

# 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

Vol. 20, No.6

Straight and Narrow

June 2011



*Mightier than the thunders of many waters,  
mightier than the waves of the sea,  
the LORD on high is mighty! (Psalm 93:4)*



# Who Is God and Does It Really Matter?

As we proceed in our study of landmarks and pillars, we want to continue on the theme of last month, with our study of divinity. One of the seven pillars of our faith concerns the personality of God and Christ. We have been told:

Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the *personality of God or of Christ*, are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor. (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 23; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Last month in our Clearly Comprehend section, we saw that almost everyone claims to believe in Jesus, but we also saw that they do not all believe in the same Jesus. The same is very true about God. Most of the people of the world claim to believe in God, but there are vastly different ideas about who or what he is and about how to worship him. Some call God Jehovah or Yahweh. To some God is Allah. Some claim to worship God as the great spirit or karma. Is God really particular about how we understand and worship him? Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him *must* worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

According to Jesus, the worship of God in truth is fundamental. One of the most graphic illustrations of this is found in the book of Ezekiel, especially in chapter 43, as it is studied in the light of chapters 8 and 9.

Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit

took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. (Ezekiel 43:1–9)

One of the most mystical portions of Scripture is the last eleven chapters of Ezekiel. There we find the prophecy of Gog and Magog. There we find detailed descriptions of a temple that was never built and services that were never carried out. Was it God’s purpose to have this temple built but Israel failed, or was God perhaps attempting to teach Israel lessons from this plan? Some evangelical Christians believe that this temple will still be built before the so-called rapture of the church. This temple was to be massive. Counting its outer court, the area was to be 500 cubits square, over 900 feet in length and width. The most holy place was to be 60 cubits square and these cubits were the royal cubit of about 22 inches (Ezekiel 40:5). The description of this temple is given in Ezekiel

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40–42; chapter 43 introduces another appearance of the glory of God.

The wilderness tabernacle had an eastern curtain to enter through, but this temple, besides having a gate on the east, also has gates on the north and south sides.

Ezekiel says that the glory of God came from the way of the east. Earlier Ezekiel had seen the glory of the Lord depart from the east gate (Ezekiel 10:18, 19; 11:1, 23). This was a result of the four abominations outlined in Ezekiel 8. The voice “like a noise [LXX uses the Greek word *phone*] of many waters” is very similar to the voice that John hears in Revelation 1:15 where the voice is described as “the sound (Greek: *phone*) of many waters. Ezekiel is describing visions of God such as he had in chapter 1.

Now after the judgments depicted in Ezekiel 9, the glory of God is entering to his new temple. The Spirit of God brings Ezekiel into the inner court (verse 5). Between the inner and outer courts were three-storied chambers for priests. Ezekiel is now beyond the outer court and has passed through the gates at the priests’ quarters into the inner court where “the altar that was before the house” (Ezekiel 40:47) was located. The glory of God filled the house such as is described in Exodus 40:34, 35 where God’s glory filled the wilderness tabernacle.

Do you think God would have filled the tabernacle with his presence if the children of Israel were worshiping Baal or Moloch? Baal was the Phoenician’s sun god. The worship of Baal was on the day of the sun (Sunday), and according to Jeremiah, included the offering of children. “They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind” (Jeremiah 19:5). The worship of Moloch was accompanied by similar abominations (Leviticus 18:21 and 1 Kings 11:7). Would God have filled the tabernacle with his presence if Israel had been worshiping Baal or Moloch? Of course not! Interestingly, Baal means lord or husband, and Moloch means king.

Today we say we would never do anything so terrible as sacrifice our children to a pagan deity. We would not do these things, right? But when we take our children to celebration, ecumenical services; when we send them to schools of the world or even church schools where they learn the things of the world; when we bring the world into our homes with any of the various media so capable of doing this today; and when we choose to live in the city environment where the world is inescapable; we offer our children to Satan, for he will be sure to steal their hearts.

In chapter 43 of Ezekiel, God is taking residence in his house (verse 6) and says to his prophet, “Son of man, *the place of my throne*, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places” (v. 7).

The phrase “the place of my throne” is emphatic in the Hebrew. No longer will God be in competition with others. Israel’s whoredoms had been both physical and spiritual (2 Kings 16:11–16; 21:11), and God would no longer allow such a situation.

According to the targum, the phrase “the carcasses of their kings in their high places,” means that the carcasses of their kings were being buried in or near the house of God. While this may be true, remember that Molach means king, and this phrase has a reference to the idolatrous worship of Molech right next to God’s house. God continues,

*In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. (v. 8)*

In the former times there was no outer court. Only a single wall separated the temple from the king’s palace. The kings had these abominations which God abhorred, their posts by God’s posts, so God in his “anger” consumed them. But God goes on to say, “Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever” (Ezekiel 4:9). This putting away of the whoredoms was the indispensable prerequisite of God dwelling among his people.

*No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 173, 174)*

So it really does matter to God how he is worshiped, and how we worship God will depend upon who we believe he is and what we believe he is like.

## **Who Is God?**

The first revelation of God is that he is the Creator of all things. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). From the beginning of the Bible (Genesis) unto the end (Revelation), God is recognized as the Creator. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

Being the Creator, God is rightly our Father. The name *father* means originator. Interestingly the word *father* in the Hebrew is the simplest word in the Hebrew language, consisting of the first two characters of the alphabet, אב, the beth and aleph, the equivalent of our b and a. Remember that

*continued on page 7*

## From Patmos, Messages for Seven Churches



Beginning next month we will start a series on the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Realizing that much has been written in the past on these churches, some factual and some speculative, we hope to present a fresh approach to these churches gathered from the history of the cities and churches and also from available archeological information.

There are two statements by Ellen White that will serve as keys for our study. The first statement says:

The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585)

Historically Adventists have closely followed the understanding of this reference to link the churches as seven consecutive messages; however, the statement says that “the messages [plural] extend to the end of time.” What does this mean? Does it mean that the messages combine as one message that goes to the end, or that there is one theme running through all the messages that goes to the end of time, or that perhaps there are parts found in each message that go unto the end of time?

The second key that we shall examine is found in a manuscript entitled “Solomon’s Reign.” This manuscript has been published in parts, and the quotation we wish to refer to is:

The messages given to the churches in Asia, portray the state of things existing in the churches of the religious world today. The names of the churches are symbolic of the Christian church in different periods of the Christian

era; the number of the churches—seven—indicates completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, and are enforced today; while the figures used are symbolic of the state of God’s professed people,—the wheat developing among the tares; truth standing on its own eternal basis in contrast with error.

(Ms. 81, 1900, pp. 17, 18—“Solomon’s Reign,” 1900; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 372)

This statement is very similar to the one from *The Acts of the Apostles* but has some additional information. The use of plurals stands out in these differences. First of all it says that the messages (plural), not just the last message, “portray the

state of things (plural) existing in the churches (plural) of the religious world today.” Furthermore, the messages are said to “extend to the end of time, and are enforced today.” She does not say that they are *in force* today, but *enforced* today. Enforced means: “Strengthened; gained by force; driven; compelled; urged; carried into effect” (*Webster’s 1812 Dictionary*). These messages are carried into effect today! She also says that the figures (plural) “used are symbolic of the state of God’s professed people” (plural). God’s people are called “wheat,” and both the wheat and his people represent “truth.” This truth needs no artificial support, for it can stand “on its own eternal basis in contrast with error.”

As we study the seven churches, we will endeavor to see how the symbols of all the churches have messages for our day and how we must relate to these messages. Next month we will begin our study with the first church, Ephesus. We look forward to this adventure and encourage you to be studying all you can about Ephesus this coming month, so we can compare notes!

*Editors*





Hebrew is written from right to left, so this is equivalent to our *ab*.

We see in both the Old and the New Testaments the concept of the fatherhood of God. For example:

Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? *is not he thy father* that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? (Deuteronomy 32:6)

Have we not *all one father*? (Malachi 2:10)

*One God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:6)

But to us there is but *one God, the Father, of whom are all things*, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

God is the Father of all things, including our Lord Jesus Christ. Seven times the writers of the epistles, inspired by the Spirit of God, tell us that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:6)

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3)

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore. (2 Corinthians 11:31)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 3:14)

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. (Colossians 1:3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:3)

Jesus says God is his Father. Fifty-seven times Jesus calls God “my Father.”

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:53)

Jesus saith unto her [Mary], Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17)

First Timothy 6:15 calls God the “blessed and only Potentate,” and in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, he is “the Sovereign of the Universe” (p. 34).

## God Is Not a Trinity

The popular concept of God is that he is a trinity of father, son, and holy spirit, a unity of three co-eternal persons. This concept of the trinity says that there is one being that manifests himself in three persons or three centers of intelligence,

but again, only one being. This is the orthodox position within Christianity on the trinity. Contrary to the wishful thinking of some, this is the official position of the Adventist Church, which is clearly presented in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, also known as volume 12 of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. There we read:

In the being of God is an essential coprimordiality of three coequal, coeternal, nonoriginated *persons*. (*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, p. 150)

This is set in contradistinction to the idea of tritheism, a godhead that has three beings and three persons.

... since the God of the Bible is one and not many, all the various revelations about Him presented throughout the Bible refer to the same, one divine reality and *not to a plurality of divine beings*. (*Ibid.*, p. 121)

The position of believing in three divine beings, “a plurality of divine beings,” is actually a very common belief among certain conservative and even historic Adventists. They are quick to say that they do not believe in the “Catholic version” of the trinity, meaning the orthodox view, but at the same time they do not realize that what they believe is not just any version of the trinity but something that is considered heresy (polytheism) by mainline Christianity, including Adventism.

*The danger of Tritheism* [three beings in the godhead] involved in this position becomes real when the oneness of God is reduced to a mere unity conceived in analogy to a human society or a fellowship of action. Beyond such a unity of action, however, it is necessary to envision God as the one single reality which, in the very acts by which He reveals Himself directly in history, transcends the limits of our human reason. (*Ibid.*, p. 150)

The God of the Bible is not a trinity and not part of a three-being godhead. If the trinity were true, when we read the term God in the Bible we should be able to insert the standard understanding of the trinity in its place and the verse would make sense. But this is not the case. For example if we consider 1 Corinthians 8:6, we would have to read it as: “But to us there is but one Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the Father, of whom are all things.” Here we would be calling the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit the Father, and this does not make sense. Inserting this trinitarian formula into many other places where we find the word God causes equal confusion; however, God, the Father, “is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Bible speaks plainly, without confusion, about *God the Father*, an expression used thirteen times in the Bible.

God is described as one in number in the Bible. The most fundamental text of Judaism declares that God is one. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Special attention has been given by theologians to the word “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4. It is translated from the Hebrew

*echad*. Some trinitarians claim that *echad* should be defined as “united” or a “unity.” They point to Genesis 2:24: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one (*echad*) flesh.”

However, of the over 900 times *echad* is used in the Old Testament, this is the only place in the Bible where *echad* is used to show that two different items are distinctly said to one. *Echad* is almost always translated “one” in the sense of an individual thing, a single unit. Such usage can be found in Genesis 42:11 where Joseph’s brothers stated: “We are all one (*echad*) man’s sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.” Here the meaning of *echad* is a single unit. One man (Jacob) was their father. The Hebrews clearly understood *echad* in Deuteronomy 6:4, as well as in other places, to be a single unit rather than a unity. This is shown in an incident from the gospels. Notice carefully:

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question. (Mark 12:28–34)

Unlike others that questioned Christ, this scribe was a sincere seeker of truth. Jesus answered his question “Which is the first commandment of all?” by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 and then followed that with Leviticus 19:18. The scribe responded, “Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God.” If there were a trinity, here was a perfect time for Jesus to make it clear. Jesus did not, however, say: “Excuse me brother, you misunderstand. There are two Gods” or “three Gods.” Instead, the Scripture states that “Jesus saw that he answered discreetly.” Furthermore, Jesus told him: “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

The doctrine of the trinity, as proclaimed by the Adventist Church, states: “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.” (SDA Fundamental Belief #2) This parallels the Basis of the Constitution of the World Council of Churches, which states: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil

together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Yet neither Moses nor Jesus ever spoke of a three-person God. Christ himself made that clear the night before the crucifixion when he prayed: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Here Jesus ascribes to his Father the title of “the only true God.” He did not say, “The only true Gods,” nor did he say “the only true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

The trinitarian doctrine is called a “mystery” (see *Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 11). It is a doctrine of human invention, the wisdom of the world, and in fact the masterpiece of Satan! However, the truth about God, his Son, and their Spirit is spoken of so clearly in the Scriptures that it need not be a mystery. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, said: “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:5–7). The creeds of men say “one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The Scripture says, “one God, the Father,” period! Paul also says that we have “one Lord Jesus Christ.” The trinity doctrine states that “the Father is Lord: the Son is Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord” (Athanasian Creed: *SDA Bible Student’s Source Book*, p. 299). The Scripture states that there is “one Lord,” Jesus Christ. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:5, 6). Here, again, the “One God” is declared to be “the Father.”

Paul, in writing to Timothy, stated: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Here are seen two separate and distinct beings. There is “one God” who is the Father. There is also “one mediator” between the “one God” and men. That “one mediator” is “the man Christ Jesus.”

The apostle James declares that even Satan and the evil angels know that there is one true God. “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19). James says we do well to believe “that there is one God.”

## The Great Communicator

Former United States President Ronald Reagan became known as *the great communicator* for his ability to share his thoughts and ideas with the American people. However, he pales in comparison to the God of heaven, who wants to communicate to his creation. Not only is the Father the only true God, but he is a God that wants to make himself known! He is the God of revelation, and the greatest revelation he makes known is the revelation of his person and character. Under the fulfillment of the New Covenant, God says:

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the

greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:34)

God wants us to acquaint ourselves with him (Job 22:21). In the Garden of Eden there was perfect face-to-face fellowship with God. Sin, however, has caused a separation between God and man, and this separation is necessary for the safety of man. Hebrews 12:29 declares that “God is a consuming fire” to sin. Yet, God wants us to find him and has promised: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

To help humanity to know and understand him better, God sent his Son, who is the express image of his character, to teach us what he is like (Hebrews 1:3). Only Jesus could fully and accurately reveal God to sinful mortal man. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).

God wants us to know him, and he has given to us his Son to reveal his character of love.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:8–10)

Above all else God is said to be love. If the trinity is true, then God has kept back the most important thing from the people he has declared that he wanted to give them—a clear understanding of himself. God, however, has revealed himself in the Bible, and we are told:

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself.

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 409)

God is a God of love, and he is also a God of truth (Deuteronomy 32:4). Justice and mercy are the attributes of his throne: “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face” (Psalm 89:14). To Moses God declared, concerning himself:

And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the

LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:5–7)

The God of the Bible is especially revealed in the life of his Son:

Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 174).

God plans for the disrupted face-to-face fellowship he had with humanity in the Garden of Eden to be restored. When God’s people meet him, they will not be strangers, for his people will know him and understand, at least in a meaningful way, his character of love and goodness. May we each devote our lives to knowing that great life and to being ready for that time when we shall see him face-to-face.

Allen Stump



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## Tasty Recipe – Scrambled Tofu

- 👉 1 block of fresh, firm tofu, squeezed to remove water
- 👉 1 onion, chopped
- 👉 ½–1 colorful sweet pepper, chopped
- 👉 Turmeric, enough to color the tofu well
- 👉 ½–1 teaspoon onion powder
- 👉 ¼–½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 👉 Non-MSG chicken-like seasoning to taste (1–2 teaspoons)
- 👉 Salt, optional
- 👉 Grated vegan cheese, optional
- 👉 Non-MSG, non-GMO baco-bits, optional
- 👉 Parsley

Tenderize the vegetables in a small amount of water. Add crumbled tofu and seasonings. Stir well over medium heat. Lower the heat and sprinkle grated cheese over the tofu. Cover and let the cheese melt. When ready to serve, sprinkle parsley flakes and baco-bits on the tofu. This is really good! 😊



# Golden Turmeric

In a recently published book (*The Molecular Targets and Therapeutic Uses of Curcumin in Health and Disease*), several scientists have presented their findings concerning the benefits of curcumin, the substance which gives turmeric its rich, golden color.

Turmeric has long been used to improve health. In fact since 1900 BC, it has been prescribed for a wide variety of diseases and conditions. In the opening article it is stated that curcumin has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal, and anticancer activities and is a potential aid against malignant diseases, diabetes, allergies, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, and other chronic illnesses.

Turmeric is the ground powder of the dried root-like portions of the plant, which is grown mainly in India. Curcumin, the golden-colored phytochemical in turmeric, is believed to be responsible for most of the therapeutic effects listed above, as well as for antimalarial, accelerated wound-healing, and pain-relieving actions. (Phyto means plant, so a phytochemical is a chemical derived from a plant.)

During the last five decades extensive research has been conducted, and it has also been found that curcumin reduces blood cholesterol levels; suppresses thrombosis (blood clots) and myocardial infarction (heart attack); inhibits HIV replication; protects from liver injury; increases bile secretions; protects from cataract formation; protects from pulmonary toxicity and fibrosis; and suppresses symptoms associated with type II diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and Alzheimer's disease.



**The turmeric plant**

How does one plant chemical accomplish all this? Editor Bharat Aggarwal and associates state that most chronic diseases are the result of dysregulated inflammation, and since curcumin is a potent anti-inflammatory, it is beneficial in many diseases. One research team estimates that 2–5% of turmeric is curcumin and another 2–8%, but whatever the percentage, you should know that 40–65% of oral curcumin passes through the gastrointestinal tract unchanged. That means only 35–60% of oral curcumin is absorbed, but even this diminished amount can be of benefit to health. (In the brief information available online about this

book, no information was given about the amount of curcumin administered nor whether the dosing was oral or intravenous. Further study on the reader's part is advised.)

## Curcumin and Neurodegenerative Diseases

Many degenerative diseases of the nervous system involve the accumulation of protein masses, oxidative damage, and inflammation, and several scientists attest to the potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities of curcumin. In addition, low-dose curcumin can limit the clumping of multiple forms of amyloid-forming substances in a variety of degenerative diseases of the nervous system, such as Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease involves neurodegeneration and the accumulation of protein masses to form lesions in the brain, and curcumin was found in initial tests to reduce oxidative damage, to reduce inflammation, and to reduce the formation of amyloid plaques, as well as being able to reduce cognitive deficits. The authors of this particular study were impressed that curcumin has a great protective potential for the nervous system in Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, head trauma, aging, and stroke. They state that there are at least ten known protective actions of curcumin for the nervous system, although not all have been documented in humans, and that there is a great need for further study because curcumin has a long history of use, an outstanding safety record, a multiplicity of applications, and is inexpensive.



**Turmeric root**

## Curcumin and Cancer

Curcumin also has an anticancer effect. We know that current chemotherapy treatments often have serious side effects, but oral curcumin is nontoxic. What is interesting is that the authors of this study demonstrated that curcumin is cytotoxic to a variety of tumor cells (which means it kills the tumor cells) and is antimetastatic. In addition, curcumin inhibits the growth of new capillary blood vessels in tumors. New capillary growth, of course, is crucial for a tumor's growth and expansion. Tumors require a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients and obtain this from nearby capillaries until they reach the size of 2 mm<sup>2</sup>, at which time they must develop their own blood supply, and curcumin inhibits this development.

## Chemoprevention

Chemoprevention is the attempt to use nontoxic natural or synthetic compounds to intervene in the early stages before a



malignancy manifests itself. Chemoprevention uses dietary factors, synthetic agents, and changes in lifestyle to intervene in the precancerous steps before the invasive disease begins. Studies have shown that diet has an impact on cancer incidence and that the daily consumption of vegetables and fruits decreases the risk for human cancer. Recent research has focused on identifying chemicals found in foods which have the ability to inhibit the process of cancer formation. Among these phytochemicals, curcumin has been shown to protect against the start of many kinds of cancer, including skin, oral, intestinal, and colon cancers.

## Chemotherapy

Curcumin is also an effective chemotherapeutic intervention once cancer has been manifested. Curcumin suppresses the formation of new blood vessels and metastasis in a variety of animal tumors. It also inhibits the proliferation of cancer cells by arresting them in various phases of the cell cycle and by inducing cell death.

## Cancer Is Preventable

One team of authors reports that cancer is basically preventable. Cancer develops in a stepwise fashion, starting with a single mutation in a single cell, and chemoprevention is aimed at intervening in these precancerous steps; whereas, chemotherapy is aimed at intervening after the cancer has manifested.

Considerable efforts have been made in the search for naturally-occurring substances with which to intervene, and many components derived from dietary or medicinal plants have been found to possess substantial chemopreventative and chemotherapeutic properties. One good example is curcumin, which can act in all stages of the multistep cancer process and is a rare substance that possesses both chemopreventative and chemotherapeutic properties, without being debilitating to the patient.

## Antioxidation

Next let us consider in more detail the antioxidation process. Associated with many chronic conditions, such as cancer, atherosclerosis, and degeneration of the nervous system, is the oxidative damage of DNA and of proteins. Oxygen is an essential and indispensable molecule for all of us, but it becomes damaging when it is transformed into highly reactive forms, such as the superoxide,  $O_2^-$ , and peroxide,  $H_2O_2$ . Nitrous oxide is also a molecule necessary for many vital activities in our body, but it has an unpaired electron which quickly reacts with  $O_2$  to form a powerful oxidant. Oxidants can cause significant damage to cells, which leads to the beginning of many diseases, such as inflammation, ischemia, atherosclerosis, arthritis, cancer, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease, but our bodies have natural antioxidant defenses. These defenses are effective, but not infallible, and damage still occurs, accumulates with age, and contributes to age-related diseases.

Moment-by-moment our bodies try to maintain a healthy balance between oxidation and antioxidation, but it is a sensitive balance, and often more oxidation occurs than antioxidation. This is why many people boost their intake of antioxidants—to help maintain a healthy ratio of oxidation to antioxidation—for some oxidation is necessary, but often more oxidation occurs than is needed, and cell damage is the result. Curcumin is one plant substance that is being appreciated more and more in the western world for its powerful antioxidant (and anti-inflammatory) properties. It is true that our future health depends greatly on what we eat today.

## Curcumin and the Immune System

Our immune system is an intricate arrangement of organs and tissues and is responsible for protection against infections and cancers, as well as for protection against larger invaders, such as organ transplants. A healthy individual has two levels of defense against foreign agents: a natural immunity and an acquired immunity. The principal working cells of natural immunity are phagocytes (neutrophils, monocytes, and macrophages) and natural killer cells, and these cells wander in the circulation to encounter and destroy invaders that have breached the defensive barriers, as well as to destroy cells that have aged and died and cells that have transformed into cancerous cells.

When monocytes and macrophages are activated in an immune response, however, they release substances that induce inflammation in the tissue, but oral administration of turmeric has been shown in animal studies to significantly reduce inflammation. Curcumin has also been reported to improve morning stiffness, walking time, and joint swelling in rheumatoid arthritis.

## Curcumin and Skin Disease

The skin is the largest organ of the body and is made up of layers of tissues that protect underlying muscles and organs. Because it is one of the first lines of defense against harm from the environment, it is vulnerable to rashes, burns, injuries, and infections. Numerous studies have revealed the protective effect of curcumin on the skin against chemicals and environmental pollutants. Curcumin protects the skin by quenching free radicals and reducing inflammation and has been used topically for conditions where Western medicine might employ a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug and/or vitamin E. Curcumin also helps to reduce the time needed for wounds to heal, and it has been demonstrated to be helpful with various skin diseases, such as scleroderma, and, in animal studies, psoriasis.

## Summary

These benefits and others gleaned from *Curcumin—Biological and Medicinal Properties* make a long list of possible protective and therapeutic activities ascribed to curcumin, activities such as:

1. Antioxidant, anticancer, antiatherosclerotic properties

2. The lowering of serum cholesterol levels
3. Inhibition of LDL oxidation and of scarring
4. Inhibition of platelet aggregation
5. Stimulation of muscle regeneration
6. Enhancement of wound healing
7. Suppression of symptoms associated with arthritis
8. Reduction in the incidence of cholesterol gallstone formation
9. Modulation of multiple sclerosis
10. Blockage of replication of HIV
11. Positive effects on Alzheimer's disease
12. Protection against cataract formation in lenses
13. Protection from alcohol-induced liver injury

14. Protection from inflammatory bowel disease
15. Enhancement of the immunosuppressive activity
16. Protection against various forms of stress
17. Correction of cystic fibrosis defects
18. Protection against pancreatitis; against endotoxin shock
19. Suppression of thrombosis and myocardial infarction
20. Suppression of symptoms with type II diabetes

When we think of the multiplicity of applications of just one phytochemical, we can truly praise God for his wonderful works of creation and, with the Psalmist, say: "For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Psalm 86:10).

*Onycha Holt*

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## West Virginia Camp Meeting, June 14–18

Smyrna Gospel Ministries would like to invite all who are interested in preparing for the return of our Lord Jesus to attend camp meeting June 14–18 at the Smyrna Sabbath Chapel in West Virginia. As always, we eagerly look forward to this special time of study, prayer, and fellowship, and we are very eager to see all of you once again. We are also very desirous to meet new friends and families. Please do not let anything prevent your attendance this June because time is short, and more than ever we need to draw closer to one another and closer to our Redeemer. Our theme this year will be "The Pillars and Landmarks of Our Faith!"

Tentative speakers this year include Elvis Alberto, returning from the island of Curacao; Lynnford Beachy; Ed Cyrus; David Sims; Reuben Gomez, Dennis Robertson, and Dr. Glenn Waite. Brother Ron Toel, a marine biologist, will be having some special presentations on sea life at the nature center for the young and the young at heart.

There will be programs for the different ages of youth over four years. These groups will also plan their programs to emphasize the main pillars of our faith.

We are also planning on four different optional items that we believe will be a blessing to many. The first will be a tent supplied with recipes cards for delicious and nutritious vegan dishes, along with samples for our campers to try. The second tent will be for simple health care demonstrations and massage. The third will be our story-hour tent, and the fourth tent will provide a seminar on using computers.

Camping is free but each camper will be responsible for his or her own meals, except on Sabbath when a meal will be served at midday. Kitchen facilities will not be available, but camp stoves can be used in the camping area. No outdoor fires will be allowed, however. Ice can be obtained one mile away.

We have four shower units, with hot and cold water. Do not forget items such as bedding, flashlights, food, toiletries,

and insect repellent. Let our dress and deportment be such as becomes Christians.

While there is room for RV's, we do not have hook-ups. RV's will need to be self-contained. For those who wish, there are motels in the area. The nearest motels are: The Pocahontas Motel (304) 436–2250, The Cow Shed (304) 732–7000, and Twin Falls State Park Resort (304) 294–4000. If you need a room, please call early, as the better motels fill up quickly, due to a large influx of tourists at this time of year.

Detailed directions are on our website. The GPS co-ordinates are N 37° 31' 13", W 81 36' 09".


### Youth Camp Planned

We are planning a youth camp this summer, to be held in scenic West Virginia. We are currently in the planning stage for this camp beginning shortly after the end of the West Virginia camp meeting.

This camp will include a three-night camp out in a national forest and visitation of nearby parks or scenic areas, which would include Seneca Rocks, Blackwater Falls, and Dolly Sods. We also plan on visiting a commercial cave during the return trip to Smyrna. Morning and evening campfire talks will be spiritually-based, encouraging the youth to understand more of God's love through his created works.

If you are interested or have youth 10 years or above that are reasonably able to care for their personal needs and would be interested in attending, please contact us as soon as possible by calling us at 304-732-9204 or email me at [allen@smyrna.org](mailto:allen@smyrna.org).

### California Camp Meeting

Pacific Virtual Fellowship will be having their camp meeting July 27–31, 2011, at Lookout, California. Please contact Pastor David Sims for information. Phone: 530-294-1115, or email him at [david@historyinfo.net](mailto:david@historyinfo.net). 



# June Has Come

By Ellen G. White

Spring has gone, and summer opens before us. The fragrant blossoms, beautifying the boughs of the apple, peach, and cherry, no longer delight the eye, and their sweet fragrance is not borne to us on the breeze. These useful trees, although they now make no display, are not resting from their labor. They are preparing to adorn their branches with a rich harvest of fruit by and by, to reward our care and patience.

Our flower gardens are now repaying us for the attention and labor we have bestowed upon them. The flowering shrubs that live through winter, are many of them pleasing the eye by putting out their buds and blossoms. The seeds we have carefully put into the earth are making their appearance, while others are thirsting for the gentle showers to awaken them to life. All the beautiful in nature seems to be upon a strife to see which can vie with the other in contributing to our pleasure and happiness, by their buds and blossoms of every hue.



The merry birds are doing their part to cheer us with their varied voices. Many of these happy songsters are busy with domestic matters, yet have not become unhappy and gloomy while engaged in bearing their burdens of life, fulfilling the mission God has given them. We are often charmed with the free music from these merry songsters, which does not fail to awaken joy and gladness in our hearts, and instinctively carry our minds up to God with grateful thanks for his beautiful gifts.

Everything in nature is diligent, and moving steadily onward, setting us an example. Notwithstanding the plants and shrubs are thirsting for showers, yet they cannot stop to complain, and cease their efforts to flourish. They obey nature's laws, to do the very best they can under every circumstance. They thirst to be refreshed with water, yet they strike their roots down deeper, reaching down far to gather the moisture, that they may retain life, freshness, and beauty.

These things of nature teach us the useful lesson, not to be easily discouraged under disadvantageous circumstances, but to continue to put forth efforts, and to do the very best we can. Although vegetation is almost fainting for the summer showers, yet the good things of the vegetable kingdom do not decide to stand still, and do nothing, until everything is favorable. There is a power in nature which we can see, if we will, in vegetation. The shrubs and plants struggle to live under discouraging circumstances, and seem to be making the best of everything, and concealing every appearance of

want and unhappiness, under a smiling, refreshing aspect, reflecting to us the beautiful in their opening buds and blossoms. If we would learn the lessons nature is teaching us we should be more hopeful and have less wearing anxiety and crushing care.

In the lessons the divine Teacher gave to those who listened to his discourses, he frequently chose a place beautified with flowers, or surrounded with nature's varied scenery, such as, fields, well-cultivated, flourishing gardens, and corn fields, rich verdure, and fruitful trees, green hedges, orange, olive, pomegranate and fig trees, adorning the hills, while in contrast to this flourishing and beautiful scenery, would appear the white rocks and barren soil, while the birds

of the air, with their varied music, charmed the ear as they were sporting in the air, or flitting from tree to flower. The majesty of Heaven uses these natural similitudes in representing the word sown in the human heart. He binds up his precious truths with the illustrations of nature that as his hearers shall ever after look upon the objects he has connected with his lessons, the heart will be impressed with the great truths he taught them. He anticipated the fears

and anxiety of the listening multitude, and his calm and impressive voice is heard to encourage the flagging faith, and quiet the aroused, distrustful, murmuring fears of his disciples.

Why take ye thought? Why be fearful and troubled about food or your raiment, or your life? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

God designs we should draw lessons from nature, and make a practical application of these lessons to our own lives. Although we may suffer under disappointments, reverses, and affliction, yet we cannot afford to fret, and walk under a cloud, and cast a shadow upon all with whom we associate. Invalids may imitate nature. They need not be like a withered, decaying branch. Let vegetation, that is clothed in cheerful green, cheer and comfort you, and suggest to you the happiness that you may reflect upon others, by presenting before them the aspect of freshness and cheerfulness, instead of complaints, sighs, and groans, and apparent languor in every step, and an appearance of inability in every move.

*continued on page 7*

# Lessons from



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Health Reformer, June 1, 18*





*“June Has Come ... continued from page 11*

Live, dear invalid friends, while you do live, and train yourselves to shed fragrance like the fresh flowers. If you are burdened and weary, you need not curl up like leaves upon a withered branch. Cheerfulness and a clear conscience are better than drugs, and will be an effective agent in your restoration to health. In order for you to be cheerful, you should have exercise. You should have something useful to do. Invalid sisters should have something to call them out of doors, to work in the ground. This was the employment given by God to our first parents. God knew that employment was necessary to happiness. You should have a spot of ground to claim as yours, to tend and cultivate. You may have a pride in keeping out every weed, and may watch with interest



the beautiful development of every leaf and opening bud and flower, and be charmed with the miracles of God seen in nature. As you view the shrubs and flowers, remember God loves the beautiful in nature. As you watch the harmonious colors of the various beautiful-tinted flowers of June, bear in mind that God loves the beautiful in human nature formed in his image. A pure, harmonious character, a sunny temper, reflecting light and cheerfulness, glorifies God, and benefits humanity. Inspiration tells us that a meek and quiet spirit in the sight of God is of great price.

As you cultivate your vegetables and flowers, and remove the weeds and prune from them the lifeless branches, bear in mind this is the work God is doing for you if he loves you. As you remove everything unsightly, and injurious to your plants, that nothing but the beautiful may appear, remember that just so God is doing with your human garden. He would discipline you, and would root out all the weeds, and all corruption and vileness, that you may possess a symmetrical character, and be free from evil habits, that you may not become sour, distrustful, and gloomy.

God wants you, dear invalid friends, to be cheerful, and cherish a meek and quiet spirit. You may meet your friends with cheerfulness and true courteousness, and you may throw a ray of sunshine into their path; and will you be the worse for so doing? Oh, no! You will have every ray of light you shed, reflected back upon you again. You will be benefited with the effort you make to be cheerful. It will be for your benefit, my invalid friends, to do all that you can to forget your sufferings. Get out of doors as much as possible, and


be benefited with the breezes and the blessed sunshine. Let the songs of the birds, and the beauties of nature, awaken holy and grateful feelings in your hearts, and lead you to adore your Creator who has anticipated your wants, and surrounded you with unnumbered tokens of his love and constant care.

I wish to encourage my invalid friends to exercise; for this is necessary for the recovery of their health. Even those who attend a Water Cure should, many of them, exercise more out of doors. They would improve much faster. To be listless and indolent, will injure you. You want something to interest and engage the mind, and divert it from yourselves, and from your ailments. If invalids who can, would engage in light, useful labor in the open

air a portion of each day, they would find physical exercise one of God's appointed agents for the benefit of man.

Much of our suffering is unreal. We imagine trouble, and we gather clouds of darkness about us. We suffer as surely from imaginary troubles as though they were real. Physical exercise is the best remedy for this dreaded disease; for it occupies the mind and strengthens it to more healthful action, and employs the idle hands, and imparts strength and vigor to the muscles.

Dear invalid friends, have an aim in life while you do live. Gather sunshine about you instead of clouds. Seek to be a fresh, beautiful flower in God's garden, imparting fragrance to all around you. Do this, and you will not die a whit sooner; but you will surely shorten your days by unhappy complainings, making your pains and ailments the theme of conversation.

If you set any value upon your life, be cheerful, and subdue a querulous, whining, complaining spirit. Prune off every decaying leaf and withered branch, from your life, and manifest only freshness and vigor. You will be repaid tenfold in this life by cherishing a courteous spirit, being kind and respectful to all, even if it cost you an effort. Let the lessons of God's beautiful flowers soften, refine, and elevate your natures, and attract your hearts from the loveliness of nature to nature's God, and increase your love and reverence for your Creator. (Reprinted from *The Health Reformer*, June 1, 1871) 



# Report of Visit to Venezuela

Two years ago Pastor Elvis Alberto and I were privileged to visit many believers in South America. Recently we received a request to visit some of the believers in Venezuela, to preach, and to conduct a baptism.

I began my part of the trip by flying from the United States to Willemstad, Curaçao. Pastor Elvis was waiting to pick me up and take me to his home, in preparation for an evening meeting at Willemstad with the believers from the various parts of the island.

After a rousing song service, I was blessed by the youth as they played hymns on their recorders. After the music I shared a message on the necessity of understanding the landmarks and pillars of our faith, as given to our Adventist pioneers by God.

Originally we were scheduled to fly out early the next morning to Valencia, Venezuela, but our flight time ended up being in the evening, so we flew out of Curaçao the next evening, landing just around sunset.

The airport in Valencia is small for an international airport, and we were blessed to be processed through immigration and customs quickly. After exiting the airport we found a taxi to take us to a prearranged hotel for the night. We had been strongly advised against traveling on the road from Valencia to Barquisimeto at night. This road is a frequent crime scene, with bandits and robbers preying on night travelers.

The next morning we found transportation to Barquisimeto, and by midday we were at the home of Dr. Norberto Revilla, who had invited us to come and speak where we were warmly welcomed and well-fed.

Sadly after our visit in 2009, some of those who had accepted the truth about God received the lunar sabbath doctrine. Studying this issue was to be one of the main points of our trip.

Also a teaching was being circulated that the day of Christ's return was now known, and the brethren wanted to know if this could be true at this time in earth's history. The subject of the biblical Sabbath, therefore, as well as the subject of the second coming of Jesus, became our central issues of study during the week in Venezuela.

Pastor Alberto translated for me. The first night the topic was "Landmarks and Pillars," and we examined the main points of our faith, as outlined in the Spirit of Prophecy, with a special emphasis upon the Sabbath truth as a pillar.

Point-by-point the Sabbath was studied, and from both the Bible and the testimonies of the Spirit of Prophecy, the lunar sabbath was shown to be false. The afternoon before the first meeting in Barquisimeto and the next afternoon, Pastor Elvis and I visited the main teacher of the lunar sabbath in his home for studies, and then he came to the next meeting with the believers in Barquisimeto. After attending this meeting he stated he had been given much work to try to find explanations for the points we presented, but he did not come back to

any more of the meetings. Others, however, became sure in their position of the biblical Sabbath.

What is the lunar sabbath? It is a way of marking off the week, and with it the Sabbath, according to the new moon. When the moon is in its new phase, the month begins, and biblically this is the way the children of Israel counted their months after the exodus. By the lunar sabbath reckoning, the sabbath is then measured off by counting the next seven days *after* the new moon. Most people who believe in the lunar sabbath teach that the 8th, the 15th, the 22nd, and the 29th days of the month are sabbath days. With this system the day of the sabbath varies each month as to which day of the week it is (as we commonly understand the days of the week) because the weekly cycle of days becomes disrupted. In other words, during some parts of the month the lunar sabbath comes on what is commonly called Sunday. In the next monthly cycle, the lunar sabbath may move to Monday, with a month of sabbaths on what we today call Monday. Each month the day of the lunar sabbath will change. Thus, the sabbath moves each month from one day of the standard week to another day of that week. Furthermore, the cycle of the week is broken at the beginning of each month. While the weeks of the lunar Sabbatharians are said to be seven days long, there is an interval of one or two days between the last day of the prior month's last week and the first day of the new month's first week! So the time between the last sabbath of the current month and the first sabbath of the next month will be either eight or nine days. Usually it is claimed that the extra days are not an actual part of any week but are special days, sometimes called transition days, and are even called "non-days."

The doctrine of the lunar sabbath teaches that the seventh-day Sabbath, as we have commonly understood it and have been worshiping God on, is a product of Satan.

While many angles supporting the true Sabbath were presented, we especially looked at biblical reasons why the lunar sabbath could not be truth. The following three reasons were especially emphasized:

**Manna:** In Exodus 16 we have the record of how God miraculously fed the children of Israel for forty years with bread from heaven:

*Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily . . . And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the*

LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and see the that ye will see the; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning (Exodus 16:4, 5, 22, 23).

The manna came on a regular basis for six days. Five days they were to gather up a certain portion. On the sixth day when the manna came, they were to gather up a double portion. If any extra was gathered up during the first five days and kept over until the next day, the Bible says that it stank and bred worms. "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them" (v. 20). Perhaps their faith was not mature and they thought that the manna would not be there the following day, so they gathered extra.

When the people gathered the double portion on the sixth day, however, it did not stink or breed worms. "And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein" (v. 24). Now, what was the difference? Verse 24 is talking about the manna they obtained on the sixth day, which was miraculously preserved, and this continued for forty years.

Please consider this. If the children of Israel had gathered extra manna on any day other than the sixth, the next day that manna would stink and breed worms. On the sixth day they were to take a double portion. The Bible never makes a provision for a triple portion or a quadruple portion to make up for the extra day(s) lunar sabbath proponents claim are at the transition between months and do not belong to any week. Neither is there any mention that after a certain Sabbath the people were to fast if the manna was not falling. Rather, the Bible says this process continued on every week for forty years.

Exodus 16:35 says: "And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan." We also read from Ellen White: "Thus for forty years God worked each week a miracle before his people, to show them that his Sabbath was a sacred day" (*The Review and Herald*, October 28, 1902).

**Pentecost:** The concept of the lunar sabbath cannot be harmonized with the calculation of Pentecost. God has set things in an orderly way in his work. He is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). If you look in Leviticus 23, you will notice the appointed feasts of the Lord, and when you come to the one we call Pentecost,\* you read: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat [meal] offering unto the LORD" (Leviticus 23:15,

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\* It is not called Pentecost in the Old Testament but rather "the feast of weeks" (Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10, 16; 2 Chronicles 8:13). The term Pentecost is found in the New Testament (Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 16:8).

16). These verses tell of seven Sabbaths, but this is to be understood as seven weeks. In the English translation of the Septuagint, we read: "And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the heave-offering, seven full weeks." Even the lunar sabbath advocates believe a week is seven days. If a week is seven days and you have seven times seven, that is forty-nine days. When you add one more day, you have fifty days. Pentecost would be on the fiftieth day. The term Pentecost means the fiftieth day. Pentecost was fifty days after the wave sheaf was offered.

But since the wave sheaf happened in the middle of the first month, the counting of time had to cross over from the first month to the second month and from the second month to the third month. If the transition days that the lunar sabbath requires are not part of any week, then there are not fifty days separating the feasts, but fifty-two or fifty-three days.

**The Sabbath on the Wrong Day of the Week for the Lunar Sabbath:** It has been asserted by some advocates of the lunar sabbath that every Sabbath in the Bible that has the day of the month mentioned in connection with the Sabbath occurs either on the 8th, the 15th, the 22nd, or the 29th day of the month; however, examples cannot be used to prove doctrine. Even if every Sabbath mentioned in the Bible is on the 8th, the 15th, the 22nd, or the 29th day, we are not assured that all the other Sabbaths were also on these days of the month. Examples cannot prove, but they can disprove a theory. If just one Sabbath can be found that is not on the 8th, the 15th, the 22nd, or the 29th, then the theory of the lunar sabbath would be disproved. Such a Sabbath is found in Acts 20.

Paul was traveling from Europe to Asia, and in verse 6, we read: "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days." As you read this, it might seem ambiguous, and you could think it possible that they left sometime after the feast but not immediately thereafter. Ellen White tells us, however, in *The Acts of the Apostles* on page 391, that they left right after the feast.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread ends on the 21st day of the first month. If the journey to Troas took two days, you would expect them to arrive on the 23rd day of the month, but it took five days, bringing them to the 26th day of the month.

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. (Acts 20:7, 8)

The Bible says: "Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Paul left for Troas after the days of unleavened bread. According to Acts 16:11, this was normally a two-day trip. It says Paul abode with them for seven days, and if you do the math, friends, it brings Paul down to the either the third or



fourth day of the following month, depending on if you use inclusive reckoning or not. Paul was preaching to them that night. This was upon the dark part of the first day of the week. It was a Saturday night, and the next morning (Sunday) Paul was going to leave. Any way you do the math and any way you figure whether the lunar sabbath is the 21st or the 22nd, you cannot calculate his leaving with the lunar sabbath. It just does not fit. There is no way the math works. See the chart below.

Using these and many other “strong reasons” (Isaiah 41:21), the evidence is overwhelming that the lunar sabbath is not a part of the platform of truth that God has for his people.

On the holy Sabbath we studied the subject of the second coming of Jesus. We saw clearly what inspiration has revealed about the blessed hope.

Sabbath afternoon the church went to Dr. Revilla’s farm in the mountains for a baptism. The ride there was quite an experience for many of us, as thirteen people wedged into Dr. Revilla’s SUV for the ninety-minute trip to the mountains.

The baptism was held in a small pool of clear water that is fed from a mountain spring. It was a little cool, but the refreshing of the Lord was certainly present.

Our travel back to Valencia was to begin Sunday midday, but on Sabbath a woman with whom Dr. Revilla had been studying died. Dr. Revilla offered to help make arrangements for her funeral, and the family, who had little religious background, gladly accepted. I shared a short message of hope in



**One of three baptisms on Sabbath**

Jesus, and the brethren sang some hymns. After the grave-side service, we began our travel back to Valencia for the night, in order to catch an early flight the next morning to Curaçao.

This was the same road that earlier we had been warned not to travel at night. Now we were starting out shortly before sunset. After finding a car traveling to Valencia, we were sandwiched in with three other people and a driver and off we went. Of course we prayed, and God saw us safely through the way, despite the car’s engine quitting on several occasions and despite stopping for a low tire on a bandit-filled road.

*Allen Stump*

| First Day  | Second Day   | Third Day  | Fourth Day   | Fifth Day | Sixth Day | Sabbath  |
|--|--|--|--|-----------|-----------|--|
|  |  | 1  | 2  | 3         | 4         | 5  |
| 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10        | 11        | 12   |
| 13   | 14   | 15th day of month beginning of unleavened bread                | 16   | 17        | 18        | 19   |
| 20   | 21st of the first month, the end of unleavened bread | 22 Left Philippi for Troas right after the feast: (AA, p. 391) | 23   | 24        | 25        | 26 arrived in Troas  |
| <b>-----Spent 5 days in travel -----</b>             |  |  |  |           |           |  |
| 27   | 28   | 29   | <b>Spent 7 days before meeting the first day of the week</b> |           |           | Meeting begins on the dark part of the first day of the week. (Saturday Night) |
| Meeting continues until the morning of the first day |  |  |  |           |           |  |

# Youth's Corner – The Light That Would Not Go Out

By C. A. Williams

A young colporteur named Chai Chung Oo decided that he wanted to go to an island off the south coast of Korea and sell books. No Seventh-day Adventist worker had set foot there before, and he felt that the Lord was leading him to go.

So, taking his brief case, he went down to the docks and looked around for a ship. Finally he found a diesel-powered launch preparing to leave for the island. He went up to the captain and explained that he wanted to go over to that island. He said, "I have no money, captain; I don't have a cent, but I do want to go over to that island, because I feel the Lord is calling me to go over there and preach the gospel."

"Well," the captain said, "I'll take you just this once; no more." So the young colporteur got on the boat. On the way over he went up to the captain's quarters and began to talk to him. He said, "Captain, where are you from?" The captain told him, and then Brother Chai said, "I come from that area too."

As they talked back and forth they discovered that they were related, whereupon the captain said, "Young man, any time you want to go over to that island you come and see me and I'll take you over, and it won't cost you a cent." The colporteur's transportation problems were now solved. He could go over to that island every day and preach the gospel.

He began to call at the homes with his books, and found a man who showed a special interest in religion. The man asked if he would come back that evening and speak to a group of his friends about Christ's soon return to this earth. Brother Chai accepted this invitation. He felt that he should seize every opportunity to preach the gospel to those people. So that evening at eight o'clock, the appointed time, he came to this man's home. To his surprise there were nearly 150 people waiting for him to come and preach to them. Brother Chai was a bit frightened, for he hadn't expected a large group. He wasn't a preacher, he was just a colporteur; but he said to himself, "I've got to do my best." And he began to talk to the people about Jesus' soon coming. He preached for nearly an hour. The people said, "You can't stop now; you have to tell us more about the truth that you are giving to us. We believe that truth."

But something was beginning to happen! The little lamp that they had was a very primitive type of light, just a short wick sitting in a little saucer of oil. Brother Chai noticed that the light was getting lower and lower. The oil was nearly all gone, and he didn't know what to do. He knew the light would go out any moment, and he wouldn't be able to find the texts in his Bible. He watched the flame as it went down. There seemed to be just a drop of oil left in the bottom of the saucer. The flame began to flicker, and he thought, "Well, it's going out."

He asked the people, "What shall we do?" A little boy jumped up and said, "Mr. Chai, why don't you pray that the

Lord will keep the light burning?" As Mr. Chai hesitated, all the other people said, "Sure, let's pray that the Lord will keep the light burning; we're sure that He will."

## An Earnest Prayer

Mr. Chai closed his eyes and lifted up his voice in prayer, praying earnestly for divine aid. While the adults still had their eyes closed, the little boy jumped up again and said, "Look at the light! Look at the light!" The little flame that had been flickering and had almost gone out was now three times larger than it was before, and three times as much light was shining all around!

Of the experience Mr. Chai says, "I kept on preaching for another 30 minutes and the light continued to burn brightly. When we were finished, we blew the light out and the people returned to their homes. But we promised to come back the next evening. Now, it was very difficult to get oil on the island. We had to go clear back to the mainland to get supplies of that kind. There was no way for us to get oil the next day, as there was no ship going to the mainland. The next evening we came together again, wondering what we should do.

"I went up just before the meeting and looked at the saucer, and there was still a drop of oil in the bottom no bigger than an aspirin tablet—just a tiny drop—and we didn't know whether we should start the meeting or not. Anyway, one of the boys put a match to the wick, and immediately a large flame sprang up. We started our meeting and continued clear through that evening. This time there were more than 200 people that met together. I spoke on the signs of Christ's soon coming.

"After our meeting we blew out the light and went home. For four meetings, a total of more than seven hours, that little drop of oil kept the light burning brightly. We are sure that the Lord performed a miracle and did not let the light go out, but kept the little lamp burning brightly for us."

Surely the same Lord who would not let the cruse of oil fail in Elijah's time is with us today. He is able to perform just as great miracles for his faithful followers in our time as he did then. We now have a church of more than 60 members in this place, and these members are letting their light shine to others. They have begun a branch Sabbath school that is almost as big as the church. The lights on this island are strong and burning brightly. We feel that eventually the work on this island, as well as in the entire peninsula of Korea, will be finished in a blaze of glory.

The Lord is pouring out his Spirit on his people today, and we are seeing miracles—miracles of salvation, miracles of saving grace. (Reprinted from the *Review & Herald*, March 17, 1960)



# Will Anyone Ever Know the Day or Hour of Jesus' Second Coming?

May 21, 2011, has come and gone, but to Harold Camping and others who had accepted his teaching that May 21 was the exact date of the second coming of Jesus, its passing was a bitter disappointment. For months the faithful followers had been preaching the message to repent and be ready for judgment day. Billboards were rented with their message, bumper stickers were printed, and some abandoned their jobs and time with their families to go on the road to spread the message.

Detractors were quick to quote the words of Jesus: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). Camping and his followers, however, believed that this statement was meant to say that at that time, the time of the pronouncement from Jesus, only the Father knew but that men could know it today.

But of course Camping and his followers are all still here. According to Harold Camping Christ was supposed to have come exactly 7,000 years past the time when the door to Noah’s ark was shut.

Several years earlier, Camping had set the date of 1994 for Christ’s return, but more people bought into his prophetic proclamations this time and now have to face the choice that they were either wrong or they were left behind and only a very few select were chosen and taken away in the so-called, secret rapture<sup>1</sup>. Pretty grim choice for these believers.

Harold Camping is not the only person who has made predictions lately. Cristian Silva, a dissident Seventh-day Adventist in California, has a Dutch website where he is proclaiming that Jesus will come on the the 15th of Tishri, 2011 (October 15th, according to the countdown clock on the home page, which gives the time to the second). Like Camping, he is telling people to get ready.

When this prediction fails, and it will fail, what effect will it have upon its adherents? Unlike most of the followers of Camping, they do not believe in a secret rapture; therefore, they will have to admit that they were wrong. Will they set a new date or, perhaps in discouragement, give up the faith?

The Adventist pioneers faced a difficult situation, as the Millerites, on more than one occasion, set specific dates for the second coming of Jesus. Of course Jesus did not return, and, especially on October 22, 1844, their disappointment was deeply bitter.



**Website proclaiming the exact day and hour of Jesus' return**

At the height of the preaching of William Miller, there were over 50,000 believers who claimed to be waiting for Jesus to return on October 22, 1844. Soon after the disappointment, however, there were only about fifty left who believed that somehow the date had prophetic significance. Light was given the next morning to Hiram Edson, and soon more study confirmed that the investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary had begun.

During the peaching of the second advent, the Millerites were faced with especially with two texts: Mark 13:32 and its parallel text, Matthew 24:36:

**But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (Matthew 24:36)**

**But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. (Mark 13:32)<sup>2</sup>**

1. Francisco Ribera (1537–1591) was a Spanish Jesuit doctor of theology who began writing a commentary in 1585 on the book of Revelation, entitled *In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistiae Apocalypsin Commentarij*. This commentary’s purpose was to remove the Catholic Church from consideration as the antichrist power. Ribera proposed a system that today is known as futurism where the first three chapters of the Revelation applied historically to the early church and the times of ancient pagan Rome, with the rest being limited to a yet future period after the secret rapture. This teaching removes the papacy from consideration of being the beast power of Revelation 13.
2. In this text Christ declares that he did not know the time of his own return. If he was the omniscient second person of the trinity how could he not know? Trying to sustain the trinity doctrine has caused confusion that would be funny if it were not so sadly riddled with error. An example of this confusion is shown in the following comments on Mark 13:32: “It is certain (says Archbishop Tillotson) that Christ, as God, could not be ignorant of any thing; but the divine wisdom which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate itself to his human soul, according to the divine pleasure, so

Matthew 24:36 and its parallel text, Mark 13:32, are statements that seem very straight-forward and difficult to misunderstand. Some of the Adventists said that the statement should have been translated: “No man shall *make known* the time.” For example, James White followed the lead of Joshua Himes when he published the following in *A Word to the Little Flock*:

An old English version of the passage, reads, “But that day and hour no man maketh known, neither the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

This is the correct reading according to several of the ablest critics of the age. The word know is used here, in the same sense as it is by Paul in 1Cor.2:2. Paul well understood many other things, besides Christ and him crucified, but he determined to make known nothing else among them. So in the passage first quoted, it is declared that none but God the Father, maketh known the day and hour; that is, the definite time of the second coming of his Son. And this necessarily implies that God makes the time known. (James White, *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 5; 1847)<sup>3</sup>

As we will see, however, this does not correctly, nor fairly, represent what the Greek actually says. The two Greek words used in 1 Corinthians 2:2 and Mark 13:32 for know and knoweth come from the same root word, which has two variations. The word in Mark 13:32 (knoweth) is *oiden* (οιδεν), which is in the perfect tense, active voice, and the indicative mood—a mood which means a statement of fact.

The variation of the Greek word in 1 Corinthians 2:2 (to know) is *eidēnai*, (ειδεναι), which is in the perfect tense, active voice, and the infinitive mood, which is usually the verb with “to” prefixed, as “to work” (1 Thessalonians 4:11). Clearly, Mark is not mistranslated.<sup>4</sup>

According to Jesus the holy angels of heaven, who always behold God’s face and execute his will on earth, do not know the time of the coming of Jesus, and even Jesus himself says, within the framework of the time of the statement (AD 31), that he did not know the time of his return. Jesus also told his disciples repeatedly to watch:

*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (Matthew 24:42)*

*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 24:44)*

*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:13)*

In each case we are told to watch and be ready because we do not know when Jesus is coming back. The element of needing to be ready is introduced here with the uncertainty of the timing of the event. This implies that if one were to know the exact time of the second coming, he or she might not be as watchful and ready as their Master demands. They would even risk losing their hold on Jesus.

Just before his ascension Jesus told his disciples: “It is not for you to know the times (*chronos*) or the seasons (*kairos*), which the Father hath put in his own power (*exousia*).” The knowledge of the timing of the event is only in the Father’s hands; however, Jesus did give his church signs so that they might be watchful and expectant. Ellen White noted:

But the day and the hour of His coming Christ has not revealed. He stated plainly to His disciples that He Himself could not make known the day or the hour of His second appearing. *Had He been at liberty to reveal this, why need He have exhorted them to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy?* There are those who claim to know the very day and hour of our Lord’s appearing. Very earnest are they in mapping out the future. But the Lord has warned them off the ground they occupy. The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God’s mystery. (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 632, 633)

Here we learn that to know the time of Jesus’ return would be counter-productive against the exhortation to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy, and the reason for maintaining an attitude of constant expectancy is so that we might always be ready and not lose our way.

The coming of Jesus to a world mostly unprepared is compared to a thief coming at night when least suspected. Notice the following verses:

*But of the times (*chronos*) and the seasons (*kairos*), brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2)*

*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. (2 Peter 3:10)*

*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. (Revelation 3:3)*

*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Revelation 16:15)*

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that his human nature might sometimes not know some things; therefore Christ is said to grow in wisdom (#Lu 2:52), which he could not be said to do, if the human nature of Christ did necessarily know all things by virtue of its union with the divinity” (*Matthew Henry Commentary* on Mark 13:32).

3. This is quoted word for word from Joshua Himes, *Signs of the Times*, October 2 & 9, 1844, except White says “several,” whereas Himes says “some” of the ablest.
4. In fact, in checking with seventeen different English translations in my library, not one translated Mark 12:32 “shall make known” or anything similar to it.



The references from Paul and Peter speak of his coming as a thief *at night*. One does not expect a thief to come in the broad light of day to steal, but rather under the cover of darkness. The householder should not be surprised that the thief comes at night, but he has developed a complacency and is not watchful anymore.

## The Seven Thunders

Let us now review a few critical points we have seen. Jesus said that, at least during the time of the statement (present tense), only the Father knew the time of Jesus' second coming. Jesus also repeatedly told his disciples that since they did not know the day or hour of his returning, that they were to watch and wait. Furthermore, the Spirit of Prophecy states that the time of Jesus' return could not be revealed, for the disciples would not be able to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy if some future date was known.

Now let us go to the tenth chapter of Revelation, for there we find another piece of the puzzle that we will use to solve this enigma. This chapter is a history of the great disappointment of the Advent people and of their work afterward.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. (Revelation 10:1-4)

Here we have a "little book" introduced. Later in verses 8-10, we read of the 1844 experience and how the hope of Jesus' return was sweet to the waiting ones, but the disappointment was bitter. Following this experience the people were told to prophesy, or teach again, to "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11). Yet in verses 3 and 4, we have an element that is not often discussed—the seven thunders. Chronologically they come before the 1844 experience, but what do they represent? History would say that they represent events that would happen before 1844, specifically events that would occur under the giving of the first and second angels' messages. This is exactly what the Spirit of Prophecy tells us they are, but the Spirit of Prophecy goes beyond the event and discusses why John is not allowed to write out what he hears from the seven thunders.

The books of Daniel and the Revelation are one. One is a prophecy, the other a revelation; one a book sealed, the other a book opened. John heard the mysteries which the thunders uttered, but he was commanded not to write them.

*The special light given to John which was expressed in the seven thunders was a delineation of events which would transpire under the first and second angels' messages. It was not best for the people to know these things, for their faith must necessarily be tested. In the order of God most wonderful and advanced truths would be proclaimed. The first and second angels' messages were to be proclaimed, but no further light was to be revealed before these messages had done their specific work. This is represented by the Angel standing with one foot on the sea, proclaiming with a most solemn oath that time should be no longer. (Manuscript Releases, vol. 19, p. 320)*

Here we learn that the seven thunders were events that were to transpire under the first and second angels' messages and that it was best for the people not to know of these events earlier, for their faith needed to be tested. Ellen White immediately proceeds in the manuscript:

*This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844. (Ibid., pp. 320, 321)*

Notice the carefulness of this statement. Ellen White writes out first that there will be no more prophetic time "which should precede the advent of our Lord." She was careful to allow for the 1,000 years of Revelation 20. Then, so as to leave no doubt about what she is talking, she rephrases what she has just said: "That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time." She finally clarifies it once more to say that after 1844 "there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time," with, of course, the exception given in the first sentence, which allows for prophetic time after the second advent, such as the millennium.

This does not exclude prophecy from being fulfilled and understood. For example, many believe that the papal deadly wound was healed on February 11, 1929, when Cardinal Gasparri (representing Pope Pius XI) and Benito Mussolini (representing King Victor Emmanuel III) signed the Lateran Treaty. The next day the *San Francisco Chronicle* headline read: "Mussolini and Gasparri Sign Historic Roman Pact. . . Healed Wound of Many Years." If we accept this as a fulfillment to the prophecy of Revelation 13:12, we can state that we have a definite time for its fulfillment, but what we do not have, nor was ever given in the Bible, is a prophecy stating *when* this would happen. No student of the Bible could have ever pointed to any certain verse or verses ahead of time and said that here is the proof this event will take place on February 11, 1929. In the same way, there is no prophecy or typological sequence that can be used as a quasi-prophecy to predict the day or the hour of Jesus' soon return.

## Our Attitude Today

So beloved, if there is no prophetic date given for the coming of Jesus, are we to ignore the subject? Quite the contrary, for though the time is uncertain, the coming of Jesus is most certain, and it will come suddenly and unexpectedly.

Jesus did not say get ready; he said be ready, and we can only do that if we maintain a preparation for the event. When the call came to the ten virgins, only those who had continually kept their lamps trimmed were able to follow the bridegroom. Those who have not kept their lamps ready will be like those who lived during the time of the flood who were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 24:38, 39, 42–44).

Clearly Jesus wants his people to be ready for his return, to maintain a constant state of expectancy, but knowing the day and hour of Jesus’ return was a theme that James White did not give up easily. Commenting upon Matthew 24:36, 37, he wrote:

Those who claim that the text [Matthew 24:36, 37] proves that nothing may be known of the period of the second advent, make it prove too much for their own unbelief. As recorded by Mark, the declaration reads: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” If the text proves that men will know nothing of the period of the second advent, it also proves that angels will know nothing of it, and also that the Son will know nothing of it, till the event takes place! This position proves too much, therefore proves nothing to the point. Christ will know of the period of his second advent to this world. The holy angels who wait around the throne of Heaven to receive messages relative to the part they act in the salvation of men, will know of the time of this closing event of salvation. And so will the waiting, watching people of God understand. (James White, *Bible Adventism*, p. 53.)

One thing about Elder White, he was a logical man, and what he states seems logical, but is this true and can it be made to harmonize with Mark 13:32? Psalm 25:14 says, “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” God has a secret, a mystery, but that mystery he will show to those that fear him.

## Who Will Know the Time for Jesus’ Return?

Certainly there is going to be a time when all will know the day and hour of Jesus’ coming, even if it is simply at the moment he arrives. However, all logic and reason concedes

that sometime before Jesus comes back the second time, he and all the angels must know the time. God is not going to interrupt “business as usual” in heaven and say, “Go now, this instant.” So if at some point in the future, if not already, the angels will know, who at one time did not know, then is it possible that the righteous might also be so informed? With Elder White, I think it is perfectly reasonable to believe so.

So far we have seen two reasons that the time of the day and hour of Christ’s return has been withheld. Firstly, it has been withheld so that we will maintain an attitude of constant expectancy and constant readiness. Secondly, by withholding the information, the saints can be tested, or proved, not that God needs to test them for his own benefit, for he knows their characters, but so that their characters may be demonstrated to the rest of the universe.

The saints are not to let their guard down and live unholy lives. But all of this is before probation closes, before the plagues fall, before the saints can know if their cases have been decided in the heavenly courts, and *before the earthliness has all been purified from them*. Even after probation closes, there is still one more work for the saints:

Jacob’s history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril. The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord’s eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God’s love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; ***but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed***, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected. (*The Great Controversy*, p. 621)

Here Ellen White speaks of an *earthliness* that must be consumed. The time of Jacob’s trouble comes after the close of probation. By this time all the sin of the saints has been put away, forgiven, and cleansed; however, there is still an earthliness in the saints that must be consumed before they are ready for heaven and before they can be assured of their position in God’s kingdom. Ellen White usually used the term *earthliness* in connection with selfishness and sin, but if probation is closed at the time the saints “earthliness must be consumed,” it cannot be understood in the sense of sin. There is, however, another understanding of earthliness. In Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, earthliness is compared to worldliness, or a “strong attachment to worldly things.” The saints will have all final attachments to the things of this world removed at this time, but after that work has been done and the plagues have almost finished, God’s people will realize that they have been victorious in the strength of Jesus



and they will now be safe to know something that no people have ever know before—the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. Ellen White, writing in the setting of the end of time, states:

Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. *The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses’ did when he came down from Mount Sinai. (Early Writings, p. 15)*

Daniel 12:10 says, “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried [144,000]; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand [think it is an earthquake or thunder]; but the wise shall understand [the day and hour of his coming].”

The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus’ coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. *Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them. And when the blessing is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory.*

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man’s hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. *(The Great Controversy, p. 640)*

We can see now that there will be a time when the righteous will know the time of Jesus’ return. It seems to be very near the end of the final events, but it is only after the sin and earthliness of the saints are finally consumed and then the saints can be trusted with this sweet tiding from God himself.

## The Coming of Jesus Is Near

All through the Christian era, the saints have had the expectancy that Jesus would come soon, perhaps in their lifetime. The words of Paul have been a comfort to many: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11).

The coming of the Lord is nearer than when we first believed. The great controversy is nearing its end. Every report of calamity by sea or land [or air] is a testimony to the fact that the end of all things is at hand. Wars and rumors of wars declare it. Is there a Christian whose pulse does not beat with quickened action as he anticipates the great events opening before us? *(Evangelism, p. 219)*

While we believe that the coming of Jesus is very soon, we must not be deceived into thinking that we can today know

the time he is returning. God does not want his people to be discouraged today with false times or to be complacent, waiting for a future time that may be too far past the second coming.

## How We Can Help to Hasten That Day?

Peter says, “Looking for and hastening the coming (*parousia*) of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Peter 3:12, margin)? Commenting upon this passage, Ellen White says:

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. *(Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 69)*

Remember that Jesus said: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

Long has God waited for the spirit of service to take possession of the whole church so that everyone shall be working for Him according to his ability. When the members of the church of God do their appointed work in the needy fields at home and abroad, in fulfillment of the gospel commission, the whole world will soon be warned and the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory. *(The Acts of the Apostles, p. 111)*

## Character Counts

Not only must we endeavor to help others to be ready, but we ourselves must be ready, and according to the Bible, Christ’s church will be ready and waiting for him, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). The wise who understand the voice of God, the 144,000, have no guile in their mouths (Revelation 14:5). The world has been warned, the character of God’s people perfectly reflects the character of their Saviour, and now Jesus will come.



**Billboard in San Diego proclaiming the day of Christ’s return and judgment upon the world**

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69)

Beloved, two groups, and only two groups, will exist when Jesus returns. One group is fearful when Jesus returns. The Revelation describes them as such:

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:14–17)

But there is another group in contrast to this group. They are described in Isaiah 25:9: “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

If we are living when Jesus returns, we will be in one of these two groups. The choice is ours. Choose life and live. Choose Jesus.

*Allen Stump*

## Prayer Requests

It is hard to believe that the year 2011 is now almost half over. The signs of the times are before us with events, such as on May 10th, last month, when the Presbyterian Church (USA) eliminated official barriers to leadership by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

Let us pray that we might be faithful and not compromise our holy faith to please the ungodly.

Please continue to remember Brother Aland Ashton from Peru in your prayers and also Benny Kayamba in Zambia where some excellent meetings have been held and where there is a need for literature to help with the interests.

Please remember those who have been hard hit by the flooding from the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, as it will take years for some to recover.

June is camp meeting time here in West Virginia, and our final call is going out! Please pray that this spiritual time will be a blessing to all.

*Editor*

## God's Glory Displayed in His Handiwork

The glory of God is displayed in His handiwork. Here are mysteries that the mind will become strong in searching out. Minds that have been amused and abused by reading fiction may in nature have an open book, and read truth in the works of God around them. All may find themes for study in the simple leaf of the forest tree, the spires of grass covering the earth with their green velvet carpet, the plants and flowers, the stately trees of the forest, the lofty mountains, the granite rocks, the restless ocean, the precious gems of light studding



the heavens to make the night beautiful, the exhaustless riches of the sunlight, the solemn glories of the moon, the winter's cold, the summer's heat, the changing, recurring seasons, in perfect order and harmony, controlled by infinite power; here are subjects which call for deep thought, for the stretch of the imagination. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 581)

*Ellen G. White*

*Old Paths* is a free monthly newsletter/study-paper published by Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC 64 Box 128-B, Welch, WV 24801-9606 U. S. A. The paper is dedicated to the propagation and restoration of the principles of truth that God gave to the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. *Duplication is not only permitted, but strongly encouraged.* This issue, with other gospel literature we publish, can be found at our web sites. The urls are: <http://www.smyrna.org> and <http://www.presenttruth.info>. Phone: (304) 732-9204. Fax: (304) 732-7322.

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