to spare people pain; it is doubly good to do so at the cost of bearing it oneself. We admire the altruism of Moses in being willing for his name to be blotted out of Yahweh's book if only thereby Israel might be forgiven (Ex. 32:32). . . . Similarly in our own century we cannot fail to be moved by the heroism of Father Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish Franciscan, in Auschwitz concentration camp. When a number of prisoners were selected for execution, and one of them shouted that he was a married man with children, 'Father Kolbe stepped forward and asked if he could take the condemned man's place. His offer was accepted by the authorities, and he was placed in an underground cell, where he was left to die of starvation.'

"So it is not surprising that this commonly understood principle of substitution should have been applied by God Himself to the sacrifices. . . .

"This elaborate system provided for daily, weekly, monthly, annual, and occasional offerings. It also included five main types of offering, which are detailed in the early chapters of Leviticus,

namely the burnt, cereal, peace, sin, and guilt offerings. Because the cereal offering consisted of grain and oil, rather than flesh and blood, it was atypical and was therefore made in association with one of the others. The remaining four were blood sacrifices and, although there were some differences between them (relating to their proper occasion, and the precise use to which the flesh and blood were put), they all shared the same basic ritual involving worshiper and priest. It was very vivid. The worshiper brought the offering, laid his hand or hands on it, and killed it. The priest then applied the blood, burnt some of the flesh, and arranged for the consumption of what was left of it. This was significant symbolism, not meaningless magic. By laying his hand(s) on the animal, the offerer was certainly identifying himself with it and 'solemnly' designating 'the victim as standing for him.' . . . Having taken his place, the substitute animal was killed in recognition that the penalty for sin was death, its blood (symbolizing that the death had been accomplished) was sprinkled, and the offerer's life was spared.

"The clearest statement that the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament ritual had a substitutionary significance, however, and that this was why the shedding of blood was indispensable to atonement, is to be found in this statement by God explaining why the eating of blood was prohibited:

by Evert McDowell

Evert McDowell is newswriter in the public-relations department of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International.

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Lev. 17:11, NIV).

“Three important affirmations about blood are made in this text. First, blood is the symbol of life. . . . The emphasis, however, was not on blood flowing in the veins, the symbol of life being lived, but on blood shed, the symbol of life ended, usually by violent means.

“Second, blood makes atonement, and the reason for its atoning significance is given in the repetition of the word *life*. It is only because ‘the life of a creature is in the blood’ that ‘it is the blood that

makes atonement for one’s life.’ One life is forfeit; another life is sacrificed instead. What makes atonement ‘on the altar’ is the shedding of substitutionary life-blood. . . . *Life was given for life*, the life of the victim for the life of the offerer; indeed ‘the life of the innocent victim for the life of the sinful offerer.’

“Third, blood was given by God for this atoning purpose. ‘I have given it to you,’ he says, ‘to make atonement for yourselves on the altar.’ So we are to think of the sacrificial system as God-given, not man-made, and of the individual sacrifices not as a human device to placate God, but as a means of atonement provided by God Himself.”*

*John R. W. Stott. *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), pp. 136-138.

Thursday, January 19

“Of Hearts, Minds, and Hands”

HOW-TO

Key Text: Romans 12:1

For many of us, Leviticus is a book easily dismissed. Brimming over with sacrificial requirements, offerings, and ceremonial rituals regarding everything from bodily discharges to clean and unclean foods, the book seems to be filled with what appears to us as alien concepts and practices.

Yet were it not for this book; were it not for its countless admonitions concerning the slaughter of sheep, goats, and pigeons, as well as the offerings of bread and wine, we would understand little of Paul's challenge to the Christians in Rome: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship” (Rom. 12:1, NIV).

The theme of sacrifice runs throughout the Scriptures—whether it be Noah offering a sacrifice of joy, or Abraham with tears streaming down his face preparing to offer his son, or Jesus kneeling in Gethsemane pleading for strength to make the ultimate sacrifice—the theme jumps from the pages of the Bible.

And just as He instructed the Hebrews in Leviticus and the

Christians in Rome, God asks us today to share in this spirit of sacrifice. No matter what our talents or abilities, no matter what the cost.

1. God asks that we give Him our hearts. This week, take time to be quiet. Acknowledge God's lordship in your life. Listen to your heart. What are you afraid of? What challenges do you face? What excites you? Be honest. Allow God to minister to you.

2. God asks that we give Him our minds. He longs for you to think and to question, to speak out and to be heard. Gather a group of friends and talk about what you can do to make a difference in your community. What changes would you like to see take place? In your home, your school, your church? How can you be a part of these changes? Be willing to dream big dreams.

3. God asks that we give Him our hands. As a part of His body, you are the only hands that He has. Under His guidance use them to work for justice; to serve food to the hungry at a local soup kitchen; to gather clothes for the poor; to be a big brother or sister to a child who needs your love and commitment. Keep your eyes open for someone who needs a friend. Be willing to express God's love to others in word and deed.

by Randal Wisbey

Randal Wisbey is chaplain at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, January 20

Sacrificing Animals Is Out, but What Should Be In?

OPINION

Key Text: Leviticus 1:1-9

The Israelites were told exactly how to do the sacrifices. A child would need to whisper only once, "Why did the priest do that to the sheep? Yuk!" From then on she/he would know what the acts meant, so the focus could be on the purpose, not the procedures. She could change the "yuk" to "ah."

How could we better point people to God's sacrifice? Would innovation be better sometimes than the usual service? In experiments, animals chose stimulation of the "joy spot" in the brain instead of food or sex. Should enjoyment receive greater emphasis to be experienced, not just heard about?

Do the services need scrutiny? Most people eat at noon—except on Sabbath. What emotions does this engender? People enjoy eating, could it be used to point to God?

Could the senses be more involved, like smelling? The Israelites used incense—would that help or not? (Perhaps they used incense because of the scarcity of water in the wilderness!)

How is sight used to tell about God? Do we use art and/or sculpture enough? It could be done inexpensively, like posting children's ideas about heaven and/or angels. Perhaps all should be issued sheets to wear over their clothes in church. When this was men-

tioned—one student asked whether hers could be silk and another talked about a designer label.

Hearing is important in worship. Which is more appropriate—the guitar, synthesizer, pipe organ, or animal horns like those the Israelites used? Is any music written after 1950 appropriate? Should music involve hands and feet as well as the ears?

And prayers—do they point to God or to the people? Should we switch from talking to God to appealing to people? Is God treated as an ineffective old man, as Lucy in "Peanuts" suggested? When praying for Brother Brown, does God need to be told that he broke his leg? (I can imagine God saying, "Oh, that's what happened to him?") We may not even know what to pray for. Some have been thankful that their prayers were *not* answered. Ellen White writes that prayer should be short and full of praise. Should we listen more and ask less? Should we use more meditation?

The Israelites were given specific instructions that the offerings were to be prime animals, not runts. What is the "prime animal" in our billfold?

REACT

If we need to spend time, money, and effort to make our worship more meaningful and beautiful—how could it be done? What suggestions could you offer?

by Melvin Wolford

Melvin Wolford is chairperson of the education department at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Lesson 4, January 22 - 28

Stains That Purify



“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5, NIV).

Sunday, January 22

The Cell

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5

Imagine complete darkness. No light. Only the sound of your breathing breaks the silence. As you stretch your arms your fingers graze a stone wall. Next your fingers touch cold iron. The cell is completely enclosed, as you know. You've been there for years.

No voice other than your own has ever broken the silence. No hand has ever touched yours. Surrounded in darkness and shrouded in pain, you wait in a cell of your own building for a punishment that has no reprieve.

Yet, once there had been someone else in the darkness with you. One conversation in the stillness of the years. His broken voice had whispered of a liberator. "Some day we shall be free men, justified before the law."

"How can that be?" you had asked urgently. "We are in here by our own choosing, our own transgressions. We can never be clean."

"Another will take our place, an innocent man. He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

"That can't be. No one would do that for me."

"Believe what you want, but it has been done."

"I see no one here," you had cried into the darkness. Stillness,

no sound but your own.

Light pierces the darkness. You close your eyes and stumble back against the wall, hands raised. Time passes. A voice breaks the stillness.

"You are released," says a deep voice.

"But, why?" you stammer.

"Another, an innocent Man comes to take your place. That is if you choose. Look upon Him."

You shade your eyes and focus through the iron bars to the Man beyond. He has been beaten. His blood drips upon the floor. Your eyes are drawn to His. Eyes filled with sorrow and yet of peace.

The Man reaches through the bars and grasps your hand. He looks directly at you when He speaks. "It is your choice."

"Yes, unlock me. Let me go." The iron door grates open. You rush out and in your haste almost shove the other Man in. All the while you babble about the moisture on the stones, the darkness, the silence. He only smiles. You turn to follow the guards who are opening the door to the outside. You pause and turn back to the Man in the cell. You cannot understand His actions. You must know more. The door shuts. Darkness.

You are alone in a cell. No. The voice of another speaks, "'Arise, shine, for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you'" (Isa. 60:1, NIV).

You stretch your arms; your fingers touch space. The cell walls have disappeared, and the Man stands beside you.

by Susan C. Comilang

Susan C. Comilang is a student at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Stain That Purifies

LOGOS

Theme: "Not all the blood of
beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty con-
science peace
Or wash away the stain.

"But Christ, the heavenly
Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of noble name
And richer blood than they."
—*Christ in Song*, No. 152.

We often sing hymns without really thinking about the words. It is only the tune that is important to us. But our hymns were first poems that were put to music because they echoed the song of the composer's heart. Can you sense the joy that welled up in the heart of Isaac Watts as he composed the words of this poem?

The poem summarizes this week's lesson, but our minds have been dulled to the metaphors of the Bible. What did Watts mean by "richer blood than they"? How can blood that stains take away stains? The question may seem elementary. But don't act superior. Even great preachers and theologians have been confused by Bible metaphors.

Chrysostom, known as the "golden tongued," said in a sermon: "The blood is the salvation of souls; by This the soul is washed, by This it is beautified, by This it is inflamed. This causes

our understanding to be brighter than fire, and our souls more beaming than gold."¹ You can sense his eloquence, but do you catch his mistaken interpretation?

F. W. Faber, a theologian, waxed enthusiastic over the blood of Christ. Christ's blood "shed in the Passion" was "borne up to heaven in the ascension" in "beautified immortality." This is no metaphor. He meant that Christ's blood was physically gathered up and taken to heaven. He even made allowances for the blood on sacred relics. The angels left some of the blood behind "for the enriching of the Church with the most inestimable of relics. This was the case with the Blood on the veil of Veronica, on the holy Winding-Sheet, on some portion of the cross, and on the Thorns and Nails."²

Before you smile scornfully ask yourself thoughtfully, "Do I really understand what we mean when we speak of the 'precious blood of Christ' "? Can we fully comprehend its meaning? Suppose we try.

We look at the metaphor first. Shed blood means death by violence. Jesus used the metaphor, for example, in his final condemnation of the scribes and the Pharisees on Tuesday of the Passion Week. "The blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world," He said, "may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary" (Luke 11:50, 51, RSV).

by Lyndon McDowell

Lyndon McDowell is the pastor of the Olney Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, and teaches at Columbia Union College.

What did He mean? He meant that the murder of righteous men in the past would be punished and that those who sought to kill Him were guilty of the same sin. They would seek to take Him by violence and kill Him. It means the same when we speak of Christ's shed blood. We refer to the fact that Christ suffered a violent death at the hands of evil men.

There are three further truths that we need to understand about Christ's death.

1. The Time of His Death

Not time in terms of prophetic history, or time of day, but time in terms of salvation. "While we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, NKJV). He did not wait for us to repent. He did not wait for us to be good. He did not wait for us to receive Him. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Notice the tenses that Paul uses: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." The act is in the past. It is an accomplished fact. He did not wait for us to do something. He acted first. Nothing that we can do can reverse history. It is an accomplished, unchangeable fact.

2. The Kind of Death that Christ Died

Christ did not die the death which the New Testament calls sleep. He died the "second death." He died a sinner's death. When he died He was "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12, NKJV). That is, He was accounted one of the transgressors and died their kind of death. He took our place so that we can go free.

3. He Died the Death of the Cross

In Philippians 2:8 Paul says that Christ became obedient to

the point of death "*even the death of the cross.*" The cross symbolized the death that was reserved for the worst of criminals. It was worse than our electric chair. No Roman could be crucified, because it would be the ultimate humiliation reserved for slaves. The Jews abhorred the cross because in their eyes anyone crucified died under the curse of God. For such there was no hope. We read in Galatians 3:13, NKJV, Christ died on the cross and became a "curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')." "

What does Christ's death mean for us? It means that His death becomes our death. His resurrection becomes our resurrection. His place in heaven becomes our place in heaven. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. A little expression that Paul used explains this. He uses it repeatedly. It is "*in Christ.*" If we are "*in Christ*" all that belongs to Him belongs to us.

Grasp the significance of this. Rejoice in its meaning. Claim its assurance.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV). The gift of God does not reside in our goodness. It resides in the virtue of Christ. When we receive Him, we receive life.

Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (NKJV).

Ephesians 3:12 says, "In whom [Christ] we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him" (NKJV). Notice the words: In Christ we have not fear, but boldness. We are not shut out, we have access. There is no timidity, there is boldness. Not in ourselves. In Christ.

To one who was brought up with loyalties to the British Em-

pire the American Revolution was a defeat. In the 1812 war the British suffered a humiliating defeat at Platsburg Bay. Twelve thousand British soldiers had to beat a retreat when their warships surrendered.

I am contemplating taking out American citizenship. When I do, all things will become new. The Revolutionary war will then not be a defeat, but a victory. The embarrassment of Platsburg Bay will then become a source of pride. The future of America will belong to me. I may make mistakes. There may be times when I transgress the law, but unless I repudiate my citizenship the victories of the past will be my victories, the triumphs of the future will be my triumphs.

Just so, when we accept Christ as our Saviour we are "in Him." "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of His grace" (Eph. 1:7, NKJV). "In whom [Christ]. . . we have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:11, NKJV). The deed is done. It is ours. The future belongs to us. We may make mistakes, but un-

less we repudiate Christ the future that He has won is our future.

This is why the death of Christ becomes precious. It is the death that we deserved. The death that is inevitable without Him, we died in Him. And "if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5, NKJV). The wonderful thing about the gospel is that there are no "ifs" and "buts" about salvation once we have accepted Christ. Paul's vocabulary is filled with positive words: "Certainly" "assurance" "boldness" "confidence" "more than conquerors" "who can separate us?" "who can be against us?" why the confidence? Because you cannot change history. It is an accomplished fact in Christ.

No wonder the twenty-four elders sing: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood" (Rev. 5:9, NKJV).

Christ's shed blood—the stain that purifies.

1. Quoted by Rev. A. J. Pollack, C.P.P.S. *The Blood of Christ in Christian Greek Literature, Til the Year 444 A.D.* (Carthagena, Ohio: The Messenger Press, 1956), p. 97.

2. Frederick William Faber, D.D., *The Precious Blood or the Price of Our Salvation* (Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Co.), p. 36.

Tuesday, January 24

The Significance of the Blood

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Romans 5:8, 9

Daily, an Israelite sacrificed an unblemished lamb for the sins of himself and his family. Once a year the high priest did the rites for the cleansing of the sanctuary, called the Day of Atonement. Sometimes we fail to see the significance of the sanctuary services, because we need only, with a repentant heart, to ask for forgiveness.

"Moses made the earthly sanctuary, 'according to the fashion that he had seen.' Paul declares that 'the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry,' when completed, were 'the patterns of things in the heavens.' Acts 7:44; Heb. 9:21, 23. And John says that he saw the sanctuary in heaven. That sanctuary, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy."¹

"As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf."²

"The precious blood of Jesus is the fountain prepared to cleanse the soul from the defilement of sin. When you determine to take Him as your friend, a new and enduring light will shine from the cross of Christ. A true sense of the sacrifice and intercession of the dear

Saviour will break the heart that has become hardened in sin; and love, thankfulness, and humility will come into the soul. The surrender of the heart to Jesus subdues the rebel into a penitent, and then the language of the obedient soul is: 'Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' This is the true religion of the Bible. Everything short of this is a deception."³

"Calvary stands as a memorial of the amazing sacrifice required to atone for the transgression of the divine law. Let us not regard sin as a trivial thing."⁴

"The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the day of atonement."⁵

"In the great day of final award, the dead are to be 'judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Rev. 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the book of heaven."⁶

The sanctuary services are just as important for us as they were for the Israelites. Jesus is in the sanctuary in heaven as our High Priest. His blood atones for our sins.

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.
2. *Ibid.*

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 625.
4. *Steps to Christ*, p. 33.

5. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 357, 358.

by Edward Earl Blackwell

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Stains That Purify

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Isaiah 53:5

The third book of the Pentateuch is composed of several manuals of instructions prepared over an extended period during the sojourn at Mount Sinai (Lev. 7:28). The ordinances contained in it are related to the ministry of the Levites, the appointed priestly order. Written by Moses, Leviticus sets forth the laws and principles by which God's people are to live. In order to understand the mission of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb and accept the mediation of His blood—the stain that purifies—a review of the sacrificial ordinances is warranted.

Leviticus 4-7 could be distinguished as the sacrificial Torah dealing specifically with the rituals required for the atonement of sin and purification from it. Both the priests and worshipers were required to participate. The animals offered by the priests represented a public communal sacrifice, and the rite performed by the worshiper was a personal admission and repentance of sin.

Isaiah 53:5 reminds us that Christ was pierced, crushed, punished, and wounded for *our* transgressions, and this was evident in the entire process of the sacrificial system. It was required that sacrificial animals be the personal property of the worshiper, secured through his or her own honest enterprise. No wild animal or those acquired through dishon-

esty were acceptable, and even the doves, cereal, or flour approved for the very poor person had to be derived from his or her personal efforts and hard labor. The sacrificial offering was to be brought to the tabernacle's outer court, where the worshiper laid hands upon it implying that it represented himself/herself, and then killed the animal. All this pointed to and had its fulfillment in the redemptive work of Christ because the sanctuary is where God leads out in the plan of salvation. The outer court represented the earth, the innocent animal portrayed the salvation ministry of Christ, and the personal ownership of the animal represented the worshiper's appeal for forgiveness as he or she dedicated himself/herself by presenting his or her own body as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Rom. 12:1).

The sin offering (Lev. 4:1-5) was obligatory as an atonement for specific sins of ignorance or error, i.e. sins committed unwittingly or due to lack of knowledge about God's requirements. It was a means of remission for the sins of four classes of sinners: the high priest (4:3); the whole congregation (4:13-21); a ruler (4:22-26) and the common people (4:27-35). Guilt varied according to rank (1 Peter 4:17). The measure of light increases one's responsibility, and the anointed priest, who occupied a position of great importance and leadership, ministering in the Holy Place, was held more accountable by God. The con-

by Hyveth Williams

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gregation, owing to the concept of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9), shared the same responsibility for sin as the priest. The rulers and common people were considered individually, but all had voluntarily to confess their sins, and none could make atonement for themselves; e.g., the priest performed for the people and the elders for the priest. There was no sacrifice for sins consciously committed, because that represented rebellion against God (Num. 15:27-31). However, intentional sins which were not calculated defiance of God's commands (Lev. 6:2-7) could be atoned (Ps. 51:16, 17). But the procedure to receive forgiveness for this sin must include confession of the deed, restitution in full plus a little extra for good measure, and finally the sacrifice. The significance of this is that conviction for sin and repentance are not enough if they do not lead us

to rectify, as far as possible, past mistakes (cf. Luke 19:8-10). Finally, no sacrifice could be offered without salt being added to it (Lev. 2:13, cf. Mark 9:49, see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 439). This pointed to the fact that only the righteousness of Christ can make the service of humanity acceptable to God.

Could it be that the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus has little impact on contemporary Christians because so many sacrifices are being offered devoid of the requirements examined above? Could it be that we are not being healed spiritually, mentally, and physically because the salt, the righteousness and selflessness of Christ our example, is being left out of our acts of worship?

If we are to be truly healed by His wounds we must examine and embrace the sacrificial system that points to the blood stain that has the power to purify from sin.

How to Worship Without Being Legalistic

HOW-TO

Key Text: Psalm 96:9

As we entered the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception we felt so small and insignificant. It seemed to overwhelm us, and the large mosaic of Christ seemed so harsh and overbearing. My students later commented that it just didn't seem to be a place in which it would be "easy" for them to worship. It led us to a discussion of what makes a place "worshipful" and what is worship? Is worship a list of "do's" and "don'ts" that we follow in a prescribed manner? Is it following a certain set of traditions? Most of my students thought not. The main theme that emerged was that worship is personal and constant, not that which occurs only in church on Sabbath.

Leviticus gives us all the details on what to do for what sin and how to be forgiven. How does this apply to us now in the eighties? We no longer offer sacrifices and we no longer list or classify our sins. Yet, we do not have functions such as the confessional to "relieve" us of our guilt and make it easier to worship. So how can we worship, daily, weekly, and continually, without becoming legalistic and resorting to the demonstrations that the Israelites practiced at the time of the writing of Leviticus?

It seems appropriate to remem-

ber that sin is a deviation from a defined standard, more simply a violation of God's law; and if we are in violation of the law, then we have failed to meet God's perfection. This means we have offended God first and humankind second. Leviticus 5:5 reminds us that when a sin is committed it must be confessed and a penalty must be remitted. This was all part of the worship process, and for each type of sin there was a set standard of offering and manner in which the offering was to be presented and dealt with by the sinner and the priest.

How can we be forgiven and find the proper place of ritual in our worship?

1. Start with a personal inventory. Why do I worship the way I do? This might be a painful question, but we need to evaluate why we do things. Is it convenient? Is it because our parents always did it this particular way? Decide what your worship style is and why it is so important to you.

2. Look at your relationship with God. How do you know when you are forgiven? Ask yourself: "How do I relate to myself when I've knowingly sinned?" Then decide what steps you need to take to be forgiven and work at a closer walk with God so you can gain the strength not to repeat those sins.

3. Evaluate your relationship to others and their sins. So often we can see the sins of

by Joan Angelo-Adams

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others so clearly and yet not be able to see our own. Seek out ways to condemn less and to seek out harmony with and forgiveness of others. Gain insight through prayer and meditation.

4. Develop a worshipful attitude. Daily seek God's forgiveness and develop a personal relationship with Him. He will be there to help every step of the way.

We need to be truthful with ourselves, those around us, and

our God—before we can truly worship. Worship need not be ritualistic or legalistic, but personal and satisfying.

REACT

Give some reasons why God instituted such elaborate services for the pardoning of sin as outlined in Leviticus. How do our religious services compare today? Should we as a church be more formal and ritualistic or should we "return" to primitive godliness?



MISSIONS: Show you care

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build a Better Living Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Give, March 25
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Is Forgiveness TOO Easy?

OPINION

Key Text: Isaiah 53:5

How often have you tried to imagine life in another time? Ever consider what it was like in Old Testament times? I mean, it seems as though it was an incredibly brutal era; wiping out whole nations on every side—people, buildings, animals. And all this sanctioned—no, commanded—of God! Well, maybe it's hard really to envision. Let's personalize it a bit.

You commit a sin—not a terrible thing, just your run of the mill sin. You feel guilty, you know it was wrong, and you ask forgiveness. But it's not that easy. If you're really with me, back thousands of years, you know what you have to do. You walk to the Temple, you take with you a lamb, and there, in full view of everyone, you hold this innocent creature down, slit its throat, and watch it die.

Boy, that's tough. It would be an innocent lamb, and it would be your own hands. Now, I'm not a hunter, and so I have no experience (or interest) in killing animals. But I'm sure not even a hunter would find pleasure in such a procedure. There is no thrill of the hunt, no sport. In fact, it's quite a horrible thing in which to participate, but you

might think twice about that sin next time.

Jump forward a couple thousand years with me. Calvary. You really have to use your imagination now. The innocent Lamb, the everyday sins of the world, bleeding, dying, lifeless. "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isa. 53:5, NIV). This ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God dying on the cross, eliminated forever the need for this personal display of atonement. So where has it brought us?

In 1989 is forgiveness too easy? We sin, we make mistakes, and because of the beauty of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we kneel down, ask forgiveness, and it is gone. I'm just afraid we don't always remember the magnitude of our actions, the pain of Jesus, the agony and death of our symbolic Lamb, because we don't have that direct physical association anymore.

I'm pleased that a private forgiveness is now possible, and I am so thankful that the sacrifice of Jesus makes it "easy" to be rid of the guilt and stain of sin. But it is only by looking back at the ancient sanctuary sacrifice that this "ease of forgiveness" maintains its significance in our lives and reveals the true gift of atonement.

by Steven C. Blackburn

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"Who's a Missionary?"

A QUIZ FOR WORLD CHRISTIANS

If you are in your 20s and grew up an Adventist, chances are that you played missionary in cradle roll Sabbath School. Maybe you wore cheap plastic glasses while your teacher sang, "Who's a teacher . . . just today?" and waved you away with "Five Little Missionaries." But who *is* a missionary?

Preparation for mission in the 1990s demands that Seventh-day Adventists rethink the meaning of the term *missionary*. Here are some questions to get us started.



DIRECTIONS: Check the blank beside the appropriate response to each question. See the answers on page 66.

- Which of the following statements exemplifies a missionary?
 - a. As a nurse at the local community hospital, Ruthie watches for opportunities to say a word for her Lord.
 - b. Rob works as a physicist for the aerospace industry. He asks the Lord to make his life a living witness.
 - c. Confined to bed by a debilitating disease, Marian trusts God and reaches out by phone to a distressed, nonbelieving neighbor.
- What determines whether or not persons are missionaries?
 - a. Their race.
 - b. Their message.
 - c. The locale (place).
 - d. Their occupation.
- The age of Christian missionaries has passed.
 - True.
 - False.
- The best missionaries up to now have been Caucasians of Germanic descent.
 - True.
 - False.
- Which societal factors seem to stimulate missionary activity most?
 - a. A favored economic level.
 - b. An advanced educational system.
 - c. A disposition to conquer new frontiers.
- Which of the following best describes frontier missions?
 - a. Witnessing in an unentered country.
 - b. Witnessing to an unreached people group.
- Which of the following is least necessary to one pursuing a career in frontier missions?
 - a. Applying to a mission board such as the General Conference.
 - b. Developing an understanding of cultures and cultural differences.
 - c. Dedicating one's time and talents to God.
 - d. Going overseas.
- Which unreached people of southern Africa are to be helped by your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter?
 - a. The people of Botswana.
 - b. The Kalahari Bushmen in Botswana.

Lesson 5, January 29—February 4

A Friend in Court



"The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2, NIV).

Sunday, January 29

What's to Lose?

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Hebrews 8:1, 2

In a popular television show, *L. A. Law*, the story was told of Benny, the simple-minded office boy in his late 30s, who was accused of rape. Arnie Becker and Mike Kusac (crusader for all worthy causes), both went to Benny's rescue. Benny's "confession" had most of the people that he worked with entertaining the possibility of his guilt. (What had actually happened was that Benny had visited an adult bookstore and, on his way home, he was feeling very guilty about the "bad thing" he had done. He was so guilt-ridden that when he saw police officers, he ran. They assumed that he was the rapist and arrested him. At the police station he said that he realized why he was under arrest. This the officers took as a confession to the rape.)

A meeting was held at the office to discuss Benny's crime. It was decided that Kusac would represent Benny, but that even if he was let out on bail, Benny would not be allowed to come to work—the law firm could not afford to be associated with a possible criminal. The one per-

son who was sure of Benny's innocence protested this decision, but to no avail.

At the preliminary hearing, Kusac, with the permission of the law firm's director, stood bail for Benny, with the condition that he would be responsible for Benny's good conduct until the court hearing.

It turned out that the rape victim told the court that Benny was not the man who raped her. He *was* innocent. What if he had been guilty? Kusac would have lost a case, the firm would have lost a not-so-easily-replaced worker, Becker would have lost a fan, and anyone else who had any involvement would have lost several hours, if not a day, of time.

Because of Christ's willingness to stand as our defender in the heavenly courts, we have a second chance for salvation. With His Father's approval, He stood bail for us 2,000 years ago. He wasn't just entertaining thoughts of our guilt—He and all heaven knew that humanity was guilty of sin. Yet, He took the risk. How much did He have to lose? Is the life you're living one that says, "I am glad He took the risk, and with His help I will make it worth His while?"

by Maxine Newell

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Monday, January 30

It Must Be Perfect to Be Accepted

LOGOS

Theme: *To help fallen humanity to understand God's love, and to reconcile the sinner to his or her Judge, Heaven called a man to serve as priest. He was endowed with grace to represent the great High Priest and Mediator, who by His sinless life and atoning death reconciled the world to God. Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary makes it possible for us to come to God for salvation.*

The Old Testament was interpreted by Jesus and the apostles in a consistent way, a way well summarized by Paul in Colossians 1:16, "All things were created by him [Jesus] and for him" (NIV). Jesus had taught His disciples—at first verbally (Luke 24:27, 44-46) and later through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—that all the events, symbols, and redemptive acts of the old-covenant community were ordained by a sovereign God to prefigure and predict His saving work of atonement: "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Peter 1:11, NASB). In other words, the redemption accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ is the apex of sacred history, everything that came before was prologue, and all that follows is epilogue: "He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the

right hand of God. . . . For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are [being] sanctified" (Heb. 10:12, 14, NASB).

In 2 Corinthians 3, the apostle makes the argument that unless the Old Testament is read in this Christocentric way there is a veil over it, a veil that causes the heart to harden toward God, rather than being converted to God. This veil can only be "removed in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:14-16, NASB). We must especially remember this as we approach the study of the priesthood and sacrifices of the sanctuary system in Leviticus. There, erring but consecrated humans and their bleeding sacrifices are meant to teach us, in dim shadows and symbols, about how God would deal with human sin through the far greater and perfect revelation of His saving righteousness in Christ (see Rom. 3:21-24).

Our lesson this week is about the ordination of Aaron and his sons as the priests of God (see Leviticus 8), and the rules and rituals they were required to observe to enable themselves and their sacrifices to be acceptable to the Lord (see Leviticus 21, 22). Preeminently, in these chapters, one is confronted with detailed ceremonial acts that are done for the purpose of cleansing, consecration, dedication, sanctification, and acceptance. God is particular: "for I the Lord, who sanctifies

by Richard Fredericks

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you, am holy" (Lev. 21:8, NASB). Let's look at just a few of these acts and their New Testament significance in the light of Christ.

First, Aaron and his sons were to be washed with water and dressed in special clothing full of symbolic significance—especially Aaron as high priest (Lev. 8:6-9). Consider two items of his outfit, the breastplate and the golden plate called a holy crown fastened to his forehead. These are described in detail in Exodus 28.

We are told the breastplate had 12 jeweled stones upon it, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel (28:21). It is called the "breastplate of judgment" because Aaron as the high priest (the representative of his people before God) was always to "carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place. . . . And Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the Lord continually" (28:29, 30, NASB). Aaron then typifies Jesus, the true High Priest, who carries His people over His heart into judgment. What a pure heart that is, one in which no taint of sin can be found, and thus we come into the presence of God "with confidence" (Heb. 4:16, NASB) and "in full assurance of faith" (10:22, NASB) for there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NASB).

Exodus 28:36 tells us the golden plate had an engraved seal on it declaring: "Holy [sanctified] to the Lord" (NASB). Everything Aaron did was to be ceremonially holy (see Leviticus 21); he was to touch nothing that would make him ceremonially unclean or impure, because he prefigured the true High Priest of God, who would make a permanent atonement for the sins of His people based on His own utterly sinless nature: "For it was fitting that we

should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:26, 27, NASB).

Not only must the priests be consecrated and ceremonially pure, but according to Leviticus 22:2, so must all the offerings to God: "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they dedicated to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the Lord" (NASB).

This must be especially true of any animal offered up as a sin offering or burnt offering. These animals suffered death as a substitute for the sinner who would place his hands in an act of confession upon the animal before it was slain, that the animal might "make atonement on your behalf" (Lev. 8:34). Thus Aaron was instructed that the offered animal must be a male without defect. The Lord declared that if there were any defect "it will not be accepted for you," indeed "it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it" (Lev. 22:20, 21, NASB).

Rejoice in it! Christ our "Lamb of God" has been sacrificed and by that one final and awesomely adequate sacrifice He took away "the sins of the world," for by that "one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb. 10:14, NIV). His total perfection allowed Him to be our substitute and example, for though we all, like sheep have gone astray, the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

There is one more application that must be made. There is, in Christ's church, no longer just one group of people called priests. All

of us who name Christ as our Lord are now a "kingdom, and priests to our God" (see Rev. 1:6 and 1 Peter 2:9). Therefore our heads, hands, and feet are consecrated and sanctified by the blood of that sacrifice, and are now to be used only to the service of our Saviour—just as Moses touched the blood to the head, hands, and feet of Aaron (Lev. 8:23). This is a serious consecra-

tion, for our Lord is still the Holy One of Israel. The blood of Jesus ever justifies all repentant sinners, but never justifies willful, cherished sin. All that we think, see, hear, or do—and everywhere we go—is to be for Him and to His glory: "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10, NASB).

Tuesday, January 31

Like Father, Like Son

TESTIMONY

Key Text: John 3:17

We have a Friend in the heavenly court who is on humanity's side. Concerning Jesus' atoning work for us in heaven, Ellen White declares: "The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy."¹

"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 by 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 fills all heaven with wonder. . . . 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 . . . ; that Christ could stoop to raise unnumbered multitudes from the abyss of ruin and clothe them with the spotless garments of His own righteous-

ness to unite with angels who have never fallen and to dwell forever in the presence of God."²

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, 'whither the forerunner is for us entered.' Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God."³

"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are thus consecrated" (Heb. 10:14, NEB).

REACT

1. How should we respond to the idea of judgment when Jesus is our friend?

2. Since Jesus died on the cross for our sins, why is His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary necessary?

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 414.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 489

by Ken Coleman

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Wednesday, February 1

Jesus Christ—Humanity's Only Access to God

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 1 Timothy 2:5

God knows that humans need to worship. As a continual reminder of this great spiritual need, the Lord instructed Moses in the wilderness to build the tabernacle in the center of Israel's camp. Three tribes were to be on each side of the tabernacle. God would not be hard to find! The Israelites would be constantly reminded of Him every time they came out of their tents. Israel's tabernacle and priestly ministry offers great lessons for us today.

The tabernacle door reminds us of the one entrance that we have to God. The worshipers who came to the tabernacle entered the open court through that one door. There were not several entrances, but one. As the sacrifice was brought to that sacred place, no one dared climb over the tent wall or break through the tent curtains that encircled the tabernacle itself. No, they entered through the one door.

How do we approach God today? There is only one way. It is not the Mennonite door, nor the Methodist door, nor the Church of the Brethren door. It is not your door or mine. It is only the Jesus door. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NIV).

Jesus says, "Most assuredly, I

say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:1, 9, NKJV). Do we wish to approach God and worship Him? We must go through the door He provides for us—"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5, NKJV).

The Holy of Holies, as a room, was a cube fifteen feet in measurement. Only the great high priest could enter that place once each year at the season called Yom Kippur—the great Day of Atonement. He sprinkled blood in that area for his own sins and the sins of the people. He entered the Holy of Holies through a veil, or curtain, which separated that Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. That curtain symbolized the body of Jesus. The writer of Hebrews speaks of the Temple veil as a symbol or type of the "veil, that is, His [Christ's] flesh" (Heb. 10:19, 20, NKJV).

The death of Jesus (our high priest) upon the cross opened the way into the Holy of Holies for every child of God. The veil of the Temple was torn or ripped apart the day Jesus died (Matt. 27:51). As followers of Christ, we are now encouraged to enter boldly into God's presence. All obstructions

by Graham Bingham

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are removed. We have an access, or a free entrance, into the throne room of the King of Glory.

REACT

1. What theological reasons can you provide to explain why we have access to God only through Jesus Christ?

2. How do you feel about the necessity of death and blood in

the institution of God's covenants with humanity? Why? What place do you think this death and blood has in twentieth-century thinking? Why? How would you explain the necessity for death and blood in Christ's religion to a non-Christian?

3. What are the components of an ideal worship time? Why these things? Where do you find them?

Inauguration Not Coronation

HOW-TO

Key Text: Leviticus 8

Since God did not want Israel to crown a king, we might think ceremony is wrong. God is not against ceremony. God is against unwise expenditures and lavish court living. God is against the loss of freedoms that a king would cause (see 1 Sam. 8:4-22).

The inauguration of Aaron as priest was elaborate, public, and gaudy. Why is this ceremony included in the Bible? Is there a place for display and ceremony in the church today? Our denomination often installs pastors and elders and college presidents in public ceremonies. The principles involved in Aaron's inauguration can be applied to these present-day ceremonies.

1. The service should be public and entertaining. Aaron was not installed as priest in a closet. Everyone was to be present. Ceremony enhances our memory. If we forget the purposes for which the office was created it will be hard for the functionary to do the work assigned. Public office in the church is successful to the extent that the church supports it.

2. The source of authority should be delineated. Moses bathed and dressed Aaron, gold rosette and all. Similarly when we lay hands on a new elder, ordain a pastor, or put the symbols of office on a new college president, we show that the office is

being conveyed, not taken or earned. The person is authorized, NOT glorified.

3. Duty toward the community is to be outlined. In Aaron's case the ceremony demonstrated in detail, in the presence of both the community and himself, his work in the sanctuary. This was important because doing more or less resulted in death (Lev. 10:1, 2; 21:9). It was important to the community because they needed to know what he was to do. It was important that both parties come away from this contract with the same understanding as to their respective roles.

4. Expectations as to role-model behavior need definition. The community can expect the person to be physically fit and without blemish (Lev. 21:17-23). Being healthy is not enough however. The ram's blood put on Aaron's right ear, on his right thumb, and on the big toe of his right foot (Lev. 8:22, 23, NEB), indicated that he was to hear no evil, do no evil, and walk in no evil ways.

REACT

1. Jesus was often entertaining. How did creating wine (John 2:1-11), creating twelve baskets of excess food (John 6:13), or getting tax money from a fish (Matt. 17:27), enhance His message?

2. Are we noticed more for what we don't do, or for our health? Does this make our message appealing?

by Fred Harder

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Friday, February 3

Christ, Our High Priest

OPINION

Key Text: Hebrew 4:15, 16

One of the central objectives of the Bible is to reveal God. After reading Leviticus 8, 21, and 22 what picture of God did you imagine? Does He sound like a person whom you wish to honor and glorify? Are you attracted to Him?

Why is God so fastidious about the priests' outward aspects—i.e. unkept hair (Lev. 21:10), dwarfed (Lev. 21:20), and uncleanness by entering a room where there is a dead body (Lev. 21:11)?

If the priests of Leviticus are to be a foreshadowing of our heavenly High Priest how do the details given in these chapters reveal Christ? Let's examine some of the commands that God gave to Moses and what they might symbolize for us today. In Leviticus 8:23 Moses was instructed to put some of the blood of the slaughtered ram on the (1) right ear, (2) thumb, and (3) big toe of

Aaron and his sons. In this we see the importance of having Christ direct (1) what we hear, since it influences our thoughts, (2) our actions, and (3) the paths we walk. All the references to the priest's physical appearance and cleanliness point us to Christ "a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19, NIV).

The standards God gave for the Levitical priests were ultimately the standards that Christ Himself fulfilled as our High Priest. Not only were they fulfilled in the physical sense but also He was without blemish in the spiritual sense. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:15, 16, NIV).

by Wendy Pega

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Lesson 6, February 5 - 11

A Day in Court



“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:10-12, NIV).

Sunday, February 5

Changing Colors

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-32

It fell almost unnoticed in the quiet evening of the Idaho desert. By morning freeze-dried fields lay unseen under the season's first snowfall. In the distance, tall mountains bowed beneath even heavier loads of snow.

My wife and I were not able to make it to the ski resort until that evening. It had been necessary first to dust off the skis, collect all the goggles and other gear of the sport, and reluctantly commute to work for the day's breadwinning.

Delay only added to the reality of that first time on the snow. As the ski lift creaked us up the mountain, we gazed out over an innocently white landscape. The runs are illuminated for night skiing, but in the moonlight that newly fallen snow shone with its own energy.

The world of the day before was no more. Dead grass, broken and rotting branches, washed-out scars in the hillsides—all were gone, buried perhaps forever under the white purity of forgetful snow.

We were mesmerized by the beauty of the scene—the glowing snow on the hillsides, the tall pines, the full moon, and the wonder of the Christmas season. Christmas is almost certainly a misplaced observance—and yet what better medium than that pure, clear winter air to catch the still-echoing voices of angels over Bethlehem proclaiming, “Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14, NIV).

How apt, too, is the psalmist's call for forgiveness. “Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7, NIV). Those dark little sins we daily commit could take a lot of washing, a lot of snow cover, to be called white. Yet God Himself holds out such a promise. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. 1:18, NIV).

Israel after Exodus knew their sins were scarlet. The desert ran red with the blood of sacrifice. The snow-white purity so longed for seemed submerged in scarlet gore.

At the center of it all was the sanctuary—“the tent of meeting.” God's presence presided over the sacrificial system from within the Most Holy Place of that sanctuary.

To most it was an unfathomable mystery. Only a few understood, as the psalmist perceived, that the sanctuary presented a cosmic outline of how God was dealing with the sin problem (see Ps. 73:17; 77:13).

But everyone knew that the ceremonies on the annual Day of Atonement summarized all that had gone before. To the Israelites it was a day of judgment and of special forgiveness.

This week we will look more closely at the Day of Atonement. Looking beyond the symbol in the desert, we will examine just how events now taking place in heaven will result in a pure and eternal whiteness.

by Lincoln Steed

Lincoln Steed is book editor at Pacific Press, Nampa, Idaho.

God's Great Objective

LOGOS

Theme: *The final judgment, pre-figured by the ritual of the Day of Atonement, finally takes care of the sin problem. The judgment clears the character of God from Satan's unjust charges and confirms the loyalty of the unfallen universe. It also seals the truly penitent for eternal salvation and passes a sentence of destruction upon Satan, his evil demons, and those human beings who have followed him. Thus the final judgment restores moral harmony to the universe.*

1. The Day of Atonement in Type (read Leviticus 16:1-34; 23:26-32)

"On the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present an offering by fire to the Lord'" (Lev. 23:27, RSV).

God's *Shekinah* presence dwelt within the Most Holy Place of the earthly tabernacle. Sin had drawn men away from God, yet God sought to "dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8, RSV).

In the ark, covered by the *Shekinah* and gazed upon by two angels, was the law of God—so cruelly transgressed against by mankind. The penalty, the natural result of lawbreaking, was death (Rom. 6:23). God had determined to redeem mankind. To do this, He was prepared to sacrifice

His Son, Jesus Christ.

Through symbols, God intended to impress His people with the true nature of sin. Vivid symbols such as blood outlined a redemption from the penalty of sin and a cleansing from its effects. God had early made it clear that blood represented the life (Lev. 17:11). The Temple sacrifices and services dealt with the question of life and death—a graphic way to portray the plan of salvation.

It was not, however, the ceremony itself that God was concerned with. From the beginning, He emphasized that "heart and soul" involvement was vital (Deut. 26:16-19). The aim was a holy people; aware of the plan for their redemption.

Throughout the year people confessed their sins on a daily basis and offered sacrifices to illustrate the penalty due for their sin. As the priests sprinkled the blood before the veil separating the two compartments, the sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary.

The great summary of the Temple services was the annual Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement dealt with the blotting out of the record of sin. As *Yom Kippur*, or the Day of Atonement, approached, the people "afflicted" themselves, by way of prayer, fasting, self-examination, and humility before God (Lev. 23:27, 29; Isa. 57:15). Those who were not inclined to do so, disqualified themselves from the benefits of the service.

by Lincoln Steed

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The high priest officiated on this great day. He alone could enter the Most Holy Place, and even then only with the correct sacrifice and attitude. The people, aware of the solemnity of the day, watched and listened to be sure that the service was acceptable.

In white "holy garments" the high priest first offered a bullock for himself and his family, sprinkling the blood upon the mercy seat within the second chamber. By this act he sanctified himself for the mediatorial role and became a type of Christ. Jesus in His high-priestly prayer recorded in John 17 used a similar image to describe His own consecration (verse 19).

Two goats were specified for the central ceremony on the Day of Atonement. One was sacrificed as a sin offering. The High Priest sprinkled its blood on the mercy seat. This corresponded to Christ as High Priest ministering His own life—given on the cross—before the Father as payment for transgression of the law.

The blood of the sacrifice is accepted. The sinless sacrifice of Christ, prefigured by the goat's blood, satisfies the law's demands and removes the sins of the congregation.

In the role of mediator, the priest then returns to the door of the tabernacle, where the second goat is tethered. Placing his hands over its head, he symbolically removes the record of the accumulated sins of the people from the sanctuary to the "scapegoat," which is then driven away into the wilderness.

This goat does not atone for any sins. That function has already been filled by the sacrifice symbolizing Christ—the only one whose blood could accomplish atonement. The scapegoat, or Azazel, represents Satan, the originator of sin. He is held accountable as the instigator of all

sin committed by the human race.

What a solemn mystery play of the great drama of atonement worked out by Christ!

2. The Investigative Phase of the Final Judgment (read Daniel 7-9, 12)

The prophecies of Daniel clearly concern events at the very close of time on earth (Dan. 12:9, 10). Bible students through the centuries attempted to unravel the time prophecies given through Daniel. Some dates they understood, but it was not until the nineteenth century that some prophecies began to make sense. The 2300-day (prophetic years) prophecy of Daniel 8:14 was seen to harmonize beautifully with the 70 weeks (490 day-years) of Daniel 9:21-27.

The "cleansing" of the sanctuary—determined to begin in October 1844—seemed at first to be a term consistent with Christ's return to the earth and its cleansing by fire. This was a misinterpretation, and further study revealed the logical reality so consistent with the sanctuary patterns.

Paul explains that the true sanctuary is in heaven (Heb. 8:2; 9:23, 24). This is where our High Priest, Jesus Christ, mediates His sacrifice on our behalf. This He has done since His ascension.

The event foretold in Daniel 8:14 was to correspond to the earthly Day of Atonement. It was, as the Jews have always understood, a day of judgment. It was the day on which the standing of all was decided and the record of their sin removed from the sanctuary.

In Daniel 7:9-14 we are shown just such a judgment scene. It follows after the four kingdoms and is convened *while* the great apostate power is still at work on earth. Christ in His glory joins His father in a great court, called to examine the books of heaven.

This pre-Advent judgment is clearly to determine the standing

of those registered in the book of life (Rev. 21:27; 3:5). The books of record are opened in the presence of the angelic host. Open to the universe will be the situation of each person under Christ's protection. All will be able to verify that God's judgment is just and true.

In His parable of the wedding feast, Christ symbolized the investigative judgment through the figure of a king inspecting all the guests to ensure that each was wearing the wedding garment (Matt. 22:11). Without this garment the guests are cast out, with it they are accepted.

The required wedding garment is clearly the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. The inspection of the guests is an inquiry into their characters. In the parable, Christ's coming is *after* the wedding (Luke 12:36, 37). Just so, the investigative judgment must *precede* His return.

It is a solemn thought to consider that a heavenly investigation is even now underway. How important it is to ensure that all is right in our standing with God! Soon the investigation will be concluded. Probation will then close for all.

A short time later Christ will come to claim His own. His return is glorious. The earth is convulsed and laid bare, and the redeemed return to heaven with Christ. But as in the earthly figures on the Day of Atonement, the story does not end there.

3. The Final Phases of Judgment (read Revelation 20:4, 11-15; Matthew 25:31-46)

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just" (Rev. 19:1, RSV).

Satan is cast into the wilderness of a desolate world. There he broods on his sins and the sins he caused others to commit (Rev. 20:1, 2). In heaven the redeemed

sit in judgment with Christ (Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:1-3). There they open the record of the lost and trace sin's effect on the lives of those who failed to come to Christ. This judgment is a review only. By placing themselves outside the blood atonement upheld in the investigative judgment, the wicked are cut off from salvation forever.

John the revelator was given impressive visions of the great and awful scenes following the millennium. There is overwhelming triumph and joy as Christ and the redeemed return to the earth. At this return there is a second resurrection. The wicked are raised to life, and Satan is released—not to have a second chance, or to continue rebellion forever, but to stand before God in final judgment.

The contrast is so overwhelmingly obvious. The wicked huddle outside the city in shadows, condemned by the purity they even yet would not seek.

What a day! What a fearful day for the wicked! Then, using the words of Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus formally recognizes the righteous as His own—and pronounces doom and the destruction of fire upon Satan and the wicked.

How fitting that the scene closes with an allusion to the sanctuary saga as it began centuries earlier in the desert! At that time God asked for a sanctuary in the camp of Israel "that I may dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8, RSV). Revelation 21 presents the picture of a new heaven and a new earth and a wonderful new Jerusalem prepared as a home for the redeemed. "A great voice from the throne" says, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them" (verse 3, RSV).

Through the sanctuary and the realities it represents, God will accomplish His eternal desire—to be with His people.

Tuesday, February 7

A Heavenly High Priest

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Daniel 8:14

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. . . . The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God."¹

"As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf.

"The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.

"In the great day of final

award, the dead are to be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted."²

"The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. . . .

"Christ had come, not to the earth, as they expected, but, as foreshadowed in the type, to the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven."³

"The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith."⁴

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 489.

2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 357, 358.

3. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 423, 424.

4. *Review & Herald*, May 25, Cited in *Movement of Destiny*, LeRoy Froom, p. 544.

by Lincoln Steed

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Wednesday, February 8

Revealed Through Law

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Hebrews 10:22

The plan of salvation is exactly that: a coordinated and consistent working out of a resolution to the sin problem. Our early Adventist pioneers understood this well. They were deep students of the Bible. They were careful to harmonize all "new" understandings to the overall picture. Take the following position of S. N. Haskell.

"At the present day the person who comes to the study of the New Testament through the interpreting lights of the types and symbols of the Levitical services, finds a depth and richness in the study that are found in no other way. It is impossible to have exalted views of Christ's atoning work if the New Testament is studied without a previous knowledge of the deep, blood-stained foundations in the Old Testament gospels of Moses and the prophets."¹

Many Christians today see the Old Testament as little more than inspired history. Ritual and law are explained as quaint customs of a less enlightened time—habits of worship derivative of the other religions existing at the time.

Much of the present "gospel" teaching, while rightly emphasizing the cross, rather neatly sidesteps the fact that it was *part* of a process designed to eradicate sin.

"Limiting the atonement to the cross does not allow for the total process of the blotting out of sin and the final purification of the universe from sin. If we limit

atonement, or 'reconciliation,' wholly to the work of Christ at the cross, then the scope of the sanctuary message is understood only in part. This broad picture of salvation history to its ultimate consummation as seen within the truth about the heavenly sanctuary gives Seventh-day Adventists a distinctive message for our time. The truth about the sanctuary constitutes one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith, particularly for these last days."²

"Last days" has become a catchcry of Adventists. There is a danger of using the term as loosely as department stores do to the "last days" of a sale no different from the one the month before. We need to see the parallel to the Day of Atonement.

In the "last days" before that ceremony symbolic of the great work now drawing to a close in the heavenly sanctuary, God's people "afflicted" themselves. They set affairs in order, put away sin, prayed for God's continued mercy.

The Old Testament symbols were sometimes elemental to those immediately involved. To us, these symbols blossom with a meaning enhanced by further revelation.

The symbolism and the typical services in the Levitical sanctuary are meant to clarify, and not to confuse. They pointed to the impending realities in the high-priestly work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. . . . "The Day of Atonement taught the truth of Christ's ministration that goes beyond Calvary to the final solution of the sin problem. No truth

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about God or the mediatorial ministry of Christ in heaven can be complete without that. The blotting out of sin involves more than forgiveness. It involves also the banishment of sin and Satan. The gracious purpose of our Lord is not only to forgive sin but to triumph over it and eradicate it. . . . If there is any place in the Levitical sanctuary and its services where this truth is taught and symbolized, it is on the Day of Atonement.¹

Our age has certainly seen "the coming of the lawless one." Watch almost any television series—listen to young people gathered on the street, and you hear the message loud and clear. As a rock song a few years ago thumped out, "Gonna shoot, gonna loot, gonna kill." Of course a lot of what goes on is white-collar looting and distrust of "the fuzz."

While clinging to "morality" a lot of Christians still live out the modernism that law itself is too restraining. But God's universe is founded on law. God's sanctuary itself enshrines the tables of law, so holy as to be hidden within the curtained recesses, but so central that the covering cherubim gaze expectantly into its depths.

"It was the transgression of 'the commandments of the Lord' that set in motion the entire ritual of the temple. Sin was the cause of the morning and evening sacrifice, the services of the Day of Atonement, the offering of incense, and the individual sacrifices for personal sins. And sin is the transgression of the law."²

Those rituals in the desert pointed not to an elemental God of blood, but to a Being determined at any cost to bring a

wandering race back into harmony with the Law of Life.

"In considering the atonement, many forget the part which the law plays. Yet it was the law of Ten Commandments around which all the services of the sanctuary revolved. Take the law away, and there would be no need of any atonement, for with no law there is no sin. Two things are necessary to atonement:

"First, an acknowledgment of the just claims of the law, which is another expression for the righteousness of God. This is given by the sinner's confession, and the consequent renouncing and giving back of the life which he has forfeited. This act satisfies the law and the penalty is paid by forfeiting the life. But while the law is thus paid, the sinner, in type, is dead. This is the first part of the transaction, and an important one.

"Second, there must be, in type, a freeing of the sinner from death, some transaction whereby a pure, sinless life is exchanged for the sinful, polluted life of the sinner.

. . . Such a life is found only in Christ, and the perfect symbol of that life is found in the Lord's goat, which on the Day of Atonement died without having any sins confessed upon it, and the blood of which effected the cleansing of the sanctuary (Leviticus 16).

"These two phases of the ministry of Christ are not to be confused. They are distinct and separate; yet they found their expression in the one perfect Redeemer, who, sinless, yet Himself bore 'the sin of many.'³

What a miracle of redemption! God's law is upheld. God's people are reclaimed from sin. It is the very heart of the gospel.

1. S. N. Haskell, in *The Cross and Its Shadow*, Preface, p. v. quoted in *The Great Judgment Day*, by John L. Shuler, p. 61.

2. Edward Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, p. 96.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

4. M. A. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, p. 252.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 146.

Thursday, February 9

Happy to Be Serious

HOW-TO

Key Text: 2 Peter 3:11-14;
2 Cor. 6:1, 2

Isn't it great to be a Seventh-day Adventist! I mean, like you get to live 6 or 7 years longer than the others, and intellectually—well—I mean, we all know the kids in our schools rate way up there percentile-wise in those national tests. We *are* different! But—hey—why do some of those other churches keep confusing us with—well, you know, those wacky, weird-doctrine groups that we all think are a little strange?

Without getting too carried away, I know that the young, with-it Adventist tends at times to think like the above. So where does that leave us in relation to the events surrounding the Investigative Judgment?

1. Take a look at yourself!

In preparing for the yearly Day of Atonement, the children of Israel "afflicted" themselves (Lev. 23:27). *Afflict!* Now that is not your everyday 1989 word—unless you use it to say that Jack looks a little afflicted at losing Melanie.

But the situation is rather serious. It is 144 years since Christ began an investigative judgment into the status of all those who have called on His name. Your name is bound to come up. That will be no time to be found a follower in name only. This is serious business we are talking about here. Well worth doing as those penitents in Israel were wont to

do: make particular repentance for sin, put all your affairs right, confess all weakness and wrongdoing to God, and in humility pray for His strength to remain faithful.

2. Look around you. It's scary how few people seem to be serious about preparing for the return of Christ. Maybe they haven't really got the message. Jesus saves. Jesus saves from sin. Jesus is coming soon—"The hour of his judgment has come" (Rev. 14:7, NIV).

Aware of the ongoing investigative judgment in heaven, we will have a special urgency in warning others that it's time to prepare to meet the coming King. The whole sacrificial system underscored the enormity of sin and showed the terrible price Heaven paid to deal with it. How could you or I ignore the plight of those unaware or uncaring of the situation? Impossible! They need to know.

3. Nervous excitement. Remember your high school graduation? How about college graduation? Or maybe the day you met that boy/girl at the altar and pledged your vows? You knew that you didn't really deserve to graduate—certainly you could never live up to that lovestruck person's expectations. Yet, at the same time you knew that you had taken all the required classes, passed all the exams—and that the someone at your side that day truly loved you. Such occasions are filled with joyful anticipation.

Just so, as we wait for our

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High Priest to seal us as His. We need to ensure that the conditions have been met. We need to recognize that it's serious business. But at the same time the joy of expectation can get to be overwhelming!

REACT

1. It's silly to be excited about something you don't understand, isn't it? Maybe we need to untangle a few of the theological threads for ourselves.

2. Is it possible to study too deeply into the more complicated Bible truths? After all, salvation is simple, isn't it? Perhaps prayer and searching Bible study will lead us to understanding.

3. Maybe the educational premise of today that tells us to "question all things" is best tempered by a "search the Scriptures" and "learn all things" approach.

4. How does the investigative judgment give you confidence in God?

Friday, February 10

What a Time to Be Alive!

OPINION

Key Text: 2 Peter 3:2, 3;
Revelation 11:18

In school we studied history from old texts, and prophecy from complicated charts. Great stuff, but it all tended to the abstract.

What I've learned in the real world now as the days have come and gone is another matter altogether.

As a child I stayed up late one night just to see a dot called *Sputnik* pass overhead. I even got to hear its distinctive beep over the hum of the valve radio. Then, almost before you could say "transistor," we were on the moon. Even less time from the first integrated circuit chips to LSIs and cars made totally by robots! (Imagine the culture shock as Daniel peered into the future!)

The energy crisis—remember that one? We took it so seriously. It became a patriotic obligation to slow to 55 and cool to go 65. For the first time, that talk of a Sunday law with teeth made sense.

The Reformation ended recently. I know it because I read a headline with that wording and saw the pope kissing U.S. soil, and I watched as millions cheered him. Of course, there's a logical explanation. This country needs moral leadership, and that man really presents good Christian values—so why not have diplomatic ties with the Vatican? They say the papacy has changed with the times.

And yes, the cold war seems to be almost over. "Russia" and the United States both seem in a rush to sign agreements to destroy existing nuclear weapons. Do we remember what the Bible says about "peace" and "sudden destruction"?

After the Crash of 1987, most people would relate that to money. I never expected to live through a replay of 1929. Pretty soon money won't even be worth throwing into the streets. Luckily, we have all sorts of electronic money substitutes and coded cards to guarantee that things go on as normal!

It's my church I'm worried about.

Seventh-day Adventists used to be rather distinctive. Oh, I know it embarrassed some of us, but at least we had a few basics to fall back on.

I never thought I'd see so many people question the sanctuary doctrine, the investigative judgment, the Sabbath commandment, and the integrity of Ellen White as a prophet. I never thought I'd hear an Adventist minister disclaim all of the above, and then express hurt at the suggestion that he might not be an Adventist. But I have. I've also seen many of those caught up in the wave of skepticism leave not only the Adventist fellowship but that of formal Christianity, as well. And I've known it to take one poor pastor so far away from biblical truth that he preached to a dumbfounded congregation on

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the "truths" that there were no angels and that God does not answer prayer.

In short, I've lived through history in fast forward—"rapid events." I've seen the charts take daily reality. I've seen things that once seemed farfetched—things foretold by Bible and prophets to our day.

I've learned that history and the Bible are indelibly fused. I've seen prophetic prediction become reality time after time. And I've determined to study out the gray areas in my understanding of prophecy. What other logical course is there? How illogical to reject a daily fulfilling prediction just because I can't quite comprehend one element to come!

As a neophyte student of history, I used to enjoy guessing at

future trends. It's almost scary to do that today, and a bit futile. You can't double-guess God. It's become very obvious that all the wild and unpredictable events of our present world are playing into His master plan.

REACT

1. Take a moment to reflect on the Bible prophecies that have become fulfilled in your lifetime.

2. Ellen White: lucky guesser or a woman who spoke prophetically under God's direction? Maybe her writings do predict a few of the once improbable developments in the world and in our own church.

3. Do I see the Bible as a book of hope? Do I really believe that Christ the heavenly High Priest is looking out for me?

Lesson 7, February 12 - 18

Calendar of Redemption



“Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8, NIV).

Sunday, February 12

Memory's Halls

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Leviticus 23

Thinking about my graduation from high school—it doesn't seem terribly long ago. Yet, a lot of water can pass under a bridge in two years, and wash away foundations once thought to be of utmost importance.

I can clearly see my classmates in their purple robes—joyously marching down the aisle to the resounding chords of "Pomp and Circumstance." Tears of sorrow and happiness streamed down their cheeks. Their feelings mixed between the joy and satisfaction of reaching the end of a long journey, and the uncertainties of the future, which now lay before them. Mothers and fathers were lining the aisle, eager to capture their son or daughter on film.

After the ceremonies came the goodbyes. Goodbyes that in some instances may last a lifetime. I remember my friends—smiling, laughing, crying, and hugging. It all seems like yesterday, but so very far away.

What are some of the significant events in your memory? Your wedding anniversary? A thought-provoking Week of Prayer last fall? Your little brother's birthday? What do they remind you of?

Thinking about memories, do

we include in them a spiritual inventory—a compilation of our time spent with Jesus and the blessings He has bestowed upon us?

"Memory's hall should be hung with sacred pictures, with views of Jesus, with lessons of His truth, with revealings of His matchless charms. If memory's hall were thus furnished, we would not look upon our lot as intolerable. We would not talk of the faults of others. Our souls would be full of Jesus and His love."^{*}

It seems that we often use God as our fire escape. When things are fine we live our lives our own way, praying before we sleep and eat. But if things get rough, then we run to the fire escape and pour out our weary souls before the Lord.

I think God knew humans would behave in this manner if sin entered the world. He understands us completely. So the Lord provided periods of holy time for rededication and refreshing the spiritual memory.

This week we will be examining the religious festivals celebrated in connection with the sanctuary worship. Although the typical festivals with their annual sabbaths ceased to be practiced, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath continues to remind the Christian weekly of his Creator and Redeemer.

^{*}In *Heavenly Places*, p. 123.

by Craig L. Lastine

Craig Lastine is a sophomore business major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

A Calendar for Celebrating Redemption

LOGOS

Theme: *The Lord provided for periods of holy time—both in the moral law of ten commandments and in the ritual code—for refreshing the spiritual memory and for rededication. Although the typical festivals with their annual sabbaths ceased to be practiced, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath continues to remind the Christian every week of his or her Creator and Redeemer.*

"Holiday, (hol'i-da), n. [holy + day], a day of gaiety and joy in celebration of some national or religious event."¹ Holidays remind us of important things. What comes to mind when you think of Labor Day, Columbus Day, Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Day, Thanksgiving, or Christmas? Each celebrates part of our history. Israel had holidays too. The Bible calls them "feasts" or "festivals," but "holiday" perhaps better describes them. Some were religious and others national holidays. All gave time off from work. They were celebrations of the mythic events of Israel's past that profoundly influenced and identified them as a community. Holidays were reminders of God's acts in their history identifying them as His people.

1. The Sabbath (read Leviticus 23:1-3)

The Sabbath, day of worship and rest, reminded Israel not only of Creation (Exodus 20) but also redemption from slavery (Deuteronomy 5). Listing the weekly Sabbath with festivals most Christians regard as ceremonial does not make the Sabbath ceremonial any more than listing Labor Day with Christmas makes Labor Day religious.

2. Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Wave Sheaf (read Leviticus 23:4-14)

The Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Wave Sheaf provided Israel opportunity each year to dramatize the escape and flight from Egypt and the settlement of Canaan, by reenacting those events through holidays (Exodus 13). In the ritual, people participated in the events connected with Israel's liberation. But Passover was not merely to remind Israel of what happened to their ancestors, it was a personal participation in that redemption. Every Israelite, whether living in Old Testament times or in the modern state of Israel, can personalize these epic stories. Notice that Scripture commands that when the child asks why the feast is celebrated, the parent replies, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt" (Ex. 13:8, RSV). In any religion "ownership" must be present before the religion of the community belongs to the individual.

by Ron Jolliffe

Ron Jolliffe is an assistant professor of religion at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Until you own your religion, your religion owns you. Ownership comes with internalization, sensing the beauty and truth in the religion and accepting it.

3. The Feast of Weeks (read Leviticus 23:15-21)

The Feast of Weeks, best known to us by its Greek name, Pentecost (see Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8) began seven full weeks after the sheaf of first fruits was waved. It also involved a waving of first fruits. The first-fruits offering dramatized the importance of recognizing God first in blessings enjoyed. The tithes and offerings, the giving of thanks for the meal, the consecration of each new day, the enjoyment of the products of one's hands are all ritualized in the offering of the wave sheaf and the first fruits. Israel was constantly reminded that God brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, that He had given them the resources they enjoyed.

4. The Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Booths (read Leviticus 23:23-36)

Three religious festivals are described here, Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month, Day of Atonement on the tenth, and Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles) from the fifteenth to the twenty-second. Little information is given concerning the blowing of trumpets. Numbers 10:9, 10 may indicate that it was to commemorate military victories in the conquest of Canaan. It probably came to be primarily an announcement of the Day of Atonement.

Perhaps, because of 1844, Adventists seem better acquainted with the Day of Atonement than

other Christian groups. It is the only Jewish festival requiring Israel to fast (Acts 27:9 speaks of it simply as "the fast"). It is a solemn day in which Israelites are to "afflict" themselves and to do no work, under threat of capital punishment. The day is a sabbath of solemn rest observed from the evening to the evening (Leviticus 23:32 is the text that led early Adventists to shift the commencement of Sabbath observance from 6:00 p.m. to sunset). Leviticus 23 does little more than outline the basic department for the day. Leviticus 16 describes the ritual ceremonies.

The week-long Feast of Booths followed. Israelites built shelters in which to eat, sleep, or sit. These booths were to remind Israel of the time they spent wandering in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land (Lev. 23:43). Booths was to be a time of happiness, celebration and joy (Deut. 16:13-15). Numbers 29 has a lengthy description of the events surrounding this festival. Imagine the fun a child has in building a booth.

Leviticus 23 describes the opportunities Israel had each year to dramatize their past experiences by reliving them in rituals. This is the true sense of holiday, i.e. to keep alive in new generations the experience of the community's past. This use of drama and ritual allows new members of the community, whether children or proselytes, to experientially internalize the belief system of the community. Would we better understand the essence of Adventism if we celebrated our history with annual rituals that allowed us personally to experience our past? Why?

1. *The Winston Dictionary College Edition*, New York: Collier, 1943.

2. The word *myth* is used here in its proper technical sense to mean the commonly accepted and believed traditions of a community that provide it with a self-identity and definition of its purpose. The word does not address the question of historicity

Our Remembrance

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Exodus 20:8-11

The religious festivals of the sanctuary service were to be constant reminders to the children of Israel that God "cares for you."

"The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, all represented the Saviour."¹

"The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, as pointing back to the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt."²

The sacred memorial services were to uplift "all minds in gratitude to Him who had crowned the year with His goodness, and whose paths dropped fatness."³

"The sacrifices and offerings pointed forward to the sacrifice He [Christ] was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world."⁴

Everything about the sanctuary service and the religious festivals was to teach the people God's plan of redemption.

"The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin."⁵

Today with all the toil and hardships of life we have been given the

Sabbath as a festival to remember God's love and redemption.

"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."⁶

"God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness."⁷

God set apart a special day that we "should behold the tangible proofs of God's infinite wisdom," and that our "heart might be filled with love and reverence for . . . [our] maker."⁸

"The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man's primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God's purpose to re-create us in His own image."⁹

"The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day."¹⁰

Let us remember the Sabbath in our weekly schedules. Every day should be used in preparation for our meeting with God on His

by Scott W. Chapdelain

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special day. Our personal concerns and affairs, our work—should all be set aside before the Sabbath hours arrive. Each Sabbath let our thoughts and words be uplifting and spiritual in nature. Jesus wants to be with you, won't you come and be filled with

the glory of God on His special day?

REACT

Should Adventists consider keeping some of the feast days? What would be the benefits or liabilities?

-
1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 77.
 2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 278.
 3. *Education*, p. 43.
 4. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 237.
 5. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 277.
 6. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 349.
 7. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.
 8. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 583.
 9. *Education*, p. 250.
 10. *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 261, 262.

Wednesday, February 15

A Sea of Ceremonial Sabbaths

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 2:16, 17 (NIV)

Leviticus 23 is important because it differentiates between “ceremonial” sabbaths (Lev. 23:24, 32, 39) and the weekly sabbath (Lev 23:37, 38). This distinction seems necessary because of what Colossians 2:16, 17 says about not letting anyone judge you with regard to a Sabbath day (Col. 2:16, NIV). And if there are no sabbath days other than the weekly Sabbath, then we have a problem because the passage calls the Sabbath “a shadow of the things that were to come” (Col. 2:17, NIV).

Many Adventists would be extremely uncomfortable defending a weekly Sabbath that was “a shadow of the things that were to come.” After all, wouldn’t the cross abolish a weekly Sabbath that was “a shadow of the things that were to come” just as the cross abolished other Old Testament shadows (see Heb 10:1; 7:12, etc.)? Furthermore, how could one explain Ellen White’s statement that at Creation, “there was nothing in it [the Sabbath] shadowy. . . .”?* The KJV mentions four annual “sabbaths” falling on the 1st (Lev 23:24), 10th (23:32), 15th and 22nd (Lev 23:39) days of the 7th month. Yet, in all but one of these verses, the Hebrew word translated *sabbath* is *shabbathohn*, which is not the same word Hebrew uses for the weekly Sabbaths. *Shabbath* is the

word for (weekly) Sabbath. If you compare these two words using reference books keyed to Strong’s concordance, you notice that on *shabbathohn* days, one refrains from “regular” (NIV) or “servile” (KJV) work, but on the weekly Sabbath one does no work (Lev. 23:3). Summing up, as far as the Hebrew text is concerned, the annual ceremonial rest-days are observed differently from the weekly Sabbath.

The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament of Paul’s day) is crystal clear that the annual ceremonial rest-days are not “sabbaths.” It translates *shabbath* with *sabbaton*, the Greek word for Sabbath. But, it translates *shabbathohn* with *anapausis*, the Greek word for rest. To be sure, *anapausis* and *sabbaton* neither sound alike, nor are they identical in meaning. And, if Paul’s Bible (the Septuagint) did not call these annual religious rest-days “sabbaths,” then Paul is certainly not talking about the weekly Sabbath in Colossians 2:16.

We may note that the Sabbath, as a memorial to Creation, was also a memorial to a perfect relationship between God and humanity. Humanity lost that by sin. Yet, the Sabbath, properly observed and understood, has always pointed its observers forward to an ever-closer relationship with God. It pointed forward to Christ in a special way in the days before He came, as it does similarly today.

* *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48.

by Thor Shaffer

Thor Shaffer is a senior religion major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Thursday, February 16

How to Celebrate the Sabbath (in Three Easy Steps)

HOW-TO

Key Text: 1 Cor. 5:7, 8

One of the most popular sections in any bookstore is the "how-to" section. It tantalizes shoppers with shelf after shelf of not only instructional material but magical formulas and practices that will alleviate any problem "in five easy steps"!

My magical formula about "how to celebrate the Sabbath" consists of attitude, application, and action. Notice, I did not mention how to KEEP or HOLD the Sabbath; such words can be limiting. The Sabbath is a holiday (holy day) and thus a time of celebration.

1. ATTITUDE: How do you view the Sabbath? Is it a time of mere ritual such as "vespers, Sabbath School, church, sunset meditations, and whew! we're done?" Or is it a time to relax and forget about deadlines, homework, and life crises like majors, careers, and your future? Is Sabbath a period of twenty-four hours that you have to give up in order to satisfy the expectations of your parents, teachers, and Adventist subculture? Or is Sabbath a gift of twenty-four hours during which you are not obligated to your job, classes, or activities, a time in which you better understand what the word *living* really means? Do you feel stifled in your Sabbath morning uniform or suit

as the ho-hum directions for all Christian soldiers are mapped out from the pulpit? Or do you relish the fact that you can see God's grandeur throughout the day in the chilly wind that tickles your face, the pastor's sincerity as he or she speaks about God's love, and the tenderness in a friend's voice as you two pray together?

2. APPLICATION: How do you apply your attitude about Sabbaths, how do you express it? Do you worry all Friday afternoon about what to wear to vespers? Or are you glad that you can put aside college life for a day? Do you complain about all the things you can't do for twenty-four hours? Or do you think about all the things you CAN do for twenty-four hours that you didn't have time for during the week?

3. ACTION: I'm not proposing what you should and should not do on Sabbaths. That is a topic that has been and can always be debated. And by now you've figured out that I'm not providing the answers; the instructions and answers will come from you, as a result of your relationship with God. I'm definitely not advocating an "I'll do whatever I please" type of Christianity, but I would like you to think about what you do and what you WANT to do on Sabbath. Do your actions reflect your attitude about Sabbath?

Sabbath was given out of love, in sincerity and truth by God.

by Teresa Cook

At the time of this writing, Teresa Cook was a senior English/religion double-major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Friday, February 17

Little Dumplin' Days

OPINION

Key Text: Ezekiel 20:20

Growing up in a large family, I often felt the "I'm not so special" syndrome. It always seemed that one or more of my four brothers got most of the attention. But just when I'd get down and depressed from a hard day at school or with the "more loved" siblings, Mom would come through to change my "dejection" into what are, now, very special memories—she would sing to me. Not just any song would do, though. Mom would sing the "Little Dumplin' Song." I knew this was my own special song—one that was sung only for me. It made me feel special! It was at these times that I felt Mom's love the most.

The Sabbath is intended for exactly the same reason. We all go through six days of feeling "not so special." Often we can get loaded down with burdens that make us feel that the world is caving in around us. But just when we feel that we can't take any more hassles, Sabbath comes.

The Lord intended this day as a celebration and communion time with Him. He wants our thoughts to be on the special song that He sings to our hearts. He wants us to feel that this day is

the special time when we can come to Him and hear His "Little Dumplin' Song."

It is the song of His love for us in creating us as special and unique individuals. When He did this, it was because He wanted us to have these special feelings. As we celebrate the Sabbath each week, we should remember that this is the day for each individual to come to his or her Creator and commune with Him.

Another reason that God sings to us on the Sabbath is to communicate the sweet sound of His redemptive plan. He has designed this plan to fit each life in such a way that we will bring praise and honor to His name. All we have to do to receive God's plan is to open our ears and listen to the strains of the song. When we do this our minds and hearts will be in tune with our Creator.

As we contemplate the seventh-day Sabbath, let us look at it as a special time with special memories of a loving Lord and His special "Little Dumplin's."

REACT

1. How do we view our Sabbaths?
2. Are there any ways that we can become closer to the Lord to make Sabbath more special?

by Matt Lyter

Matt Lyter is a junior English and secondary-education major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

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Lesson 8, February 19 - 25

The Dark Side



“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons” (1 Corinthians 10:21, NIV).

Sunday, February 19

Awareness Needed

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Mark 4:15

I have always prided myself in knowing blatant sin when I see it. Shirley MacLaine, spirit channelers, Ouija boards, and astrology definitely fit into my category of "blatant sin." All these things I associate with the occult—Satan territory.

I have always had this curiosity about Ouija boards, how Satan could have infiltrated a harmless company like Parker Brothers, the people who had brought me Monopoly and Sorry! Although I was curious, I never had the courage even to look at one while walking down the toy aisle of the local department store. I'm the type of person who makes a deliberate effort not to read the horoscope section of a newspaper or magazine.

In light of all this, I read this week's lesson on the occult and think that the occult has no bearing on me, your average college student, Joe Blow.

But think again, how has the supernatural pervaded our lives? How many of us have seen *E.T.*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and the *Star Wars Trilogy*, the top-grossing movies of the decade? There is no doubt that the unseen, the unknown, "magic" in general, have always mystified the general public, Joe Blow certainly included.

Let's give Satan credit for being the crafty salesman that

he is. Satan is never going to tempt you with cocaine if doing drugs is the farthest thing from your mind. Neither is he going to tempt you purposely to sell your soul to him if he knows that you would never do so intentionally.

Seeking to maintain a relationship with Christ is hard enough in this vale of sin and tears. Just think how much harder it is when we place ourselves on Satan's turf, where he makes the rules and calls the shots. The smart person is never going to allow himself to be placed in a precarious situation consciously.

A greater sense of awareness is needed in our everyday lives. Many things we do are done without careful thought, and many a decision made without even thinking to ask the guidance of Jesus. This week we will explore God's instruction regarding the occult. The occult is not something that is far removed from us, and the temptation to us as Seventh-day Adventist Christians probably won't be blatant Satan worship. But as soon as you hear the Word, Satan will try to take that from you. Seeking Jesus moment by moment is true safety from anything that Satan throws our way.

"Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them" (Mark 4:15, NIV). In the hands of Jesus—be there or be unaware.

by Kuk-Wha Lee

Kuk-Wha Lee is a senior chemistry major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

The Two Masters

LOGOS

Theme: *Two superhuman forces are engaged in a deadly war on our planet: God, our Creator and Redeemer, contends with demonic beings, Satan and the other fallen angels. Because Satan continually seeks to lead believers away from their loyalty to God, their only safety is to heed strictly the Lord's warnings about the dark powers.*

1. The Great Controversy

Before the creation of mankind there was a conflict in heaven between God and "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). Satan lost the encounter and was cast out of heaven with all of his rebellious followers. The exiled rebel came to this planet where he became "the prince of this world" (John 12:31) through the fall of humanity.

The conflict greatly intensified as the new world joined the rebel cause. Mankind had fallen victim to a ferocity revealed in Peter's description as him who as "a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The apostle Paul emphasized the cunning in the satanic masquerade: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).

In our world, modern Christians must pierce this glowing guise to perceive with the sense of a vital faith the subtle "doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1). Only with

the help of the Lord's Spirit and with determined opposition will we succeed against the powers of darkness. Therefore, be "stedfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:9), "resist the devil" (James 4:7), and "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11).

2. Occult Phenomena

The term *occult* comes from the Latin *occultum* and means "hidden." Although loosely applied to the "twilight zone" phenomena of the paranormal (the as-yet-unexplained), the term more specifically includes "any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deut. 18:10-11, RSV).

The Scriptures contain many references to the various practitioners of the occult, roundly condemning them and their activities. The Canaanites surrounding the children of Israel were permeated with these abominations, and unfortunately their corruption often crept in among God's chosen people.

The Lord foreknew the terrible temptation to conform in these matters, and warned: "You shall not learn to follow the abominable practices. . . . For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord" (Deut. 18:9-12, RSV). With unmistakable clarity, He declared: "If a person turns to mediums and wizards, playing the harlot after them, I will set my face against that person, and will cut

by Erwin Sicher and Lee Greer

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him off from among his people' ” (Lev. 20:6, RSV). Further, “‘a man or a woman who is a medium . . . shall be put to death’ ” (Lev. 20:27, RSV).

For King Saul, these judgments proved real. Confronted with a national crisis, he attempted to consult the dead prophet Samuel through the medium of Endor. A phantom (not Samuel) appeared and pronounced doom, leaving Saul comfourtless (1 Sam. 28:7-25). The Scripture is plain about the dead: “The dead know nothing. . . . They have no more for ever any share in all that is done under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5, 6, RSV).

From the beginning, the serpent contradicted God's ruling that sin brings death, by suggesting to Eve, “‘You will not die’ ” but rather “‘you will be like God’ ” (Gen. 3:4, 5 RSV). This lie was the root of the spiritualistic belief, whether Christianized or not, that the “spiritual” part of a person somehow survives death, to live on in a higher form. Spiritualism proper asserts that these departed spirits can be contacted through a medium.*

A second category of occult practice is divination, which, like spiritualism, attempts to gain knowledge by the use of supernatural powers. It falls under God's condemnation, as well. Both divination and spiritualism differ from sorcery or witchcraft in that they are quests for knowledge. The sorcerer seeks manipulative power over people and events. This third category is also included in this condemnation: “‘You shall not practice augury or witchcraft’ ” (Lev. 19:26, RSV).

3. The Sovereignty of God

The central crux of the Biblical condemnation of occultism is a vindication of the sovereignty of

the Lord: “‘Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God’ ” (Lev. 19:31). All condemnation of occultism must be understood from the perspective of the first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3). The issue at stake is between the Lord and the demons—whether the Lord is God over all gods or not.

The sacrificial involvement of Jesus Christ with mankind is an argument-by-distinction for God's position because of its striking contrast with the machinations of Satan. While Satan has played trickery and dead-mimicry with the human race, Christ has subjugated evil through His life and death, and delivered the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:24-26), thus providing a way that God can follow His own rules and yet save sinners (Rom. 3:26).

As individuals, we face either having God and the forces of good or the satanic forces of evil bear rule in our lives. The distinctions are stark: prophecy or divination, heavenly messengers or spiritualistic apparitions, the Heavenly Mediator or the evil-controlled medium or channeler, the Anchor of the soul or the transmigration of the soul, *life or death*.

What are some cunning approaches Satan employs in the conflict with God and His children? What are some defenses against his wiles? Do we even have any defense without a special miracle in our lives from God?

Are occult practices a phenomenon of the past with little relevance for our sophisticated age? What are some contemporary “occultisms” that are used in the quest for transcendent knowledge and control of other people and events?

* Definition of the National Spiritualistic Association, in the SDA Bible Student's Source Book, by Don. F. Neufeld and Julie Neuffer, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1962), p. 946.

Tuesday, February 21

Tuning In

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Ps. 106:34-36

All we need to do is watch the commercials on television (not to mention the introductions to many programs). They bombard us with the ever-present theme of spiritualism, whether it be a booming voice on the Drainso commercial or a psychic who tracks down criminals for detectives. We need to be wary of the influence this has upon our attitudes toward those who claim to have special knowledge about, and communication from, "the unknown." Ellen G. White gives us counsel upon this matter:

"There is danger in departing in the least from the Lord's instruction. When we deviate from the plain path of duty, a train of circumstances will arise that seems irresistibly to draw us farther and farther from the right. Needless intimacies with those who have no respect for God will seduce us, ere we are aware. Fear to offend worldly friends will deter us from expressing our gratitude toward God or acknowledging our dependence upon Him. We must keep close to the word of God. We need its warnings and encouragement, its threatenings and promises. We need the perfect example given only in the life and character of our Saviour. . . ."

"The visible and invisible world are in close contact. Could the veil be lifted, we would see evil angels pressing their darkness around us, and working with all their power to deceive and destroy. Wicked men are surrounded, influenced, and aided by evil spirits. The man of faith and prayer has yielded his soul to Divine guidance, and angels of God bring to him light and strength from Heaven. . . ."

"Those who give themselves up to the sorcery of Satan, may boast of great benefit received thereby, but does this prove their course to be wise or safe? What if life should be prolonged? What if temporal gain should be secured? Will it pay in the end to disregard the will of God? All such apparent gain will prove at last an irrecoverable loss. We cannot with impunity [exemption from punishment¹] break down a single barrier which God has erected to guard his people from Satan's power.

"Our only safety consists in preserving the ancient landmarks. 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'²"

REACT

Is mass media used in ways that will cause me to have a casual attitude toward evil thoughts and actions?

1. Webster's Dictionary, parentheses supplied.

2. Ellen G. White, *Present Truth and Review and Herald Articles* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association), vol. 1, p. 326.

by Debra E. Chastain

Debra Chastain is a senior elementary-education major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Wednesday, February 22

Fun Facts to Know and Tell

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Deut. 18:9-14

At this point in our study of "The Dark Side" it may be helpful to define the various practices common to the Canaanite and Mesopotamian world of the Old Testament. The heathen nations surrounding Israel were immersed in what we may consider to be demonic divinations. (Divination being defined as "the art or science of deducing the future or the unknown through observation and interpretation of some facet of nature.")*

The purpose of divination was twofold. As stated in the definition, divination was used in hopes of knowing the future. More than that, it was used to try to control or alter that future.

Although there are certain forms of divination viewed either neutrally or receiving tacit approval (i.e., dreams and lots); there are also practices closely associated with various forms of magic and sorcery (see Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-14), which are specifically forbidden.

Forms of divination:

1. Dreams (oneiromancy): In Egypt and Mesopotamia, handbooks on the interpretation of dreams have been found. The biblical characters associated with dreams are Joseph and Daniel.

2. Lots (cleromancy): Small peb-

bles, dice, or short sticks were probably used in the Bible to (a) determine a person's guilt; (b) select someone for a given responsibility; (c) divide the land among the tribes; (d) select the goats for the Day of Atonement. This was not used to control the future, but to seek out the Lord's will.

3. Arrows (belomancy): It is not known precisely how arrows were thought to predict the future, though this form of divination was widespread throughout Mesopotamia. Israel, though, doesn't seem to have used this type of divination.

4. Water (hydromancy): Other liquids were added to the water, and the resulting patterns were used to determine the future.

5. Liver Inspection (hepatoscopy): The liver was thought to be the seat of the emotions, and it was also believed that the gods would write the answer of the entreaty on the entrails of the animal. This form of divination was quite common. No direct evidence exists to suggest that Israel was involved in this practice.

6. Consultation of the dead (necromancy): Divination of this nature is strictly forbidden in the Bible (see Deut. 18:11, 12). Our belief on the state of humanity in death presupposes this type of divination to include direct demonic involvement. This form is accessible in our society. Will we fall prey as quickly as Israel did?

*H. E. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979).

by Janice Yakush

Janice Yakush is a senior religion major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Thursday, February 23

God's Sovereignty in Our Salvation

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gen. 3:4, 19

Beginning in Genesis, the vital issue in the great controversy has been whether the creature can have life without obedience to the laws of the Creator—whether there is life independent of the Creator. Concerning the sinner, Satan has claimed, “Ye shall not surely die,” but in death, “your eyes shall be opened” (Gen. 3:4, 5)—the basis of spiritualism and all false religion. However, God has revealed the true state of the sinner: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (3:19). As children of Adam, we are born, without our consent, into sin (Ps. 51:5) and into the slavery of evil (John 8:34). How can we be free from the satanic master into whose hopeless service we are sunken, from over whose dark pit we hang from ledgeless walls? The miracle begins with surrender to God—the God-given realization of His sovereignty in these areas:

1. God's sovereignty in our seeking of Him. Since “there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11), He gives unmerited the desire for Him and for righteousness; therefore He says, “I am found of them that sought me not” (Isa. 65:1). “Turn thou me

... for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented” (Jer. 31:18, 19).

2. God's sovereignty in our repentance. The preaching of God's Word is in vain unless “God peradventure will give them repentance” (2 Tim. 2:25). Jesus said, “All that the Father *giveth* me *shall come* to me; and him that *cometh* to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). So, to wait idly for repentance is to defy His will that we return to Him. Instead, we must come, humbly grateful for the gift of coming, in order to receive forgiveness through His death—the event whereby God can be both just *and* justifier (Rom. 3:26).

3. God's sovereignty in the Christian life. “Work out your own salvation. . . . For it is God which worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12, 13). To wait idly for obedience is to deny His election and to defy His will and work in us—“Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works *in us*” (Isa. 26:12).

REACT

How did Satan's first lie, “Ye shall not surely die,” lead to the falsehood of salvation by human merit, and to the counterfeit “surrender” that is actually passive defiance?

by Lee Greer

Lee Greer is a senior English-and-history major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Friday, February 24

Holiday Religion

OPINION

Key Text: Colossians 2:16, 17

The majority of Adventists who are reared in the church celebrate Christmas, Halloween, Easter, Columbus Day, Labor Day, etc. You may say that there is a difference between Halloween and Labor Day, and maybe there is. But maybe it's all in your head.

To some people, a holiday is just a chance to stop working. For others the holidays are something traditional; they carry an aura of being sacrosanct. I think it depends on the beliefs you had when you were growing up.

The Jews celebrate Hanukkah to give thanks to God for the restoration of their Temple in 164 B.C. They do not celebrate the birth of Christ in any way or form. However, Christians have many different views on the authenticity of Christmas.

Many people believe that Jesus was born during the autumn of the year. To them Christmas is not a time to rejoice in His birth necessarily, but to express the love for friends and family members that God has given them. By exchanging gifts and being together, these people capture the spirit of loving kindness that God wants us to have all year.

On the other side of the coin are those who believe Christmas is a pagan holiday, and an excuse for people to see family and

friends who won't take time during the rest of the year. Perhaps your view of Christmas is similar to this one. Attitude has a big part to play in how we celebrate any holiday.

Halloween is a day for witches, no doubt. This is a day that Satan can rejoice in because we dress as he does and "trick" people into giving us what we want. We costume ourselves to hide our true identity. That is the light side. Actually, many witches and spiritualists have a heyday on the thirty-first. Are we helping Satan's work?

The days of the week are named after pagan gods. Easter is a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Communion is our reenacting of Jesus' suffering for us. For someone of another faith it would be eating, drinking, and clean feet.

By imposing our beliefs on one another are we helping or hindering our spiritual growth? Is every day a time to worship Christ and His love, or do we only remember Him during vacation? If the holidays are your excuse for remembering the blessings of the Lord, then try to make every day a holiday. Satan knows how to get to us, and by keeping our minds on material things the spirit of love is forgotten.

REACT

Is it possible to overreact to the occult and see Satan in everything?

by Caroline Cameron

Caroline Cameron is a sophomore English major at Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas.

Lesson 9, February 26—March 4
Getting It All Together



“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy”
(Leviticus 19:2, NIV).

Sunday, February 26

Two Sad Beginnings

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Leviticus 3:17; 15:31-33; 19:17, 18

Colleen's alcoholic mother beat her often. Her stepfather molested her. She learned early that she got fewer beatings if she got up first in the morning and fed her little half brother to keep him quiet. She became like a servant in the house.

During adolescence, she ran away with a boy, who left her when she became pregnant. She had an abortion, but soon turned to prostitution to survive. By age 21 she had been through heroin addiction and several bouts of venereal disease. She was institutionalized for a time.

A psychologist described her personality as "inadequate." She was about 10 years old emotionally. She was unable to respond to affection, since she had received hardly any. Her mother, her boyfriend, and her pimp had always told her what to do, so she never learned to make mature decisions. If closely supervised, she could perform menial tasks, but was unable to work alone.

Her caregiver taught her basic personal hygiene. At a halfway house, with her diet and activity controlled, her behavior improved slightly. If not constantly guided, she became slovenly, ate poorly, and lapsed back into old habits. The halfway house softened her

slightly, but she remained immature and empty. She was unable to form lasting relationships. She was a child in an adult body, with a "kick me" mentality.

Colleen's problem parallels ancient Israel's problem. Prolonged abuse dehumanized them. They had become human oxen for the Egyptians, who severely oppressed them. Their lives were expendable. The Egyptians worked them like animals.

Years of slavery left them with an ingrained, self-debasing stigma, and nearly destroyed their national pride, their sense of identity. Like Colleen, they were impotent, powerless to change their predicament.

When God freed them from Egyptian power, the vacuum of authority nearly led to chaos. They could not manage themselves, which forced God to supply rules and regulations through Moses to replace the control the Egyptians had maintained over them.

The bad news is that God had to multiply rules and regulations to save them from themselves. The good news is that God wove His infinite wisdom through the rules. In that way, the people could accrue the benefits of health and well-being if they followed His advice.

As with Colleen, the rehabilitation program took a long time to pay off. Unfortunately, the results were not all they might have been in either case.

by Edward Cook

Edward Cook is a pathologist in Portland, Oregon.

Monday, February 27

Forward Into the Past

LOGOS

Theme: *The book of Leviticus gives instruction regarding holiness, or sanctification, as it relates to the Christian's health and well-being. Although sin has weakened the human family, God devised the plan of salvation to restore in repentant sinners the image of their Maker.*

The idea that Adam and Eve are created in God's image implies that God is our model as we try to regain holiness. Within our limited resources, powers of reason, and our position in the stream of time, the goal of sanctification would be to recapture as much as possible of Adam and Eve's original tie with God.

We will explore the texts chosen for this week's lesson with the idea of how they reflect God's persistent intent to bring human beings as close to Himself and to Eden as possible. Comparison with Eden was a teaching device used by Jesus.¹

1. No Israelite May Eat Any Fat or Blood (read Lev. 3:17)

The stark contrast between Edenic and Egyptian diets gives this ban meaning. The Egyptian diet included some Edenic items, like cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic.² But nearly every other living thing had become part of the menu. "Meat" might range from insects and clams to various reptiles, birds, and mam-

mals (fat, blood, and all).

Part of God's task was to change habits ingrained in hundreds of thousands of ex-slaves who had no knowledge of physiology, nutrition, or hygiene. From each one, He wanted an intelligent response from a healthy brain, based on a TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP.³ But most of them were capable only of a master-servant arrangement. They kept distant and obeyed Him from fear.⁴

Dietary laws were necessary even while they received manna daily. Coming from God's hand, this "heavenly" food was surely close to ideal. But the people complained about it and remembered the good old days of carnivory in Egypt.⁵ In frustration, God even indulged them and told them they could have meat "until it come out at your nostrils."⁶

God's infinite knowledge of physiology, nutrition, behavior, biochemistry, etc., seemed useless in improving their habits. He resorted to laws and punishment. It was the only method they understood at the time. Persuasion and reason would not have worked, or surely He would have used them more.

If you were God, how would you reach a fearful, unlistening audience who understood nothing of the science behind your plans to help them?

Holiness includes maturity. Does emphasis on rules foster mature powers of decision or does it

by Edward Cook

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promote immature, grudging obedience?

2. Sexual Health (read Leviticus 15:31-33)

This text summarizes the whole fifteenth chapter, which contains detailed instructions about genital discharges. Until recently, most people felt ill at ease discussing this subject in a group setting. With the sexual revolution of the 60's and 70's, and the AIDS plague of the 80's, we have necessarily become more open about sexual hygiene. But why would Moses devote space to this subject?

A comparison with Eden might help. If our ideas of Eden are true, safeguards were pointless there. With no risk of infection, there was no concern over microorganisms entering or leaving the body. Epidemiology⁷ was an unneeded science.

By Moses' time, however, epidemiology as we know it was still unknown but desperately needed. In ancient times, the greatest killers were infections. There were no antibiotics to save the ill. People commonly died with infections that, today, we cure with inexpensive pills. Mortality among infants and children was high.

Nearly all microorganisms need water for growth. Body fluids are water-based substances that serve one's physiology in some way. Fluids transmitted between people carry one person's microflora and fauna to the other. Some are harmless; others are deadly. It's like sharing air with coughing people who have colds.

Moses linked freedom from Egyptian diseases to observance of health laws.⁸ But with no working understanding of their scientific basis, the people came to see these laws as ritual, moral, and author-

ity issues more than health issues.

Are laws and punishment a legitimate means of imposing health and order onto a disorderly, unhealthy community? What about AIDS sufferers?

How does sexual health magnify the image of our Maker in us? Is it a cause? A result? No relation?

3. Love Your Neighbor (read Leviticus 19:17, 18)

This text illustrates that nearly everything Jesus taught came from the Old Testament. Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan helping the beaten, robbed man during a discussion about who is one's neighbor. They had been discussing Leviticus 19:17, 18.

In Eden, the question "Who is my neighbor?" was meaningless. Since then, however, self-interest has become an instinctive and dominant drive in human thinking. Yet many Bible authors promoted altruistic themes,¹⁰ which require control of self-interest.

In Egypt, self-preservation was foremost in the Israelite mind. The Egyptians reinforced this instinct daily. Such ingrained patterns would not simply vanish during the short trek across the Red Sea floor. In Sinai, God's task was to lead them away from self-centered, instinctual thinking, toward patterns of generosity, altruism, order—traits nearly extinguished during slavery.

God's larger purpose, to reveal Himself globally through mature, trusted friends, could never occur while the Israelites had a slave mentality.

So loving one's neighbor symbolized the higher plane of thought that God wanted them to reach. He and His friend Moses were willing to lead them to it.

1. Mark 10:1-9.

2. Num. 11:5. RSV.

3. Jer. 7:22, 23.

4. Ex. 20:18-20.

5. Num. 11:4-6.

6. Num. 11:20. GTEV.

7. Epidemiology is the study of how diseases spread among humans.

8. Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:12-15.

9. Luke 10:25-37.

10. John 15:13; 1 John 3:17, 18; Ps 82:3, 4; Job 29:11, 12; Micah 6:8.

Recipe for a Rebel

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Jeremiah 7:21-26

More was at stake than compliance with Levitical health laws. Behind behavior lies motive. The Israelites' motive for obedience was a major problem.

Rebellion smoldered beneath their outward compliance. Obedience brought them little peace of mind. They did not serve God in confidence and peace.

Ellen White's observation: "A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul."¹

On the other hand, true obedience has a different motive. It comes from devotion to principle, not just the need to follow orders. "The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. . . . True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The es-

sence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God."² Evidently, motive makes the difference.

In the emergency conditions of the time, God resorted to law as a tool for improving the health of the Israelites. With healthier bodies, their minds would be clearer and easier for Him to reach. "The brain nerves that connect with the whole system are the medium through which heaven communicates with man and affects the inmost life. Whatever hinders the circulation of the electric current in the nervous system, thus weakening the vital powers and lessening mental susceptibility, makes it more difficult to arouse the moral nature."³

God's intent in giving Israel health rules was to improve their health so that they could discern His communications more clearly. Robust health in the whole person—mind and body—is His desire for each of us.

REACT

1. What are my motives in acting out my lifestyle? Commitment to principle? Fear of disapproval? Desire for approval? Peer pressure?

2. How often do we distinguish between principled behavior and grudging compliance?

3. Is rebellion or defiance ever justified?

1. *Signs of the Times*, July 22, 1897.

2. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 97, 98.

3. *Education*, p. 209.

by Edward Cook

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Wednesday, March 1

New Light on Old Knowledge

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Proverbs 17:22

The knowledge explosion in the past century has revealed vast information about nutrition and physiology. The effects of the Mosaic ban on eating animal fat¹ are more understandable now than ever before. God gave us minds to learn and reason. Learning to stay healthy will make us able to learn God's ways more easily, and promote sanctification.

In the last few decades, high intake of animal (saturated) fat has been linked to hardening of the arteries, a major cause of death in developed nations.

People with low total-fat intake and dietary fat limited to vegetable oils, in general, have lower rates of coronary disease.

Many vegetable oils are polyunsaturated. Polyunsaturated refers to the structure of the carbon chains in the triglyceride (fat) molecule. In a saturated fat molecule, a hydrogen atom occupies every possible binding site. If sites on two adjacent carbons are not hydrogenated, the unused sites form a second bond between those carbons. A single bond becomes a double bond. Unsaturated chains have double bonds. A chain with many such double bonds is polyunsaturated.

Certain studies suggest that monounsaturated fats may be even better than polyunsaturated fats. Olive oil has a high proportion of monounsaturated chains.

In some way, the kind and amount of fat we eat can accelerate or retard vascular disease.

Good health is made of many elements besides diet, some of which are intangible.

The command to love one's neighbor² carries a health benefit, too. Of course, even God cannot command love from a free person. Yet if one chooses to love and not be hateful, better health may follow that choice.

Studies have implied a link between mental status and the immune system's efficiency. Many, if not all, cases of clinical depression are an evidence of anger turned into oneself. Lowered immune competence and even cancer have been linked to depression,^{3,4} a form of anger.

One could argue that anger may bode ill for one's health in a very real way. The biblical advice not to be hateful is pertinent because hatred and anger are similar emotions, and they often occur together. On the other hand, Solomon observed that happiness is good for one's health.⁵

Observers of human nature often conclude that a positive frame of mind promotes health.

1. Lev. 3:17.

2. Lev. 19:17, 18.

3. Greenberg, J. and Bower, B. "The Aging of Immunity," *Science News*, vol. 131:328, May 23, 1987.

4. Persky, Victoria W., et al. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, September-October, 1987 issue. Cited in: Bower, B. "Depression and Cancer: A Fatal Link." *Science News*, vol. 132:244, October 17, 1987.

5. Prov. 17:22

by Edward Cook

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Curing Hearing Impairment

HOW-TO

Key Text: Proverbs 12:15

We enjoy many advantages over the Israelites of Moses' time. Our knowledge of health science is among the most valuable. Like sanctification, building and maintaining health is so simple, yet so hard.

It is simple because healthful eating, moderate exercise, and God-centered thinking are not complex requirements. They are within reach of nearly everyone.

It is difficult because success depends partly on our own will and commitment. Few of us have all the self-mastery we need.

Here are some tools that may enhance success:

1. Listen to your body. Notice which foods leave you light, bright, and alert and which leave you heavy, dull, and lethargic. Imagine how the Israelites felt after gorging on quail vs. eating manna.¹ Would you expect them to feel different?

2. Listen to nature. Laws of cause and effect surround us. Lawns, investments, and relationships all grow with nurturing. They degenerate if ignored. Result follows cause. Our bodies and minds can flourish or fail by the same laws.

3. Listen to the Bible. Bible stories abound with examples of cause and effect. Read Proverbs.

The Bible urges us to test

everything² to learn the effects of actions. Common knowledge of natural laws will help us avoid illness and enjoy health. Spiritual laws are natural laws.

4. Just listen, period. Keep an open mind. Take a balanced attitude somewhere between cynicism and gullibility. Notice how many Bible writers depicted God's people as being in trouble because they wouldn't listen.³

Willingness to listen was a key factor in Christ's choice of disciples. They were so teachable that, in less than four years, the direction of their lives was permanently changed. They became sanctified because they were willing to listen and learn.

For contrast, think of the scheming religious leaders of Christ's day. They had closed minds and could not receive new ideas. Their attitude kept them from receiving the truth He offered.

Regaining God's image entails striving for the best health. It requires willingness to listen and learn. It is enhanced by an inquiring mind that tests and weighs issues and learns to tell good from evil. It means becoming a "neighbor" to other people. The finished product mirrors Christ's character.

REACT

With so much deception in the religious world today, how should I filter what I hear?

1. Num. 11.

2. 1 Thess. 5:21; Hb. 5:14; 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 4:1.

3. Prov. 13:18; 15:14; Hosea 4:6 and dozens of others.

by Edward Cook

Edward Cook is a pathologist in Portland, Oregon.

Friday, March 3

An Endless Changing

OPINION

Key Text: Job 12:7-12

Constant change pervades God's creation. People, neighborhoods, churches, and countries evolve through predictable phases. Seeds become trees and bear fruit. A sun becomes a red giant, a nova, a white dwarf. Likewise, time changes our view of God as He reveals Himself.

Levitical laws revealed part of God. They showed how He wanted the Israelites to live in their day. Today they seem archaic.

Today's knowledge explosion is a sprinkle of God's omniscience upon us. It overflows the civilized world. Even the network news and the daily paper explain the latest scientific advances in simple language.

New discoveries have changed past beliefs. To cure headaches, some ancient peoples trephined holes in the skull to release demons. The "cure" killed many patients. Today, craniotomies bring hardly any mortality, and they treat tumors, not demons.

Leprosy was seen as God's judgment on unusually corrupt sinners, a proof of His displeasure. Today, the leprosy bacterium is easily controlled with an antibiotic. Leprosy has nothing to do with one's morals.

We have discovered that some "moral weaknesses," like alcoholism, may have a genetic component. An alcoholic cannot choose his parents.

Studies even suggest that some forms of insanity are associated with prenatal viral infections.

God is lavishing knowledge upon us and forcing us to discard inadequate ideas. But are we willing to give up contradictory notions of theology and morality, too?

By explaining away superstition, science can reveal that "sin" is like a disease, not a legal problem between us and an exacting God. The remedy is healing, not fawning before God, pleading for forgiveness and pardon. We don't age and die because God won't forgive us until we beg. We die, repentant or not, because the genes of our minds and bodies are defective and bear the effects of centuries of separation from God.

By deluging us with testable scientific knowledge and showing us universal laws of cause and effect, God can better assure humanity that He is a God of order, patience, and generosity. How could one think that such a God, presiding over a magnificent, infinite universe, is arbitrary, petty, or severe?

Through nature, Scripture, Christ's life on earth, and scientific discovery, the Spirit continues to reveal God as the remedy for our predicament.

If we are willing to learn and change, He gently brings us healing. Pride changes to repentance, confusion to order, hardness to kindness, anxiety to peace. He leads us on the eternal journey toward the maturity of Christ.

by Edward Cook

Edward Cook is a pathologist in Portland, Oregon.

Lesson 10, March 5 - 11

The Truth About the Birds and Bees



“It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, NIV).

Sunday, March 5

The Witness of the Bones

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Leviticus 18, 20

“So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. . .” (Ex. 13:18, 19, NKJV). The bones—and the story.

* * *

They were a stunning couple! An aura of promise enveloped them, and socialites coveted inclusion in their circle. His mere touch turned enterprise to gold, it seemed, and she wore his prestige elegantly.

But success made its demands, and he was away more than she liked. Between the glitter and excitement of gala parties and state balls stretched weeks of loneliness and boredom. Until more and more often she pushed aside thoughts of her husband and looked for opportunities to be near the young foreigner.

In his emerging manhood, she found him strong, handsome. Her husband had employed him as a mere laborer, but it quickly became evident he was one in a hundred. He was bright, energetic, industrious. Perhaps it was true what they whispered, that it was *his* talents that made her husband what he was.

Management of household duties brought them together often. She liked the way he respected her, treated her with dignity. In

many ways he elevated her womanhood even more than did her husband. He was her fantasy transformed into male blood and bone. He challenged her, brought out her assertiveness. She never once doubted she would have him for herself. She was wise in the art of winsome seduction.

The awakening process of sexuality exploded within Joseph as surely as one new moon followed another in the Egyptian night. The evidences of his budding manhood caught him with surprise and filled him with questions and concerns about his own responses and emotions. But these were dark times for Joseph. No loving mother stood by to affirm him. No understanding father celebrated with him his emerging maleness. There were no self-ratifying experiences of young love. Isolation, grief, fear, and loneliness were his daily companions, scarcely kept at bay by his burgeoning responsibilities.

She was not unimportant to him. She was his employer's wife. And her attentions filled a desperate void in his life. It was hard to separate duty from pleasure, to know even where there was a line. Until . . .

“Now it came to pass . . . that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me’” (Gen. 39:7, NKJV).

Then Joseph saw the line, the line of God's command. And “he refused and said to his master's wife, . . . ‘How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?’” (Gen. 39:8, 9, NKJV).

by Ron and Karen Flowers

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

Monday, March 6

Eros Sanctified

LOGOS

Theme: *The sexual powers are sacred to marriage, which is a divinely ordained union. The Levitical guidelines for sexual morality are based on the divine principle that 'wholeness' and 'normality' are essential aspects of holiness. Consequently, sexual deviations from the Creator's original design are sin because they introduce confusion and mar the divine ideal. Living according to the Creator's design promotes genuine happiness.*

Have you ever wondered why, in our society, close relatives don't date or marry each other? why it is that the church believes so strongly in faithfulness to the marriage vow and in the permanence of marriage? how we as Christians came to feel as we do about sexual perversions? The regulations for human sexuality and marriage given by God in Leviticus 18 and 20 form a significant part of the watershed from which Christian thought about these topics has flowed.

The announcement, "I am the Lord your God," with which Leviticus 18 opens and closes, signals that this is instruction for the covenant community. The behavior God expects of His people is always commanded within the context of this covenant in which He has espoused His people to Himself, pledged to care for their needs, and done mighty acts for

their redemption (cf. Ex. 6:7; 19:3-6; 20:2). In this very short covenant formula, "I am the Lord your God," the people were reminded constantly of who they were, what had been done for them, and whom they served.

1. Sexual Behavior Is a Mark of Religious Allegiance

This section of Leviticus (chap. 17 ff.) deals with private religion and morality rather than corporate worship as in the first sixteen chapters. Holiness in the personal life is in focus, specifically the sexual experience of the individual as an expression of that holiness. God considers sexuality of such significance as to fix it within the holiness code of His people and to expect obedience to that code as part of the believer's response to His covenant. The corollary to this on the human side is that the sexual behavior of a person makes a religious statement about the individual's relationship to God. Elizabeth Achtemeier, writing of the part sexuality plays in a wholistic understanding of human spirituality, says, "This means that the life of sex can never be separated, for the Christian, from the life of spirituality. It is fully as possible to violate or to fulfill our relation to God through sexual activity as through prayer or service."¹

2. Obedience to Sexual Morality Leads to Abundant Living

"Therefore keep My law and

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My ordinances; whoever practices them enjoys life through them," the Lord promises (Lev. 18:5, Modern Language). Real happiness and fulfilled living comes from a close relationship with God and adherence to His guidelines for living. In Jesus, God opened the way for us to that abundant life (cf. John 10:10). "What is envisaged is a happy life in which a man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessing, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present (Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-14)."²

3. Sex Is Best Within Boundaries (read Leviticus 18:6-23)

Most of Leviticus 18 is an establishment of boundaries on sexual activity. The prohibitions against incest—sex with close relatives ("uncover the nakedness of" means "have intercourse with") also defines who is not eligible as a marriage partner (18:6-18). Other heathen practices and perversions—such as intercourse during menstruation, intercourse between men, and intercourse with animals—were forbidden (18:19-23).

The unbeliever would find all this too limited, too restrictive, a denial of true sexual freedom. While many points were not new to Hebrew life, some of the regulations did restrict practices that had been followed by even the nation's leading ancestors. Such marriages as that of Abraham to his half-sister Sarah (Gen. 20:12), Jacob to the sisters Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29), and that of Moses' own father Amram to Jochbed, an aunt (Ex. 6:20), would not now be permitted.

The Lord did not then and does not now set boundaries on sexual expression to limit the happiness and fulfillment of His people. Divinity is interested in our happiness and is wiser than

we. True happiness, true holiness, is found in a life of purity, living according to the Creator's design, putting together what God has planned to go together, and keeping apart what God has meant to be separate.

4. The Sexual Powers Are Special and Sacred to Marriage

The teachings of Leviticus 18 and 20 affirm the truths of human sexuality found elsewhere in Scripture. The boundaries that are placed upon sexual expression and marriage (18:6-23) and the penalties imposed for violations (20:10-21) designate the sexual powers of human beings and the institution of marriage as worthy of the highest respect. Our sexuality is created by God as a whole—some part of our nature and is to be controlled and disciplined according to God's plan for us. Marriage is thereby accorded dignity, security, protection, and honor (cf. Heb. 13:4).

In Leviticus 18:7, 8, 16 it is stated that a wife's nakedness is her husband's nakedness and vice versa. Implied is that, in God's eyes, marriage, or more precisely marital intercourse, makes the man and wife as closely related as parents and children.³ The husband-wife relationship is therefore truly that of "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5), a shared life, an intimate bond, a lifelong union.

The prohibition against the worship of Molech (18:21), a most obscure verse, may in fact give us a clue to an even deeper meaning to the rest of the chapter. Marriage is a metaphor for the divine relationship with Israel in the Old Testament and with the church in the New (cf. Isa. 54:5; Eph. 5:31, 32). The worship of other gods is spiritual prostitution (cf. Jer. 3:1; Hosea 4:15), an adulteration of the marriage covenant with Jehovah

(Eze. 16:8, 15, 32). The reference to Molech emphasizes the importance of faithfulness to the marriage, i.e. the covenant, with Him. The tangible expression of each Israelite's faithfulness to that spiritual marriage is the selection of an appropriate marriage partner and faithfulness to a monogamous, heterosexual relationship.

What would you consider the purpose of the regulations in Levi-

ticus 18 and 20 to be for Christians? In comparing the new marriage regulations of Leviticus with those known by the earlier patriarchs, what conclusions might be drawn about progressive revelation? About God's plan for the social structure of His covenant people?

What do the severe penalties for sexual sins of Leviticus 20 indicate? How do these penalties emphasize the importance of the cross of Christ?

1. Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Committed Marriage*, p. 159.
2. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, p. 253.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Tuesday, March 7

Sex With Love and Limits

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Eph. 5:25-27

Ellen White spoke in warm and endearing terms of the Creator's plan for sexual union in marriage, and boldly and bluntly condemned attitudes and practices not in keeping with that design. She sought to elevate the place of sex in marriage to a level befitting the dignity and honor of the marriage covenant.

Her time, which was one of considerable restraint as far as public discussion of sexuality is concerned, influenced both her terminology and approach. While "privilege of the marriage relation" refers to sexual intercourse, her more general term "marriage relation" also connotes the accompanying sexual union. "Animal passions," "lustful passions" and "sexual excess" are terms she uses in reference to attitudes and practices that abuse the sexual powers and the marital union.¹

Myths surrounded the sexual union. Anxieties about conception prevailed. Women lacked robust health. Many knew great pain associated with intercourse owing to unrepaired childbirth trauma. The standard mind-set for husbands was not gentleness and understanding.² Many assumed that marriage legitimizes any kind of sexual practice between a couple. Women were to be subject

to the will and wish of their husbands.

"The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes it. By it human love is refined and purified, elevated and ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides."³

"How few men show their love in the manner specified by the apostle: 'Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might [not pollute it, but] sanctify and cleanse it; . . . that it should be holy and without blemish.' This is the quality of love in the marriage relation which God recognizes as holy. Love is a pure and holy principle, but lustful passion will not admit of restraint and will not be dictated to or controlled by reason. It is blind to consequences; it will not reason from cause to effect."⁴

"Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish love. Then soul will be knit with soul, and the two lives will blend in harmony. Angels of God will be guests in the home, and their holy vigils will hallow the marriage chamber. Debasing sensuality will be banished. Upward to God will the thoughts be directed; to Him will the heart's devotion ascend."⁵

1. See *The Adventist Home*, pp. 121-126 and footnoted sources.

Eden, p. 19.

3. *The Adventist Home*, p. 99.

5. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 362.

2. Alberta Mazat, *That Friday in*

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124.

by Ron and Karen Flowers

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

Born to Bond

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 1 Cor. 13

The enactments of Leviticus 20 “had as their . . . purpose the preservation of community holiness in the area of sexual conduct. . . . Here . . . is an underlying concern for individual and communal well-being.”¹

Implied in the restrictions are protection against property control falling into the hands of a few families and corruption of the gene pool, both dangerous to long-range societal well-being. On the individual plane, the issue is one of healthy and alien bonding.

Donald M. Joy in his landmark book, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God*, asserts “all humans are bonding beings.”² The first intense desire for bonding occurs at delivery. Up to three hours after birth, babies will form a special attachment to their parents, given the magic of skin contact and other instinctive bonding behaviors. As years bring more of the same parent/child intimacy, the child is nurtured into wholeness as a sexual being.

Somewhere between childhood and maturity this once-bonded creature awakens to new desires to bond again. Joy unfolds the distinctive Judeo-Christian blueprint for the developing intimacy—

leave, cleave, unite—in twelve steps moving from a look of “Eureka, I have found you” to “naked and unashamed.”³ When God’s timetable and design are followed we may know the fullness of a protected, lifelong bond of married love. When the mystery pairbond of Creation is present, when male and female become one flesh again as they were created in Adam under the blessing of God, the two are enabled to survive all kinds of adversity. But when the bond is faulty because the pair become involved in stages of intimacy inadequately protected by appropriate levels of commitment or because they seek to establish God-forbidden alien bonds, the consequences will almost certainly be pain and brokenness from which not only the two persons but a wide circle around them will struggle to recover.

Ultimately, Joy concludes, “God’s [desired] relationship with humans is one of intimate bonding, and . . . all human intimacies are ‘rehearsals’ for the ultimate reunion of humans with their Creator.”⁴ While human love “has its own existence . . . and does not need to be spiritualized to have human worth, . . . it is a human experience that images something eternal.”⁵

Seeking bonds apart from God’s design thwarts His desire to show His love to the world.

1. R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), pp. 188, 189.

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

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-53.

4. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

5. Dennis F. Kinlaw, quoted by Donald M. Joy, p. 176.

by Ron and Karen Flowers

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Thursday, March 9

How Not to Run a Red Light

HOW-TO

Key Text: Philippians 4:8

Sexuality is a gift from God, a trust of which we are given the care. Despite the decadence around us, it is possible by the power of the Spirit to honor Christ joyfully in this arena of our lives.

1. Commit your sexuality to God. Recognize that God is both Creator and Redeemer of all that you are, including your sexuality. Whether single or married, pledge yourself to glorify Him.

2. Find fulfillment in the broader aspects of sexuality. As exciting and significant as sex with one's spouse can be, the physical act does not make for completion in marriage. The achievement of intimacy in other areas of life is essential to give quality to the relationship. The Bible expression for sexual intimacy is *know* (cf. Gen. 4:1, 17) and connotes the wider knowing of one another that comes from open communication, showing affection, tender talk, appreciating one another's differentness and specialness, and working to perpetuate romance.

The sexual energy of single Christian men and women, while not culminating in physical sexual expression, may still provide a satisfying experience of intimacy with friends on emotional, intellectual, and spiritual levels.

"Human sexuality is not something apart from ourselves; it is what we are, our very essence. It is expressed in everything we do. It is the source of most of life's richest joys and fulfillments. God does not deny any of the enjoyment or development of our sexuality. Christian singles are only denied the genital expression of sexuality; in all other ways we are free to express it to the utmost. And that 'utmost' has a very broad scope."

"Not that such denial is a small thing. But it is possible, and with God's help, it need not be devastating."¹

3. Heed the yellow lights. It's time for caution when you find yourself getting special enjoyment from being close to someone who is "off limits," through talking, sharing personal thoughts and notes, touching, giving gifts, fantasizing or dreaming about this individual. An emotional affair characteristically precedes a physical one.²

4. Focus on that which is uplifting. Biblical Christian values on sexuality are rarely if ever portrayed in the media, in the film and video industry, and the popular literature of today. Sex sells, so just the opposite is found there. Since "by beholding we become changed," we must be far more discriminating than we often are in the attention we give to these things if we want to heed the counsel of Philippians 4:8.

1. Margaret Clarkson, *So You're Single* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1978), p. 27.

2. Charles E. Mylander, "Running the Yellow Lights," *Partnership*, Nov.-Dec. 1987, p. 37.

by Ron and Karen Flowers

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

By Whose Authority?

OPINION

Key Text: John 17:17

Canaan, ahead of the migrating Israelites by some 200 miles and what would turn out to be a trek of 40 years, was the Promised Land, but it was not Utopia. God acknowledged that, as in Egypt, even in the place where He was bringing His chosen people, there would be sexual behaviors radically different from His ideal. Israelite men, women, and young people would be tempted, taunted, and pressured to conform to ideas springing from sources other than Divine revelation. Philosophies about sexuality would be advanced by the most trusted individuals with the suggestion that, because they met natural human urges, they were compatible with the way of the Lord. A wide range of sexual experiences would therefore be very, very attractive—even overpowering.

Like parents endeavoring to ready their children for life in adult society, God in Leviticus seeks to prepare Israel *and us* for what can be expected from the world in terms of sexual mores, values, and behaviors. The instruction to the people was simply to follow the moral code given by God. There is no discussion of any “redeeming value” in the ideas of those who follow other codes or no codes at all. All other values and

practices must be tested by the Word of God. “Israel does not look to Egypt or Canaan for her sexual standards. The unbelievers do not establish the moral criteria by which the believers live in community.”* In recent decades, the behavioral sciences have amassed an impressive body of information on human sexuality. Much of it is compatible with Scripture; part is not. What are we to do when confronted with ideas and philosophies that differ from Scripture, or that would propose to flesh out areas where the Bible seems silent? Some would suggest that we go with that which is current, with that which has been studied and found to be psychologically and sociologically sound, and not be concerned about what is or is not written in the Bible. After all, God and our ancestors-in-faith did not have the benefit of modern research!

The prayer of Jesus was, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. . . . Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:15-17, NKJV). Sociological observations and personal feelings may be at great variance with revelation. Ultimately, we must choose which source—Scripture or contemporary thinking—we will trust. When we encounter what is unclear or confusing, faith demands that we question, not God, but our own understanding.

*Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*, p. 301.

by Ron and Karen Flowers

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Answers to Mission Quiz (From page 36.)

1. All three. Each true disciple of Jesus has a responsibility for the witness of Christ's mission to the unbelievers in his/her own culture as well as to all peoples of the world.

2. b and d. Missionary means one who goes to take a message—the gospel. That person may engage in any occupation while witnessing or assisting the witness.

3. False. We are embarking on an age of renewed mission. But missionaries will be different in the 1990s. Those from developed countries will probably have specialized technical skills or will adapt to the culture, and work at the grass roots level. The numbers of missionaries from underdeveloped countries will dramatically increase.

4. False. While many outstanding missionaries have been of Germanic descent, other peoples also have produced wonderful missionaries out of all

proportion to their numbers. Mussau Islanders, of Papua New Guinea, are an example.

5. c. Missionary activity was highest in the United States when society was obsessed with pushing back frontiers, making do with what was available, and striving to achieve new heights—to fulfill the impossible dream.

6. b. Frontier missions need not open the work in a brand new country. Missions may reach out to an unreached people such as the Sioux Indians of North America.

7. d. And response a may not be essential either.

8. b. The Kalahari Bushmen. For more information, check your world mission reports in Sabbath School. Or write MISSION, Department of Church Ministries, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.



MISSIONS:

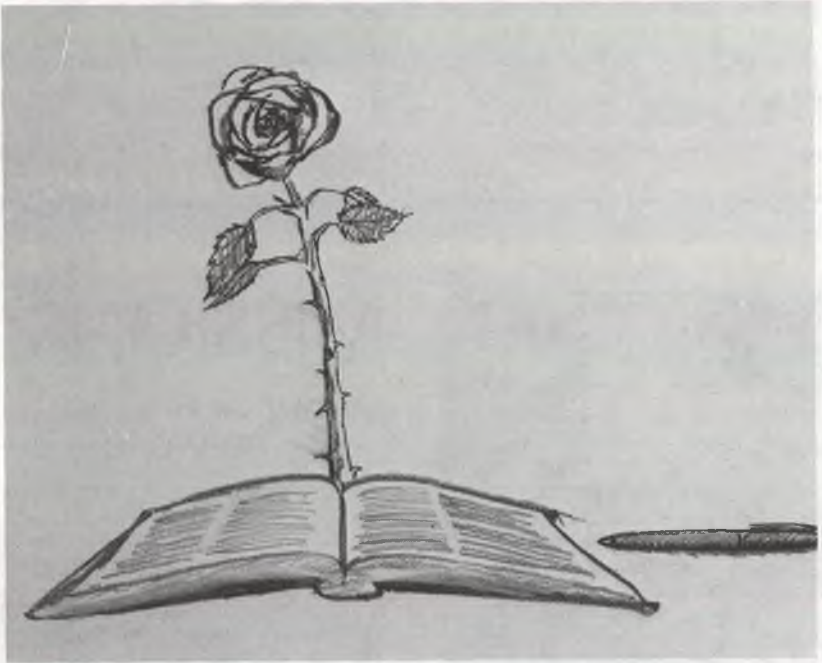
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On the other side of the globe, the bushmen of Africa's Kalahari Desert desperately need medical help. Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will give it to them.

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Thirteenth Sabbath Offering
March 25**

Lesson 11, March 12 - 18

Commitments or Conditional Contracts



“How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people” (Psalm 116:12-14, NIV).

Sunday, March 12

A Question of Commitment

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Leviticus 26 and 27

"Walk together children; don't you get weary.

Walk together children; don't you get weary."

The old woman's favorite song tumbled across my mind like lace lyrics orchestrated on a red-dirt road. Remembering her, I slid my legs into the tub of hot water. I recalled her speckled, varicose-veined legs as they pushed toward the church. Several times I wanted to pick her up, carry her to the finish line, but I knew she would refuse. She was committed to completing the fifteen mile walk so that the people of Marietta County's shelter for the homeless could enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner.

But why? I thought to myself. After soaking my own legs, I phoned her to find out. I asked her, "Woman, why did you walk when your own cupboards are empty?" There was a long silence in the phone, a silence that protruded like soft sketches of Jesus

hanging on the cross for me, a silence that felt strengthening.

"Hear it." She finally spoke.

"What?"

"The simple sound of satisfaction after you've fulfilled a commitment."

"But that doesn't answer the question," I answered somewhat confused by her remark.

"Child," she said, "when you tell someone you are going to do something for them, you can't stop and think about what you have in your own cupboards. You've got to give without condition."

"I've got to go," she said after that. "I've got a warm pot of tea on the stove."

As I hung up the phone, I imagined her as she put her phone down. I saw her calloused, tired feet as she walked to the kitchen. I saw her sitting at the table sipping tea, gathering another stride of warmth to make another commitment without condition. I could hear her humming, "Walk together children; don't you get weary." And I thanked God for giving me her life as an example.

by Ramona Lahleet Hyman

Ramona L. Hyman is a writing specialist at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Covenant and Consequences

LOGOS

Theme: *A holy God keeps His word. His promises never fail. In like manner His holy people are challenged to stand by their commitments.*

Chapter 26 is seen by most scholars as the conclusion of the "Holiness Code" of the book of Leviticus (chapters 17-26). Since its structure parallels Ancient East contracts, we will get a better understanding of the passage by dividing it accordingly.

Structure of Ancient East Contracts

1. The contract opens with the introduction of the suzerain, stating his name and titles.

2. The exploits of the suzerain are enumerated as his rights to initiate the pact.

3. The duties of the contractants are stipulated.

4. The contract concludes with an enumeration of the rewards and punishments in case of compliance or breaking of the covenant.

Parallels with Leviticus 26

Although in a different order, all these elements are found in Leviticus 26.

1. Introduction of the suzerain.

As it is usual in the Mosaic laws, the Author introduces Himself as YHWH: "I am YHWH" not only introduces the chapter (v. 1), but is repeated four more times throughout the text (vv. 2,

13, 44, 45). The passage indicates also the title of the suzerain. He is "God," the supreme, unique, and exclusive God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He invites Israel to accept Him as the only God.

2. YHWH's exploits.

YHWH is entitled to initiate the contract because of an unprecedented prowess: "I am YHWH your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright" (v. 13). It was unthinkable that any nation could free herself from the superpower of those days. However, Israel was liberated from Egypt because of God's direct intervention, which is expressed by two parallelisms:

<i>Exploit</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
I brought you forth out of the land of Egypt	that ye should not be their slaves
I broke the bands of your yoke	that ye should go upright

It was evidently a redemptive exploit. Before God's intervention, Israel was in Egypt; afterward, he was en route to the Promised Land. Before, he was slave; after, he was free. The antithesis slave/free is rendered through two striking imageries: the yoke of plowing oxen and the upright walking. Before God's intervention, Israel was living in an in-

by Agniel Samson

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human condition; after deliverance, he gained a human status. As such, he was brought to a level where he could enter into partnership with God.

3. Duties of the contractants.

Leviticus 26:1, 2 summarizes the duties of the people in three-fold formula:

a. "Ye shall make you no idols" (v. 1)

b. "Ye shall keep my sabbaths" (v. 2)

c. "[Ye shall] reverence my sanctuary" (v. 2)

These injunctive statements are in fact the three focal points of the book. They respectively stress the exclusiveness of God's worship, the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the sacredness of the sanctuary. All the Levitical prescriptions turn around these three pillars of the Sinaitic covenant. The first ten chapters give details on the different sacrifices that have to punctuate the worshiping acts of Israel. The expression "before YHWH" is repeated as the dominant recurring theme. It is an indication that the ultimate purpose of the offerings is to renew the relationship with God, either as an individual or as a collective experience. The Aaronic priesthood is set to minister to that worshiping act in the sanctuary and during the festivities of the sabbaths.

Chapters 11-18 state the principles relative to the sanctuary. Some of them deal with matters concerning cleanliness and uncleanliness. However, they have a ritual significance, stressing the status of the people as a living sanctuary even in the day-to-day routine of their lives. As a matter of fact, God's intention was to "set [his] tabernacle among . . . [the people]" and to "walk among . . . [them]" (Lev 26:11, 12). The sabbaths climaxed the celebration of

the relationship between God and Israel. God called them "feasts of YHWH," "holy convocations," "my feasts" (23:2). Commemorative of the divine act of liberation, they drew Israel to a close rapport with God, whose presence required holiness, cleanliness, and worship.

4. Benedictions and maledictions.

This is the main section of Leviticus 26. It turns around two opposite conditions and their respective consequences: If ye hearken/If ye hearken not. God invites the people to choose between obedience and disobedience. The blessings or the cursings will be consequential to the people's response. In both cases all the aspects of their daily living will be affected: agriculture, family, peace, and security, ultimately even their worshiping experiences. In both cases, the Author of the consequences will be God.

A noteworthy feature of this portion is the climactic points of the blessings and cursings. The blessings will culminate with God's presence among His people. The cursings result in the gradual distancing of God from the people as expressed in the four series of sevenfold chastisements (vv. 18-39).

Although Leviticus 26 and the ancient contracts are structurally similar, they present a noticeable difference. The Eastern treaties exhibit a vindictive intention in their enumeration of cursings. However, Leviticus 26:40-45 emphasizes the compassionate concern that lies behind the punishments previously foretold. Their main object will be to lead Israel to a genuine repentance, which will guarantee the durability of the covenant.

1. A sovereign or ruler of a vassal state.

2. YHWH is the sacred name of God. It is usually rendered Jehovah or Yahweh.

Tuesday, March 14

Neglected Vows

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Luke 16:10

Ellen White makes it plain that Christians ought to take seriously the pledges they make verbally or in writing to give certain amounts to the Lord. A pledge to the Lord is more binding than an IOU.

"When a verbal or written pledge has been made in the presence of our brethren to give a certain amount, they are the visible witnesses of a contract made between ourselves and God. The pledge is not made to man, but to God, and is as a written note given to a neighbor. No legal bond is more binding upon the Christian for the payment of money than a pledge made to God.

"Persons who thus pledge to their fellow men do not generally think of asking to be released from their pledges. A vow made to God, the Giver of all favors, is of still greater importance; then why should we seek to be released from our vows to God? Will man consider his promise less binding because made to God? Because his vow will not be put to trial in courts of justice, is it less valid? Will a man who professes to be saved by the blood of the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ, 'rob God'? Are not his vows and his actions weighed in the balances of justice in the heavenly courts?"¹

Ellen White calls upon Chris-

tians to show greater concern over neglected vows and pledges.

"There are many neglected vows and unpaid pledges, and yet how few trouble their minds over the matter; how few feel the guilt of this violation of duty. We must have new and deeper convictions on this subject. The conscience must be aroused, and the matter receive earnest attention; for an account must be rendered to God in the last day, and His claims must be settled."²

Vows are not related solely to monetary matters. A vow may not even be explicit, but may be implied in a commitment. Ellen White says:

"Everyone who connects himself with the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration."³

"All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ."⁴

Then our vows of consecration should be renewed each day.

"Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power."⁵

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 470.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 468.

3. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 460.

4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

5. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 56.

by Bernard Benn

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Wednesday, March 15

God Is Committed to You. Are You Committed to Him?

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Leviticus 26:9, 13

This week we have been focusing on commitment, but have you really stopped to contemplate God's commitment to you as an individual? Have you ever tried to calculate what His promises are worth to you? Read the text once more (Leviticus 26, 27). There are so many promises here that an effort to grasp them boggles the mind.

Let us take one idea from the text and explore it a little. "I will keep my covenant with you" (Lev. 26:9, NIV). Israel had been in Egypt for hundreds of years and had suffered every indignity that was the common lot of slaves. Through mighty miracles God liberated them. Then He appealed to them to accept Him as a friend, a liberator, a provider, a father. He said, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high" (Lev. 26:13, NIV). Let us look at three very important ideas raised by our text.

First, "I will keep my covenant with you" (Lev. 26:9, NIV). God keeps His promises. Joshua was able to report, "Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of

all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56, NIV). Ellen White suggested that we would do well to read Psalms 105 and 106 at least once a week. His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are also promises to us. God's promises to Israel included: holiness of character (Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48); blessings of health (Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:13, 15; PP 378, 379; COL 288); skill in agriculture and animal husbandry (Isa. 51:3; Deut. 7:13; 28:2-8; Mal. 3:8-11; COL 289); superior craftsmanship (Ex. 31:2-6; 35:30-33; COL 288); superior intellect (PK 368; DA 827; COL 288); unparalleled prosperity (Deut. 8:17, 18; 28:11-13; COL 288; DA 577); and national greatness (Deut. 4:6-8; 7:6, 14; 28:1; Gen. 33:9).¹

Second, "I . . . brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians" (Lev. 26:13, NIV). God does not want you and me to be slaves (Lev. 26:13) to anyone or to anything. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1, NIV). And always remember that "those who in everything make God first and last and best, are the happiest people in the world."² There is no joy that can equal that of the child of God who is in Christ Jesus (see Rom. 8:1). The secret of this success is commitment, con-

by Clarence Barnes

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secration, and surrender to Christ (see *Steps to Christ*, 70). It is not what you can do, but rather what Christ can do for and through you. "It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you."³

Third, "I . . . enabled you to walk with heads held high" (Lev. 26:13, NIV). God wants His children "to walk with heads held high." Great things happen when God finds a consecrated, dedicated, committed person. This

was true in the life of Abraham (read Gen. 26:5; 15:18; Heb. 11:9-12; Gen. 17:2-7). The stories of Joseph, Moses, Daniel, and Paul come to mind, but what really matters is that your name can be included in the honor role. Why not make the decision now to commit yourself to Christ?

REACT

If God's blessings are conditional, why does it appear that the Jewish people still prosper as well as or better than other people?

1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 25, 26.

2. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 83, 84.

3. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146.

Thursday, March 16

Commitments or Conditional Contracts

HOW-TO

Key Text: Psalm 76:11

The human response to the goodness of God must and does flow from one's relationship with Him—a relationship based on faith, love, and respect. Golgotha is the supreme reason for all three attitudes. Christ's sacrifice for our sins, internalized, creates in the human heart these three motivating forces. The vows we make verbally or mentally become expressions of our love for Him, our faith in Him, and our respect for Him.

It is essential that we remember with whom we are dealing when we vow. In dealing with God it is better not to make the vow than to vow and not pay. It is, therefore, important that we:

1. Measure our vows with reference to our ability to pay. In this we must remember that in humanity there is a nagging, persistent imbalance, and that we tend to overpledge or underpledge in all areas. One should "count the cost" before verbalizing the specifics of his or her appreciation.

2. Understand that God is adequate, and altogether self-sufficient. We, therefore, supply no needs of His in these expressions. Rather, *we grow with giving.*

3. Recognize that vows of abstemiousness starve certain appetites and are thus auto-therapeutic.

4. Acknowledge that vows involving monetary gifts such as tithes and offerings tend to heal our selfishness and bless others in areas of vital need.

5. Realize that there are vows taken at baptism that cover all kinds of involvements, doctrinal and behavioral. We make them in faith knowing that our ability to deliver is God-provided and God-delivered. And our growth in these areas is a matter of progressive sanctification, that the nature and pace of behavioral change is determined by the depth of our love, the height of our faith, and the quality of our respect.

There are certain essentials to keeping the vows that we make.

1. A quality decision must be made. It must be in the class of decisions that determine *where we go to college, whom we marry, and what job we take.* These are things we decide to do and *do them.* The vows we take must carry with them the full intention to *carry them out.*

2. We must understand that our God-given best is required. Therefore, prayer for God's help is a *constant.*

3. We must admit that in giving to God we help ourselves. Of this, we must *constantly remind ourselves.*

4. When possible, we must extend the outer limits of the terms of the vow—with no self-

by Edward Earl Cleveland

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ish end in mind—and watch the blessings flow.

5. We must practice unselfishness beyond the verbal vow and “forget yourself into his-

tory.” Long after we have departed this life, God and man will call us blessed—to the third generation.



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**Give, March 25
Thirteenth Sabbath Offering**

Friday, March 17

Not for the Promised Blessings Only

OPINION

Key Text: Matt 5:8

In the "How-To" article by E. E. Cleveland we are reminded that God does not force us to make vows and that it is better not to make a vow than to make one and not keep it. It would seem a plausible argument, therefore, that the best way out is not to make vows at all. But before we reach such a hasty conclusion let us consider two important factors concerning vows.

The first factor to consider is that sometimes we make vows without recognizing them as vows. In the "Testimony" article we are told that the very act of joining the church is a *solemn* vow that we put the interest of the church above all other interests. Do we always put the interest of the church above our personal interests? When we do not are we aware that we are breaking a solemn vow? It seems to me that as Christians we need to make an effort to raise our "level of awareness" about vows. For example, are we aware that some Investment projects may be vows made to the Lord? When a college student invests his goals and says that if the Lord blesses him with an A or B, he will give so much for that grade, that is a sacred vow that should be kept. What about those who raise their hands, promising to give so much when an appeal is made for funds, and turn in

empty tithe envelopes in an apparent show of honoring a request for special offerings, claiming that the act is to set an example for others to give. Could that act also signify a broken vow?

The second factor we need to consider is that God empowers us to keep the vows we make to Him. We should not let fear of breaking a vow or fear of the consequences of breaking a vow prevent us from entering into a contract with the Lord. If a young man loves a young lady (or the other way around), should he refrain from taking the wedding vow for fear that he might break it, or shouldn't he be so determined to keep the vow that he should go ahead and get married?

Vows are not to be made mainly for the blessings that have been promised. The blessings that follow kept vows and the curses that follow broken vows should be looked upon as natural consequences. Vows should be made because they are a way of strengthening our commitment to and our faith in God. They should not be made lightly, and our motives in making them should be pure and holy.

REACT

Do you agree that dropping empty tithe envelopes into the offering plate under the circumstances mentioned by the author constitutes a broken vow? Why?

by Bernard Benn

Bernard Benn is chairman of the department of English and communication at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Lesson 12, March 19 - 25

Secularizing the Sacred



“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28, 29, NIV).

Sunday, March 19

God's Paddle

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Leviticus 10:1-11; 20:1-5; 24:10-16, 23; 26:2.

It is 6:00 p.m.—time for the evening news. You press the “on” button of your remote control, grab an apple, and look at Don Anchor, your favorite. But something is wrong. Where’s his dark suit, his tie? Where’s his coiffured hair? The man’s disheveled, yawning, mumbling, obviously suffering from a hangover. Shocked, annoyed, you switch to another channel.

“SLOPPY ANCHOR SINKS SHIP” scream headlines around the nation the following day, “HANGOVER HUMBLER ACS. RATINGS PLUMMET” “SLACK ANCHOR FIRED.”

Well-deserved punishment, you admit. Certain things are just not done. The Scripture says, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God . . .” Certain behavior is downright unacceptable! People must be willing to accept the consequences for it.

Remember the time you drove 55 mph in the 40 mph zone and the cop in black gave you a fifty-dollar ticket? Or the time you used the car without permission and lost your driving privileges for a month? The list goes on. You miss eight classes for the quarter and flunk the class. You stay out after curfew, and your parents are called at three o’clock in the morning.

Yet when you fail to “render unto God the things that are

God’s,” who punishes you, and when? Actually, how do you know what things are sacred and what are profane, anyway? There’s never a “No cut-off pants” sign on the church door as there is at McDonalds, or a “No making out on the back pews” sign.

Those young Israelite pastors, Elder Nadab and Elder Abihu, were not doing anything so wrong, you may say, as they conducted the divine service that day—just partying a little. Yet in the midst of the worship they were struck dead. Just like that. The message was clear for the audience. Sacred things are not to be mixed with secular things. Secular music and party behavior have no place in God’s church.

But how can God grab our attention today? Should there be a daily “murder in the cathedral” before we get the point? How and when does He punish those who “fool around” with His holy day, His holy name, His sacred church—or does He really care?

Instant punishment has its place. Uzzah only reached out his hand to steady that which he was not to touch—the ark. He died immediately. Miriam was simply saying mean things about the pastor, Moses. Yet she was struck with leprosy.

Parents, teachers, friends, the public, all punish instantly and unforgettably. Ask Jim and Tammy Bakker. Ask Gary Hart.

That’s not God’s way of punishing. Yet, He still says, “Render unto God . . .”

by Annette Walwyn Michael

Annette Michael is an assistant professor of English at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Secularizing the Sacred

LOGOS

Theme: *God's claim to reverence and worship is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and to Him all other beings owe their existence. To obtain an intelligent knowledge of how to come to God in reverence and how to serve Him with love should take first place in the lives of His people.*

1. "STRANGE FIRE:" Less Than Your Best (read Leviticus 10:1-11)

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1).

Nadab and Abihu, nephews of Moses, held the highest positions in Israel next to their father and uncle. Their status as assistants to and priests under Aaron afforded them advantages and privileges including the following: "They had heard the voice of God; they had been with Moses and Aaron in the mount of God; they had seen the God of Israel, and 'did eat and drink' (Ex. 24:9-11). They had been greatly favored; but had not profited by their opportunities.

"Shortly before the events noted in this chapter [Leviticus 10] they had spent a week in study and meditation, preparing for the day when they should begin their sanctuary service. They had assisted their father as

he offered sacrifices, and had brought the blood of the victims to him (Lev. 9:9). They had witnessed the solemn service of dedication, and had themselves been sprinkled with sacrificial blood. They had been thoroughly indoctrinated, and were fully acquainted with the sacredness of God's work. All of this only made their sin the greater. They were without excuse. When the time came for them to officiate, they did that which the Lord their God 'commanded them not.'"¹

What was the specific sin of brothers Nadab and Abihu? Simply this: instead of using the required fire from the altar of burnt offering miraculously provided by God for the hour of worship, they used "strange fire." The Hebrew phrase is variously translated "illicit fire" (New English Bible), "unholy fire" (RSV), "unlawful fire" (Jerusalem Bible), and "ordinary fire" (SDA Bible Commentary). Ellen White says, "For burning the incense they took common instead of the sacred fire which God Himself had kindled, and which He had commanded to be used for this purpose. For this sin a fire went out from the Lord and devoured them in the sight of the people."² God's way in worship is always the best way. Any other way is less than our best and inevitably scars the sacred.

2. DEVILISH FIRE: Worse Than Your Bad (read Leviticus 20:1-5)

by Mervyn A. Warren

Mervyn Warren is chairman of the department of religion at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

"And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name" (Lev. 20:3).

The pagan ceremony described by the phrase, "pass through the fire to Molech" (Lev. 18:21), found its way into the practices of not a few Israelites. Although no specific heathen god has been discovered in ancient history bearing the name Molech, nevertheless, the devilish cult ritual was well known among the Canaanite religions and marks a low level to which some persons among God's people had frequently fallen (Jer. 7:31; 19:4, 5; 32:35; Eze. 16:21; 23:37, 39). The name *Molech* (Hebrew *Molek*) might very well be a variation of the Hebrew word *melek*, which means "king." Reserving the normal spelling for their *true King* (God of heaven), they may have changed the first "e" to an "o" in order to force a word difference between "Molek" (pagan god) and "Melek" (true God).

As if it were not sufficiently bad to become attracted to other than the God of heaven, many went a step further and dedicated their children to Molech and, worse yet, even *burned their children alive* in sacrificial fire to the pagan deity (Ps. 106:37, 38; Isa. 57:5). Is it not amazing how the chosen of God can stray from the path of simple childlike gospel trust and find themselves doing worse than their bad in worshipping Him?

3. BLASPHEMOUS FIRE: Worse Than Your Worst (read Lev. 24:10-16, 23)

"And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed" (Lev. 24:11).

On their way from Egypt to the Land of Promise, the people of

Israel were accompanied by a "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38; Num 11:4) which proved "a source of continual temptation and trouble. They professed to have renounced idolatry and to worship the true God; but their early education and training had molded their habits and character, and they were more or less corrupted with idolatry and with irreverence for God. They were oftenest the ones to stir up strife and were the first to complain, and they leavened the camp with their idolatrous practices and their murmurings against God."³

Example in point: the son of an Israelitish woman and an Egyptian left his part of the camp and, entering that of the Israelites, claimed the right to pitch his tent where the divine law forbade him at that particular time. An argument arose, and, in a fit of anger, he cursed the human judge over the matter and also blasphemed the name of God. Death became his punishment.

One of the most serious things we can do is blatantly disregard divinely inspired counsel, but even worse than that is to speak openly against God Himself.

4. DEVOTED FIRE: Best of Your Best (read Lev. 26:2)

"Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Lev. 26:2).

Leviticus 26 consists of a conditional prophecy announcing blessings to come upon Israel for their obedience and punishments for their disobedience. Devotion to true Sabbathkeeping means not merely resting *from* regular activities of daily living, but resting *in* God, resting (restfulness) in reverence, honor, and respect for God and His sanctuaries: heavenly, earthly, bodily.

1. Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 748.

2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 408.

Reverence Is Essential

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Leviticus 10:9, 10

God honors those who honor and reverence Him. It is important that God and His house be approached with awe and reverence.

1. The Results of Irreverence

"Nadab and Abihu had not in their youth been trained to habits of self-control. The father's yielding disposition, his lack of firmness for right, had led him to neglect the discipline of his children. His sons had been permitted to follow inclination. Habits of self-indulgence, long cherished, obtained a hold upon them which even the responsibility of the most sacred office had not power to break. They had not been taught to respect the authority of their father, and they did not realize the necessity of exact obedience to the requirements of God. Aaron's mistaken indulgence of his sons prepared them to become the subjects of the divine judgments.

"God designed to teach the people that they must approach Him with reverence and awe, and in His own appointed manner. He cannot accept partial obedience. It was not enough that in this solemn season of worship *nearly* everything was done as He had directed. God has pronounced a curse upon those who depart from His commandments, and put no difference between common and

holy things. He declares by the prophet: 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness! . . . They have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel' Isaiah 5:20-24. Let no one deceive himself with the belief that a part of God's commandments are nonessential, or that He will accept a substitute for that which He has required. Said the prophet Jeremiah, 'Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?' Lamentations 3:37. God has placed in His word no command which men may obey or disobey at will and not suffer the consequences. If men choose any other path than that of strict obedience, they will find that 'the end thereof are the ways of death.' Proverbs 14:12."

2. Today's Application

"From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts and are being brought down to the level of the common things. The reverence which the people had anciently for the sanctuary,

by Ruth Faye Davis

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where they met with God in sacred service, has largely passed away. Nevertheless God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature. . . .

“Would it not be well for us often to read the directions given by God Himself to the Hebrews, that we who have the light of the glorious truth shining upon us may imitate their reverence for the house of God? We have abundant reason . . . even to be more

thoughtful and reverential in our worship than had the Jews.”²

REACT

1. Give specific ways we secularize sacred things today, and emphasize ways we can improve.

2. What advice would you give to a Seventh-day Adventist youth who desires to get married to a non-Adventist youth who possesses excellent character traits and attends church regularly?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 360, 361.

2. *Child Guidance*, pp. 540, 541.

Secularizing the Sacred

EVIDENCE

Key Texts: Exodus 3:2-5; Joshua 5:13-15

"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:2-5).

In these words of God to Moses we recognize the imperative that the secular must always be separate from the sacred and that the sacred must be revered. This imperative is both explicit and implicit in the words "Draw not nigh hither" and "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The Bible is replete with numerous examples of the dire consequences that can follow the secularizing of the sacred. The following are but a few:

At Mount Sinai: Here God specifically commanded Moses as follows: "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to your-

selves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" (Ex. 19:12, 13).

The Ark of the Covenant: Earlier, God had specifically warned that those who bore the ark were not to touch it (Num. 4:15). The instant slaying of Uzzah, in spite of his good intentions, shows how important it is to heed the command of God at all times (2 Sam. 6:6, 7).

The Sabbath: It is interesting to note that one of the most significant promises made by God to Israel pertained to the Sabbath. God promised Israel that if they would hallow the Sabbath **Jerusalem would remain for ever** (Jer. 17:24, 25). The full import of this promise is tremendous. Just think! Had Israel obeyed God's commandment concerning the Sabbath, the course of history would have been changed. Jerusalem would not have been destroyed in A.D. 70; there would have been no mass suicide at Masada; there would have been no Diaspora (the dispersion of the Jewish people); and there would have been no holocaust. Let us remember this fact when we are tempted to disregard the importance of keeping the Sabbath holy.

Now, let us consider the converse of the above—the sanctifying of the secular—which is

by Emerson A. Cooper

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known as sanctification. This is defined as the act of setting apart for a sacred purpose. There is a profound difference between sanctification and the mixing of the secular with the sacred. Sanctification is a complete transmutation in purpose and in sacred status. A classical example of this is the use of the **“jewels of silver, and jewels of gold”** (Ex. 12:35), which the children of Israel obtained from the Egyp-

tians when they departed Egypt. These jewels were later used in the building of the sanctuary (Ex. 25:1-8). The apostle Paul had this concept in mind when he stated “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Let us resolve, by the grace of God, and by the indwelling of His Spirit, not only to refrain from secularizing the sacred but to grow in sanctification.

Thursday, March 23

Key to Reverence

HOW-TO

Key Text: Ps. 100:3

Reverence in worship and in the treatment of God's property—particularly human beings—hinges on the Christian's relationship with God.

Reverence grows out of the intensity of our desire to strengthen this relationship through sharing the life of God's Son—to be like "the Son . . . the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Heb. 1:3, NIV), to do like the Son, who "went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10:38, NIV). Reverence is an attitude toward God revealed in our willingness to accept what He offers and in the joy and quietness we share in daily worship.

1. Willingness to accept what He offers. God's character is what He offers through Jesus Christ—love, mercy, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance. The Christian who demonstrates these attributes in day-to-day living leaves no doubt about his or her relationship with God.

2. Joy and quietness in daily worship. In worship through thanksgiving, music on the "harp" and the "timbrel" and "loud sounding cymbals" and "dancing" and rejoicing may be wholly acceptable. On the other hand, worship through prayer and meditation suggests quietness in the presence of God when we listen as the Spirit speaks through the word hidden in our hearts.

When we understand that worship is conscious contact with God, then maintaining a reverent attitude will come naturally, whether it be in the sanctuary, or workplace, or "play-place." Reverence blooms forth from the Christian who is totally in love with the Creator. Such a person keeps in mind that "it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Ps. 100:3). Herein lies the key to reverence.

REACT

Reverence may not be legislated; however, it may be exemplified. How should the Christian view activities that the church has traditionally frowned on but nowadays seem to creep in as acceptable behavior?

by Sylvia J. Barnes

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Friday, March 24

Slippery When Wet?

OPINION

Key Text: Phil. 4:8

Some years ago a very thoughtful discussion of the public's attitude toward science and technology appeared in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. The author was the eminent scientist S. E. Luria, and the caption of his remarks was "Slippery When Wet."¹ The author noted that during the seventeenth, and particularly the eighteenth century, it was accepted as axiomatic by the public that all knowledge would automatically be applied for the good of humanity. The author raised the question: "Was the optimism of previous generations justified?" The present writer feels that such unbounded optimism can be justified only if based on two important conditions: one must understand fully (1) the *nature* of that in which the optimism is expressed, and (2) the *true* nature of those on whose hands such benign outcome is dependent.

Similarly, if Christians are to make right choices in the kinds of music to which they will listen or which they will use in worshipping God, then two prerequisites seem necessary: (1) they must first have an understanding of the nature of music and *how* it can affect them, and (2) they must understand and give heed to inspired counsels on this subject. If not, then choosing the right music for Christians may prove to

be a slippery matter. But it need not be!

Before expanding on the above-mentioned prerequisites, let me point out that about the time Dr. Luria's article appeared in print, the Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was meeting in Mexico City and it was expressing some important views on the philosophy of music for believers. The general principles of those views were expressed in ten points and suggested that music should: (1) Bring glory to God and assist us in worshipping Him. (2) Enoble, uplift, and purify the Christian thought. (3) Influence the Christian in development of Christ's character; have a text that is in harmony with scriptural teachings of the church. . . . (10) Be appropriate for the occasion, the setting, and the audience for which it is intended. The full text of recommendations was published in the *Review*, November 30, 1972.² All who study this week's lesson are encouraged to read the entire text of the recommendations.

The present state of understanding of music and how it affects the individual is considerable, but the following points will suffice for the present discussion: (a) music can be perceived and enjoyed without necessarily being interpreted by the higher center of the brain involving reason and judgment; (b) one's response to music is measurable even though one may not be paying any con-

by Ashton Gibbons

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scious attention to the music; (c) there is evidence that music can bring about mood changes in the individual; (d) by lowering the level of sensory perception, music can heighten one's response to color, touch, and other perceptions; (e) music can affect muscular activity and can promote or inhibit bodily movement; (f) highly repetitive rhythmic music can produce a hypnotic effect; (g) the sense of hearing has a greater effect upon the autonomic nervous system than any other sense.^{3,4}

In light of the foregoing, the words of a former rock performer, Bob Larson, is rather revealing: "Then beyond the message and the messenger, you come to the fact that heavy rock really is immersing oneself in sound. It has such a physical impact upon the body that not only are the kids tripping on it and entering into a sort of spiritually transcendent state, but in addition, their minds are placed in a highly susceptible condition to be brainwashed by the message of the song."⁵

Perhaps the average Seventh-day Adventist collegian may react to Bob's remark by saying that he/she has little or nothing to do with rock music and therefore cannot be ensnared by it, but let us not fool ourselves; in order for anyone to make correct Christian choices in a wide range of musical genre such as classical, country, blues, gospel, jazz, or rock, an alert mind set is a prerequisite.

Modern scientific knowledge has enabled us more fully to appreciate the following words

addressed to the youth of her day by Ellen White: "Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired."⁶ "The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from truth. Frivolous songs and popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste."⁷ "Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse."⁸ In all our choices we must encompass all that is "pure . . . lovely . . . of good report."⁹ Only our Father, through the agency of His Spirit working in our minds, can enable us to accomplish the task.

Finally, we can conclude that although the road to making correct choices about music may be wet, it need not be slippery.

REACT:

1. What do you think are some important questions to be answered by the Christian youth before choosing the particular kind of music for both private or public worship?

2. Can one rely solely on one's cultural taste for selecting the right kind of music? Why or why not?

3. How can one be certain that the music one has chosen to listen to is uplifting and/or ennobling?

4. What can a Christian say to another whose musical taste is different from his or hers?

1. S. E. Luria, "Slippery When Wet," *Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc.*, vol. 116, p. 351.

2. Pages 16, ff.

3. Leno, H. L. (1976) *Review*, February 12, 1976, p. 4.

4. *Ibid.*, February 19, 1976, p. 7.

5. *Review*, December 18, 1975.

6. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 497.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Phil.* 4:8.

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LOVE



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