

# Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

## What Does it Mean to be "Orthodox"?

Today a great deal is said about the need to be orthodox. Orthodox is defined as, "1. Adhering to the accepted or traditional and established faith... 2. Adhering to the Christian faith as expressed in the early Christian ecumenical creeds. 3. Adhering to a commonly accepted, customary or traditional practice or belief." (*American Heritage Dictionary*) Let us examine the definition of "orthodox" and see if it comes up to the test of Bible truth.

First, "orthodox" is that which is "traditional." When asked why His disciples transgressed "the tradition of the elders," Jesus "answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:2, 3) Christ further added, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9) The Son of God clearly stated that tradition was not a reliable method of determining truth. The Apostle Paul wrote: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8) Peter continued in this same theme, writing: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." (1 Peter 1:18)

Secondly, "orthodox" is considered to be that which has been established by the "early Christian ecumenical creeds." A creed is defined as: "A brief, authoritative, formal statement of religious beliefs. The word creed comes from the Latin word credo ('I believe'), the first word of both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed." (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*) The term "creed" is not in the Bible, but God, through His servant, has given us this counsel:

Rome withheld the Bible from the people and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. It was the work of the Reformation to restore to men the word of God; but is it not too true that in the churches of our time men are taught to rest their faith upon their creed and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures? (*The Great Controversy*, p. 388)

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and

## Literature Taken to Toronto G.C.

By the time you receive this issue of *Old Paths*, the General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will either be history or very near an end.

Many know of the great effect that the publication *Holland 95* had upon the spreading of the truth about God. That publication went into many hands and many countries as a result of the moving of God's spirit. Knowing of the potential to reach so many in such a short time, God's spirit has moved to see that there would be a witness at Toronto. Approximately 15,000 books and over 40,000 tracts were prepared here at Smyrna this last month for the session. 20,000 tracts on religious liberty covering the subject of the trademark cases were printed. The rest of the material covered the subject of the truth

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pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would accept God's standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 124)

*The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.-(The Review and Herald, Dec. 15, 1885 - emphasis supplied. See also Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 416)*

The early Adventists were very careful to steer away from creeds. During an organizational meeting on October 5, 1861, J. N. Loughborough outlined the five steps of apostasy, of which he noted the formation of a creed as the first or foundational step.

The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is, to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And, fifth, to commence persecution against such. (*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1861)

Thirdly, "orthodox" is that which is "commonly accepted." In other words, the voice of the majority. However, the record is clear that as far as matters of faith and practice are concerned, the majority of humanity has always been in error. The Bible portrays God's last day saints as a "little flock" compared to the apostate churches. (Luke 12:32) The Scripture declares that "all the world wondered after the beast." (Rev. 13:3) Jesus said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:22, 23)

The experience of the twelve men sent to spy out the land of Canaan well illustrates the principle that the majority is usually wrong. The majority, eighty-three percent, brought back a wicked report. It was the

majority that nailed Jesus to the cross. However, our courage is strengthened when we realize that while the majority of humanity is on the track of error; all the heavenly hosts are in perfect unity with God. We should pray that God will open our eyes just as He opened the eyes of Elisha's servant when the Syrians had surrounded Dothan. (See 2 Kings 6)

## ***The Bible is Left Out***

In reviewing the definition of "orthodox" it should be noted that nothing about the Bible is mentioned. The teachings of Scripture are not considered the criteria for "orthodox." Instead, "traditional" beliefs, based upon the "ecumenical creed" and "commonly accepted, customary or traditional" practices are the paradigm for "orthodox." Ellen G. White certainly accepted no such axiom. This standard can hardly be acceptable to the Christian who stands on the Bible and the Bible alone. She wrote:

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain *the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.* The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, *the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority-not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith.* Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support. (*Great Controversy*, p. 595 - emphasis supplied)

A study of the writings of Ellen G. White reveals that she did not use the concept of "orthodox" in a favorable light. In fact, it was the "orthodox" ministers from the "orthodox" churches that attacked the Seventh-day Adventists and their message.

The orthodox churches used every means to prevent the belief in Christ's soon coming from spreading. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 54)

From the beginning of my work, I have been pursued by hatred, reproach, and falsehood. Base imputations and slanderous reports have been greedily gathered up and widely circulated by the rebellious, the formalist, and the fanatic. There are ministers of the so-called orthodox churches traveling from place to place to war against Seventh-day Adventists, and they make Mrs. White their textbook. The scoffers of the last days are led on by these ministers professing to be God's watchmen. (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 69)

The attack of "orthodox" ministers and churches upon God's people is not a new plan, but one that has been in progress since ancient times. It is based on

## ***The Trinity is "Orthodox"***

human fear and weakness. The carnal mind is insecure and does not wish to be thought of as being outside the norm. Satan used this plan well to prevent the people from hearing Jesus and he continues this plan to our day.

When Christ was upon earth, frowning priests and angry rulers threatened the people with exclusion from the synagogue, and thus kept many from hearing the great Teacher. To-day the so-called "orthodox" ministers by similar threats deter their hearers from listening to the words of Christ's ambassadors. Many fear even to study the word of God for themselves, lest they shall be convinced. Young persons who find no attractions in the Bible, and who have never searched its pages, will, parrot-like, repeat the sayings of opposers to the truth. They imagine that it savors of manly independence to talk of having a mind of their own, when in fact they merely echo the opinions and sentiments of others. What the minister says in the desk, against the truth, is greedily devoured by those who love to have it so, and his assumptions, though wholly destitute of Scripture proof, are repeated as conclusive evidence. (*Signs of the Times*, March 16, 1882)

The contrast between the "orthodox" ministers and the sincere seeker of truth is well presented in the previous statement. The "orthodox" preacher stands on the sinking sand of "opinions and sentiments," while "Christ's ambassadors" stand on the firm platform of Scripture truth. As noted in the prior statement, the times of Christ show great similarity to our day.

From its earliest years the Jewish child was surrounded with the requirements of the rabbis. Rigid rules were prescribed for every act, down to the smallest details of life. *Under the synagogue teachers the youth were instructed in the countless regulations which as orthodox Israelites they were expected to observe. But Jesus did not interest Himself in these matters.* From childhood He acted independently of the rabbinical laws. *The Scriptures of the Old Testament were His constant study, and the words, "Thus saith the Lord," were ever upon His lips.* (*Desire of Ages*, p. 84 - emphasis supplied)

Jesus, "the way, the truth, and the life," was not concerned with what was "orthodox," but rather with what the Scriptures said. If He is our example in all things, then why are so many of His professed followers interested in being "orthodox"? God has never required His people to accept the traditions of men to receive His approbation. In fact, God's ideal has been for them to be a separate people. "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:9) "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." (Leviticus 20:26)

No doctrine of the Christian faith is supposed to be more orthodox than the Trinity. Let us examine it and see if it is really "orthodox" as its defenders claim.

First, is the Trinity traditional? Yes, the Trinity doctrine is a tradition not based upon Scripture. Let us first notice a Catholic statement printed in an early Review:

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."

"Q. Do you observe other necessary truths as taught by the Church, not clearly laid down in Scripture?

"A. *The doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine the knowledge of which is certainly necessary to salvation, is not explicitly and evidently laid down in Scripture, in the Protestant sense of private interpretation.*" (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 22, 1854 - Quoted from *Doctrinal Catechism*, emphasis supplied.)

A special issue of the Adventist Review devoted to the 27 Fundamentals yields the following declaration concerning the doctrine of the Trinity.

*While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times.*

*Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity.* (*Adventist Review*, Vol. 158, No. 31, p. 4 - emphasis supplied)

Therefore, by both Catholic and Protestant admissions, the Trinity is a traditional doctrine not based upon the Scriptures.

Secondly, was the Trinity established by an "ecumenical creed"? Yes, the Trinity doctrine was established in the Catholic Councils at Nicæa (325 A. D.) and Constantinople (381 A. D.). A. T. Jones in his monumental work, *The Two Republics*, documents the Council of Nicæa to be the "Establishment of the Catholic Faith." (See chapter 14.) The Nicene Creed is the basis for the Trinity doctrine. At this council, presided over by Constantine, it was the word of man, not God, that set the standard. "In 325, Constantine played a leading role in the Council of Nicæa, ... he defined orthodoxy." (*Enc. Amer.*, vol. 7, p. 649) The Catholic Church openly claims this doctrine, established at a council ruled over by a despotic tyrant, to be the central pillar of her faith.

The Mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 11)

Thirdly, is the Trinity an “accepted, customary or traditional practice or belief”? Yes, the Trinity is an accepted belief today and is essential to be considered an evangelical Christian. The “Basis” of the World Council of Churches, in part, states the belief in “the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” (Constitution of the WCC) While the list of acceptable doctrines varies among evangelicals, the one doctrine that must be accepted and believed to be considered a part of the body of Christ is the Trinity doctrine. The compromises made between the Seventh-day Adventists and the evangelicals forty-five years ago could not have occurred if the doctrine of the Trinity had not been first accepted.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was considered a cult for over 100 years because the rest of the Christian world did not consider us to be orthodox. With the acceptance of the Trinity doctrine after the death of Ellen G. White, the church put herself in a position to join hands with evangelicals. However, if we were going to be embraced by the rest of the world, we had to be willing to accept them. In 1926, the General Conference Executive Committee voted a statement: Relationship to other Societies. Part one of that statement declared:

“We recognize every agency that lifts up Christ before men as a part of the divine plan for the evangelization of the world, and we hold in high esteem the Christian men and women in other communions who are engaged in winning souls to Christ.” (Quoted from, *So Much in Common*, p. 73)

We were sending a message to the nominal churches: if you tone down on calling us a “cult,” we will tone down on calling you “Babylon.” The results are clearly seen today. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is accepted by most evangelicals as a part of the body of Christ; and we, sadly, have toned down the three angels’ messages.

Israel was not considered “orthodox” by ancient Babylon. Jesus, nor the Apostles, were considered “orthodox” by the religious leaders of their day. The Adventist pioneers were not considered “orthodox” by the nominal churches. If drinking the wine of mystical Babylon is necessary to be “orthodox,” then I would rather take my stand with the unorthodox. A.S.

(This article was reprinted from the November 1996 issue of *Old Paths*. Editor)

## West Virginia Camp Meeting

As announced earlier, Smyrna will be hosting a camp meeting this August 8th–12th. The camp meeting will be here in West Virginia and we wish to encourage everyone to plan on attending. A detailed map with directions on how to get here was sent out last month. If you did not receive one or need another, please write or call us and we will be glad to send another to you.

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening. Each day will begin with an early morning devotional followed by a morning meeting, a mid-morning meeting, an afternoon meeting, and an evening meeting. Time will be provided in the afternoon for nature hikes and other activities.


Reading the encouraging report about the Arizona camp meeting (pages 14-15) and its blessings, challenges us to seek God for wisdom to know how we can provide an equal blessing.

The Lord has supplied a group of very able speakers for the main meetings. They include Ben Vela, David Clayton, Willis Smith, and Gary Richmond. Other speakers will include Danny Campbell, Arthan Wright, Howard Williams, and Lynnford Beachy. Lynnford and Kendra Beachy will be leading out with some meetings for the youth.

We currently are adding an addition to the print shop. This addition will serve as the main meeting room for the camp meeting. Based on the responses we have received so far, we are expecting many more than the chapel sanctuary will hold. Lord willing, the addition will be finished enough to comfortably meet in. We also are installing two showers with hot water for the campers. Please bring your own towels, soap, etc.


There will be no cost to those attending, but each family will be responsible for their own meals and all supplies. Plenty of tent space is available. We have a limited supply of camping materials for those who do not have and can not afford to purchase it at this time. If you are in need, please contact us soon. Parents will need to be responsible for their children at all times.

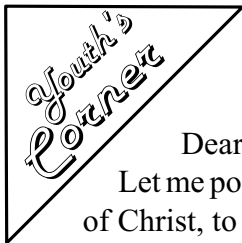
Though this is a camp meeting, modest dress will be expected of all who wish to attend. Items such as short pants, tank-top shirts, and clothing with un-Christ like pictures, symbols, or words are not acceptable.

Sister Gina Campbell will be bringing some supplies from her health food store. Gina is very reasonable with her prices. If you would like Gina to bring something specific for you, you may place an order ahead of time by calling her at: (901) 845-5859. 

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*Literature continued from page 1*

about God and Christ. An able army of workers have gone to Canada to share this literature. Please pray for this literature and claim the promise of Isaiah 55:11. Lord willing, we are planning to share with you a report of the activities next month. 



Dear young friends,  
Let me point you to the life of Christ, to his compassion, his humility and love, his inexpressible tenderness. You are to copy his example. God has given you life and all the rich blessings that make it enjoyable, and in return he has claims upon you for service, for gratitude, for love, for obedience to his law. These claims are of the first importance, and can not be lightly disregarded; but he requires nothing of you that will not make you happier, even in this life. He requires you to control passion, to restrain selfish thoughts and actions, and to leave fretful words unspoken. Would Jesus require this self-control, if it were not for your real happiness to practice it? No; he wishes you to cultivate such traits of character as will bring peace to your own hearts, and enable you to brighten other hearts and lives with the sunshine of love, joy, and cheerful contentment.

If you are truly converted, if you are children of Jesus, you will honor your parents; you will not only do what they tell you, but will watch for opportunities to help them. In doing this you are working for Jesus. He considers all these care-taking, thoughtful deeds as done to himself. This is the most important kind of missionary work; and those who are faithful in these little every-day duties are gaining a valuable experience. Would it not be well to talk these matters over when you are together, and see what plans you can devise to become home missionaries? By cheerful obedience and manifesting a lov-

## Home Duties

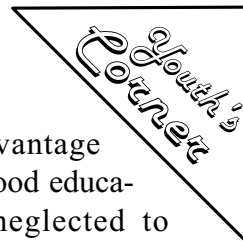
ing, helpful disposition in the home circle, you lighten the cares and burdens of your parents, and thus show true love for them, while exemplifying the grace of Christ. Take your older friends into your counsel, and see what you can do in this direction.

Many children go about their home duties as though they were disagreeable tasks, and their faces plainly show the disagreeable. They find fault and murmur, and nothing is done willingly. This is not Christ-like; it is the spirit of Satan, and if you cherish it, you will be like him. You will be miserable yourselves, and will make all about you miserable. Do not complain of how much you have to do, and how little time you have for amusement, but be thoughtful and care-taking. By employing your time in some useful work, you will be closing a door against Satan's temptations. Remember that Jesus lived not to please himself, and you must be like him. Make this matter one of religious principle, and ask Jesus to help you. By exercising your mind in this direction, you will be preparing to become burden-bearers in the cause of God, as you have been care-takers in the home circle. You will have a good influence upon others, and may win them to the service of Christ.

Some young persons who have the privilege of attending school, do not improve their advantages. They would like to read and write accurately, but the price of excellence is hard work, and they will not pay it. They remind me of the youth whose father sent him to school, and gave

him every advantage for gaining a good education; but he neglected to study, saying that his father was able to give him a liberal education, and he was not going to bother his brains about it. You will all say at once that he would remain ignorant, for there is no royal road to learning. But wishing for a healthy religious experience without making earnest, self-denying effort, will be equally useless. Sighing over your ignorance of divine things will never make you wise unto salvation. There are ten thousand sluggish tears and sighs toward heaven that will never win one smile of approval from Jesus. Do not think that a Christian experience will come to you of itself. When you make up your mind to do something on which your heart is set, you do not give up for difficulties, but try again and again. Put the same energy and determination to succeed into the service of Christ, and you will not fail of a reward.

I point you, dear young friends, to Jesus. I commend you to his grace. He invites your confidence; and if you trust him in the simplicity of faith, he will come into your heart, and take up his abode with you, and will be to you an ever-present help in every time of need. Will you comply with the conditions laid down in his word? Will you come to Jesus? Many of you profess to be his followers; will you not begin now to imitate him in your lives? (Mrs. E. G. White - *Youth's Instructor*, January 30, 1884)



# JUDGMENT WITHOUT A TRIAL?

by David Clayton

The *most* misunderstood teaching of the Advent faith is the doctrine of the investigative judgment. This misunderstanding is present not only among non-Adventists, but is also evident among hundreds of thousands within Adventist circles, including many of those who are teachers and pastors. This fact was forcibly impressed on my mind recently as I examined the arguments of several persons who have concluded that the investigative judgment is a false, unscriptural and anti-gospel teaching.

All Christians believe basically in two aspects of final judgment. They believe in:

(1) *A Sentencing or a Verdict*: That God will one day pass sentence upon every human who has ever lived.

(2) *An Execution*: That the sentence will be carried out with the wicked being destroyed and the righteous inheriting eternal life.

The investigative judgment, however, seeks to introduce a third element into the concept of this final judgment.

(3) *An Investigation*: Before sentence is either passed or executed, God will first of all examine the life of each person in order to determine whether such a person should be sentenced to death or to life.

To simplify the issue: Most Christians will agree that God will sentence all men to either life or death. They will also agree that God will destroy the wicked and reward the righteous with eternal life. They object, however, to the idea that God will conduct a public investigation before passing His sentences.

The early Advent believers insisted that the concept of the investigative judgment is clearly taught by the Bible, in spite of the numerous objections to it. Were they right? Let us concede from the beginning that they chose a term to describe this doctrine which is not found in the Bible. The Bible nowhere uses the term “investigative judgment” and it is usually best if we describe our beliefs using the terminology of the Bible. The real question is, however, is the concept taught in the Bible? Let us be quite sure what we are talking about by first of all carefully defining our terms.

## WHAT IS THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT?

The word “Judgment” can refer to any one of three phases of judgment, (1) examination or investigation of

evidence. (2) Sentencing or the passing of a verdict. (3) The execution of the sentence.

In the case of the term “investigative judgment,” the word judgment refers to the first aspect of judgment, which is the investigation of evidence. Let us note in passing that there has never in the history of mankind been a fair judgment which did not involve, first of all an examination of all the known facts which were relevant to the case in question.

The word “investigation” means an examination. In the context of the term “investigative judgment,” it means a review of every single factor in the life of an individual which may have some value in revealing whether or not a person is a genuine Christian.

The doctrine of the investigative judgment also teaches that this investigation will take place for all who profess, or have ever professed to be followers of Christ, before He comes again to reward the faithful, and that it will involve the cases of the dead as well as the living.

Generally speaking, many of those who are critical of the investigative judgment have failed to examine the subject carefully from all angles. The result has been a distorted picture which has appeared to be unscriptural and even ridiculous. However, if we are going to criticize something, it is only fair that we understand it properly first so that we know what we are talking about.

The basic misconception concerning the investigative judgment goes something like this:

(a) The life records of all Christians (beginning with the dead) are presently being examined in heaven.

(b) Soon this examination will pass to the living, and any individual’s name could be called at any moment, we know not when.

(c) A person’s eternal destiny will be decided by his condition at the moment when his name is called. If he has unconfessed sin, he is lost. If he has confessed and forsaken all his sins, he will be saved.

(d) Not until this judgment has taken place can we be certain of our salvation. This judgment, in other words, is the decisive factor which will result in our being either saved or lost.

Some years ago I became very troubled about the concept of the investigative judgment as I understood it then. The possibility of my name being called at any moment, unknown to me, and my eternal destiny being

determined by whatever my status chanced to be at that moment seemed unfair and unreasonable, and not a concept which was in keeping with the character of a just and loving God.

At that time I was still in my twenties and had been a Christian for only about six years. My problem was this: Suppose my name should be called today and I find that I am not ready—I have unconfessed sins—then I shall be lost. However, if I had been given another day of life before my name was called, then, being a conscientious Christian, it is probable that I would have confessed that sin and thus would have been saved. Therefore, my salvation would not depend upon whether or not I really am a child of God, but upon the question of what moment my name should chance to be called! This did not make sense to me and it did not appear to be fair either. Furthermore, I could see that a person who had been a Christian for, say, fifty years, before his name came up, had an advantage over the one whose name was examined after he had been a Christian for only ten or twenty years, since the older Christian would have had more time to repent of all his sins. All in all I was not satisfied with my understanding of the doctrine.

When I shared these concerns with others they consoled me with the words, “well, God already knows who deserves to be saved and He will certainly not call your name at a moment when you are not prepared.” This, however, only created more problems in my mind because it seemed that this presented the idea of a public trial which was “rigged.” A trial which was intended to establish guilt or innocence, to prove something in a public way, but which was so set up that there was the possibility of only one outcome. This again, did not seem to me to exalt God’s qualities of fairness, openness and justice. I therefore decided to do a more careful study of the concept of the investigative judgment from the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and from the standpoint of reason and my knowledge of God’s character.

It was easy to see how a *dead* person’s status could be determined by an examination of his life’s record which included every minute detail. However, with a living person it was different. If we are given an entirely clean sheet by God when we confess and forsake our sins, then it is possible for a person to have a clean record today and a soiled one tomorrow, or vice-versa. If God is ever to give a person a clean sheet once and for all and forever, and permanently seal that person, then it is clear that such a person must be brought to the place where he will never sin again.

The long and short of it is that I found one passage in Ellen White’s writings which basically cleared up the questions in my mind and enabled me to see perfect sense and fairness in the concept of an investigative judgment. The statement says:

“The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . . [Rev. 13:11-17 quoted.] . . .

“This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast (Letter 11, 1890).” (7 BC, p. 976.)

Let us think of what this statement implies. The eternal destiny (salvation or damnation) of God’s living people is to be determined by a certain test. Not by records in a book. Clearly this must apply only to the living, since the dead will not be around to experience this final crisis. But doesn’t Ellen White teach elsewhere that the investigative judgment is what will determine our eternal destiny? Yes, she does. But here she explains that this investigative judgment (here called a “test”) for the last generation of Christians will be based upon how we respond to the trial brought on by the Mark of the Beast crisis, rather than upon the basis of records in a book. This is perfectly reasonable and entirely in harmony with the Scriptures.

An examination of a *living* person’s history, recorded in a book, will never fairly reveal a person’s state, as long as there is the possibility that the person may still change. An examination of books will not accomplish much as long as you and I are still alive and possess the ability to change for good or bad. **The Judgment of the living, therefore, will not be based on books, but upon an examination of the response of each Christian as we are all thrown into the furnace of affliction known as “the great tribulation.”** This fiery trial will force every person to clearly take his stand either for, or against, God and His truth. It will bring us to the place where all will clearly demonstrate in an unmistakable way whether or not we have a genuine relationship with Christ, or are mere professors. This trial will be of such an intensity that none will be able to remain in disguise. Every person’s true loyalty and character will be clearly displayed for all the universe to see.

This crisis, however, is not only a test. It is also a graduation exercise. As trials and hardships crush and defeat those who are not genuine fighters, so this crisis will push the hypocrites far away from the way of truth. On the other hand, as resistance only strengthens the will and the muscles of those who have the will to fight, so the trials brought on by the Mark of the Beast crisis will strengthen, purify and perfect those who truly have the spirit of God living in them. Every difficulty will only drive them closer to Christ until the test is over and they have clearly demonstrated that their relationship with Christ is real. They receive the seal of the living God, and their sins are blotted out.

This is the experience of the day of atonement. The day when God's people will be totally cleansed of all sin by a trial which will cause them to "afflict" their souls. References to this experience are to be found all over the Bible. (See Isaiah 4: 3, 4; Malachi 3:1-4.)

Ellen White once said, "The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living." (*Great Controversy*, p. 490) Because this has not been looked at in the light of other things which she also said concerning the judgment, this statement has been often misunderstood. In actual fact, this is simply stating a very simple truth. Nobody knows when God will permit the great tribulation to begin. Nobody knows when the final crisis will come upon the living saints, therefore none know how soon the judgment will pass to the names of the living.

As I stated before, hundreds of thousands, probably millions of Seventh-day Adventists hold to the concept of an investigative judgment which leads to fear and uncertainty; a warped view of the gospel as well as an unbalanced understanding of the plan of salvation. The true concept of the investigative judgment, however, is not only reasonable and logical, but is also solidly founded on an abundance of scriptural evidence.

## IS AN INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT NECESSARY?

The question is often asked, "why does God need a judgment? Doesn't He know all things? Why would He need to closely examine the record of every individual to determine what He already knows? There are several answers to this question. First, it is evident that the controversy between God and Satan is a public affair, not a private matter. It involves billions of other beings who also have a stake in the outcome of the controversy. Why did God allow Satan to virtually destroy Job when He knew that Satan's accusations were false? To prove

something to whom? To God? To Satan? God already knew the truth and Satan's personal opinion was irrelevant. He was already lost without hope of redemption. The whole drama of Job's affliction was partially for Job's benefit, yes, but more for the purpose of proving a point to the watching universe. Satan accused God and Job publicly. He challenged God, if you prefer. The consequence was not a private, secret duel, but a public conflict in which the character of Job was God's main weapon, with the universe carefully observing and taking note of the results.

God is fair in all His dealings. All His ways are justice and truth. There was a time when heaven was thrown into confusion by the work of a clever liar, and fully a third of the angels became convinced that God was an unfair deceiver. The remaining two thirds, while maintaining their faith in God, were undoubtedly shaken and left with many gray areas which needed clarification. Over the centuries God has answered the questions one by one, and given His supreme argument when He gave His only-begotten Son to die for the redemption of unworthy mankind. There can be no doubt that the deceptions of Satan have been fully unmasked by Calvary. The love, the justice, and the wisdom of God blazed forth at Calvary with a brilliance never seen before in the history of the universe. The arguments of Satan against the government of God have come to an end.

But let us think carefully; is there nothing left to settle in the controversy? Are there no more lessons to be learned? Is there nothing more for God to demonstrate? Why are we, then, not yet in heaven? Why does the suffering and death continue? What is the purpose of future judgment since God Himself already knows all things? Why the seven last plagues? What is the point of a thousand-year delay before sin is finally eradicated? The fact is, justice must not only be done, but since transparency is a marked characteristic of every honest, just government, justice must be clearly *seen* to have been done. Therefore, it is reasonable that there should be an investigation of the lives of even those who have already been saved. Not in order to save them, but in order to *demonstrate* that they truly have been saved and are fit candidates for God's eternal kingdom.

Finally, let us consider that if there is need for God to publicly judge *one* single person in spite of His foreknowledge, then the same reason is the rationale for His judging *every* single person. The point again is, God knows everything, and always has known all things. The rebellion of Satan, the fall of Adam, the name and the destiny of every descendant of Adam, were all open to the Almighty from the days of eternity. Yet every



phase of the controversy has been allowed to take its course in spite of the horrors of suffering which have been the consequence. Why? In all of this, there were vital lessons to be learned; but not by God. The controversy is the school of the universe. Don't tell me that some little corners of it will be private between God and Satan alone. No! God, in His wisdom, opens every area of His work before the universe. Not a single area is left where there may be the possibility for doubt and question. Is this foolish? Is this unnecessary? When Christ has finally "put all enemies under His feet," then it is over. The questions will then all have been forever settled. "Affliction shall not arise the second time." Not because God has made it impossible for disobedience to take place, but because all His ways will have been so clearly demonstrated to be just, fair, good, and perfect, that none will ever again question the ways of God as Lucifer once did.

### THE EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE

I have often noticed that people seem to link the validity of the doctrine of the investigative judgment to the validity of the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14. In reality, Daniel 8:14 only gives us a *time* for the beginning of this event. The doctrine itself is to be found all through the Bible. It is a teaching which receives a great deal of emphasis. If the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8: 14 were proven to be false, (I don't believe it can be) then all it would mean is that we do not know the date of the beginning of the judgment. It would not affect the many other passages in the Scriptures which clearly teach an examination of all Christians of all ages in the time of the end, and a separation of these Christians into two groups, the true and the false.

The doctrine of an investigative judgment is clearly taught and receives great emphasis in the Scriptures. The term "investigative judgment" is not used, but the concept is clearly taught. Jesus taught the concept of an investigative judgment very clearly in several of His parables.

(a) In Matthew chapter 22:1-14, Jesus told the parable of a king who made a marriage for his son and invited certain guests (the Jews). The guests were unworthy and murdered his servants and generally despised the king's invitation. Finally, the king sent his armies and destroyed them and their city (the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). The king then invited all to the wedding (the gospel invitation to the whole world) and many came in, both good and bad. Finally, the wedding was furnished with guests, all sitting down and waiting for the bridegroom's arrival. However, at this point, something surprising happens:

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:11-14)

Please notice carefully that in this parable, all the guests, including those who responded to the invitation at the beginning, are represented as waiting for the bridegroom. Where are those who came in at the beginning, today? They are all asleep in their graves, awaiting the resurrection. At this point, the king comes in to "*see*" the guests. What does this represent? What event is described here? At what point, prior to the return of Christ does God "*see*" or examine Christians? Please note that all are examined. Notice also that this examination takes place at a certain specific time, "when the king comes in," *not as each guest enters the hall*. Some get in without the proper equipment, but it is not until the king examines all that these unfit ones are finally manifested and removed. The question is, how does this process take place in the case of those who are already dead at the time when this examination takes place? Since none were examined when they entered the hall, but only when the king came in, how does this examination take place in the case of those who died before the king came in? This has to be on the basis of an investigation of the records of these dead Christians.

(b) In the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30) we see again the concept of the investigative judgment clearly taught. Christ plants a good field. All who are planted by Christ are good material, finally to be harvested. However, the devil puts tares among the wheat. The counterfeit is so convincing that even the angel reapers are not certain of the difference between both. God does not allow them to pull up the tares, because there is danger that they may also pull up the wheat as well! However, at a certain appointed time, "the time of the harvest," the tares are first gathered into bundles for the burning *before* the harvest takes place. What does this event represent, and does it only include one generation of Christians or does it include all Christians who have ever lived? If this process took place for each generation as soon as that generation died, then it is clear that the separation of the wheat and tares did not begin in the time of the harvest, but was a continuous process taking place from the beginning. However, the king's specific command to the angels was that they should wait until the time of the harvest.

In Matthew 22:14 Jesus said, “many are called, but few are *chosen*.” His meaning was that, subsequent to the calling of Christians, there was to be another process—a choosing process. The call alone was not enough to guarantee salvation. The only ones chosen would be the ones who possessed the wedding garment. A qualification which would be clearly manifested in some recognizable way, insomuch that it would be recognized by the angel reapers who separate the wheat from the tares.

(c) Revelation chapters 5 and 6 are a part of the “*Revelation of Jesus Christ*.” Here we are clearly dealing with many things which are symbolic. However, no one will deny that God intends that these symbols should be understood and interpreted in some reasonable and rational way, and that our interpretations must be derived from an examination of the symbols. Here again I believe we see very clearly and unquestionably an investigative judgment taking place.

(1) There is a great convocation in heaven at which ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands are assembled. (Revelation 5:11) This convocation takes place “hereafter” (Revelation 4:1) or some time after AD 95 when John received this vision.

(2) A book containing classified information is opened by the only Being in the universe qualified to do so. (Revelation 5:4-7)

(3) As the book is opened, all are invited to “Come and see” (investigate - examine) its contents. (Revelation 6:1)

(4) Long-dead people cry for vengeance as they are examined. How is this possible since dead people cannot talk? What does this represent? (Revelation 6: 9, 10) The *records* of the injustice which they suffered demand justice.

(5) These long-dead people are *at this point* given white robes. What does this mean? How do you give a white robe to a dead person on the basis of an examination from a previously sealed book? This can only mean that at this point, while dead, they are declared to be righteous.

(6) This examination takes place while there is still a “little season” left (Revelation 6:10) in which future saints are also to be killed as the living ones pass through the “great tribulation” and wash their robes white in the blood of the lamb. (Revelation 7:14)

(7) While the dead Christians are “given” white robes, the living Christians who are sealed receive their white robes by another process. They “wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They are involved in the process of obtaining those white

robes. This “washing” process also takes place during the period when the book is opened.

I will be the first to concede that there are some elements in Revelation 4-7 for which we do not have a perfect explanation. However, the facts which are clear and undeniable, which we have referred to above, fit perfectly into the Adventist concept of the investigative judgment. In fact, there is no other interpretation of this passage which makes sense of all the elements and events described, if we reject the investigative judgment.

## WHAT PRACTICAL GOOD IS THE DOCTRINE?

Within Adventist circles a great deal of emphasis has often been placed on the fact that the judgment of the dead is now taking place. To a large extent, this is an irrelevant piece of information. Since I am alive, how does the judgment of the dead affect me?

Undoubtedly the issues in the judgment far exceed our limited concepts. While we have labeled the phases of the judgment as “investigation”, “verdict” and “execution,” there is evidently far more involved than these terms imply. Daniel 7:11 shows us that one of the issues in the investigative judgment will be the beast and his works. During the judgment a decision is made “because of the great words which the beast spake”, to give him to the “burning flame.” Here we see that the beast, as a system, is condemned during the investigative judgment, and is destroyed and thrown into the “lake of fire” at the return of Christ. The people who make up the system, however, do not receive their punishment until after the thousand years.

We are aware of *some* of the issues and *some* of the activities in the judgment. However, something happens in Revelation chapter 5 which suggests that far more is involved than we fully realize. When the Lamb takes the sealed book from the hand of the One seated on the throne, there is an outburst of praise, glory and honor given to God, and to Christ, such as is described nowhere else in the entire Bible or in any inspired writing: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13)

What is the reason for this universal explosion of adoration to God and Christ? It is the occasion of the opening of the book. The opening of this book is evidently an event which is charged with eternal consequences. The things to be revealed, the issues to

be settled with the opening of this book, fill the entire universe with a sense of the greatness and goodness of God and His Son, insomuch that every single living thing bursts out in involuntary praise and thanksgiving. It is clear that these beings are seeing something in the opening of the book, in this “investigative judgment,” that we human beings have not fully understood. Nevertheless, as we continue to study, let it be with the intention of building on the foundation already laid. Let it be with the desire to obtain a clearer understanding without destroying what is already established. We may justifiably claim that we have only a limited understanding of the investigative judgment. We may claim that the issues are far more important and far reaching than we realize. We may conclude that we often place the emphasis on the wrong aspect of the judgment. We may determine that the focus of many Adventists has turned the doctrine into an irrelevant, legalistic appendage. However, when the biblical evidence is carefully considered, we must conclude that those who deny the reality of an end-time, pre-advent judgment of Christians are guilty of denying the plain teachings of Scripture.

The investigative judgment separates the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the bad, the sheep from the goats, the naked from the clothed. This is a Scriptural emphasis. Here, the focus is on a purging of Israel, the removal of what is impure and corrupt. The reality of this process is that some will have to go. Undoubtedly it will be a terrible experience for the living who pass through it to see loved ones swept away from the truth; to see them choose a course which we know means they are forever lost will be more dreadful than we can imagine. However, the Bible gives us another perspective of this judgment which is worth considering.

In Daniel 7:22, when speaking of this judgment, the Bible says that judgment was “given to” the saints of the Most High. The margin suggests that this means that judgment was made in favor of God’s people. This is a comforting perspective. A number of persons have confessed that the concept of the investigative judgment has filled them with fear and uncertainty. They seem to have viewed the whole process as though God were looking for an excuse to exclude them from heaven. Here we see another angle. Judgment is made “in favor of” the saints. Here we see the judgment as a process in which God’s people (His true people) are vindicated. Therefore, while the hypocrites need to be afraid of the investigative judgment, what about those who truly belong to Christ, who are truly born again? Why should we be afraid of being examined if we know that we are

truly Christ’s? Isn’t it His duty to perfect us? Isn’t it His job to prepare us for His judgment? It is comforting to see that His aim is not to see how many He can push out, but that the main purpose of the judgment is to pass sentence “in favor of” the saints. This same truth is brought out in the examination of the souls under the altar in Revelation 6: 9, 10 where, white robes are given unto these dead people. Here again we see a judgment being made in their favor.

As we stated before, the judgment of the dead is somewhat irrelevant to those who are alive. Somewhat, but not entirely. The knowledge of such an event is one way in which God alerts us to the time in which we live. It is a forerunner of the judgment of the living, an event which is of critical importance to every person living upon the earth. Over and over in the Bible God warns us of the need of *special* preparation for this event. The judgment is one event. It all takes place during the same period of time, but in different phases. God in His infinite mercy, always warns us of coming distress and appeals to us to make the necessary preparations to survive it. Therefore, God warns of this event and urges His people to prepare for it. (Revelation 14: 6-12; Joel 2:1; Leviticus 16: 29, 30)

## IS THIS TEACHING CONTRARY TO THE GOSPEL?

Does the concept of an investigative judgment deny justification by faith? Does it remove a Christian’s confidence in his salvation? Is it contrary to the gospel? In essence, the investigative judgment is simply a process by which the genuine children of God are separated from the pretenders. This separation takes place among the dead as well as the living. Can any person who has the slightest knowledge of the Scriptures deny these facts?

The main problem, I believe, is opposition to the idea that this judgment is based on examination of a person’s works. Let us examine the plain, incontrovertible teachings of God’s Word and see whether there is any difficulty.

(a) Salvation is entirely the gift of God, freely bestowed upon us by grace through faith *alone*. Not of works, but rather “without the deeds of the law.” (Romans 3:28)

(b) Faith saves us. But how is genuine faith discerned by those who do not possess the omniscience of God?

“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) “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” (Matthew 7:20) “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith,

and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” (James 2:18)

Faith, according to the plain, unmistakable Word of God, is discerned, or known by the things we *do*, (our fruits) by our *works*, and even by the *words* which we speak. In the parable of the wheat and tares Jesus shows us that even angels cannot tell the difference between some of the good and some of the bad until the fruit, or the works, are revealed in the “time of the harvest.”

(c) Any judgment cannot be for God’s benefit since He already knows all things. Nevertheless, the Bible clearly, beyond controversy, speaks of judgment over and over. For whose benefit, for God’s? No, it is evident that some beings apart from God need to see the results of a judgment. Therefore we all agree that there is reason for some kind of judgment, and that this judgment is for the benefit of somebody other than God.

(d) Since the judgment (in any form) is for the benefit of limited beings, then it goes without saying that the judgment cannot be on the basis of God’s knowledge or foreknowledge. God cannot say in the judgment, “this man is saved because I know it to be so,” or “this man is lost because I know it to be so.” No. God’s foreknowledge is not in question. If limited beings need to see a judgment, then it is obvious that this judgment needs to be on the basis of evidence which they can see, assess and measure. It must be on the basis of hard facts which leave no room for question. The works or deeds of man are the only standard by which finite beings may assess the reality of a person’s Christian experience.

Millions who profess to be Christians are not. Many more millions died in that state with only God knowing their true condition. These people made a profession of faith. They claimed to be Christians. They accepted (or claimed to accept) justification by faith. They professed to have been saved by faith in Christ and faith alone. The words of Jesus make it clear that “many” persons will be lost who make these claims (Matthew 7:21-23). Did these people truly trust in Christ? Evidently not. Did they *profess* to trust in Christ? Clearly they did. What is it then, that makes the difference between those who profess faith and are *saved*, and those who profess faith and are *lost*? The answer, according to Jesus, is the works or the deeds which they did; the fruits which they bore.

The question is, does God *Himself* make the distinction between those whose faith is genuine and those who are only professors based on His own personal knowledge of all things, or does He permit His family in heaven to participate in the process of determining who

are the true candidates for heaven and who are the imposters? Does God alone make the decisions based on His own absolute knowledge of all things, or is the universe organized in such a way that His rational creatures participate in the administration of things? In answering this question please consider this: At some point books are opened which unveil the life records of men, or some classes of men if you prefer. The point is not *when*. The point is, *why* is it necessary at *any* point, since God knows all things? Why not just punish the wicked on the basis of God’s own personal omniscience? Why open books? For whose benefit? God’s? No.

The evident answer is that there is somebody other than God for whose benefit there is a record of the lives of men contained in books. It is for the benefit of these beings that the books are opened, whether in Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation chapters 5 or 20. The point is, if somebody needs to see the evidence in books at some point (regardless of the fact that God already knows all things), why is it considered ridiculous that all the records should be examined, rather than just some of them?

There is no question that many Christians are scared to death of the idea of a judgment based on works. Why is this so? Can it be that they are fearful of what a close examination of their life’s record might reveal? Can it be because they know deep inside that they have not truly repented of their sins? Can it be that they are more willing to cling to their sins than to believe that Jesus is able to remove sin from our lives entirely? If genuine faith brings the genuine presence and power of Christ into my life, why should I be afraid of an examination to determine whether or not Christ is really at work in my life? Does a man need to be afraid of judgment if he already has salvation? The fact is that no genuine Christian will ever be lost. Jesus said that such persons have already passed from death to life (John 5:24). While it is true that such a person may willfully choose to go back to the life of sin and death, yet as long as he maintains his hold on Christ, he will never come into condemnation. (Isaiah 54:17; Psalm 7:8; 26:1) Christ is able to “save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” (Hebrews 7:25) Christ is “able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory...” (Jude 24) Every Christian who has truly been born again will be declared righteous in the judgment. Their righteousness is of Christ and their works prove it.

Let us just consider an imaginary scenario. A wife wants to know whether or not her husband has cheated on

her and hears of a remarkable new lie detector which is guaranteed to give a truthful result. She tries to persuade her husband to take the test. Now a husband may justifiably object to being required to prove his faithfulness, but does he need to be *afraid* to take the test if it is guaranteed to be accurate? Think about it. Which husband would be afraid to take the test? Only the guilty one. He would be afraid of what the test would reveal. The one who had not cheated might be unhappy at his wife's paranoia but he would have no fear of the test itself.

The point is, why should a person who has truly accepted Christ and who knows that his relationship with Christ is real, be afraid of an examination to determine whether or not his faith in Christ is genuine? The only person who needs to be afraid is the hypocrite (Isaiah 33:14); the person who knows deep inside that he does not know Christ. "*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.*" (Titus 1:16)

The plain, simple truth is that, if there is no investigative judgment, God must either save *all* who profess to have faith, saint and hypocrite alike, or must, Himself, decide, without offering one bit of evidence, who will be saved and who will be lost.

## IMPUTED VERSUS IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

One of the chief objections to this doctrine is that it teaches that man is saved by a righteousness within him (even if imparted by Christ) rather than by a righteousness within Christ which is imputed to the believer. In other words, I am saved by faith in what Christ did and what He is. My salvation is in Him, and God saves me for His sake, not because of what I am, or what I have become, but because of who Christ is and what He has done. All that is necessary on my part is faith. All that is needful is that I believe what God has done for me in Christ. This is my passport to eternal life.

There can be no denying the truth that this is the clear Biblical means by which salvation comes to us. The critical issue, however, is not the question of *how* men are saved. That is beyond controversy. The issue is really this: How can it be *demonstrated* that a person has truly received salvation? That a person truly believes in Christ? That a person has truly been born again and has Christ living within? This is the critical question which God must answer for the universe, and He has only two possible ways of doing it.

(a) Either God Himself must make the decisions without offering any proof except that "this person claimed to have faith." (What about those who made the same claim and yet are lost?)


(b) Or He must open up their lives before the universe in an investigation which will demonstrate, on the basis of their works, that their faith was real.

## OBJECTIONS

At this point the question may be asked, "what about those followers of Christ who are already in heaven? What about Enoch, Moses, Elijah and even those who were taken to heaven after the resurrection of Christ? If the investigative judgment did not begin until the time of the end (1844) and is necessary before a person's destiny is decided, how then could God have taken these people to heaven thousands of years ago? We might well ask, "how is it that Moses was raised from the dead and taken to heaven before the appointed time of the resurrection? How come some people received the Holy Spirit before Pentecost? The point is that there are specific appointed times, ordained by God for the major events in the plan of salvation. The death of Christ, the return of Christ, the resurrection of the righteous dead as well as the unrighteous dead, the judgment in its various phases, etc. All these are ordained by God to occur at particular times and do occur, at the exact time appointed of God. Does this mean that there cannot be individual exceptions to the rule? Does this mean that there are not times when heaven makes an exception and acts outside of its timetable? This point hardly needs to be proved.

Enoch was taken to heaven thousands of years before the general appointed time for the children of earth to be delivered. Moses was resurrected and taken to heaven long before the general resurrection of the just. In the same way, why is it difficult to accept that the lives of these men were examined before the general time of the investigative judgment?

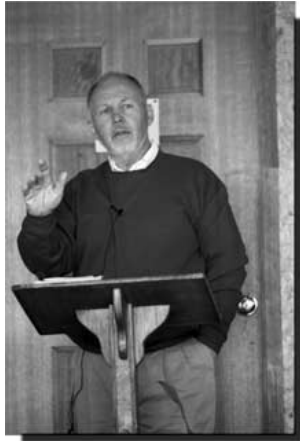
## AN APPEAL

My dear brothers and sisters I urge you to carefully examine the biblical evidence again. This truth is too plainly taught to be missed. How can we reject something which is so evidently taught in the Word of God, and why should we? What good reason is there for the enmity which is often manifested towards this doctrine? God desires us to be united. This is also the aching desire of my heart. But it cannot be on the basis of anything other than God's truth. Let us re-examine our positions carefully in the light of the Scriptures and see if we cannot conclude that unity can be achieved upon the basis of a united acceptance of this, and all other biblical truths. 

# Arizona Camp Meeting Report

by Lynnford Beachy

The Arizona camp meeting in Wilhoit, Arizona was a wonderful experience for all my family. The theme of the camp meeting was “Walking in His Footsteps.” We were daily confronted with the urge to make further steps in our Christian experience. We enjoyed the challenge and appreciated the time we were able to spend with the Lord and His people. Every message was focused on practical issues in our lives. It was truly a blessing. I really appreciated the opportunity to meet new people whom I had only corresponded with in the past. For those of you who were not able to make it, or did not even attempt to come, I am truly sorry for the blessings you forfeited by your absence. I pray that you will be able to come to the next camp meeting in West Virginia. Until you have been to one of these camp meetings you have no idea of how uplifting they can be. The fellowship with like-minded brethren, with their gentle urging to continue on, is a real blessing. Solomon wrote, “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10) I pray that you will consider these verses as you make plans to attend the next camp meeting.



**Richard Stratton**

Benjamin Vela from Miami, Florida shared some powerful messages with us from the Word of God. His messages were focused on the eight laws of health, presented from a unique perspective—tying them in with our spiritual needs. I learned many new things from these meetings. Benjamin is a dynamic speaker who preaches with enthusiasm. He also has the talent of presenting the messages in a way that makes everyone know he has a genuine love for them.

Willis Smith from Cleveland, Ohio shared some very thought-provoking messages from the Word of God. I was challenged to examine my own life as the Bible standard was lifted up. Before each message Willis shared some excellent poems he had written that applied to the message he was going to share. Willis’

messages were filled with testimonies of everyday experiences where the Lord had worked in His life. I especially enjoyed the very appropriate message of “The Golden Rule,” which helped us to examine how we treat our fellow man. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” (John 13:34) My friends, this is a very high calling. Let us consider this in our daily lives and not love in word only, but manifest that love in our actions as well. Willis has a good way of making his messages very understandable and practical. This is very necessary in his work in prison ministry and with the down-and-out people on the streets in Cleveland, Ohio.



**Willis Smith**

Malcolm McCrillis shared some very helpful insights into proper Christian music and, more specifically, proper music to be used in our churches. Malcolm has a deep appreciation for music and an ear to easily pick out the slightest variation from the correct notes in music. It is not difficult for each of us to quickly discern when the words of a song are not appropriate to fill the minds of Christians, but it is sometimes difficult for us to discern whether the way the musical instruments are used is pleasing to God. Malcolm shared some principles to help us recognize whether the music behind the lyrics is



**Group Picture**



**Lea came all the way from Australia**

pleasing to God. If it makes you feel like dancing, it is inappropriate to be played in our churches. On Sabbath, Malcolm shared a timely message with us entitled, "If Not Now, When?" urging us to get ready to meet the Lord now rather than waiting until it is too late.

Richard Stratton shared some wonderful thoughts on faith, encouraging us to walk closer to the Lord.

I spoke on the love of the Father in giving up His Son to die for us and the basic principles of salvation, as well as a study on the importance of having an assurance of your salvation, which we plan to print in next month's *Old Paths*. I also shared a study on what the Bible says about how Christians should communicate with one another, especially on matters that would urge our brothers and sister to make forward steps in their Christian experience. I also shared some studies on having a closer walk with the Lord and spending more time in fellowship with Him and His Son.

Each morning from 6:30-7:00 there was a time for personal testimonies. Benjamin Vela, Willis Smith, Malcolm McCrillis, Lonnie and Abigail



**Abigail and Lonnie Davis**

Davis, Richard and Bonnie Stratton, Lynnford Beachy, Steve Sutton, and Lea Hay each shared their testimony of how the Lord worked in their lives. It was a blessing to get to know the background of each of these people and behold the mighty works of God.

Of all the people who came to the camp meeting there was one individual who, by far, traveled the farthest to get there. Sister Lea Hay flew from Australia just to come to camp meeting and meet some of the people in America. Praise the Lord for such dedication.

On the last day of the camp meeting a dear sister from Colorado entered into the watery grave of baptism. We praise the Lord for her commitment to serve Him. The camp meeting ended with testimonies from everyone who attended, sharing how the Lord had worked in their lives and how the camp meeting had blessed them.


I am certainly grateful to the Lord for allowing me to be able to fellowship with God's people at the Arizona camp meeting. I wish to personally thank each of you who came to the camp meeting, for it would not have been the same without you.

After our camp meeting last September in southern Illinois, I left proclaiming that it was the best camp meeting I had ever attended. (I have attended about fifteen since I became a Christian in 1991.) I can no longer say that the Illinois camp meeting was the best I have attended. Now the last Arizona camp meeting



**Malcolm and Sandy**

was the best one I have ever attended, primarily because of the deep experience I had with the Lord there and the wonderful fellowship. One thing different about this last Arizona camp meeting, from all the others I have attended, is that there was not even one Bible study focusing on the truth about God. This is good and bad. Good because it gave us more time to focus on other areas which we needed to learn about. Bad because there was nobody there who was not already familiar, and in agreement, with the truth about God. Some people have accused us of harping on one issue all the time and becoming unbalanced. Anyone who attended the Arizona camp meeting would certainly know that we have a much wider perspective than that.

Again, I wish to urge you to attend the next camp meeting here in West Virginia. You have no idea of what blessings and advancements in your spiritual life that you will forfeit if you do not attend. I will see you at camp meeting. 



**Lynnford Preparing to Baptize Sister White**

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## Camp Meeting in Washington State

We wish to announce a camp meeting to be held near Leavenworth, in central Washington state, about 150 miles east of Seattle. The first meeting will be Thursday evening, August 31. The meetings will extend to Sunday evening, September 3.

Eldon Noyes will be hosting the camp meeting at his home, which is well suited for a camp meeting. He has had many camp meetings at his home in the past. Some of the possible speakers are David Clayton, Lynnford Beachy, and Allen Stump. We hope you, especially all those living in the northwestern part of the United States and the southwestern part of Canada, will be able to attend.

Eldon is requesting a donation of \$15 per person, or \$25 per family, to help cover the costs of this camp meeting. This request is very reasonable since all meals will be provided. An additional donation can be given to help with additional costs.

Come prepared to camp with all the necessities such as tent, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, etc. We are certain that this camp meeting will prove to be a great blessing. Please begin now to make plans to attend. For more information call Eldon Noyes at (509) 548-5379. I will see you at camp meeting.

*Lynnford Beachy*

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Editor . . . . . Allen Stump  
Associate Editor . . . . . Lynnford Beachy