

# 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 shew them his  
covenant.                      Psalm 25:14

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**“I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.” (Job 30:29)**



## When Were the Angels Created?

By Allen Stump

The Bible has a lot to say about angels. They are mentioned almost 300 times in the Bible. God has made them “spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire” (Hebrews 1:7). They are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14). The Spirit of Prophecy has thousands of references to angels, so they are important.

We have recently received questions about when the angels were created. Were they created sometime before our world and the life on it, or were they perhaps created on the first day as the light described in Genesis 1:3? We want to look at this subject first from the Bible alone and then from the writings of Ellen White which we call the testimony of Jesus, for such we believe them to be. This is not designed to be a rebuttal to anyone but simply to answer a question which has generated a lot of interest.

### Sola Scriptura

Let us first look at this matter from the Bible alone. Satan is a master of deception, and even people who love God are at times misled by Satan. It has been suggested by some students that the light in Genesis 1:3 is the angels and that they were created on Day One of the creation week recorded in Genesis, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). To declare this light to be the angels, we certainly should have a text somewhere defining that light to be the angels. There are only two texts in the Bible that even use the words angel(s) and light(s) together. They are

And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. (Acts 12:7)

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

The text in Acts speaks of the angel of the Lord coming into the prison where Peter was, and it says a light shined. This text does not say, however, that the angel was light but that when the angel came, there was light. Exegesis (taking from the text) cannot say that the angel must be light. Exegesis could say that the angel might be light, but it could also say that the angel and the light have no connection since they are not directly linked. It would be eisegesis (reading into the text) to say that the angel had to be the light.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul stated well that Satan can appear as an angel of light; however, Paul does not say the angels are light but, rather, that angels bring light. Remember that angels are messengers. If I said I was sending a messenger of happiness to cheer someone up, that messenger would not be the happiness but would, rather, be the agent of bringing the happiness.

Is there a text that clearly states how the light of Genesis 1:3 should be understood? Yes, there is such a text. Just two verses later, we read:

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:5)

If God calls the light “Day,” how can I presumptuously call it something else? No, it is not using good hermeneutics or biblical interpretation rules to do such.

One could argue that it would be a better interpretation to say that Jesus was the light created on this day rather than the angels, for Jesus said “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Of course, we reject this for many reasons, but it has more basis to accept than to say the angels were the light of Genesis 1:3.

It has been noted by the proponents of the idea that angels were created on Day One that Genesis 2:1 states: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” Since the text says “all the host of them,” it must mean the entire universe; however, this is again reading something into the text that is not in the text. The antecedent for *them* is the heavens and the earth. The heavens of the creation account are defined in Genesis 1:8 as the firmament, or atmosphere, around the earth: “And God called the firmament Heaven.” So, the heaven in Genesis 2:1 is not speaking about the entire universe of God but, rather, to a limited portion.

Further, if one wishes to include the angels as those that can minister the Spirit of God, how could the Spirit of God move upon the waters (Genesis 1:2) before the light of Genesis 1:3 (angels?) was created?

So, could the angels have been created during the first week of this earth’s history? Within the Genesis account there is no statement which would prevent it. What we have seen is that there is no biblical evidence that it did happen. Interestingly, Genesis is not considered by many students to be the first book of the Bible written. Job is considered even older, and in it we read God challenging Job by stating:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4–7)

This text speaks of the morning stars and the sons of God shouting for joy when God laid the foundations of the earth. The Hebrew for *laid the foundations* is *יָסַד* (*yasad*). Virtually every Hebrew lexicon states that *yasad* means to *establish* or *found*. There is no reason to think that Genesis 1:3 comes in time before Genesis 1:1, 2. In Job 38:7 the *morning stars* are synonymous with *the sons of God*. Their identity is given in Job 1:6:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. (Job 1:6)

The LXX translates the phrase “sons of God” as “angels of God.”

And it came to pass on a day, that, behold, the angels of God (ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ) came to stand before the Lord, and the devil came with them. (Lancelot Charles Lee Benton, *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*)

So, we can see, based upon the Bible alone, that the angels were in existence before the foundations of this earth were laid.

There is no definite time given in the Bible when the angels were created, but since they were in existence before the foundations of this earth were laid, we know they could not have been created on Day One of the Genesis creation.

### The testimony of Jesus

We now want to see if there is any evidence on this point from the testimony of Jesus. We read the most complete and succinct details of creation and the angels’ relationship to it in *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng—“ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father’s will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ *was still to exercise divine power*, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God’s plan, but would exalt the Father’s glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36.2; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Here the heavenly hosts, “the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng,” are called into the presence of God so that the right position of the Son of God can be clarified. The Father made clear that “the Son of God had wrought the Father’s will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven.” Who were the hosts of heaven? The angels were those hosts of heaven. Further, it says, “Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.” That is future.

We find this scenario explained in more detail in the book, *The Story of Redemption*:

Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, next in honor to God's dear Son. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone.

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself *in the anticipated creation of the earth* and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him. (Ellen White, *The Story of Redemption*, p. 13.1, 2)

Notice the phrase *in the anticipated creation of the earth*. By its very definition, to *anticipate* relates to a future action. Here Ellen White speaks of Lucifer and other angels in existence, and the context is clearly before the anticipated creation of the earth.

Further on, we read:

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at its head. Satan was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, heaven's great commander. (Ibid., p. 17.2)

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God and should be taken into conference with the Father and under-

stand His purposes. God informed Satan that to His Son alone He would reveal His secret purposes, and He required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield Him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy of a place in heaven. Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, "These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?" He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ and to defend his place in heaven by force of might, strength against strength. (Ibid., p. 18.1)

Good angels wept to hear the words of Satan and his exulting boasts. God declared that the rebellious should remain in heaven no longer. Their high and happy state had been held upon condition of obedience to the law which God had given to govern the high order of intelligences. But no provision had been made to save those who should venture to transgress His law. Satan grew bold in his rebellion, and expressed his contempt of the Creator's law. This Satan could not bear. He claimed that angels needed no law but should be left free to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right; that law was a restriction of their liberty; and that to abolish law was one great object of his standing as he did. The condition of the angels, he thought, needed improvement. Not so the mind of God, who had made laws and exalted them equal to Himself. The happiness of the angelic host consisted in their perfect obedience to law. Each had his special work assigned him, and until Satan rebelled, there had been perfect order and harmonious action in heaven. (Ibid., p. 18.2)

Then there was war in heaven. The Son of God, the Prince of heaven, and His loyal angels engaged in conflict with the archrebel and those who united with him. The Son of God and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left in heaven. All was again peaceful and harmonious as before. Angels in heaven mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. (Ibid., p. 19.1)

The Father consulted His Son in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with an-

gels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience. (Ibid., p. 19.2)

The Father and the Son engaged in the mighty, wondrous work they had contemplated—of creating the world. The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. (Ibid., 20.1)

To follow the flow of the paragraphs, in 17.2 Satan is at war with God. In 18.1, his rebellion hits its zenith. In 18.2, God declares that Satan and his sympathizers cannot remain in heaven. In 19.1, war was in heaven, and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled. In 19.2, the Father consulted his Son in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. According to 20.1, the earth was still to be made. Thus we see that the angels were in creation before this earth was created and that Satan fell and was expelled from heaven before the earth was created.

Concerning the time frame of the angels in heaven before our earth, we read:

Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, stood highest in the favor of God, and highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of Heaven. Before his fall, Lucifer was the covering cherub, holy and undefiled. The prophet of God declares, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." [Ezekiel 28:15.] Peace and joy, in perfect submission to the will of Heaven, existed throughout the angelic host. Love to God was supreme, love for one another impartial. *Such was the condition that existed for ages* before the entrance of sin. (Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p 316.3)

A few days or even weeks cannot reasonably be understood as "ages" within this context. We also read:

## 1889 HSDA–USA Camp Meeting

The first 1889 HSDA–USA camp meeting will be May 16–20, 2023, at Fall Creek Falls State Park near Spencer, Tennessee. Please mark these dates on your calendars soon!

The main meeting building has a large kitchen with a large room that will be used for dining and for the main meetings. There is no Wi-Fi available, but cellular service with AT&T is available. There is enough cellular service that we will be able to broadcast meetings using hotspots, and the meetings will be recorded and posted afterward.

This condition of things had existed a long period of time before Satan was unmasked and the evil ones expelled. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol, 21, Lt 162, 1906, par. 7)

While these time periods are not defined, it is not reasonable to try to define them as a short period of time such as five days.

Further, we are told that God bore long with Lucifer:

In great mercy, according to His divine character, God bore long with Lucifer. (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 39.2)

If Lucifer were created on Day One and cast out on Day Six or sometime near there, how could it be said that God bore long with him? God gave the people of Nineveh forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4). God gave Sodom and Gomorrah years, based upon the story of Lot (Genesis 13–19), and he gave the Amorites generations (Genesis 15:16)! Does it make sense to say that the long suffering and merciful God only suffered with his highest of creations for only a few days? We think not.

One of the vital points in making this study is that to teach the angels were created on Day One violates the Scripture. Good hermeneutical principles of interpretation cannot allow such a teaching. To allow the Scripture to be bent in such a manner would pave the way for other errors. Another vital point is that teaching the angels were created on Day One undermines confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. It is easy to claim others misunderstand the writings, but some points are very clear and do not have seemingly different counterpoints. We, as a people, need to be firm in both good biblical hermeneutics and in confidence in the testimony of Jesus.



There will be no cost for staying at the camp, but we would appreciate knowing how many plan to attend, so we can make our plans better. We will provide two meals a day on a donation basis. The food will be healthy, simple, and filling, and we will be glad to accept any volunteers who would like to help with the kitchen duties and with cleanup afterwards. A tentative camp schedule is on page 11.

The temperatures in mid May usually range from between 65° and 75° F throughout the day. There are usually about ten days of rain at the park during the month of May, so please bring an umbrella in case we catch a few of those ten days. We have a link to register at <https://smyrna.org/2023-camp-meeting-attendance-survey/>.



# Present Truth for Today

By Allen Stump

Recently a brother related to me that his wife was talking to one of the leading sisters in a mainline Seventh-day Adventist church, and the topic of *present truth* came up. The church member stated that *present truth* was okay for the pioneers of the Adventists, but *present truth* was not needed anymore. She said, “Today we just need to understand Jesus and his love.”

Do we need present truth today? What did the concept of present truth mean to our pioneers, and do we still have and need *present truth* today? What is the present truth the world needs today? What is present truth the church needs today?

The Bible speaks of present truth in Second Peter:

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, **though ye know them**, and be **established in the present truth**. (2 Peter 1:12)

Under inspiration, Peter states that God wants us to be *established*, or *made fast*, in truth and even in what Peter calls *the present truth*. The word we translate *present* in this verse is *πάρεμι* (*pareimi*). *Pareimi* primarily means *present* and is so translated eleven of the twenty-three times it is used in the New Testament. It is also translated as *come* and *be*, among others. It comes from *para* and *eimi*. *Para* means *beside* (like parallel), and *eimi* means *to be*, such as when Jesus said, *I am*. *I am* is translated from *ego eimi*.

In the two verses just before verse 12, we have the context:

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to **make your calling and election sure**: for if **ye do these things** [Peter’s ladder], ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:10–11)

Peter states “wherefore” in verse 12, meaning *on account of, in remembrance of* “these things, though ye know them.” The present truth is needed for us to not fall, so we can make our calling and election sure.

Truth is vital to the experience of the believer. Today we hear the phrases *my truth*, *his truth*, *her truth*, or *know your own truth*. This is absurd because it speaks directly against the very definition of truth. Truth is that which agrees with reality. Truth is an objective matter and is not subject to one’s whims or desires.

Many people who have *their truth* cannot see or agree with the reality of the matters about them.

You might think how dare I suggest that someone should not speak *their truth*. The problem is that when people have to attach possession to *truth*, it is because it is not a truth but only a want-to-be idea. Your truth (and my truth) may not be the truth, and that is not just my truth but *the* truth.

Suppose science leaders came together from several countries to discuss electricity, gravity, or quantum mechanics, all using data collected from their imaginations! It would be chaos. Some scientists claim to have their truth on string theory, entanglement, or Schrodinger’s cat.

Certainly there are multiple perceptions and interpretations of truth, but there is only one truth. There are multiple ways to express the truth, but there is one truth on a given subject, not many.

Just because I insist something is true for me or is *my truth* does not mean it is *the truth*. There have been plenty of times in my life when I have believed something as true that was not at all true. No matter how much I believed Santa Claus brought me that race car set under the tree, *my truth* was not *the truth*. My insistence that Santa Claus was true did not change the reality of the truth that I should not build my life or set my hope upon what I held to as *my truth*.

The idea of someone having *their truth* is unscriptural. A growing Christian desires God’s truth, not their own ideas.

Jehovah is a God of truth:

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, is *the truth*:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

Jesus declares the Holy Spirit to be “the Spirit of truth”:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13)

Let us not forget that truth is that which agrees with reality. The Hebrew and Greek words we translate as *truth* mean *reality*. God wants us to live in the real world!

It is by the truth that we are sanctified:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

God wants all to come to the truth and especially the truth about God:

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:4–5)

We must believe and live the truth to be sanctified by it:

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:2)

Why is obedience so important? What effect does obedience to the truth have upon the soul? Peter notes:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (1 Peter 1:22)

When we understand the value of truth, especially present truth, we will love the truth and cherish it.

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23)

That is, buy the truth at whatever sacrifice or cost, and under no circumstances should you sell it, let it go, or depart from it.

Some truths are applicable in all ages and are, therefore, *present truth* for every generation. There are other truths which are of a special character and are applicable to only one generation. They are none the less important because of this, for upon their acceptance or rejection depended the salvation or loss of the people of that generation. The message of Noah was this kind of present truth. To later generations, it became past truth and not a present, testing message. It is truth we learn from, truth valuable to us, but is not truth by which we are tested today.

John the Baptist preached that the Messiah was at hand. Had the first advent message of John been proclaimed in

the generation either before or after John’s time, it would not have been applicable. It would not have been present truth in those generations. The people of the generation before would not have lived to see it fulfilled, and to those living after, it would have been wrongly timed. This is not the case with general truths as love, faith, hope, repentance, obedience, justice, and mercy. These are always in season, and of a saving nature at all times. Present truths always include all these and, hence, are saving in character and of vital importance.

## Present truth for the last days

Is there a special present truth message that will be the burden of the closing gospel work? Yes, of course. We know it as the three angels’ messages.

### The first message

Let us begin with the first angel’s message and see how it is present truth for today.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6–7)

This message includes the everlasting gospel. Certainly the gospel is present truth for all people and all times. Even its name *everlasting* indicates that it is for all people of all times.

Further, this message contains the announcement of the hour of God’s judgment. Prophetically, we know this began on October 22, 1844, and is still in progress. Certainly it is also a present truth for this time.

The message gives a special emphasis on worshiping God as the Creator and echoes us back to the fourth commandment and to the worship of the Creator.

### The second message

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

This message was not applicable in times past. Martin Luther did not preach it. It is true that Rome had been in a fallen state for centuries in his time, but it is the apostate Protestant churches upon which this prophecy focuses.

The term Babylon, derived from Babel, and signifying confusion, is applied in Scripture to the various forms of false or apostate religion. But the message announcing

the fall of Babylon must apply to some religious body that was once pure, and has become corrupt. It cannot be the Romish Church which is here meant; for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. But how appropriate the figure as applied to the Protestant churches, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects. The unity for which Christ prayed does not exist. Instead of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, there are numberless conflicting creeds and theories. Religious faith appears so confused and discordant that the world know not what to believe as truth. God is not in all this; it is the work of man,—the work of Satan. (Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 232.2)

Certainly this is truth we need today.

### The third message

The first part of the third angel's message is:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:9–11)

Would the warning against the mark of the beast have been needed in the time of Luther? No. The beast as described in Revelation 13 had arisen but had not caused its mark to be forced upon others at that time.

The message of the third angel is present truth today because the final events are just before us and because we are living in the time of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Revelation 13 and 14. It is especially now that God's people are to understand the work of the papacy and to be in step with the signs of the times.

How are the saints described who accept the three angels' messages and are in step with them?

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

Some have tried to deny these messages or have tried to change them. Some have said that the mark of the beast is now the acceptance of homosexuality or the European Union enforcing vaccination.

Maybe you have heard of Dr. Jon Paulien. A few years ago he wrote and delivered a series about prophecy and inspiration, including how he believes Ellen White fits into the last-day picture.

Paulien believes that Ellen White was a product of her time, that she wrote in relationship to her time, and that this time just does not fit today's time! He has written:

The world that Ellen White experienced in the 1880s was soon to change dramatically. (<https://revelation-armageddon.com/2020/10/sunday-laws-and-bible-prophecy-13-the-world-of-ellen-white/>)

The scenario Ellen White projects in *Great Controversy* is deeply embedded in the very specific politics and issues of the 1880s and a little after. It addresses the very things the nation at large was discussing and includes all the major political players of the time. It is not the story of some far future for the United States of America, that story is a natural extension of Ellen White's time and place. (Ibid.)

You will look in vain for any clear description in Ellen White's writings of the world in which we live. There has been more change in the last hundred years than in the previous 6000, but you wouldn't detect that in any detail in her writings. Yet you won't find any explicit descriptions of nuclear war or nuclear power. There is no mention of computers, the internet, or cell phones. There is no mention of space travel by human means. There is no description of Communism, the two world wars, or Islamic terrorism. There is no specific description of an America that is becoming increasingly secular or post-modern. (Ibid.)

It is true that Ellen White knew nothing of nuclear power or space travel. She was not a prophet of science but of spiritual truth and especially truth concerning last-day prophecies and the history that would surround them. She wrote that "the fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 606.2).

When Ellen White wrote, there were no Roman Catholics on the United States Supreme Court. There had never been a Catholic president nor even a serious run for the presidential office by a Catholic. There were few Catholics in Congress. Today, however, the United States Supreme Court has six of its nine justices who are Catholic. The United States House of Representatives has 122 Catholics of the 435 members, 28%, the highest represented group in the House. The United States Senate has similar Catholic representation, with twenty-seven sena-

tors being Catholic, which is 27% of the Senate, again, the highest represented group in that body. President Joe Biden is also Catholic, giving all three branches of government a heavily Catholic presence. No, Ellen White did not predict two world wars, but she certainly predicted the influence of the Roman Church in the United States at the end, something that would have seemed as impossible as sending a man to the moon in 1888.

In his next blog, Paulien writes:

As you look at all the statements Ellen White makes regarding Sunday laws, the key statements regarding Sunday legislation in Congress are clustered in the year 1888, when that was a live and national issue. As you observe the trend of her statements over seventy years, it fits the pattern of the classical prophet: speaking directly and prophetically to the living issues of her time. (<https://revelation-armageddon.com/2020/10/sunday-laws-and-bible-prophecy-14-ellen-white-a-classical-prophet/>)

But Ellen White said:

Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 338.1)

The prophets of God spoke less for their own time than for the ages to come, and especially for the generation that would live amid the last scenes of this earth's history. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, January 13, 1898, par. 8)

Paulien also says:

Those awaiting a Sunday law in the US Congress are assuming that Ellen White's historical predictions are different from those of the Bible, they are not conditional. They must be fulfilled in detail exactly as projected. But this assumption contradicts Ellen White's own counsel: ". . . the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional" (LDE 38). Conditionality warns us not to take the historical details of prophecy as absolute certainties ahead of time. Prophecy is best understood as or after it happens (John 13:19; 14:29). (<https://revelation-armageddon.com/2020/11/sunday-laws-and-bible-prophecy-16-summary-and-conclusion/>)

Paulien tried to categorize all of Ellen White's prophecies as conditional. His idea is to allow what a prophet saw in his or her time to be flexible, to be adjusted according to the new times. With this idea, you can throw out all of Ellen White's statements on Revelation 13 and 14. In fact, if we apply this to the Bible, we will need to throw out Revelation 1:1:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants *things which must shortly come to pass*; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (Revelation 1:1)

While many prophecies in the Bible are conditional, there are no conditional prophecies in Revelation, and when Ellen White writes about those prophecies, those explanations are not conditional either.

Paulien is just one of many who are disregarding the sacred prophecies because they think times have changed and because events cannot take place today like they might have in 1888. Today we have Super Bowl Sunday, and nothing will be allowed to stand in its way! No Sunday law, right? But, beloved, Inspiration gives many unconditional prophecies. In *The Great Controversy*, we find unconditional events given which are in harmony with the Bible.

We should not be surprised to learn of Adventist theologians, even in high places, trying to change the church's eschatology with impunity. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, after all, now has no fundamental teaching on the papal power nor on the Sabbath issue. But the Adventists of Ellen White's time did! Fundamental #8 of the 1889 statement said:

. . . that the second coming of Christ is to precede, not follow, the millennium; for until the Lord appears, *the papal power, with all its abominations*, is to continue (2 Thess. 2:8) . . .

Fundamental number 13 also said:

XIII. That as *the man of sin, the papacy*, has thought to change times and laws (the law of God, Dan. 7:25), and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a *prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ*. Isa. 56:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:5; Rev. 14:12, etc.

Today there is prophecy of Ellen White that should hold our attention, for it reveals present truth to us.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth century, there was a movement in the Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists which would later be called "The Holy Flesh Movement." To sum up the movement:

They sought a physical demonstration of the "spirit" and shouted and prayed and sang until someone in the congregation would fall, prostrate and unconscious, from his seat. When the subject revived, he was counted among those who had passed through the "Gethsemane experience", had obtained holy flesh, and had translation faith. Thereafter, it was asserted, he could not sin

and had obtained a form of immortal assurance. The doctrinal teachings of this movement regarding the nature of Christ's humanity is that he took the nature of Adam before the Fall. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy\\_Flesh\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Flesh_movement); accessed March 17, 2023)

Elder Stephen Haskell and his wife were sent to investigate what was going on in Indiana. They wrote back to Ellen White, explaining what they saw. She replied, in part, to them on October 10, 1900:

It is impossible to estimate too largely the work that the Lord will accomplish through His proposed vessels in carrying out His mind and purpose. *The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation.* Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with *drums, music, and dancing.* *The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.* (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 36.2)

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. *This is an invention of Satan* to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. *The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival,* and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working. (Ibid., p. 36.3)

I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations *demons in the form of men are present*, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make the truth disgusting to sensible people; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing the truth of the third angel's message before multitudes, should lose their force and influence. (Ibid., p. 37.3)

### Celebration worship

What the testimony of Jesus portrays as coming into the people of God just before the close of probation is known today as "celebration worship." Since we are living at the close of probation, this is certainly present truth. This worship style is more akin to a rock concert or a Pentecostal

service than to the divine, sacred services that should characterize the people of God.

I bring these matters to our attention not because we do not know something about them but mostly to help us see a point of *present truth* that is not well received by many.

The message of the first angel is virtually gone within the mainline church. It is almost impossible to find biblical teaching on the sanctuary or the importance of 1844. The Sabbath is lightly regarded. A "strange god" (Daniel 11:39), the trinity, has been enthroned in the hearts of the people. Worldliness has come into the church. No teaching on the papacy and the mark of the beast is official doctrine anymore. Celebration style worship is throughout the denomination. Liberty of conscience is squashed, if it involves not taking the COVID-19 vaccination.

I think of what God said through Jeremiah:

The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? (Jeremiah 5:31)

A vital part of the *present truth* for today is that Babylon is fallen, including the Protestant churches.

Babylon is said to be "the mother of harlots." By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 382.3)

The call to come out of her is to be given loudly and clearly. If you stay in the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church, you cannot please God. You might please your old friends, you might please the pastor, but you cannot please God anymore than a Catholic can staying in Rome once they know the truth.

It is not hate speech to speak against the sins within the church and her corruption; rather, it is love speech, just like we used to give to the Catholics and apostate Protestants when we told them their organizations were corrupt and that they must come out from them to be saved.

The name on a building or a church does not make it God's church. You can put a sign with the word "Paradise" above the door of a bar with prostitutes, but that does not make it paradise. The church of God is a pillar of truth. Paul, writing to Timothy, noted:

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15)

The true church must be "the pillar and ground of the truth," not of error. Further, we have been told:

From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.2)

God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. (Ellen White, *The Upward Look*, p. 315.5)

Yes, God has a church on earth today, but it is not in apostate rebellion against truth. Today his true people are reorganizing under the name 1889 HSDA. I invite you to join with us as we stand on the pillars of truth given to the Advent people by God. What will you find? Let me begin by telling you what you will not find. You will not find a church run by leadership making back room deals. You will not find a church compromising with the state or forming even the most innocent of alliances, such as 501(c)(3) and 508(c)(1)(A) corporations. You will not find a church that will be out of harmony with you, if you do not agree on certain minutia of prophecy not spelled out in the Fundamentals, and, honestly, you will not find a people already perfect.

Instead, you will find brothers and sisters who care dearly about fidelity to the truth, giving the message, and preparing to go home. You will find a worldwide movement that is growing and one that meets the description of the remnant in the book of Revelation, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And though those people are not perfect yet, it is their desire to be like Paul when he wrote:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

If you and/or your local study group are interested in joining such a people, you can write us for more information at [info@smyrna.org](mailto:info@smyrna.org) or call us at 1+304-732-9204. If you believe the Bible truths given to our people and want to live out those truths, you are the very people we want to work with.

Please carefully consider what your relationship to present truth should be.



## Tentative Camp Meeting Schedule

May 16-20, Fall Creek Falls State Park, Tennessee. See page 5 for more details.

Time (EDT)	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath	Sunday
6:30-7:00 am		Devotional-Youth	Devotional-Youth	Devotional-Youth	Devotional-Youth	Devotional-Youth
7:00-9:00 am	Breakfast					
9:00-10:25 am		Fay Ulett	Onycha Holt	Allen Stump/ Communion	Allen Stump	
10:25-11:10 am	Break					
11:10-12:35 pm		Jean-Christophe Bolotte	Testimonies	Martin Barlow	Martin Barlow	
12:35-3:05 pm	Lunch					
3:05-4:30 pm		Ralph Fisher	Rob Chisom	Open	Jean-Christophe Bolotte	
4:30-5:00 pm	Break					
5:00-6:00 pm		Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	
6:00-7:00 pm	Break					
7:00-8:15 pm	Todd Brown	Martin Barlow	Daniel Mesa	Daniel Mesa	Daniel Mesa	

# True Education—Making Thinkers

By Allen Stump

Neither the word *education* nor the word *educate* is found in the Bible, but words such as *teach* (134 times), *taught* (81), *learn* (63), *train* (4), etc., are in the Bible, and, of course, they, with *education* and *educate*, are all in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Gaining knowledge and wisdom is an important theme of the Bible. Through the prophet, Hosea, God said “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). While we cannot be saved by knowledge, we can certainly be lost without it.

*Wisdom* is used 234 times and *knowledge* 172 times in the Bible. *Wisdom* has various definitions but perhaps the best is that it is the ability to use *knowledge* well.

While God wants his people to have knowledge, there is a knowledge that God does not want his people to have. The first two times *knowledge* is used in the Bible is about “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9). Of this tree, God told Adam and Eve:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17)

It was never the intention that Adam and Eve know about evil. Today there are so-called educators and liberal parents who say that children need to be exposed to many things, good and bad, and then the children can learn to choose for themselves. This is not the will of God, who only wished for his people to know good.

The very year that Jesus entered into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, Robert Chambers published his work on evolution entitled *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. This work influenced Darwin. It was also in 1844 that Karl Marx met the German socialist Friedrich Engels and began to collaborate on what would become *The Communist Manifesto*, a document that would educate billions of people to forget God. While God was trying to direct people on the earth to a knowledge of the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus was making the final atonement, Satan was trying to give people a knowledge of evil and a blueprint to forget God.

Today the most *worldly educated* people teach that humans are simply an animal, an animal which has evolved over millions of years. This “science falsely so called” (1 Timothy 6:20) teaches that instead of man being created

in the image of God, his life came from perhaps germs or primitive creatures, perhaps even arriving upon the earth on an asteroid.

Eighty years ago, the most worldly educated people on the globe killed six million people in the holocaust and even tanned their skins to use for lamp shades!

Beloved, history is important and vital, and, as George Santayana stated, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Ellen White was well aware of this when she wrote:

In reviewing our *past history*, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our *past history*. (Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, p. 196.2; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Notice the emphasis in this statement on knowing history and especially our past history. If we remember this and, of course, its lessons and the Lord’s teachings he has given us, we certainly have nothing to fear.

## Thought test

Let us now have a quick thought test. The answer may or may not be obvious, but think of why you choose the answer you do. The question is: Is genocide evil?

It seems easy enough to say that it is evil. We think of the holocaust in Germany or the holocaust in Rwanda and can easily say that, of course, genocide is evil, but wait. This is a thought exercise, so you know the answer is probably not the obvious answer. If it is not evil, how can we justify it? It is not evil, if God directs it. Do you remember the command that God gave to Saul through Samuel?

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. (1 Samuel 15:3)

This was a total genocide of the people and even of the animals. Amalek’s probation had ceased, and to keep them from leading others into sin, they were to be destroyed. Their evil ways were so terrible that the animals were corrupted. How could that be? Archeology has shown that the

remains of animals from some of these enemies of Israel showed evidence of venereal diseases.

There will be a total genocide of all the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years of Revelation 20. That will be the greatest genocide of all, but because it is a judgment of a fair God, it is not evil. To be clear, however, all genocide by man is evil.

Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia decided that higher education was bad. They killed the teachers, doctors, and lawyers—all the *educated people who could think!* If you even wore glasses, it was a virtual death sentence because you were considered to be an intellectual.

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, agriculture should be incorporated in our schools. Working with the soil is a good thing for body and spirit. Pol Pot wanted Cambodia agriculturally based. So what went wrong? Why did one fourth of the country die in the *killing fields*? Pol Pot, like others before him, left God out of the picture and allowed selfish human nature to take control. True education does not make God a part of the picture; it makes God *the picture*.

God promised to teach Moses what to say, and he will teach us too.

Now therefore go, and *I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee* what thou shalt say. (Exodus 4:12)

Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), what he was willing to do for Moses he is willing to do for us.

The book *Education* by Ellen White is one of her finest works. It should be read by all believers, not just teachers and students. Of the many gems in this book, the following carries one of the most important lessons in the book:

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, **power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought.** (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 17.2)

Rejecting evolution, we believe that every person is made in the image of God and that they have “a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.” Each human has an individuality that is not to be merged into another nor shaped by another. You are to develop your own individuality by thinking and doing. We are told that those who develop this power become

“leaders in enterprise, and who influence character.” True education trains the youth to think for themselves and to not simply reflect what others say or think.

Albert Einstein was one of the greatest thinkers of this era. Working with theoretical physics, he did a lot of what he called thought experiments. He would think about possible scenarios and try to learn from them. He said that the happiest thought he ever had was from a thought experiment when he imaged a person at rest in an elevator. At that time, gravity affected the person and held them to the floor, but if that elevator car would be released from a high floor and go into free fall, then the person inside the car would exist as if there was no gravity while the car was falling. This may seem simple enough to us today but in Einstein’s day, it was a revolutionary thought.

God wants us to teach our children to be thinkers and, most of all, to be thinkers about him! We are to teach our children about him:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deuteronomy 6:4–7)

While we are all familiar with verse 4 and the truth about one God, the next verse says that we are to love God supremely. In verses 6–7, we are told to teach these truths to our children as they go in and come out and in all their activities. God commands us to train our children, and they must be trained to think for themselves. They need to be able to investigate and study about the things of life on their own. The wise man said:

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

## The one goal of parents

If there is one simple, succinct goal of parenthood, it is to train your children to live successfully without you. They should be able to live spiritually, physically, and mentally well without you. That is it, but they will never do that without learning to think for themselves.

You can make many decisions for your children while they are home, maybe too many, but what happens when they leave home? Or when you die?

You may allow your child to earn an allowance, but do you fully control their use of the money? When they are young, you try to give them a lot of counsel. As they get older, that counsel may, at times, be disregarded, but if the result is not good, are the children still learning? They are learning, and hopefully they learn the correct lesson that will help them in the future, but if you try to protect them by never letting them make choices, you are not protecting them but hurting them. Of course, there are limits. You cannot let them make certain choices, such as using alcohol or drugs.

God let Adam and Eve make choices, and after they sinned, he confronted them with questions!

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, *Where art thou?* And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:9–10)

Why did God ask Adam where he was? Did not the omniscient God *know* where Adam was? Of course, he did, but he was trying to make Adam think. Continuing:

And he said, *Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:11–12)

Again, God simply asked Adam two questions. Then God questioned Eve:

And the LORD God said unto the woman, **What is this that thou hast done?** And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:13)

Of course, God knew what both Adam and Eve had done, but he wanted Eve to begin to understand the enormity of what she had done. God could have approached them with condemning statements, but he only began with questions.

Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is the teacher of righteousness (Joel 2:23 margin) sent from God:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that *thou art a teacher come from God*: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (John 3:2)

Being the Son of God, we would expect Jesus to teach lessons and communicate like God. He would teach in a way to make people think! He would, just like his Father, ask questions to produce thinking. For example:

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* (Luke 10:25–26)

Did Jesus not know what was in the law? Of course, he did, but he wanted this lawyer to think for himself, so he asked him to ponder on the requirements.

Another time a question came up about tribute. How did Jesus teach Peter?

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, **What thinkest thou, Simon?** of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? (Matthew 17:24–25)

Prophets were exempt from this temple tax, and Peter wanted to impress the Jews that Jesus was a good Jew. He did not think to realize that Jesus should be exempt from this tax, so Jesus taught Peter with a question.

Another time a question about civil taxes came up:

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? (Matthew 22:15–17)

Here the disciples of the Pharisees and of the Herodians came to Jesus to cause him to stumble. The Pharisees and the Herodians were polar opposites within Judaism. They hated each other, but in their common desire to destroy Christ, they united. They began by asking what seemed like a simple question, but Jesus saw through their deceit and returned a question upon them:

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, *Whose is this image and superscription?* They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (Matthew 22:18–21)

Notice that the lesson of Jesus began with a question.

At the end of the parable of the good Samaritan, instead of telling the lawyer the answer to his question about who was his neighbor, Jesus asked him:

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? (Luke 10:36)

Did not Jesus know who was the neighbor? Of course, he did, but he wanted the lawyer, as well as those around him, to think.

The lawyer had been trained to think a certain way, in the ways of the scribes, the Pharisees, and the leaders of the Jews, but he had not been trained to think for himself. So, there is a lot to learn and also much to unlearn.

Many have, as had Moses, very much to unlearn in order to learn the very lessons that they need to learn. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, p. 325.2)

When you tell someone *the facts*, they may or may not believe you, but if a person can come to the correct conclusion based upon their own thinking, they are in a much better position than the person who is simply taught the facts.

### God wants you to think

God wants each individual to think, personally. This is why the Bereans were so noble—they used their ability to think for themselves:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11)

A religious magazine arrived in my mail one day. In it was an article on Daniel 11:45, and the article gave a certain interpretation based upon a definition given for a word in the verse. According to the paper, the word was defined a certain way which then determined the interpretation of the verse. In looking up the critical word in a good lexicon, however, it was found that the definition given to the word was wrong.

Hebrew is a complex language, and sometimes a word has different meanings, based on the form of the word used. In this case the form of the word gave it a definition different from the definition given in the article. Most people reading the article would not think to check the veracity of the definition given and would, therefore, by default, accept the interpretation given. So even if something at times looks logical and solid and sounds good, it may not be, and only close, personal study will reveal the wheat from the chaff.

### Next thought test

Let us now look at some seemingly contrasting statements of Ellen White about the corporate church.

Ellen White wrote to a Brother Staton on March 22, 1893, stating, in part:

“My brother, if you are teaching that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, you are wrong, God has not given you any such message to bear. Satan will use every mind to which he can attain access, inspiring men to originate false theories or go off on some wrong tangent, that he may create a false excitement, and thus divert souls from the true issue for this time. I presume that some may be deceived by your message, because they are full of curiosity and desire for some new thing.” (Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 59.2)

Brother Staton was told in 1893 that to call the church Babylon was wrong. She also wrote:

Again, I say the Lord hath not spoken by any messenger who calls the only church in the world that keeps the commandments of God, Babylon. True, there is chaff with the wheat; but first gather the chaff and bind it into bundles to burn it, but gather the wheat into the garner. I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized, or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this. There is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. Those who shall heed this false message, and try to leaven others will be deceived, and prepared to receive advance delusions, and they will come to naught. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 303.1; Letter 16, 1893, to W. F. Caldwell, June 11, 1893)

Again in 1893, we read that we should not call the church Babylon.

But ten years later, we read:

Who can truthfully say: “Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world”? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: “Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? **How is the faithful city become an harlot!** My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence **the divine presence and glory have departed!** For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.” (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 250.2; 1903)

How can we understand such statements? They seem to be very different. There is a key to understanding the testimonies that is very helpful. We are told:



Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 57.2)

Heaven instructs us to consider the time and the place of statements. What was the time and place of the 1893 statements? We find the answer in a *Review* article:

Let every one who claims to believe that the Lord is soon coming, search the Scriptures as never before . . . Search for the truth as for hidden treasures, and disappoint the enemy. The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892, par. 7)

This article was published at the end of 1892, just a few months before the Staton and the Caldwell letters. Ellen White said that God was pouring out the latter rain in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ as was being given by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner. How could you call a church that the latter rain was being poured upon Babylon? You could not!

But did the latter rain continue? Did the blessing then finish the work? We are here over one hundred thirty years later. The work is not finished. Why? Because something cut off and stopped the latter rain. Certainly no reasonable person can believe that it will take over one hundred thirty years of the latter rain to finish the work.

Now we need to understand the history of the statement from volume 8 written in 1903. To fully understand it, we need to know the history of what led up to that statement.

Ellen White had written in 1896:

As a people we should study God's plans for conducting his work. Wherever he has given directions in regard to any point, we should carefully consider how to regard his expressed will. This work should have special attention. It is not wise to choose one man as president of the General Conference. The work of the General Conference has extended, and some things have been made unnecessarily complicated. A want of discernment has been shown. There should be a division of the field, or some other plan should be devised to change the present order of things. . . . (Ellen White, *Special Testimonies*, Series A, number 8 p. 28.4; ellipsis in original)

The counsel from God was "it is not wise to choose one man as president of the General Conference." Did the brethren respond? At the 1897 General Conference ses-

sion three presidents were elected. One president over the field of the United States, one president over the European field, and one president over the Australian field.

Further reforms came in 1901 when a new Constitution was adopted which made no provision for a president; instead, a committee with twenty-five members and a chairman was instituted. What precipitated that move?

On April 1, just before the General Conference session convened on April 2, Sister White spoke at the Battle Creek College library and plainly said:

Now the Lord wants his Spirit to come in. He wants the Holy Ghost king. (Ellen White, *The Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 166.3)

Then at the General Conference, Sister White said:

O, my very soul is drawn out in these things! Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God, are not competent to train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. **That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,—that is past.** What we want now is a **reorganization**. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. (Ellen White, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 3, 1901, par. 25)

With the current leaders of the conference sitting on the platform behind her, Ellen White said these men had not done the work entrusted to them and that God wanted them replaced! The message was received, and a reorganization, not a new organization, of the work was begun.

Now we must go forward to 1903. In that year at the General Conference session, the Constitution and By-Laws Committee introduced a new constitution which brought back the office of a president. This constitution was objected to by a minority report of three: E. J. Waggoner, David Paulson, and Percy T. Magan.

Magan began the opposition report:

The proposed new constitution reverses the reformatory steps that were taken, and the principles which were given, and which were adopted as the principles of reorganization, at the General Conferences of 1897 and 1901, and which were incorporated in the constitution of 1901. (P. T. Magan, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 10, 1903, p. 150.10)

Remember, the "reformatory steps" of 1897 and 1901 were to not have a single president and then no president of the conference. Magan continued:

It may be stated there is nothing in this new constitution which is not abundantly safeguarded by the provisions of it; but I want to say to you that any man who has ever read "Neander's History of the Christian Church," Mosheim's, or any of the other of the great church historians,—any man who has ever read those histories can come to no other conclusion but that the principles which are to be brought in through this proposed constitution, and in the way in which they are brought in, are the same principles, and introduced in precisely the same way, as they were hundreds of years ago when the Papacy was made. (Ibid., p. 150.12)

If you had been at that conference, would you have received these words or only considered them as the words of an extremist? Magan also noted:

It might be well to call attention to the principles of organization that were given to us in 1897 and 1901. One word that came to us in 1897, which the General Conference accepted, and upon which it acted in that Conference, and which has become a constitutional principle, was spoken in these words: "It is not wise to choose one man as president of the General Conference;" and the new constitution does propose that very thing. Now, that came to us in 1897, and it was accepted by the Conference. The committee, of which I happened to be a member with others, acted upon it, and you know that we brought in a report of that committee, and the Conference adopted it, of having three presidents instead of one. You know the reasons that were given in Conference for it. This providing one man as president of the General Conference, when the General Conference is bigger now than it was in 1897, is just that much more a reversal of the principle to which God was calling us, and that much more of an emphasis of the principles from which He was calling us, as could be. So much for 1897. (Ibid., p. 151.7)

Even having a chairman instead of president alone was not enough. A. T. Jones explained what Magan was speaking about concerning the history of the formation of the papacy:

Another thing: Brother Magan said something about church history. Please remember that was the first organization of the church. *The elders met as equals. One was chosen chairman, and simply making the chairmanship perpetual is what bred the Papacy.* That is the historical truth. It is proper to have a presiding officer, proper to

have a chairman of the meeting; but when you perpetuate that thing, and that officer begins to claim it as his right, and, if you don't elect him chairman next time, feels that you have dropped him, and so on. you have the spirit of the Papacy, though it is not yet developed. So I say again, that is the way the church began the chairmanship only of assembled elders, for there were a number of them; and *the making of that chairmanship perpetual is what bred that which is to-day the Papacy.* I don't say that these brethren mean that, but I say simply what this testimony said,—in this there are things that the responsible ones have not realized and do not realize, and we want to learn it and look it in the face, and not put ourselves in the way where it will be possible to have this thing repeated. (A. T. Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 10, 1903, p. 154.1)

So, as we put time and place into the equation, we can see that in the 1892–1893 time frame, God was pouring out his Spirit upon a church that was preaching righteousness and keeping his commandments, but by 1903 that preaching had to a great degree stopped. The brethren were working to produce a hierarchy, and the church that had been faithful had become a harlot.

The issues behind this second problem of thought has caused a lot of sincere people to stay with a sinking ship and to drown with the leadership.

Only by careful thought processes, with careful interpretation, can such matters be sorted out.

Only the mind of God can figure out the complexity of humanity and faith, and he is willing to share his wisdom with us.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)

God can do this because in the Father and Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Today "science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20) is corrupt. The teachings of evolution have caused many to yield their faith in the Genesis account to false speculations about the origins of humanity; yet, there is a true science which acknowledges God and his wisdom and creation. We are told:

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new

depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 115.2)

True science is not wrong and something to be ignored by Christians; rather, it is the gateway to “new wonders.” True science will always be in harmony with the Author of science.

True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 225.1)

One of the greatest thinkers within the time of modern history, if not the greatest, is Isaac Newton. Newton is perhaps best known for his laws of planetary motion. What is not generally known is that Newton spent more time studying the Bible than studying physics and wrote more on the Bible than he did on science. Even in his greatest scientific work, *The Principia*, where Newton laid out the laws of planetary motion, among other things, he wrote about God. In the General Scholium of the *Principia*, after explaining the mathematics behind planetary orbits, he wrote:

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. And if the fixed stars are the centres of other like systems, these, being formed by the like wise counsel, must be all subject to the dominion of One . . .

This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of his dominion he is wont to be called *Lord God παντοκράτωρ* . . . (Isaac Newton, *Principia: The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*)

παντοκράτωρ (*pantokratōr*) is the Greek word translated *omnipotent* and *almighty* in the New Testament.

The importance and value of true education ultimately is being properly educated about God

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. (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 409.1, 2)

Let us become thinkers and train our youth to be thinkers so that we and they might have the true knowledge of God, be able to serve him aright, develop characters like his, and be not only prepared for a successful life here but for the life to come.



“Youth’s Corner,” continued from page 20

Just a few days later, on November 7, 2014, the first hearing took place.

The night before the hearing, I wrote out my “faith picture”:

I enter the courtroom. Jesus is standing beside me, between me and the criminals, who frighten me. A group of mighty angel warriors surround us. They are light and truth. I feel empowered and safe. I am strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. I draw my strength from Him.

I remember a prayer session I had with one of my sisters when I had a memory of myself at two or three years old. I am frightened. I am standing beside the couch in our home in Holt, Michigan, and a big, angry man is standing in the middle of the room yelling. (In reality, it was my father, who suffered with post-traumatic stress disorder from having fought in World War II.) When I told my sister what I saw, she reminded me that Jesus promised never to leave or forsake me, and she told me to look around the room to see where Jesus was. I (the child) see Jesus standing between the big, angry man and me. Jesus picks me up and comforts me. I buried my face in his neck. Jesus was also there for the woman in the room who was crying (my mother). He stood between her and the big, angry man. Somehow, I am aware that Jesus loves the angry man and does not want him to behave that way. The man does not want to act like that either, but he doesn’t seem to be able to stop.

I could apply this picture of faith and understanding to the courtroom the next morning. Jesus is my protector and loves and comforts me. He also loves the *big, angry men* in the courtroom and does not want them to be mean, angry, or commit crimes against others. I did not have to be afraid of them.

A psychologist friend said something to me about becoming strong through this process, and that made perfect sense. I wanted to feel strength and get rid of the gripping fear. I didn’t want to be the victim any longer. I wanted my life back.



Next month: *The Trial*

## Youth’s Corner – Kidnapped in Ecuador! A Story of Faith, Surrender, Forgiveness, and Trust in God, Part 6

By Sheri Yohe

### Don’s story

The afternoon before the kidnapping Don and I were sitting in our living room. Allen was in Vilcabamba. Don told me he sensed a change in Allen that he couldn’t put his finger on. He felt that something was very wrong and we should be very cautious. Allen was planning to return to Cuenca the next day, and we decided that after this, we wouldn’t invite him into our home again. As it turned out, of course, Don’s intuition couldn’t have been better.

That night while the kidnapers were in the house, realizing that there was nothing he could do physically to stop these people, Don thought about what he could do to get free quickly.

As they were duct-taping his hands, he held them apart a little. They dragged him into the bedroom, and someone tied rope over the duct tape around his wrists and locked him in the house.

As soon as he heard two cars drive away, Don immediately began trying to free himself so he could get to the police as quickly as possible. The kidnapers had taken our car and cell phones.

With the little space created by holding his hands apart, he was able to maneuver and free his hands from the tape and rope.

The deadbolt on the front door requires a key even to open it from the inside, and the kidnapers had taken all the keys. Don tried to remove the bars from one of the windows but soon realized that would take too long with the limited tools available. So he tried to take the lock off the door with a small pair of scissors I had in the bathroom. Thankfully, the screws of the deadbolt lock were a bit loose already. Once the lock was off, Don went to the neighbor’s house for help.

Two neighbors took him to the police station. After he had told his story, a few police officers returned to our house with them.

Special detectives from Quito, who were in Loja on other police business, were notified and came right away. Soon the house was filled with detectives. Don was awake all night with a house full of police officers while the investigation took place.

Around 2:00 a.m., another neighbor came to translate for Don and stayed the rest of the night, along with the officer assigned to the house. The neighbors were amazing.

They stayed with Don, brought food, and were emotionally supportive throughout the horrible ordeal.

The neighbors called Don a hero because he had thought ahead, had kept his cool, and had gotten the police involved quickly.

### Allen’s capture

Around 8:00 a.m. the morning after the kidnapping, while I was still locked in the storage unit, the police stopped Allen on the road as he drove our car. He was just a few miles from our house. When they pulled him over, they found the ransom note that he was obviously planning to deliver to Don.

The police were very quick to find the kidnapers. Within twenty-four hours, all but one of the five people involved with the abduction were apprehended and locked up. These included Allen, his girlfriend or wife, whom they assumed to be an accomplice, the two men who were at our home, and one man who helped as an accomplice to find the kidnapers for Allen.

The man who had entered my bedroom and detained me in the back seat of our car escaped. They assume he went to Peru, the country south of Ecuador and very close to where the other kidnapers lived. The Ecuadorean police are working with the Peruvian government to find and extradite him. The police assured us that the kidnapers would not be released on bond and that we were safe.

### Were there any warning signs?

It is very hard to switch from trust and love to suspicion. When we first met Allen, he was a wonderful answer to our prayers for guidance as foreigners in this country. He immediately took on the role of protector and advisor. When we told him we had a timeshare week in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, he warned us of the possible dangers. We asked him to accompany us on this trip and eventually other trips as well. He was happy to oblige.

Allen arranged a rental car and picked us up for our Esmeralda trip. He drove Don, myself, and a friend of ours more than twelve hours to the timeshare property and slept in the living room on the couch. He then drove us back home. During the trip, Allen told us a lot about his childhood and family. We thought his stories were representative of the way children were raised and disciplined in Ecuador. It sounded foreign to our ears, like child abuse. For example, he told us his uncle taught him to street fight when he was a small boy by picking boys a little older and

bigger than Allen and making Allen fight them. There were many stories of harsh punishments for silly youthful infractions. As I know now, there is a connection between strict discipline and criminal activity. I never found out if these stories were true.

During the few months before the kidnapping, Don and I began to see some things that troubled us. There were negative interactions with his new girlfriend (after Karol had gone) and sexually aggressive behavior toward our innocent 19-year-old granddaughter. She told us that Allen had asked her not to tell us about his behavior towards her because, he said, we trusted him.

A new friend of mine from Vilcabamba had come to Cuenca to help me pack and move out of our rental house there. She met Allen when he came to visit us that night. During the visit Allen sat in our house talking about how corrupt the police are in Ecuador. He told us never to go the police in a kidnapping situation, just pay the money and be quiet, or it will get worse. He related stories of people who stop on the road to move a tree limb across the road and of people jumping out of the ditch to rob them. He also said if you are ever robbed, you should not tell the police because they only want part of the stolen goods and will take from the robbers, making them mad and then they return to take more things or possibly get revenge for your decision to go to the police.

Allen and my friend compared negative stories and experiences about the police in both the U.S. and Ecuador.

This wasn't the first time Allen had talked about how corrupt the police were. He had told us to be wary of them many times from the first day we met him.

The evening of the kidnapping, before bedtime, he sat with us in our living room and repeated his warning: Remember, if you are kidnapped, never go to the police.



**Don Yohe**

## Leading up to the trial

After five weeks, we were able to pick up our car from a police holding area. It had been fingerprinted and searched for evidence. It also took a long time and many trips to Loja to get our passports, cedula (Ecuadorian IDs), and driver licenses. We were in regular communication with the local police. They were working with the Police Protective Services program. They drove by our home and stopped in a couple times a week to make sure all was well.

In September, Don and I traveled to the U.S. to visit family and to get away from the scene of the crime, literally, our rental home. When we came back in October, we moved to a different rental in Vilcabamba. We felt unsafe at the kidnapping scene, which held too many bad memories. It was very hard to sleep in the same bed. Memories and nightmares were frequent. Each time my adrenaline would begin racing, and it would take hours to calm down.

On Wednesday, October 29, the attorney at the Police Protective Services office in Loja told me that I had to get an attorney immediately. I struggled with pressing charges and was praying for clear direction. Don and I chose to forgive, but knew that these men were dangerous and could hurt or even kill other people.

While praying about pressing charges the morning we were to meet with our attorney, knowing that we needed an answer that very day, I remembered one of my favorite quotes, and it took on a whole new meaning:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 57.3)

I realized that we had to be honest, call sin by its right name, and do our duty. So we moved forward to allow the evidence to convict the guilty and the courts to decide the just sentence.

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