

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



“And he . . . brought me to . . . the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.” (Ezekiel 8:3)

Prayer Requests

Heavy on our hearts is the on-going tragedy in Haiti. I am sure all of us have prayed for the many victims of Haiti and the great loss they have suffered. Let us continue to remember them in prayer as they try to rebuild their lives following the loss of family, home, income, and basic necessities; and let us seek to answer our prayers with whatever donations we can make to the disaster relief charity of our choice.

Let us also continue to pray for the 59th General Conference Session and the plans that we are making now to be present. One need we have is housing for our workers. Will you please join us in prayer that

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The Seal of God and the Abominations of Ezekiel 8 (Part 1)

Adventism was raised up to restore long-buried truths, such as the seventh-day Sabbath, the truth about death and hell, and the identity of God and his Son, but Adventism was also raised up to proclaim God's last-day warning messages to the world. This includes the message of the everlasting gospel, as taught in the sanctuary service, and to proclaim the seal of God and the mark of the beast issues before the seven last plagues are poured out upon the earth.

The book of Revelation speaks about those who will receive the seal of God and clearly denotes that those who receive the seal of God are set in contradistinction to those who receive the mark of the beast. When the seal of God is discussed, the book of Revelation is almost always at the center of the focus. However, as with so much in the Apocalypse, the imagery of the seal of God is borrowed from the Old Testament, specifically from the 9th chapter of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel chapter 1 begins with "visions of God" (1:1). Ezekiel experienced a theophany or an appearing of God. Chapters 2 and 3 contain the prophet's commission and charge. Chapters 4-7 contain a series of indictments against Judah for her transgressions which would result in three judgments: sword, famine, and pestilence (Ezekiel 7:15). In Ezekiel 6:4; 7:10, 11, God speaks of Judah's idolatry, pride, and violence. These things finally climax in the vision of the four abominations of chapter 8 and the seal of God for the righteous and the slaughter of the wicked in chapter 9.

He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. (Ezekiel 9:1-6)

It is clear that what has happened in chapter 9 is the result of judgment. There are two classes; one class is cut down by

the destroying angels and the other class receives a mark on their foreheads. This mark is given to one group – those who receive the seal of God. There is not a lot of direct description in Revelation of those who receive the seal of God. They are the 144,000 or at least the 144,000 are a part of those who receive the seal of God (Revelation 7:2-4). They are described as having the "Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1), as being "redeemed from the earth" (v. 3), as "virgins" (v. 4), and without "guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (v. 5).

In Ezekiel there is additional information given as to the identity of this group and it does more than hint at something that they are doing. When we study Revelation concerning the seal of God, we usually think of those who keep the Sabbath. Though the Sabbath is not directly mentioned as the seal of God in Revelation, as we study below the surface we can see that it is the seal of God. We have also been plainly told that "the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 640). Furthermore, in the book of Ezekiel, God calls the Sabbath a sign between himself and his people (Ezekiel 20:12, 20), but within Revelation, the Sabbath must be dug for as for hidden treasure.

It will not be surprising to find the Sabbath as an issue in Ezekiel 9, but, like in the book of Revelation, it is not directly mentioned but clearly visible as one digs below the surface of what is being said. Yet there is a characteristic of those who receive the seal of God that is clearly and plainly stated. Ezekiel 9:4 gives the requirement of those who receive "the pure mark of truth" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 267) — the seal of God. It says that those who receive the seal of God are those who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of Jerusalem.

In Ezekiel 8, God revealed to Ezekiel abominations that were occurring in Jerusalem. Chapters 8 and 9 of Ezekiel make up part of an enacted prophecy. God showed Ezekiel literal events occurring at that time in Jerusalem among God's people which were prophetic of literal events that would happen among God's people at the end of time.

The end-time setting is impossible to miss unless one's head is buried in the spiritual sand. The servant of the Lord has plainly stated concerning this prophecy:

The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. . . . Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 208, 207)

Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed

people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of the last work under the figure of the men each having a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. (*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 266)

This testimony is of great instructional importance. It mentions "the closing work *for* the church." This does not say "the closing work *of* or *by* the church." This is not a work that the church does but rather a work that needs done *for* the church! The time frame is given for the testimony as the time of the sealing of the 144,000 and this is called "the *last* work!"

In the last days, the only people who will be sealed are those who "sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst" of Jerusalem. Here Jerusalem represents the church:

Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those "that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done" in the church. (*Ibid.*, p. 267)

When we read anything in inspiration, we should pay close attention, but when we read "mark this point with care," it should raise a red flag of warning to each of us. It should make us sit up and pay attention. There is a special work for God's church in the end of time, and only those who participate in this work will receive the seal of God. God's people will only receive his seal if they are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the church, so we first need to know what these abominations are and why they are offensive to God.

Ezekiel 8 lists four abominations. The first abomination is what is called "the image of Jealousy" in verses 3 and 5. The next abomination Ezekiel is shown (verses 10-12) consists of the idols of Israel, "creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about" (Ezekiel 8:10). In connection with this, Ezekiel is shown the leaders of Israel with censers and a thick cloud of smoke (v. 11). The third abomination is "women weeping for Tammuz" (Ezekiel 8:14), and the last abomination is twenty-five men with their backs to the temple and facing east towards the sun, worshipping the sun (Ezekiel 8:16)!

God calls all of these things abominations. The Hebrew word translated abomination is *tow'ebah*. This word means something disgusting or loathe. Some examples of things that God says are an abomination or *tow'ebah* are homosexuality and other terrible perversions (Leviticus 18:22-26), idolatry (Deuteronomy 7:25), human sacrifice (Deuteronomy 12:31), and occult activities (Deuteronomy 18:9-14).



Aerial view of the Vatican

Solomon gives a list of seven abominations in Proverbs 6:16-19. By the context of the usages of *tow'ebah*, we see that what is described by this word is not something that pleases God but, rather, something that is very abhorring to God, something that is foul, repulsive, nauseating, and disgusting. By calling the four things in Ezekiel 8 abominations (*tow'ebah*), God is making his attitude well-known concerning them.

The list of abominations that are given progresses from bad to worse. After each of the first three abominations, the prophet is told that he will now see "greater abominations" (Ezekiel 8:6, 13, 15).

Concerning the first abomination Ezekiel was told: "Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary" (Ezekiel 8:6)? These abominations are so revolting to God that he is driven far away from his sanctuary because of them. During the time of the sealing, Ellen White noted: "But the glory of the

Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, *His power and presence were lacking*" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 210).

The Image of Jealousy

Now let us begin to study the first abomination, the image of jealousy.

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold



Inauguration of President Reagan

northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. (Ezekiel 8:3-5)

Six times in the Bible God declares that he is a “jealous God” (Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Joshua 24:19). The first reference is from the second commandment and all the references except for Joshua directly deal with the issue of worshiping the true God instead of false gods. Deuteronomy 32 describes how Israel provoked God to anger with the worship of false gods. These false gods were worshiped with sun pillars.

But Jeshurun [Israel] waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. (Deuteronomy 32:15-21)

God did not wish for Israel to become trapped by the worship of false gods and so he gave very specific instructions to his people:

When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye

deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. (Deuteronomy 7:1-5)

And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. Deuteronomy 12:3

And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images. (Isaiah 17:8)

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up. (Isaiah 27:9)



Obelisk-lined street leading to the Vatican

God told Israel to destroy the pillars and idols of the land they were going into. No idol or image provoked God more than sun pillars. Anciently, as well as today, sun pillars provoked the God of heaven to jealousy. God said to destroy these images and idols. Interestingly, many of these sun pillars still exist today.

It should be noted where Ezekiel saw this abomination. It was first noted that it was at “the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy” (Ezekiel 8:3). This image provoked God to jealousy and the seat of placement of this image was near the door of the inner gate towards the north. This was the location that images of Baal were usually kept at heathen temples. Furthermore, Ezekiel notes that the image of jealousy was “northward at the gate of the altar” (Ezekiel 8:5). This sun pillar which provoked God to jealousy was then more precisely located near the brazen altar close to the inner gate towards the north.

Idols were a threat to the children of Israel and to the early church also. These idols and images paved the way for further and deeper apostasy. E. J. Waggoner wrote in 1888:

The worship of images and the observance of the Sunday festival came into the church about the same time; but images were regarded with reverence a long time before Sunday was regarded as a sacred day. (*Fathers of the Catholic Church*, p. 268)

You see, beloved, Satan brings in his images prior to the worship of himself and his day of worship. Not only were images a snare for ancient Israel and the early church, they can be snares for us. “Satan’s snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their

entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 160).

What were some of the main snares that Satan used to entangle Israel? Idols and images! And then she says that “We are repeating the history of that people.” Notice again what God said about those idols and images concerning Israel:

Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Exodus 34:11-14)

God says his name is *Jealous* and he is a jealous God. These idols provoked God to jealousy. The Hebrew word for images in verse 13 is *matstsebah* and it means an image or a pillar. Its root’s base meaning is something that is standing or erect. The Hebrew word for grove is *asherah*. Asherah was the supposed consort of Baal in Canaanite worship. God’s command was to “destroy their altars, break their *images*, and cut down their *groves*.”

In Jeremiah 43:13, God prophesied what Nebuchadnezzar would do in Egypt. “He shall break also the *images of Bethshemesh*, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire” (Jeremiah 43:13). The name Bethshemesh means “house of the sun.” The LXX translates this as Heliopolis, which was the city of the sun. Heliopolis was known for its sun pillars, but there was one immense pillar there that has become famous today and has been seen in person or by picture by almost every person upon the earth. It is known as the obelisk of Heliopolis and its current location is in the middle of St. Peter’s square at the Vatican. The history of this obelisk is intriguing.

[The Roman Emperor] Caligula, in A. D. 37-41 had this obelisk transported from HELIOPOLIS, Egypt, to his circus on the Vatican Hill, where now stands St. Peter’s Cathedral. Now Heliopolis, the city from which the obelisk was originally transported, is but the Greek name of Bethshemesh, which was the center of Egyptian sun-worship in olden days! And this was the very place of which we read in the Bible of the false worship that existed there and in which special mention is made of the “images (obelisks) of Bethshemesh (the House of the Sun)” (Jer. 43:13)!

And so, the very same obelisk that once stood at the ancient pagan temple at the CENTER of Egyptian paganism (Heliopolis or Bethshemesh) now stands before the temple

that is the CENTER of modern paganism—the so-called Cathedral of St. Peter, the “Mother” church of Catholicism. This seems like more than a mere coincidence.

The red granite obelisk of the Vatican is itself 83 feet high (132 feet high with its foundation) and weighs 320 tons. In 1586, to make certain that this obelisk was centered right directly at the entry of the Cathedral, it was moved a short distance to its present location—St. Peter’s square—by order of Pope Sixtus V. Of course the moving of this heavy obelisk—especially in those days—was a very difficult task. Many movers refused to attempt the feat, especially when the Pope had attached the DEATH PENALTY if the obelisk was dropped and broken. (Such a regulation in itself indicates how much importance that the Pope and his people accredited to this abominable idol!)

Finally a man by the name of Domenico Fontana accepted the responsibility of the moving and erection of the Vatican obelisk. With 45 winches, 160 horses, and a crew of 800 workmen, the task of moving began! The date: September 10, 1586. Multitudes crowded the extensive square. While the obelisk was being moved, the crowd—UPON PENALTY OF DEATH—was required to remain silent until the erection was made. (Again we see how much importance the Romish Church attributed to this idol!) Finally, after near failure, the obelisk was erected—to the sound of hundreds of bells ringing, the roar of cannons, and the loud cheers of the multitude. The idol was dedicated to the “cross”, mass was celebrated, and the Pope pronounced a blessing on the workmen and their horses. (Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, pp. 42, 43)

An obelisk is a phallic symbol and in order for these heathenistic symbols to carry out their representations, they had to be placed upright (erect), pointing towards the sun. God said that this representation should be taken down, but the vicegerent of Satan (see *The Signs of the Times*, November 19, 1894) says that it is to be erect. It is also of interest that the obelisk at St. Peter’s Basilica is placed in such a manner that, as the sun rises in the east during the summer solstice, the shadow of the obelisk penetrates the middle of St. Peter’s Basilica, symbolically impregnating the Vatican with the power of the sun. This is possible because the street leading to the Vatican is exactly due east of the Vatican. Interestingly, this street that leads toward the center of modern-day sun worship is lined on each side with smaller sun pillars.

The obelisk is a four-sided pillar, representing the four corners of the earth. At its peak is a pyramid. It represents a combination of religious and political power throughout the world today. To the Jesuits, Masons, and the Illuminati, it stands for one-world government. As we have noted, it is a phallic symbol. As a point of interest, Dr. Alberto Rivera, former high-level Jesuit priest, stated on page 26 of the

Chick publication *The GodFathers* that when the president of the United States took his oath of office facing an obelisk, it would be a sign to the Jesuits worldwide that Protestantism was no longer a threat to the Vatican because of the ecumenical movement. This was fulfilled in 1981 with the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, whose inauguration occurred just months after the 1980 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session during which the church officially voted to approve of the trinity doctrine.

Over and over, God commanded his people to break down, tear down, and beat down the images and idols that were in the land. In Isaiah 27:9, we read:

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves (*asherah*) and images (*chamman*) shall not stand up. (Isaiah 27:9)

The Hebrew word for images is *asherah* which we have seen before but the Hebrew word for images is *chamman*. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states this concerning Baal worship:

The Baal of the Syrians, Phoenicians, and heathen Hebrews is a much less elevated conception than the Babylonian Bel. He is properly the sun-god Baal-Shamem, Baal (lord) of the heavens, the highest of the heavenly bodies, but still a mere power of nature, born like the other luminaries from the primitive chaos. As the sun-god he is conceived as the male principle of life and reproduction in nature, and thus in some forms of his worship is the patron of the grossest sensuality, and even of systematic prostitution. An example of this is found in the worship of Baal-Peor (Numbers 25), and in general in the Canaanitish high places, where Baal, the male principle, was worshiped in association with the unchaste goddess Ashera, the female principle of nature. The frequent references to this form of religion in the Old Testament are obscured in the English version by the rendering 'grove' for the word Ashera, which sometimes denotes the goddess, sometimes the tree or post which was her symbol. Baal himself was represented on the high places not by an image, but by obelisks or pillars, . . . sometimes called *chammanim* or sun pillars, a name which is to be compared with the title Baal-Chamman, frequently given to the god on Phoenician inscriptions. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, article on "baal," quoted in *Fathers of the Catholic Church*, pp. 306, 307)

In Revelation 14:8, the Bible declares that Babylon is fallen: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." What is part of the wine that causes her to be fallen for which God condemns her?

And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. (Isaiah 21:9)

Notice the command of God to Israel, as they prepared to enter the Promised Land:

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set thee up any image (*matstsebah*); which the LORD thy God hateth. (Deuteronomy 16:20-22)

God said not to plant a grove of any trees near his altar – not fruit trees or ornamental trees of any kind. The pagans around them would have groves of trees and in some cases they would cut the limbs from the trees and these would be places of worship. God did not want this temptation to be upon his people or a confused witness to the surrounding nations concerning the worship of himself. The Hebrew word for image in verse 22 is *matstsebah*, which means pillar or obelisk. God's people are to be a different people than the world.

For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. (Deuteronomy 14:2)

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

For God's people to be a different people, they could not be like the pagan/heathen people around them.

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations (*tow'ebah*) of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13)

God said that his people were not to follow the abominations of the nations, the disgusting loathe practices that the nations did. Worshipers of Baal were required to sacrifice their firstborn son to the image of jealousy and women, married or not would have to serve as temple prostitutes. No wonder it was an abomination to God. The worshipers of

Molech would have their children pass through fire (Leviticus 18:21).

You say that you would never do that! Oh, really? What are you doing when you send your children to public schools or places where they learn the ways of the world and Babylon? What are you doing when you bring the ways of the world into your home by television? What are you doing when you live in wicked cities where you can hardly turn your head without seeing some sort of abomination? God tells us what he is going to do with the altars you erect to Baal:

And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. (Ezekiel 6:4, 6)

Remember that these sections of Ezekiel are prophetic of events at the end of time. Remember “The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 208)

How does this affect us today? We don't have obelisks in Protestant Christianity today, do we? Yes, of course, professed Protestants have church buildings that carry this phallic symbol upon them today. We simply call them steeples. Steeples were incorporated into the worship of Christ around AD 600. If the apostles could be resurrected today and see the common meeting places of professed Christians and be told that these are the places where the Saviour is worshiped, they would, no doubt, be in disbelief. They would say that these could not be Christian worship areas but, rather, meeting places for Baal, for the Apostles would recognize the architecture. If Elijah were able to come to this earth with no knowledge of its history since his translation and see the professed meeting places of God, he would know that Baal is worshiped, not Jehovah, in these places. He would base this, first of all, upon the architecture, but also upon the fact that he would see the women weeping for Tammuz and the church leaders facing and worshipping the sun with their backs to the sanctuary. This would confirm to him that Baal was being worshiped.

You may be asking how this could affect you, for you may worship in a home church where there is no steeple or any such thing. Please remember that Satan brings his symbols in first, and our acceptance of these matters, even though we ourselves may not be doing them, prepares the way for further abominations. Furthermore, some people say this is not a salvational issue and because it is just a side issue to take our attention away from the righteousness of Jesus, it is should not be studied and is only useless, dangerous and fanatical. May I remind you that the Spirit of Prophecy also says that “the righteousness of Christ ... is pure, unadulterated truth” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*,

p. 65). This *is* truth and it is truth that concerns the sealing of God's people, so, beloved, it is very important and is not a side issue.

The importance of this is seen in the 9th chapter of Ezekiel where we learn, as noted earlier, that only those who sigh and cry about these wicked things will receive “the pure mark of truth,” the seal of the living God. We are discussing truth essential for God's people at the end of time, although I believe that some of our spiritual forefathers knew of these things. We are talking about what is essential if we are going to be a part of the 144,000, those who are sealed just before probation closes. Those who have a zeal for the honor and glory of God will not wish to be involved in anything that is disgusting to God. Ellen White tells us how God's people will sigh and cry about these matters:

In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in *lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings*. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 210)

If you wish to be a part of the 144,000, you will have to put the honor of God first. You may not be involved with this abomination called the image of jealousy, but if you fail to sigh and cry to those who are involved, you will not receive the seal of God. That is clear and plain. You may be considered a troubler of Israel, but so was Elijah. You may not receive the approval of the General Conference, but you may have the approbation of God. I realize that this message will not be palatable to some, but the Bible declares that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18 NKJV). I cannot and will not suppress the truth because it is unpopular. Now, what will you do?

To be continued.

Allen Stump



Modern obelisk

No Room for Christ in the Inn

By Allen Stump

While this kind of study is usually given in December, the understanding of the incarnation is always important.

Several years ago, my family and I were visiting at Yellowstone National Park, and, due to illness in the family, I decided that we needed to get a room in one of the lodges for a few nights instead of using our customary tent. Although there were several places in the park that offered rooms, each lodge I checked with had no vacancy. I learned by experience that when you have a family member who is sick and there is no place to go for the night, you feel like the weight of the world is upon your shoulders. After checking each lodge, we finally found a room. Though it did not have its own bathroom, at least it was warm and dry.

As I reflected back on the situation, my mind went to Joseph and his desire to find a place for Mary to rest. Joseph had traveled to Bethlehem, and there Mary:

brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)

The inn was more like the guest chamber in Luke 22:11, and in the humble manger of the stable of the guest chamber God's Christ was born. The birth of Jesus had been prophesied:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. (Genesis 49:10)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

This God-man was to be born of humble stock in Bethlehem. How could a public recognition of the lineage of an obscure carpenter and an unknown maiden be secured? What interest could the census keepers take in two such humble persons?

Mary lived at Nazareth in Galilee, and there seemed every probability that the birth would take place there; in fact, the time of her delivery was so near that, unless absolutely compelled, she would not be likely to undertake a long and difficult journey to the southern province of Judea. How would providence arrange matters?

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one

into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:). (Luke 2:1-4)

Each person was required to go to the town to which he or she belonged. Mary comes to Bethlehem and Jesus Christ is born as prophecy declared. In fact, Jesus will be officially recognized as being descended from David by the fact that his mother came to Bethlehem as being of that lineage, remained there, and returned to Galilee without having her claims questioned.

Since all persons of the house of David were compelled to go to Bethlehem, the meager accommodations of the little town were soon exhausted. We can be sure that friends entertained their friends till their houses were all full, but Joseph had no such willing kinsmen in the town. At that time, there were in most towns caravan inns where free accommodations were given to travelers. However, this inn, too, was full. Coming from a long way and forced to travel slowly, the humble couple had arrived late. The rooms within the great brick square were already occupied with families. "No Vacancy" was all Joseph could see. There remained no better lodging, even for a woman in travail, than one of the lowly spaces appropriated to beasts of burden. The stall of an animal was the only place where Jesus could be born. Perhaps by hanging a curtain at its front and tethering their donkey on the outer side to block the passage, the needed privacy could be obtained, and here in the stable the King of Glory was born and in the manger was laid.

The God who is ruler of the universe could, of course, have provided a much better place. Money is not an object to the God who owns all the gold and silver and the cattle on a thousand hills. Space is not an object to the God who created a space so vast that when we try to measure its vastness we use a ruler whose basic unit of measure is 5.87 trillion miles! So, why was Jesus born in a stable?

For one reason, it was to demonstrate the humiliation of Christ.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a

man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:2, 3)

Jesus would go from swaddling clothes, clothes made of strips of bandages, to being naked upon the cross. Purple robes would not be fitting at this time. Jesus was to be born in the humblest shed for his birth, later die, and then be buried in a donated tomb. Jesus could say: “The birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). Nothing could be more fitting than when, in his season of humiliation, Jesus laid aside all his glory, took upon himself the form of a servant, and lay in a manger.

Also, Jesus must be born in a stable so he could be declared to be the king of the poor.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:8-12)

The shepherds would have been able to recognize Christ's relationship to them by the position in which they found him. Poor folks are not impressed with imperial robes; they excite no affection for them. A man in their own apparel, however, could attract their confidence. Working men will cling with tenacity to a leader of their own order, following him because he understands their toils, sympathizes in their sorrows, and feels an interest in all their concerns. Great commanders, such as George Washington, have readily won the hearts of their soldiers by sharing their hardships and roughing it, as if they belonged to the ranks. The king of men who was born in Bethlehem was not exempted in his life from the common calamities of the poor. In fact, his lot was even worse than theirs. “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11). Jesus was to be Lord of all.

In the life of Jesus, we find an invitation to the most humble to come to him because he is approachable! We might tremble to approach a throne, but we need not fear approaching a manger.

The president of the United States is not approachable to the common person. On November 24 of last year, Tareq and Michaela Salahi circumvented the Secret Service to attend an event in the White House and even shook hands with President Obama. This became a huge scandal due to the security concerns because the average person is not supposed to have access to the president.

The gospel writers, though, record events that help us to see the accessibility of Jesus. An example is the woman who touched the fringes of Christ's garment (Matthew 9:20, 21). There were no rough guards whose job it was to push poor petitioners away. Mark records that when the disciples tried to keep the children away, they were rebuked by the Master.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:13, 14)

Luke notes that the outcasts could come near to Jesus: “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him” (Luke 15:1).

The invitation of Jesus was for all people: “Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Those who are weary and heavy-laden, broken in spirit, and bowed down in soul can come to him. Those who despise themselves and are despised of others – the publican, harlot, thief, and drunkard – can come to him. Look in the manger! There lies the Christ. There are no guards to keep you away, no shields to keep you from looking. You may have total access to the Son of God and accept him as your Savior, for he puts himself into that manger so that you may approach him. The throne of Solomon will awe you, but the manger of the Son of David invites you in a manner that is not threatening.

It was at the manger that the beasts were fed. Sin has made men into something worse than beasts, but Jesus has come to where the beasts are and offers them change. Our Lord was laid in the manger where the beasts were fed, to show that even beast-like men may come to him and live. No person can be so degraded that Christ cannot lift him up. If you fall, you can fall into his strong arms. If society loathes you and you abhor yourself, the Master in the stable with the beasts presents himself as “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (Hebrews 7:25). When we accept Jesus into our lives, we become a new creature in Christ.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

It was the very presence of Jesus that made the stable holy. I have seen the worldly-acclaimed, magnificent St. Peter's Basilica, and it is anything but holy. Only the presence of Jesus can make anything holy. As Christ told Moses, “Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5).

Interestingly, after Jesus was gone, the beasts continued to feed and all seemed normal again, and, in fact, things *were* normal again. It was only his presence which glorified the manger. If Jesus were taken away from this world, it would go fully into heathen darkness, and this is exactly what will

happen when, at the close of human probation, the Spirit of God is withdrawn.

Not only was there no room for Christ in the inn, but there was no room for Jesus among the kings of the earth. Kings and queens of the earth do not visit dirty, old stables. Royalty of this earth loves splendor and pomp, but Jesus is meekness in the flesh. He is a carpenter's son and the fisherman's companion.

According to the Bible, it is the kings of the earth that make war with Christ:

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. (Acts 4:26)

It is the kings of the earth that associate with the harlot and find their doom with her, as they have warred against Jesus (Revelation 6:15; 17:2; 19:19).

There was no room for Christ in the inn, and there usually is no room for Jesus among the "upper class." Any of us who are old enough to remember Harvest Ingathering know that you usually do not get many donations from the "upper class," but, rather, it is often the "lower class," those who can understand where Jesus came from, that help with the work for the needy.

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. (Jeremiah 9:23)

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (Matthew 19:24)

There was no room for Christ in the inn, and there is usually little room for Jesus among the merchants. "The merchants of the earth are waxed rich" (Revelation 18:3).

There was no room for Christ in the inn, and there is usually little room for Jesus in the schools of philosophy. Jesus does not fit into the thinking of Socrates and Plato or into the thinking of the Stoics and Epicurians. Those molding the New World Order have Lucifer on their throne and have no room for Jesus.

There was no room for Christ in the inn, and there is usually little room for Jesus in the science room. Today's evolution and even intelligent design leave little room for the true Creator.

Finally, there was no room for Christ in the inn, and there is usually little room for Jesus in professed Christianity! In his time, the Sanhedrin and the priests moved the people to say: "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke 23:18). The priests paid out their shekels to bribe the popular voice, and then Christ was hounded to his death. Surely there ought to have been room for him in the church of his own people, but there was not.

Who burned the martyrs? Who put John Bunyan in prison? Who chased the Puritans from their pulpits? Who? The professed messengers of heaven and priests of God! The

hirelings who are not Christ's shepherds and do not love his sheep have ever been the most ferocious enemies of our God and of his Christ.

Today, there is no room for Jesus in the trinitarian Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jesus foresaw this and told us why: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2, 3).

I find it interesting that most men will not stand for open insult upon their wife, mother, or sister, but they will let Jesus be insulted and put down as someone other than the exalted Son of God. Why do we allow Jesus to be so ill-spoken of among our ranks?

Do you have room for Christ in your heart? One way to gauge this is to see if you have study time for Jesus. Do you take time for him in prayer?

Is there room for Jesus in your busy daily life? What about in your house work and your work places? Are you so busy with these places and their events that you have no room for Jesus?

Is there room for Jesus in your checkbook? Ouch, that one hurts!

Is there room for Jesus in your conversations and in every aspect of your life? Is there room for Jesus in your homes and at your tables? Jesus gave us a little story to help us to know. He said:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:34-40)

If you have room for Christ, then know for a fact that *the world has no room for you!* You see, friend, in that inn over two thousand years ago, Jesus was not the only one turned away. The text says that "there was no room for *them* in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

So, as there was no room for the family of Jesus then, there will be no room for the family of Jesus today. Jesus told us

Is there room for prayer in your life?

Quiz on the 12 Chapters of Daniel

Place the chapter number beside the description of the events listed below. Some chapters are used more than once.

who his family is: “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matthew 12:50). There is no room in this world for any true follower of Christ who will keep all the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. There is no room for you to have a life of acceptance and ease. No, you are to be a soldier of the cross, and you will find no ease in all your life-warfare. All the great men and women of faith “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). We are people who must press forward (Philippians 3:14) constantly.


The Bible says that “Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Hebrews 13:13). If you are to be a Christian, the world will not accept you. Do you want to know one of the surest signs that you are not in the will of God? If the world accepts you and acclaims you as someone great, you can be sure that you are not in the will of God. The Billy Grahams of this world cannot be doing the will of God.

There is no room for you in the heart of the world. If you expect that everybody will praise you and that your good works will all be noticed, you are quite mistaken. On the contrary, Jesus said: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). *The world, has no room for the man who has room for Christ.*

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15:19)

If the world today loves “Christ” and loves “Christianity,” it is because they serve a false christ. “Christmas is about family and food,” so said a famous country music singer. Instead of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” and “At the Cross,” the songs played on the radio and in the homes are “White Christmas,” “The Christmas Song,” “I’ll be Home for Christmas,” and “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Is this world your home, or are you as a stranger going through a foreign land? Will you, like the saints of old, follow the Lord, though you will be an alien and a foreigner here? Is there room for Christ today? Room in your heart, life, and breath? Will you have room for Christ when it will cause you to be cut off from the world to the point that it will not have room for you? May the Lord help you to do his will, accept the scorn and shame of the cross, and then to glory in nothing but that cross that brings the shame. 

“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” is in this chapter.

“The king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven” in this chapter.

Daniel’s prayer is in this chapter.

Daniel interprets the king’s dream is in this chapter.

The handwriting on the wall is in this chapter.

Vision of the ram and the he-goat is in this chapter.

Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego and the fiery furnace are in this chapter.

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days” is in this chapter.

The lion’s den is in this chapter.

The king’s image of gold is in his chapter.

Time, times, and an half; 1290 days; and 1335 days are in this chapter.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit” is in this chapter.

Daniel’s diet is in this chapter.


“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High” is in this chapter.

“At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him, and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind” is in this chapter.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people” is in this chapter.



Service Broadcasts

We broadcast our Sabbath morning worship service by phone conferencing and over the Internet at 11:00 (EST), as well as our Wednesday night prayer meeting at 7:00 (EST). You may listen via phone conferencing by dialing 1-201-793-9022 and, when prompted, entering room number 2692202. Long distance charges may apply. To listen on the Internet, you must have the free communication software Skype installed on your computer. Skype can be downloaded from skype.com. Once installed, you dial +9900827042692202 on your Skype keypad. We look forward to having you join us. 

Quiz on Job 25-27

1. Who is the speaker in Job chapter 25?
2. What is the main thrust of the speaker's position in Job 25?
3. One of the great questions of the gospel is asked in Job 25:4. List two different New Testament verses that give an answer to the first question.
4. What is man compared to in Job 25?
5. Who is the speaker in Job chapter 26?
6. Paraphrase the question in Job 26:4.
7. Where does God bind up the waters?
8. What does Job 26:9 mean? Why does God operate in this manner?
9. What two verses in Revelation 21 and 22 might reference to Job 26:10? For further thoughts read Job 26:10 in the RSV.
10. What two characteristics of God are mentioned in Job 26:12?
11. What does the word "garnished" in Job 26:13 mean?
12. In Job 27:2, we find the expression "As God liveth." What, in effect, is Job doing by saying this?
13. Where did Job say the Spirit of God was within him?
14. What verse has Job declaring that he will not change his position on his integrity?
15. According to Job 27:9, 10, when do the wicked pray and call upon God?
16. Job 26:13-23 appears as a reversal of some of his prior positions. Why would this seem to be, and what is the overview of these verses?
17. For example, find two references in Job 21 that seem to be opposite of Job 27:14.
18. What would be the significance of using the symbol of a moth in Job 27:18?
19. What is the meaning of Job 27:20?

Answers to Quiz on Job 22-24

1. Eliphaz is speaking in Job 22.
2. The thought of verses 2-4 is simply that man's goodness does not profit God.
3. Job is accused in 22:5 of having iniquity that is measureless.
4. The five specific sins Job is accused of in Job 22 are taking a pledge from his brother for nought, stripping the naked of their clothing, not giving water to the weary and withholding bread from the hungry, sending widows away empty, and breaking the arms of the fatherless.
5. The speaker was implying in Job 22:13 that Job dared to do all his iniquities because God would not know about them.
6. Repent and God will restore his favor is the theme of Job 22:21 through chapter 22.
7. The result of acquainting oneself with God is to be at peace.
8. Satan cannot acquaint himself with God now and be at peace because the Hebrew word for "acquaint" means to be of use or service or profit or benefit. Satan is none of this for God. The Bible says that "the devils also believe, and tremble;" but this is not faith. James 2:19. "Where there is not only a belief in

God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith--faith that works by love and purifies the soul" (Steps to Christ, p. 63).

NOTE: "When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. 'Acquaint now thyself with Him' (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 126).

9. Job 8:6 is a verse that might be a contrast for Job 22:30.
10. Job's basic complaint in Job 23:2-7 is that he doesn't know where or how to find God.
11. In Job 23:7, Job wishes for God to acquit him from the judgment he has received.
12. The Hebrew word for "forward" in Job 23:8 is *qedem* which means east. Bonus: orientation of maps in the oriental are based on the east, not north.
13. The word of God was more valuable to Job than his necessary food.
14. The word "soft" in Job 23:16 means to be tender, soft, or weak.
15. Job 24 1-16 describes the wickedness that is often seemingly unpunished, but the other theme expressed in this section is how the poor of the earth manage to scratch out a living, how they groan and cry out, but God does not seem to hear them.
16. The friends have been pressing home to Job that if we find ourselves suffering it is because of our sins, but Job says God is not punishing the poor, disproving the philosophy of his supposed friends.
17. Job 24:11 is speaking of the poor and how they have to manage their existence all the time under the watchful eye of the wicked who want to despoil them. Sometimes the poor tread out the grapes, yet they themselves are thirsty.
18. Some consider verses 18-20, and even the rest of the chapter, to be words of Zophar. Some might disagree, thinking Job is still speaking and he is trying to prove his point that death comes to all--the wicked, the poor--just as drought and heat consume all the snow waters. The shadow of death is swift as water and is not influenced by the number of vineyards or by the mighty.
19. The barren one in Job 24:21 is helpless because the wicked doeth evil (or oppresses) the barren woman who has not born a child and the wicked do not do good to the widow, for she has no child to protect her or take up for her.
20. In chapter 24 verse 25, Job challenges his friends to prove him wrong.



"Prayer Requests" continued from page 1

God will provide for this need and for the materials that we wish to share? Also, Sister Ann Ford continues to recuperate from a fall on the ice, and we covet your prayers for her complete recovery.

Ornycha Holt

Thoughts on Religious Liberty

By Elaine Nailing

A while back, I was talking to a friend, and he asked if I still remembered the preamble to the constitution. When in grade school, all of us were required to memorize it, but I told him, with much embarrassment, that I did not recall the words. I quickly retorted, though, that I did recall the words to the Pledge of Allegiance and proved so by saying those words:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

I learned those words as a child. I recited them every morning in grade school as a part of everyday life, and we all accepted it gladly. Of course, when we were children it was just something that we did. It was a routine. I never knew the significance of those words. As a child, I never knew that those words acted as a description of the political and religious freedom we enjoy in the United States of America. But as an adult, a Christian, and especially a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, I now wrestle with the concepts behind the pledge, especially as I witness the turmoil taking place in America regarding our civil liberties, including our religious liberties. The pledge says “with liberty and justice for all.” Do we still have civil liberty and power of choice in our country? Is there such a thing as justice?

I propose that while there is minimal justice, our liberties are vanishing and our Constitution is under attack. In the name of national security; former President Bush, former Attorney General John Ashcroft, and even Congress have pulled strand after strand out of the constitutional fabric that distinguishes the United States from other nations.

And President Obama continues this trend. He continues to sacrifice civil liberties for the dubious security gains. Civil libertarians are accusing President Obama of acting like Bush, citing reports about Mr. Obama’s plans to detain terrorism suspects without trials on domestic soil after he closes the Guantánamo prison.

This was only the latest instance in which critics have argued that Mr. Obama has failed to live up to his campaign pledge “to restore our Constitution and the rule of law” and have raised a pointed question: Has he, on issues related to fighting terrorism, turned out to be little different from his predecessor?


But this attack on our constitutional liberties does not stop with the executive and legislation branches. It extends even into the judiciary branch. The most disturbing development in American law in modern times has been the transformation of the U.S. Supreme Court from judicial arbiter (supposed to decide, judge on disputed issues) into avid policymaker. Some people believe that The Court has (mis)interpreted the Constitution to require governmental hostility to religion and religious practices rather than neutrality, to impose a radical pro-abortion agenda without exception, to undermine critical property rights, to expand

the power of the federal leviathan at the expense of individual rights, to infringe political speech, etc.

On March 18, 2003, Justice Antonia Scalia gave us a small glimpse into how he views our rights under the Constitution. The Associated Press reported that at John Carroll University, in a Cleveland suburb, Justice Scalia said: “Most of the rights you enjoy go way beyond what the Constitution requires” because “the Constitution just sets minimums” (<http://www.akdart.com/patriot.html>). Accordingly, in war-time, Scalia emphasized, “the protections will be ratcheted down to the constitutional minimum” (*Ibid.*).

Today we are living in world that advocates political correctness, judicial activism, diversity, and multi-culturalism. In the name of political correctness, diversity and multi-culturalism, our civil liberties, including the freedom to speak and act upon what we believe, is in dire jeopardy.

I would like to close by leaving you with one important thought. We are not citizens of this world, but citizens of the heavenly kingdom soon to come. Paul noted, “Our conversation (margin: citizenship) is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). The truths of liberty and justice are not confined to our U.S. Constitution. The ideas of liberty and justice permeate throughout the Word of God. The prophet Micah explains what the Lord wants from his followers: “To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

According to Revelation 13 and the *Testimonies*, “our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution” (vol. 5, p. 451). We know this is soon to happen. God did not promise that all would be fair in this world, but we can be of good cheer. Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33), and we, too, may overcome, despite all odds being against us. Do not be afraid when these things come upon us. Jesus said, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28). During this time we are to be faithful, act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God! 

Tasty Recipe

Sister Arlene’s Tahini Cookies

6 tablespoons tahini
1/8 teaspoon stevia powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shredded coconut
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla powder
1/2 cup ground sunflower seeds
1 1/2 cups quick oats
1/2 cup barley malt carob chips
1/2 cup or more liquid; can be herb tea or water, either sweetened with a little honey

Mix together well. Drop on cookie sheet and flatten slightly. Bake 360 degrees F for 10 minutes. Cool on the cookie sheet.

Bon Appétit

Youth's Corner – Thomas Cranfield

Our story this month is about Thomas Cranfield, who was born in London during the 1700s, and the part of London he grew up in was not a pleasant place. Perhaps you can picture narrow cobblestone streets with tenement houses squeezed together on either side, clothes hanging on lines draped at unpredictable angles, and dirty dishwater propelled through windows without thought or concern for the passers-by below. Thomas' father was a laborer and worked hard, doing whatever he could to feed and clothe his family, for he could not read or write and therefore could not obtain a dependable job. His life was a very hard one, and he determined that his son would have a better life than his. So, he sent him to school when he was seven years old.

Thomas, however, was not eager to attend school. He was used to running the streets of London. He was rowdy and did whatever he wanted during the day while his parents were away. When Thomas started school, he found that he did not like the discipline imposed on him to stay at his desk and to finish his school work. He wasn't interested in learning to read or in computing math problems and often skipped school, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Now, I should also tell you that Thomas' father knew nothing about God, and because of this he was not able to teach his son about God. Thomas' father's parents had been poor laborers also and struggled to raise a family. Because they, too, could not read, they had no use for a Bible and did not know of God. This is one reason why learning to read is so important. Also, there were no Sabbath Schools for the little children in the tenements to attend. Thomas would change all that, but first he needed to learn his letters.

His father continued to send him to school until he was fourteen years old. Thomas had skipped school so much that he could only barely read, but instead of sending him back to school, his father apprenticed him to a friend who was a tailor. This friend was also a Christian, and he determined that if Thomas was going to live in his home, he was going to go to church with him also — twice on Sundays! Because Thomas was apprenticed to the tailor, he had to obey, but he hated it! He went to church on Sunday and sat, came home, and then went back to church and sat again. He lived like this for fifteen months while learning to be a tailor, but one day Thomas did something wrong at the tailor's home, and Thomas decided he needed to run away.

When the opportunity was right, he put the little bit of money he had in his pocket, he put on all his clothes and left. He went to the next town, slept over, and then started walking the next day. He continued in this fashion for the next forty-five miles, traveling by foot and sleeping by night until his money ran out. He wanted to get as far away from home as

he could and then he thought he would quickly find another job in a tailor's shop. It wasn't as easy, however, as he thought it would be to find another job. He stood in the market place during the day, waiting and hoping for someone to hire him, but no one did. At night, he slept under the stalls in the market place. He ended up selling his clothes to have money for food, and he even sold the Bible his mother had given him. Finally, he was able to apprentice himself to another tailor, but this man was not kind to him at all and gave him so little food to eat that Thomas was always hungry. He gave more food to his dog

to eat than he gave Thomas. Thomas finally ran away from this tailor and, after time, became apprenticed to third tailor who was also so mean to him that Thomas decided the only thing to do was leave. This time when he ran away, he met a company of British soldiers marching on the road, and they suggested he join them and become a soldier, which he did. This unit of men was scheduled to be sent to Gibraltar because the Spanish Navy was planning activity there. Thomas realized that it was possible he may never see his parents again, and as he thought back on his first apprenticeship, he realized it had not been such a bad place after all. In fact, it had been a pretty nice place. He had been fed well, and the tailor had not beaten him or spoken harshly to him. Thomas realized he should have been nicer to this family.

So, Thomas wrote to his parents and told them how much he appreciated what they had tried to do for him. His parents were overjoyed to get this letter, for they had not heard from him since he had disappeared. He also thanked the first tailor who had taken him in as an apprentice. Thomas was beginning to change from his old, rough and rowdy ways. He was beginning to be thankful for what people had done to help him in his early years, but he still did not know about God nor about God's love for him.

Soon his Army unit was sent to Gibraltar, where he was stationed for a long time. Food was very scarce at Gibraltar. The Spanish Navy had placed a blockade around the area so that for a long time no supplies could arrive. His men were down to four ounces of rice a day and whatever else they could scrounge from the land around them. Scurvy was very prevalent among the men. Life on Gibraltar was hard indeed.

Thomas became a commander, and he remembered how he had felt when treated harshly as an apprentice. He determined to be kind and compassionate to the men under him. As a result, Thomas was responsible for saving many of his men's lives, not only from the Spaniards, but also from the military law itself, and Thomas was looked upon with great favor by both his men and his superiors.



Children from tenements that Thomas invited to school

Thomas did not know that before he left for Gibraltar, his father had become a Christian and had also learned to read! This is important because there was a prayer group at the little church his father attended, and they started praying for Thomas! They knew he was being shipped to Gibraltar, and they began to pray fervently for his safety during the war. One lady in particular was impressed that God would protect Thomas while he was gone, for one evening at prayer meeting the last half of 2 Samuel 14:14 was heavily impressed on her mind.

Second Samuel 14 is about Joab's intervention with King David for the safety of Absalom. What the Bible calls a "wise woman" went to King David and said to him the words in verse 14: "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person," but it is the next part of the verse that the church members clung to as a promise of safety for Thomas: "Neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he [God] devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him" (v. 14). Now, we know that our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2). We are, in a sense, banished from him by them, but God deviseth means so that we are not expelled from him forever! And this is the promise they claimed for Thomas. Even though Thomas was not worshipping God, was not acknowledging God, and was not doing anything to please God in the sense of trying to abide by the Bible, God had promised he would devise means so that Thomas would not be expelled from him forever! What a wonderful God we serve.

Back at Gibraltar, though, Thomas and many of his men were experiencing the tragedy of war for the first time. Bullets and more bullets and cannon balls and more cannon balls rained upon them. One time, Thomas was responsible for protecting the magazine, which is a building that stored their ammunition, from destruction by the Spaniards. So many shells whizzed by Thomas that he decided to start counting them. He counted eighty shells, in addition to the cannon balls, but not one of them touched him. The person who took his place, I am sorry to say, was killed immediately. On other occasions, Thomas was so exhausted that he all he could do was drop to the ground and rest even though shells were landing on all around him, but not one shell landed on him. God answered the prayers of Thomas's father and his church family for Thomas' protection.

Finally Thomas was able to return home, and he was astonished to learn that his father was now a Christian! He found his father reading from the Bible, praying, and worshipping God at church. Eventually, Thomas went to a church service with his father and later became a Christian and from that time until the end of his life, Thomas served God. He established what he called Sabbath Schools (but they were really Sunday Schools) for the poor children who lived in the tenements and in the poor, dark areas of London. He visited the poor, he visited those in prison, he established regular day schools, and he established benefit societies for the poor.

Here is an edited version of his entrance in his diary on a Sunday when he was eighty years old. It reveals how Thomas,

who was once headstrong and selfish, continued to remain a devoted follower of Jesus Christ throughout his life and how he encouraged others to do the same:

Arose at five, and after communion with my Protector on behalf of myself, family and friends, proceeded at seven o'clock to Surrey Chapel in the spirit of prayer. Partook of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. I found the presence of the Lord. My soul more refreshed than at any season for many years. Mr. Sherman administered the ordinance. Returned home and at breakfast had a profitable conversation. Read the seventh chapter of the second book of Chronicles; had a good time in prayer. Went to the Borough School and met with Messrs. Heward, Churchill, and others. Mr. Churchill brought to my mind Boaz visiting the reapers. I then proceeded to the Mint School. Met Mr. Smith and had some conversation on the genealogies in the first book of Chronicles, then in the spirit of prayer went to Union Street Chapel. Heard a most solemn sermon—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

On my way home, I passed through Red Cross Street. Met an aged woman with two of her grandchildren. Her children were old scholars. As to herself, she appeared indifferent about her soul. I left her with a word of exhortation. After this, saw one of the parents standing at the shop door. This woman has had twenty children who have all received their education at the Mint School. I reproved her and told her that it would be an awful thing if her children should enter the kingdom of heaven and she herself should be shut out. I then called upon a good woman, not seeing her at chapel, and found her poorly. Spoke to her about her soul. After dinner, went to the Lodging House. On the road met a man and his wife going to a prayer meeting. Asked them of the welfare of their souls. Came to the Mint School; found things going on well. Arrived at the Lodging House; heard a good sermon by Mr. Forsyth from Jer. 50:5. Went to the Mint School and addressed the children on the threefold office of Christ. Took tea at the Borough Road School. There were about fifty present. Mr. Heward and myself addressed the company about the soul. Returned home, conversed with my son upon the priestly office of Christ, catechized my grandchildren, and closed the evening with singing and prayer. This was a good day and profitable.

From this short story, we can see that even though Thomas wasn't serving God when he was a young man, people were praying for him and claiming the promise that God would devise a plan for his salvation. You may have friends and even family members that have not accepted Jesus as their Saviour, but don't ever stop praying for them. God has a plan devised for them too!

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Onycha Holt

Blessed are the Meek

By Ellen G. White

(The following article is reprinted from the August 22, 1895, issue of *The Signs of the Times*.
Editor)

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” The meekness that is born of sorrow, when the heart has been exercised aright through yielding submission to the will of God, brings forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Those who have humbly sought God for comfort and peace in the midst of trial, have had imparted to them the gentleness of Christ. Those who have learned of Him who is meek and lowly of heart, express sympathy, and manifest gentleness toward those who are in need of consolation; for they can comfort others with the consolation wherewith they are comforted of God. In seeking to save souls who are ready to perish, they make Jesus their pattern in all things. They respond to the comfort given them of God, and become inheritors of his kingdom. Through the operations of the Holy Spirit a new nature is implanted within them, and they are sanctified of soul, and the Lord gives grace for grace.

Jesus expects that his gentleness and condescension will be reproduced in those whom he blesses. Jesus came to our world, and chose the lowliest life, took the humblest position, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. The Majesty of heaven was meek and lowly in heart, and he expects all his followers to catch his spirit of meekness and lowliness, and become wise in helping those that mourn. There is no time in life when we shall not need to cultivate meekness and lowliness of heart. Those who minister in connection with Christ, will be called upon to manifest meekness and lowliness, that they may reveal this attribute to those who are learners in the school of Christ. A possession of the gentleness of Christ means the possession of true dignity. The adorning that is of value with God is a meek and quiet spirit, and it is of more value than gold and silver and precious gems. The attributes of God are goodness, mercy, love, long-suffering, and patience, and his followers are to possess the same attributes of character, representing Christ in true spirituality. Meekness, the treasure of inward wealth, may be possessed in the midst of poverty and sorrow. The soul reveals the source of its strength in the manifestation of meekness and lowliness of heart; for the grace of meekness has its origin in the source of all blessedness, and those who possess this grace are in harmony with Christ and the Father. The followers of Christ thus become one with each other. If meekness and love are not a part of our character, we are not the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our whole experience is feeble and uncertain.

Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, and an evidence that we are branches of the living God. The abiding presence of

meekness is an unmistakable evidence that we are branches of the True Vine, and are bearing much fruit. It is an evidence that we are by faith beholding the King in his beauty and becoming changed into his likeness. Where meekness exists, the natural tendencies are under the control of the Holy Spirit. Meekness is not a species of cowardice. It is the spirit which Christ manifested when suffering injury, when enduring insult and abuse. To be meek is not to surrender our rights; but it is the preservation of self-control under provocation to give way to anger or to the spirit of retaliation. Meekness will not allow passion to take the lines.

A possession of the gentleness of Christ means the possession of true dignity.

When Christ was accused by the priests and Pharisees, he preserved his self-control, but he took his position decidedly that their charges were untrue. He said to them: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” He knew that his position was right. When Paul and Silas were beaten and thrust into prison without trial or sentence, they did not surrender their right to be treated as honest citizens. When there was a great earthquake, and the foundations of the prison were shaken, and the doors were opened, and every man’s bands were loosed, and the magistrates sent word to the prisoners that they might depart in peace, Paul entered a protest, and said: “They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. . . . And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.” Through the action of Paul and Silas the name of God was magnified and the authorities were humbled. It was necessary that the honor of God should be vindicated at this time.

At all times and in all places the Christian should be that which the Lord designs that he should be,—a free man in Christ Jesus. Duty performed in the Spirit of Christ will be done with sanctified prudence. We shall be guided as with a light from heaven when we have a vital connection with God. Holy men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. To be meek does not mean that we shall regard ourselves as in a servile condition; for Christ is our sufficiency. Christ pronounced his benediction upon those who felt their need of divine grace. He pronounces a blessing upon the weary and heavy laden of every age. Human agents who

accept his guidance, who hear his word, will be led into clear light, and will bear fruit to the glory of God. Those who have repented of their sins, who have cast their weary, heavy-burdened souls at the feet of Christ, who have submitted to his yoke, and become his collaborators, will be partakers with Christ in his sufferings, and partakers also of his divine nature. In the world the Christian will be slighted and dishonored, and will consent to be least of all and servant of all. He will submit to be injured, to be despitefully used and persecuted, but wearing the yoke of Christ he will find rest unto his soul, and the yoke will not be galling. He will hear the Saviour saying: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Jesus not only commands his followers, but he instructs them, he helps the helpless, he invigorates the fainting, he inspires the faithless with faith and hope. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." If men have mourned with godly sorrow, the fruit of meekness and humility will be manifest in the character. Their affections will be drawn from earthly things, and they will have learned, through trial and testing, the precious lesson that great truths can be brought into the little things of life as well as into the great things. Practical religion is far-reaching in its influence, and will aid us in fulfilling the duties of daily life. Daily we are to learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, and find rest unto our souls. It is in obeying the word of God that peace and rest come in. O, what fragrance might be brought into the daily life if all were to follow simply and completely the teachings of the word of God, which is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path! Like the rays of the sun in heaven, which brighten the earth, so are the commandments of God exceeding broad.

In the audience to whom Jesus spoke in his sermon on the mount there were not only those who were weary and heavy laden, but the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the rabbis and rulers, and the so-called great men, who were ambitious to receive the honor of men. He knew that there was strife in the Jewish nation, and desire for supremacy in the hearts of men. He knew that there was unhappiness in homes because the precious jewel of meekness had been lost. Meekness and lowliness of heart serve as a shield, and break the fierce darts of the enemy. The meek often have a thorny path to travel; for meekness is often set down as weakness or insensibility, while those who lose self-control conclude that their pride is sensitiveness. But Jesus is our pattern, and it is from him that we receive strength and grace to walk in humility and contrition before God. But whatever may be our trials, God understands them, and invites us to share the blessing that he has pronounced upon the meek and lowly in heart. ✍

A New Lifestyle Center

by Lynnford Beachy

Steve and Suzanne Day have opened a lifestyle center in Kentucky. It is a wonderful facility located on 300 beautiful acres. They are active missionaries and intend that this work will further the Gospel. In the past, the Days have worked with many people, especially those with cancer. They run a vigorous program and believe that regardless of anyone's condition, that all will be benefitted by a stay. They are also combining health with agriculture. They believe, nutrient dense foods are the foundation of any health program. For more information check out their website www.homeforhealth.net or call them at 606-663-6671. ✍



Steve and Suzanne Day

WV Camp Meeting

Plans are underway for the next West Virginia camp meeting, to be held June 15-19, 2010. We hope you will arrange your schedule to join us, for we live in solemn and important times. Soon Jesus will come and our struggle with evil and with the principalities of this earth will be over but until that time, let us avail ourselves of every opportunity to meet with God's people to exhort and strengthen one another.

We are arranging speakers from France, Italy, Netherlands Antilles, and Canada, as well as from the United States, some new, some old. We are praying for and expect a great blessing from God during camp meeting and hope and pray you will be able to worship and study with us. We are also planning a nature center for the young folks and a visit from the local Three River's Avian Center, with their raptors, is being scheduled, as well as are outreach opportunities for the youth.

Following camp meeting, a group will be heading to Atlanta, Georgia, to witness at the 59th General Conference session June 23 through July 3, 2010, and we need many workers to help us. If you are interested in going to the GC session with us, please contact us, and will you also please join us in prayer as we lay plans for both camp meeting and the GC session? ✍

Intelligent Design

In the United States, over the past decade, we have heard much concerning intelligent design. The concept was principally introduced when Michael Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, published a work in 1996 (*Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*), popularizing the term *intelligent design*. Since then, in the United States at least, organizations, people, and even lawmakers have attempted to place intelligent design in classrooms in addition to, or even in the place of, evolution.

Definition

Just what is intelligent design and does it differ from a belief in a creator? Intelligent design (ID) is defined in various ways, but it is basically understood as a scientific research program that seeks evidence of design in nature. The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause and not by an undirected process, such as natural selection. A design theorist seeks to determine whether various natural structures are the product of chance, of natural law, of intelligent design, or of some combination thereof. These theorists have applied scientific methods to detect design in irreducibly complex biological structures, in the complex and specified information content in DNA, in the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe, and in what some consider to be the geologically rapid origin of biological diversity in the fossil record.

Not all scientists agree, of course, that ID is science. Some are vehement that it isn't. Others feel that it is just a variant of creationism that will bring religion into the biology classroom. Intelligent design, however, is not the same as creationism. It is, instead, an attempt to empirically detect whether the design found in nature is the product of an intelligent cause or is simply the product of an undirected process, such as natural selection acting on random variations. Creationism, on the other hand, typically starts with a religious text and tries to see how the findings of science can be reconciled to it. Unlike creationism, intelligent design does not claim that modern science can identify whether or not any intelligent cause detected through science is supernatural. Intelligent design does not teach that when design is found there is a creator of that design.

Even critics of intelligent design have acknowledged the difference between intelligent design and creationism. University of Wisconsin historian of science Ronald Numbers, for example, is critical of intelligent design and acknowledges that "the creationist label is inaccurate when it comes to the ID movement" (Richard Ostling, March 14, 2002), but he also acknowledges the linking of creationism with intelligent design is one way to discredit intelligent design. Not everyone

understands the difference between the two, though. Even Jesuit astronomer George Coyne, the former director of the Vatican Observatory and a staunch defender of evolution, frequently attacked ID *as a religious movement*.

Dr. Ariel Roth, former director of the Geoscience Research Institute does not agree with the view that intelligent design is a religious movement. In his article in the online edition of the *Adventist Review* entitled *The Evolution Bandwagon*, he states that "it is hard for most people to believe that all the amenities of the universe that provide for life on earth, and the incredible complexities we have found in that life itself, just happened by themselves as science postulates. Even many scientists believe in God" (<http://www.ideacenter.org/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/1119>). Dr. Roth is connecting the knowledge of "all the amenities of the universe that provide for life on earth and the incredible complexities ... in that life" with a belief in God, but he does not call this connection intelligent design and later in the article states that intelligent design "studiously avoids any reference to the Bible and religion."

Theistic Evolution and Progressive Creation

In *The Evolution Bandwagon* and in an article published in *In Six Days*, Dr. Roth explains both theistic evolution (a framework of creation that attempts to blend God with evolution) and progressive creation. In *In Six Days*, we read:

"Theistic evolution" is one of these intermediate models. It proposes that God used an evolutionary process over eons of time. The model preserves some kind of god, but he is not the kind of good God described in the Bible. God's creation described in the Bible is "very good." Furthermore, He is a God with concern for those who need help. The aberrant results, the competition, and the survival of only the fittest in the evolutionary process are very much out of character with the kind of God described in the Bible. Furthermore, the fossil record does not provide the intermediates expected from an evolutionary process. (p. 98)

Dr. Roth states progressive creation, on the other hand, "is one of the intermediate views closer to the biblical creation account. It proposes that life developed over millions of years, as God from time to time created more and more advanced forms of life, eventually creating humans. Some advocates of this view propose that each day of creation week described in Genesis represents a very long period of time. However, the sequence of events in Genesis, where plants are created on the third day, before animals on the fifth and sixth days, does not fit the order in the geologic layers, where the major groups of animals appear before almost all the major groups of plants" (*The Evolution Bandwagon*). Writing *In Six Days*, Dr. Roth further states that this model of creation (progressive creation) "does not fit well with either the kind of God described in the Bible or the biblical creation

account. The many thousands of fossil kinds that we find that are not now living imply numerous creation errors in the past. The presence of evil, in the form of predatory animals, earlier in the fossil record, long before the creation of man, negates the biblical account of God as a good Creator and the concept that evil in nature is the result of the fall of man. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in the Bible that God created over long periods of time. There is only one model of creation in the Bible: God does it all in six days” (p. 98).

His explanation of science itself is also of value:

Science is the best system devised by man to give us information about nature. However, the conclusions of science are not final. Science repeatedly revises and even reverses its conclusions. Science is more reliable in the experimental realm than when dealing with the past, especially when that past cannot be experimentally repeated. When it comes to answering the great questions of origins, meaning and destiny, science has lost its credentials. This happened over a century ago when science decided to exclude God from its explanatory menu. If God exists, science will never find Him as long as it refuses to consider God as a part of reality. While a significant number of scientists believe in some kind of god, and their numbers are growing, we don't yet see God being incorporated as a reality into scientific research papers and textbooks. Science is still adhering to a narrow mechanistic approach to reality. (*Ibid.*, p. 99)

It is interesting that Dr. Antony Flew, a champion for atheism for more than fifty years, followed the trail of intelligent design evidence and changed his staunch atheistic belief as a result. A few years ago, he confessed: “The findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided materials for a new and enormously powerful argument to design” (<http://www.adventistreview.org/2004-1553/news.html>). The author of the *Adventist Review* article, Timothy G. Standish, research scientist for the Geoscience Research Institute located at Loma Linda University in California, confirms that a belief in ID can be a stepping stone to a belief in God. Dr. Flew accepted the evidence of ID and then left atheism for a belief in God, but, remember, ID does not propose or endorse a belief in God or in a creator. The evidence of intelligent design can bring us face-to-face with a creator, but where we move with the evidence is left to us. Dr. Flew, unfortunately, rejected Christianity and chose a deist framework of God.

Application for Today

How do the current affairs of intelligent design, theistic evolution, and progressive creation affect us as Adventists? First of all, we should have no problem bridging the gap between the beautiful and complex macro and micro intelligent designs found in nature and our heavenly Father as the Creator of all things through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). And because we can bridge this gap, there really is no need to ascribe to the theory of intelligent design. It is like accepting

a handful of yellow dandelions, as beautiful in design that they may be, in the place of a dozen lovely roses or a beautiful orchid. We can and must, as Adventists, go beyond intelligent design to creationism. Secondly, we should have no problem accepting this creation to have occurred just as the Bible recounts, as Dr. Roth and others teach, and as Ellen White unwaveringly supports — in six literal days. Progressive creation and theistic evolution both fail to stand firmly on the Bible and fail to mesh with the character of God as revealed in the Bible. This is not, however, the only or the most important intelligent design of our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. There is a far greater and weightier one.

It is true that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), but before this creation, another design of great significance was developed. This most intelligent design of all was devised before the foundation of the world, as Peter tells us: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:19, 20). Now, we do not know how far back in the eons of time this great plan of “re-creation” was developed, but as beautiful as the natural world can be, the re-creation of the human heart is even more beautiful and outstanding. The transformation that takes place in the mind and turns one from self-centeredness to other-centeredness, not only in the big things of life but in its little details also, is something beyond the scope of man. An ascetic may be meek and kind in his isolated setting, but only the gift of God can keep one full of love to those around him and pure in the hustle and bustle of

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The End and Beginning

Struggle, struggle when will it end?
My child, said Jesus, “I am” the end.

The end of burdens and suffering and pain,
Of greed and fraud and unshared gain.

The end of loneliness and broken hearts,
Of weeping and grieving when we must part.

The end of hatred, confusion, and strife,
Of huffing and puffing over our life.

Jesus the end and beginning tis true,
So wrestling and struggling give to him, too.

Let's count our blessings and rest in his arms.
Jesus will keep us from Satan's harm.

So, at the beginning of each new day,
Let's make his Spirit our strength and our way.

Jerry Weber

day-to-day living, where the demand for patience, temperance, longsuffering, gentleness, love, joy, peace, meekness, faith, and goodness is constant. When the call for these traits is made under extreme circumstances, such as was made and continues to be made of the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti, then the distinction between the Christian and the man of good intentions is seen more clearly. As Christians, we have the responsibility to “shew forth the praises of him who hath called” us “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9), and we do this by revealing God’s lovely character in unselfish deeds of love and forbearance as we rub shoulders with each other. These are not acts born alone from an intellectual sense of duty, even though duty is a valuable and worthy quality of life, because acts of duty alone will ultimately cease when enough resistance is applied to them, such as is applied in the extreme conditions of concentration camps, with prolonged hunger and thirst, with sleep deprivation, etc. Unlike deeds produced from a sense of duty alone in times of ease, deeds filled with the fruit of the Spirit abound as gifts given from heaven above to God’s humble followers here on earth. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). These gifts come only from the agape heart of God and may be revealed in our dutiful acts. God’s



The re-creation of the human heart is more beautiful than anything found in nature.

love is an agape love that denies self and serves others. Man cannot generate this kind of love. It is a living, vibrant power from God above that enables us to walk in the meek and lowly footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matthew 11:29).

Onycha Holt

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“O taste and see that the LORD is good.” (Psalm 34:8)