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

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Fundamental Pillars — The First Angel's Message-1

By Allen Stump

The Bible speaks a great deal about a last-day crisis involving something called the mark of the beast. The acceptance of this mark dooms one to eternal destruction. Yet, God has a plan of escape for his children whereby they may not accept the mark of the beast but, rather, receive his seal, the seal of God. In Revelation 13, we read:

> [1] And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. [2] And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. [3] And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. (Revelation 13:1–3)

The Bible then explains how there will be another compelling power that will form an image to the first beast and seemingly all of humanity will be seduced by this unholy trio.

God, however, had never and will never be taken by surprise. He is the omniscient one who knows everything happening now as well as in the future:

> [29] The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

> [7] Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

God could not reveal the future without a knowledge of it, and it is by the gift of prophecy which God gives that humanity can know of the great mark-of-the-beast conflict soon to happen. God is preparing a special people who will not bow the knee to Satan nor to any of his agents.

Right after the depiction of the second coming of Christ in Revelation 6, the question is asked: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:17). The immediate answer is given in Chapter 7, where it speaks of the servants of God being sealed in their foreheads and the number of those sealed is 144,000.

The only other place in the Bible this group is mentioned is in Chapter 14 of Revelation. Right after we read about the beast powers and image to the beast in Revelation 13, we read again about the 144,000 at the start of chapter 14.

> [1] And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (Revelation 14:1)

These people have the Father's name, representative of his character, in their foreheads, the very place where the seal of God is received. Notice the following verses:

> [3] Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Revelation 7:3)

> [4] And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. (Revelation 9:4, see also Ezekiel 9:4)

Revelation 14:3 states that the 144,000 sing a new song, which is a song of experience. Throughout the Bible when new songs are composed, they are songs of experience (see Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 32).

We also read about them in verse 4: that "they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were

redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Being virgins they represent being the true church of God.[1]

Furthermore, in verse 5 we read that "in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." The 144,000 have a pure faith and speak no guile or deceit. There is no false teachings, and they are so transformed by the grace of God that God calls them faultless before his throne!

So, the picture leading up to the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6–12 is a great worldwide crisis that will take almost the whole world captive, and yet, standing in distinction, there will be a remnant people who are faithful to God.

God wants all to know the issues, to count the cost, and then to decide to serve him. But today many are deceived. They think that they are worshiping God and doing his service, when in reality they are serving Satan. God will not allow this to continue without contesting for the souls of the lost, and so, in connection with these end-time events, God sends a special message of warning to the lost. That message is actually a threefold message found in Revelation 14:6–12.

This presentation will begin the focus on the first of these three messages:

> [6] 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, [7] 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)

Later in this series we will see that the beginning of the sounding of the first angel began around the fall of 1833, and we will look at the counter religious movements happening right after that. But first we want to examine the message itself.

The first part of the message, verse 6, gives three main points:

- ☞ Firstly, the message lists the instrumentalities God will use in the giving of the message.
- ☞ Secondly, we are told a most basic overview of the message.
- ☞ Thirdly, we are told the extent which the message is to cover.

The term "angel" in both Hebrew and Greek simply means messenger and is frequently applied to people (Job 1:14; 1 Samuel 11:3; Luke 7:24, 9:52). These angels represent men and women giving a message from God. That message is the "everlasting gospel," and the extent of its promulgation is "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Since the whole world is wondering after the beast power, this message must go worldwide. God wants to use all who will surrender their lives to be chosen vessels for his work. As you study this message, may God lay upon your heart to be one of his vessels for the giving of the great message which is the everlasting gospel.

> [16] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

The Greek word for gospel is εὐαγγέλιον (*euaggelion*), and it literally means *good news*. This is a message that has been, is now, and always will mean good news. The story of John 3:16 telling of God's love in the gift of his Son will eternally be good news. This gospel, for there are other or false gospels (Galatians 1:6), is a message of both justification and sanctification which will lead to glorification.

A message that denies the most basic fundamental teaching of the gospel cannot be a part of the first angel's message. Today many churches, even one which claims to be the remnant church, deny that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and when you try, at times, to share the truth, you are treated as a heretic. In the place of the Son of God you are taught the idea of God the son, who is really not a son at all but simply one who plays the role of a son.

An example of this theory of role playing is well illustrated by the following statement, written by Gordon Jenson, then the president of Spicer Memorial College in Pune, India, in the special "Week of Prayer" issue of the *Adventist Review*. He wrote:

> In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit. . .
>
> By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity. . . .
>
> . . . the divine Beings entered into the roles they had agreed upon before the foundations of the world were laid . . . (Gordon Jenson, "Jesus, the Heavenly Intercessor," *Adventist Review*, October 31, 1996, p. 12)

The apostle Paul is explicit that no other gospel than the true everlasting gospel is acceptable, even going to the point of pronouncing a curse upon those who preach a false gospel:

> [8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

1 The Bible uses a pure woman to represent God's church. See Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 51:6; 2 Corinthians 11:2.

The second part of the message, verse 7, gives the *intensity* and means by which the message is given, along with specific content. There are three verbs that form part of the commands in verse 7 none of which may be overlooked. We are to *fear*, or reverence, God, *give glory* to God, and *worship* God as the Creator.

The reason for this reverence and seriousness is given: the hour, or time, of God's judgment has come!

These parts of the message are all interwoven with each other and with the everlasting gospel. To be ready for the judgment, one must properly worship and respect the God of the judgment. The standard of the judgment must be understood.

The message to fear God and give glory to him

While the command to fear God may sound, at first, as though God wishes for us to cower in fright of him, the word *fear* in the Bible also means to reverence and show great respect. That being said, a healthy fear, or respect, of God is important, for we must remember that he is the author of all things and that we are his creatures.

In the first angel's message, we are instructed to give glory to God. Is this simply shouting hallelujah? Is lip service enough? The Bible says:

> [23] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23)

The Bible teaches that sinning brings one short of God's glory. Therefore its opposite, obedience, brings glory to God. Obedience to God is a demonstration of love, for Jesus said: "If ye *love* me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

The judgment has begun.

Revelation 14:7 states that "the hour of his judgment is come." This is s present tense statement. Interestingly as one searches history we find various messages preached at different times. For example we know that during the time of Luther, the message of how a person becomes just with God was preached. While not a mature message it was a great light for the time.

John Wesley emphasized the doctrine of entire sanctification (or Christian perfection). He taught that, after being justified by faith, believers could achieve a state in this life where their hearts are "habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor" (https://www.umc.org/en/content/what-did-john-wesley-mean-by-moving-on-to-perfection), and freed from the desire to sin.

History shows other great truths coming into the light after papal darkness had shadowed the people for centuries. But the message of the three angels finds no historical record of being preached until the mid-nineteenth century.

Paul spoke of a judgment, but he preached of it as a future event, not simply when a person dies. Preaching to Felix and his wife, Drusilla, he preached to "him concerning the faith in Christ" Acts 24:24. Then in the next verse we read that Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (v. 25a). Notice that Paul preached of a judgment to come–future tense. "Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (v. 25b). Sadly, that day never came. Felix was dismissed from his governorship and later accused in Rome of corruption. Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I, died with their son, Agrippa, in the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, likely in or near Pompeii.

As we will see in a later article, the Bible does prophecy that the judgment would begin in AD 1844. Since that time, humanity has been living under the time of the judgment.

But now, the time of God's judgment has come! The timing of the message of the three angels would coincide with the judgment of humanity.

The worship of the Creator

The first angel's message ends with the command to worship God as the Creator, the one who "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:7).

We acknowledge God as the Creator in two ways. Firstly, we worship him as the Creator of heavens and earth, the most logical way, according to the text; and, secondly, we worship him as the Creator through redemption.

As the Creator of the heavens and earth, God is worthy of our worship. The Bible says that for his pleasure we were created:

> [11] 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)

In six days, God created all things, through his Son, Jesus Christ.[2] By his creative word, God made all things. The Psalmist said,

> [6] By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . [9] For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:6, 9)

The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and of God's power to create.[3]

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2 See Genesis 1, 2; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6.

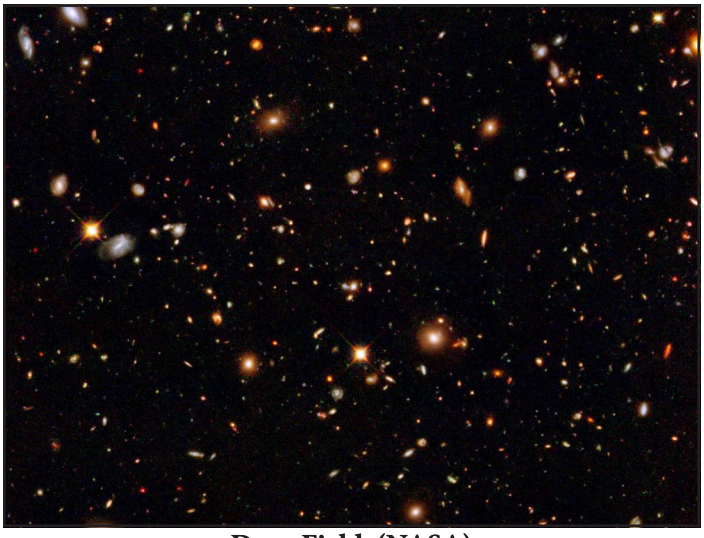
3 "Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel" (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 437.2).

[1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. [3] And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:1–3)

As we worship on the Sabbath, we acknowledge God as our Creator and as worthy of worship. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue gives the reason for worshiping on the seventh-day Sabbath:

[8] Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: [10] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8–11)

God created myriads of stars and planets and billions upon billions of galaxies by simply speaking them into existence. The Hubble space telescope has given us wonderful glimpses into the artistic, resourceful, and imaginative work of God. One of Hubble's pictures is named "Deep Field."



Deep Field (NASA)

The Hubble Deep Field picture was taken by having the Hubble Space Telescope stare at a tiny, seemingly empty patch of sky for about 10 days in 1995, capturing hundreds of long-exposure images (342 in total) that were then combined. This technique, using different color filters, revealed thousands of incredibly distant, faint galaxies, acting as a "core sample" of the universe.

What is extra extraordinary to think is that each point of light is an entire galaxy by itself. No single star would be visible at such a distance.

Pillars of Creation via James Webb Telescope (NASA)

Using such information, it was estimated that the known universe contained about 300 billion galaxies, each containing about 300 billion stars. That is a very big number.

Since that time, however, the James Webb telescope has greatly expanded our thinking and depth of understanding of cosmology. Now it is estimated that there are at least 1.2 trillion galaxies! Do you know how much that is? If you count a number every second, it will take a little under two minutes to count to 100. To count to 1,000 takes 16 minutes and 40 seconds. To count to one million would take a little over 11 ½ days. To count to a billion it would be 31.71 years and to count to a trillion it would take 31,710 years!

But creating myriads of beautiful galaxies and nebulae is not the greatest miracle of God's creative ability. The conversion of a sinner is the greatest of all miracles![4]

God wants to give to his children a new heart. We all have, according to the Bible, a "stony heart," but God wants to change this to a heart of flesh.

[26] A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

The Old Covenant had the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone, but the New Covenant experience has God's law written in our new hearts of flesh:

[33] But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

4 "Is not this, the renewal of man, the greatest miracle that can be performed?" (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 152.1)

This experience brings life and health to the soul. The message of the first angel is about the everlasting gospel all the way through!

Only God can create something from nothing. There is nothing that a man or woman can create, including a new heart. How foolish it is for us to consider the works of human hands sufficient to atone for sin. This is why the Bible plainly teaches:

> [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

You might be thinking that this is all well and good, but what does this have to do with our topic of worshiping God as Creator, as commanded by the first angel? A person receives a new heart by creation. The Bible teaches that redemption is a creative process. After David sinned with Bathsheba, he knew he needed a new heart and therefore prayed:

> [10] Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

David knew his old heart was not fixable and that he needed a "new heart" as God says through Ezekiel. Furthermore, we read:

> [17] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation, marginal reading]. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The only way to be a new creature is to have a new creation. God can create in a sinful man a clean heart, and the Sabbath is a sign that God is not only our Creator but also our Redeemer. Through Ezekiel, we read:

> [12] Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. (Ezekiel 20:12)

The work of the first angel

Even a basic outline of the first angel's message shows it to be extremely broad and sweeping in scope. It has the message of salvation from justification to sanctification to glorification. The different parts of the first angel's message interlock like pieces of puzzle.

The judgment bar of God is set before all men, and the standard of the judgment is the law of God and especially in the testing truth of the fourth commandment. In the Sabbath we find a safeguard against atheism and evolution.[5]

Properly observed and understood, the Sabbath is the sign of righteousness by faith and is not a "works program" as so many Sunday-keepers claim. In fact, Sunday worship, being an act of man and not of God, is actually the sign of righteousness by works!

The first angel's message calls for God's people to be obedient and self-sacrificing in giving glory to him. The first angel's message, combined with the second and third angels' messages, teaches that it would be better to die than to knowingly break one of God's commandments. In fact, this is the standard of all the martyrs for Christ. They died rather than knowingly break one of the commandments of God. Pagan Rome actually made allowances for many religions, so long as the people would acknowledge that Caesar was king. Christians would be offered to have their lives spared by simply taking a pinch of incense and offering it to a pagan god.

The first angel's message also teaches a reverence to God that will safeguard the church from celebration-style worship with its Pentecostal type of worship that is based upon emotions and not the sure word of God.

As one carefully considers the truth of the first angel's message, he or she can see that it is not a popular message. It is a message that is opposite of that which is comfortable to most people, and the giving of this message will either warn and separate people from sin or allow them to have a chance to stifle their consciences into a lukewarm state that cannot be helped.

The first angel's message is so complete that when it is accepted, it will restore the church to an apostolic state and to the perfection God is calling his people to obtain.

Is it any wonder that this message is portrayed as being given with a loud voice to the whole earth?

The three angels' messages should engage our interests. They should consume us, beloved.

Every day of the week, there are millions of people in sports stadiums cheering for teams that they love when God is far from their hearts. Angels are interested in the three angels' messages and work tirelessly day and night for their giving.

Giving the three angels' messages is a solemn work, but it is also a *sacred work*.

When we reject a message from Jesus, we are rejecting Jesus himself in the form of the message. Remember what God told Samuel when he felt that the people rejected him when asking for a king?

> [7] And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (1 Samuel 8:7)

Will you allow God to reign over you?

To be continued

5 ". . . if the true Sabbath had been kept, there would never have been an infidel or an atheist. The observance of the Sabbath would have preserved the world from idolatry" (Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, p. 96).

The First and the Last Christian Churches

By Onycha Holt

DEFCON 2

DEFCON is an acronym created in the 1950s to define how the United States military is to respond to the threat of a nuclear attack. The United States defense readiness system has five levels, starting at Level 5, which is normal readiness, the readiness we may be living in now, but the general public really never knows the level and never knows when it changes. Level 1 represents maximum readiness and indicates nuclear war has already begun or is imminent. Level 1 has never been reached, but DEFCON 2, or Level 2, which is one step away from nuclear war, was declared during the Cuban Missile Crisis. On October 24, 1962, Strategic Air Command (SAC) was ordered to DEFCON 2 and remained at that level until November 15. At this level, 92.5% of SAC's weapons systems, including strike aircraft, missiles, nuclear weapons, and refueling tankers were readied for launch within one hour, and several bomber forces remained in position in the air, twenty-four hours a day, prepared to be directed at targets in the Soviet Union at any given moment. The United States was on the verge of nuclear war. President John F. Kennedy was at the helm. The crisis was real, tensions were high, and nuclear war was just a theoretical keypad command away. The situation room was volatile and steamy, with constant racing through doors with new information, but the unseen activity was even more intense. Only God knows the warfare that occurred between angels and spirits then in the command rooms in the White House and in the military outposts throughout our nation.

And symbolically we are at DEFCON 2 in the great controversy between Christ and Satan and are just a command away from Level 1.

The early Christian church

After the ascension of Christ, God's people were in a crisis. Leaders were few, just a handful, and prejudice and enmity were high against the sect of those of "The Way." The Christian church became established and grew only through the interventions of God in both positive and seemingly negative ways. We don't know how Ananias and Sapphira died, but they both died through the intervention of God as a result of the fraud they attempted to commit, which included lying to the Holy Spirit. The intervention of God with Ananias and Sapphira stopped, for a time, the invasion of Satan into the church of God. Bar-Jesus was struck with blindness for a "season" because he was practicing sorcery (Acts 13:11). Signs and wonders were performed by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:3), visions were seen, such as the man calling to Paul for help in Macedonia (Acts 16:9), and a great earthquake opened the prison doors of Paul and Silas, loosed their chains (Acts 16:26) and resulted in the conversion of the prison keeper and his family (Acts 16:30).

> The early Christians were indeed a peculiar people. Their blameless deportment and unswerving faith were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles, they were a terror to evil-doers wherever their character and doctrines were known. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 1888 ed., p. 46.1)

Angels

Through the direct intervention of angels, God worked for the growth of his church on earth. For example, after Peter and John were arrested and imprisoned through the efforts of the high priest and the Sadducees,

> [19] . . . the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, [20] Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. [21] And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. (Acts 5:19–21)

King Herod later imprisoned Peter with the intention of executing him at a later date:

> . . . Peter had been put under the charge of sixteen soldiers, who, in different watches, guarded him day and night. In his cell he was placed between two soldiers and was bound by two chains, each chain being fastened to the wrist of one of the soldiers. He was unable to move without their knowledge. With the prison doors securely fastened, and a strong guard before them, all chance of rescue or escape through human means was cut off. (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 145.4)

Herod knew Peter and John had been miraculously released from prison earlier. It was voiced about:

> . . . Peter and John appeared among the believers and recounted how the angel had led them directly through the band of soldiers guarding the prison, bidding them resume the work that had been interrupted, the brethren were filled with amazement and joy. (Ibid., p. 80.1)

And he was determined it would not happen again:

> With the prison doors securely fastened, and a strong guard before them, all chance of rescue or escape through human means was cut off. (Ibid., p. 145.4)

But man's extremity is always God's opportunity (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 145.4), and an angel was sent to rescue Peter:

> [7] 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. [8] And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. [9] And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. [10] When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. [11] And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. (Acts 12:7–11)

When the keepers before the door found that Peter had escaped, they were seized with terror. It had been expressly stated that their lives would be required for the life of their charge, and because of this they had been especially vigilant. When the officers came for Peter, the soldiers were still at the door of the prison, the bolts and bars were still fast, the chains were still secured to the wrists of the two soldiers; but the prisoner was gone. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 149.2)

[19] And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode. (Acts 12:19)

Angels continued furthering the work of the early church. During prayer, Cornelius saw and heard an angel who instructed him to send for Peter at the home of Simon the tanner, who lived by the seaside in Joppa:

[1] There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, [2] A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. [3] He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. [4] And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. [5] And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: [6] He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. [7] And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; [8] And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. (Acts 10:1–8)

An angel spoke to Philip, instructing him to travel on the road toward Gaza to meet a man from Ethiopia:

[26] And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. (Acts 8:26)

Also, the angel of the Lord destroyed Herod because he did not give God the glory when men praised him as a god:

Not long after Peter's deliverance from prison, Herod went to Caesarea. While there he made a great festival designed to excite the admiration and gain the applause of the people. This festival was attended by pleasure lovers from all quarters, and there was much feasting and wine drinking. With great pomp and ceremony Herod appeared before the people and addressed them in an eloquent oration. Clad in a robe sparkling with silver and gold, which caught the rays of the sun in its glittering folds and dazzled the eyes of the beholders, he was a gorgeous figure. The majesty of his appearance and the force of his well-chosen language swayed the assembly with a mighty power. Their senses already perverted by feasting and wine drinking, they were dazzled by Herod's decorations and charmed by his deportment and oratory; and wild with enthusiasm they showered adulation upon him, declaring that no mortal could present such an appearance or command such startling eloquence. They further declared that while they had ever respected him as a ruler, henceforth they should worship him as a god. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 149.4)

Herod knew that he deserved none of the praise and homage offered him, yet he accepted the idolatry of the people as his due. His heart bounded with triumph, and a glow of gratified pride overspread his countenance as he heard the shout ascend, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." (Ibid., p. 151.1)

[23] And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. (Acts 12:23)

. . . suddenly a terrible change came over him. His face became pallid as death and distorted with agony. Great drops of sweat started from his pores. He stood for a moment as if transfixed with pain and terror; then turning his blanched and livid face to his horror-stricken friends, he cried in hollow, despairing tones, He whom you have exalted as a god is stricken with death. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 151.2)

An angel also spoke to Paul when the ship he was on was about to be wrecked:

[23] For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, [24] saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. (Acts 27:23–24)

Angels were also present to impress on the hearts of the people the words Jesus spoke:

Before His crucifixion the Saviour explained to His disciples that He was to be put to death and to rise again from the tomb, and **angels were present to impress His words on minds and hearts**. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if He had not forewarned them. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 594; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

And we can be sure that the words of prophecy given to prepare us for the future crises will also be impressed upon our hearts through the work of angels as we study them and pray:

So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready. (Ibid.)

I saw that angels of God were commissioned to **guard with special care the sacred, important truths** which were to **serve as an anchor** to the disciples of Christ **through every generation**. The Holy Spirit especially rested upon the apostles, who were witnesses of our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—important truths which were to be the hope of Israel. All were to look to the Saviour of the world as their only hope, and walk in the way which He had opened by the sacrifice of His own life, and keep God's law and live. I saw the wisdom and goodness of Jesus in giving power to the disciples to carry on the same work for which He had been hated and slain by the Jews. In His name they had power over the works of Satan. A halo of light and glory centered about the time of Jesus' death and resurrection, immortalizing the sacred truth that He was the Saviour of the world. (Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 196.2)

The Holy Spirit

In addition to these means, the Bible also tells us that God's Spirit enabled the early Christians to do at least three things—to witness with power, to prophesy, and to speak in other languages, i.e., with tongues:

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8).

31 . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.(Acts 4:31)

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

Animals

An ass has also been used by God in the time of crisis:

23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. (Numbers 22:23)

Prayer

And prayer is a mighty power that moves the hand of God in ways that it would not otherwise be moved and is the key that unlocks God's storehouse. So, we need to pray! It is our obligation. People, events, and our own selves depend on it!

17 Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . . (Ephesians 6:18)

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (1 Timothy 2:1–2)

The following sentence alone should move us to constant prayer:

It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 525.2)

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but **prayer was made without ceasing** of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 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. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (Acts 12:5–8)

Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when **prayer is the key** in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the

boundless resources of Omnipotence? (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 94.2)

[9] And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:9–10)

And every thought in the following quotation is meaningful when we pray. Even though it is long, please be sure to read it.

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. **The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son**. (White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 100.1)

God's word, written and spoken

God's word is another source of power on earth to further his work among man. Through it, he guides us, and he stands behind every promise he has made.

[8] I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. (Psalm 32:8)

[20] For all the promises of God in him [Jesus] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

[21] And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. (Isaiah 30:21)

Rest in the promises, for God is behind every promise. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscript*s, vol. 14, Lt 66, 1899, par. 21)

I saw that angels of God were commissioned to guard with special care the **sacred, important truths** which were to **serve as an anchor** to the disciples of Christ through every generation. The Holy Spirit especially rested upon the apostles, who were witnesses of our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—important truths which were to be the hope of Israel. All were to look to the Saviour of the world as their only hope, and walk in the way which He had opened by the sacrifice of His own life, and keep God's law and live. (White, *Early Writings*, p. 196.2)

The gift of people to be prophets, who speak and write the words of God to us, has also been promised. We read about this gift in Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11, and in Revelation 19:10.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, we are informed that God hath set, placed, or fixed, certain spiritual gifts in the church. In the absence of any scriptural proof that He has removed or abolished them, we must conclude that they were intended to remain. . . . But the objector claims Bible proof that gifts were to cease, contained in the following text: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity." 1 Corinthians 13:8–13. (White, *Early Writings*, p. 135.2)

This text does foretell **the cessation of spiritual gifts**, also of faith and hope. But when were they to cease? We still look forward to the time when—

"Hope shall change to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

They are to cease when that which is perfect is come, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. The perfect day, when the just are made perfect and see as they are seen, is yet in the future. (Ibid., p. 136.1–.2)

Samuel

The gifts enumerated in the above references will one day cease to be needed, for the perfect will have come, but for now we are in great need of them, and when we think of the prophets, whose words we eagerly read and study, we might think of Samuel because what occurred in his childhood is crucial for us to understand:

[10] And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. [11] And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. [12] In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spo-

ken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. [13] For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. [14] And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. [15] And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. (1 Samuel 3:10–15)

Samuel was filled with fear and amazement at the thought of having so terrible a message committed to him. In the morning he went about his duties as usual, but with a heavy burden upon his young heart. The Lord had not commanded him to reveal the fearful denunciation, hence he remained silent, avoiding, as far as possible, the presence of Eli. He trembled, lest some question should compel him to declare the divine judgments against one whom he loved and reverenced. Eli was confident that the message foretold some great calamity to him and his house. He called Samuel, and charged him to relate faithfully what the Lord had revealed. The youth obeyed, and the aged man bowed in humble submission to the appalling sentence. "It is the Lord," he said: "let Him do what seemeth Him good." (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.2)

Yet Eli did not manifest the fruits of true repentance. He confessed his guilt, but failed to renounce the sin. Year after year the Lord delayed His threatened judgments. Much might have been done in those years to redeem the failures of the past, but the aged priest took no effective measures to correct the evils that were polluting the sanctuary of the Lord and leading thousands in Israel to ruin. The forbearance of God caused Hophni and Phinehas to harden their hearts and to become still bolder in transgression. The messages of warning and reproof to his house were made known by Eli to the whole nation. By this means he hoped to counteract, in some measure, the evil influence of his past neglect. But the warnings were disregarded by the people, as they had been by the priests. The people of surrounding nations also, who were not ignorant of the iniquities openly practiced in Israel, became still bolder in their idolatry and crime. They felt no sense of guilt for their sins, as they would have felt had the Israelites preserved their integrity. But a day of retribution was approaching. **God's authority had been set aside, and His worship neglected and despised, and it became necessary for Him to interpose, that the honor of His name might be maintained**. (Ibid., p. 582.3)

What is of great importance to us now is what follows a few paragraphs later in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. It cannot emphasized enough:

The most terrifying calamity that could occur had befallen Israel. The ark of God had been captured, and was in the possession of the enemy. The glory had indeed departed from Israel when the symbol of the abiding presence and power of Jehovah was removed from the midst of them. With this sacred chest were associated the most wonderful revelations of God's truth and power. In former days miraculous victories had been achieved whenever it appeared. It was shadowed by the wings of the golden cherubim, and the unspeakable glory of **the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the most high God**, had rested over it in the holy of holies. But now it had brought no victory. It had not proved a defense on this occasion, and there was mourning throughout Israel. (Ibid., p. 584.1)

Eli knew the importance of what had happened, for when he learned of the capture of the ark of God, he fell backward and died:

[18] And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he [Eli] fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. (1 Samuel 4:18)

The ark

The ark had been captured. It was in the possession of the enemy. And herein our study deepens. What was important about the ark? Not only was it a prized work of art, but it contained the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that budded, and a pot of manna. It was covered by the mercy seat with a cherub at each end, between which God's Shekinah glory rested and from which he communicated with man. The ark was, or represented, everything of value to man—God's written word (the law), his spoken word (the Shekinah), his mercy, his providence (the manna), the plan of salvation (the priesthood), and the work of heavenly angels for man.

It was represented to me that **the remnant followed Jesus into the most holy place and beheld the ark and the mercy seat, and were captivated with their glory**. Jesus then raised the cover of the ark, and lo! the tables of stone, with the ten commandments written upon them. They trace down the lively oracles, but start back with trembling when they see the fourth commandment among the ten holy precepts, with a brighter light shining upon it than upon the other nine, and a halo of glory all around it. They find nothing there informing them that the Sabbath has been abolished, or changed to the first day of the week. The commandment reads as when spoken by the voice of God in solemn and awful grandeur upon the mount, while the lightnings flashed and the thunders rolled; it is the same as when written with His own finger on the tables of stone: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." They are amazed as they behold the care taken of the ten commandments. They

see them placed close by Jehovah, overshadowed and protected by His holiness. They see that they have been trampling upon the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, and have observed a day handed down by the heathen and papists, instead of the day sanctified by Jehovah. They humble themselves before God and mourn over their past transgressions. (White, *Early Writings*, p. 255.1)

The mercy seat

God's mercy is brought to mind by what we call the mercy seat, which really is not a seat at all in the Hebrew language. The word translated "mercy seat" is *kappōret* and comes from the Hebrew *kapar*, which means to cover over, to atone, to propitiate. So, it could be thought of as the mercy cover, except the Hebrew word *kappōret* means more than a cover. It represents the whole plan of salvation—the atonement made possible by the life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ our Savior. In other words, the mercy seat speaks to us of the means by which we are reconciled to the Father. The mercy seat was something that was readily visible to the high priest and is symbolically readily visible to us as well. It was not hidden away in the ark itself but was on display. After the law and the Shekinah glory of the Father, it is the most important part of the ark because of what it stands for, and it was 100% gold. No inner wooden structure was used. This pure gold conveys to us the total beauty and the completeness and perfection of the plan of redemption and of the atonement made for us. Angels desire to look into its depths. It is something we will study for eternity. And resting on this beautiful symbol of mercy was the Shekinah glory of God.

Above the mercy seat was the Shekinah, the manifestation of the divine Presence; and from between the cherubim, God made known His will. **Divine messages were sometimes communicated to the high priest by a voice from the cloud**. Sometimes a light fell upon the angel at the right, to signify approval or acceptance, or a shadow or cloud rested upon the one at the left to reveal disapproval or rejection. (Ellen White, *Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 41.1)

[22] And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (Exodus 25:22)

[89] And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him. (Numbers 7:89)

[27] And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, [28] And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand. (Judges 20:27–28)

Oh, that the people might know the time of their visitation! There are many who have not yet heard the testing truth for this time. There are many with whom the Spirit of God is striving. **The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth**. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 97.2)

The mercy of God is shown in His long forbearance. He is holding back His judgments, waiting for the message of warning to be sounded to all. Oh, if our people would feel as they should the responsibility resting upon them to give the last message of mercy to the world, what a wonderful work would be done! (Ibid., p. 97.3)

God also communicated with his people through the Urim and the Thummim:

At the right and left of the breastplate were two large stones of great brilliancy. These were known as the Urim and Thummim. By them the will of God was made known through the high priest. When questions were brought for decision before the Lord, a halo of light encircling the precious stone at the right was a token of the divine consent or approval, while a cloud shadowing the stone at the left was an evidence of denial or disapprobation. (White, *Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 45.1)

The Shekinah was the glory of the Father.

Looking over the past, Christ saw how, during the record of a thousand years, the Jews had abused their precious privileges. **God had borne long with his erring people**. **In visible glory he had dwelt in the Shekinah** of the mercy-seat. **<u>He had sent his Son</u> to redeem them**, but in a short time they were to show to the heavenly universe, to the worlds unfallen, that they had chosen Satan to be their leader, and were determined to cherish his attributes. (Ellen White, *The Youth's Instructor*, May 11, 1899, par. 2)

Meanwhile worshipers from every nation sought the temple which had been dedicated to the worship of God, and which to all appearance remained the same as when the Shekinah had glorified it. Glittering with gold and precious stones, it was a vision of beauty and grandeur. But God was no longer to be found in that palace of loveliness. Israel as a nation had divorced herself from God. When Christ, near the close of his earthly ministry, looked for the last time upon the interior of the temple, he said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Hitherto he had called the temple his Father's house; but **as the Son of God passed out from those walls, God's presence was withdrawn forever from the temple built to his glory**. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, April 27, 1911, Art. A, par. 9)

Communication with our heavenly Father, represented by the Shekinah glory and by the Urim and Thummim is the heartbeat of our walk with him and the life of the soul. "Pray much. Prayer is the life of the soul. The prayer of faith is the weapon by which we may successfully resist every assault of the enemy" (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1904, par. 9).

Not only does God hear the prayers of his people, he also continues to provide for them, as represented by the pot of manna.

Has the ark been captured today?

So, is the ark, symbolically speaking, in the hands of God's enemies today, as it physically was during the time of Eli? Has "the most terrifying calamity that could occur" befallen us? The ark is just as important to us as it ever was to the Israelites of old.

The law still shines in all the beauty and splendor it ever did for King David and as it ever has for the entire universe. It is unchanging and continues to reveal to God's faithful the wondrous character of God and ever will.

All of the sacrifices, offerings, furnishings, structure, and work of the priests in the earthly sanctuary reveals to us the most comprehensive and beautiful plan a government has ever created, anywhere, at any time, for the benefit of its subjects. It is absolutely unsurpassed and magnificent and will remain so for all eternity. Nothing comes close to it, and the work of our Savior and heavenly high priest, Jesus, for our salvation is measureless and incomprehensible. It is a plan that even the angels do not understand and long to look into.

Three mysteries incomprehensible to man

How Jesus could hate sin yet have sympathy for sinners, as seen in the wonderful plan of salvation, is a mystery the angels long to understand:

> In Christ dwelt all the fulness of the God-head. But the only way in which He could reach men was to vail His glory by a garb of humanity. The angels beheld the hiding of His glory, that divinity might touch humanity. Christ ever retained the utmost hatred for sin, but He loved the purchase of His blood. He suffered in the place of sinful men, taking them into union with Himself. **This is the mystery into which angels desire to look**. They desire to know how Christ could live and work in a fallen world, how He could mingle with sinful humanity. **It was a mystery to them that He who hated sin with intense hatred felt the most tender, compassionate sympathy for the beings that committed sin**. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1898, par. 3)

But there is another mystery, this time a mystery to man and not to angels. It is a mystery man can only wonder at and be silent about—the mystery of the blending of the divine and human natures:

> Christ could have done nothing during His earthly ministry in saving fallen man if the divine had not been blended with the human. **The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery**, the blending of the two natures, the divine and human. **It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery**. This most wonderful exhibition of God's love was made on the cross of Calvary. Divinity took the nature of humanity, and for what purpose? that through the righteousness of Christ humanity might partake of the divine nature. This union of divinity and humanity, which was possible with Christ, was incomprehensive to human minds. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 6, Lt 5, 1889, par. 6)

We are to understand the truths of salvation, if we are to stand faithful to God now and in the morrows ahead, and we are to understand the experience of the union of the divine with the human and know through this experience that we have been changed into the likeness of Christ. Even though we cannot explain how it happens, we can know it is a reality in our lives. "**Man must be a partaker of the divine nature in order to stand in this evil time, when the mystery of satanic agencies are at work"** (Ibid.).

And we also need to understand, as God so chooses to enlighten us, the terrible assaults of Satan in these days. It is another mystery for us to contemplate—the mystery of satanic agencies. This mystery is important to understand because upon us the end of the world has come.

We all know that Satan's angels are demons. They inhabit minds and bodies. They bring pain and misery, and disease and despair follow in their train. There is no torture or deception from which they shy, but they are *individual* demons, *individual* agents. They are *usually* not thought of as an agency or as agencies, although they can be referred to as such. Usually, however, we understand the agencies of Satan to be different. They are bigger, more extensive entities and have far more reaching consequences and much greater power. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," Paul said of his day, but the culmination of this mystery of iniquity in our day far surpasses anything Paul saw in his day. It is off the charts, to the point that you and I will not be able to endure the mystery of iniquity unless we are partakers of the divine nature:

> The wonderful things to take place in our world, the greatest events of all ages, are incomprehensible to

worldly minds; they cannot be explained by human sciences. The powers of the heavens shall be shaken. Christ is coming in power and great glory, but His coming is not such a mystery as the things to take place before that event. Only by the divine power united with the human can souls endure through these times of trial. Says Christ, "Without Me ye can do nothing." [John 15:5.] Then there must be far less of self and all for Jesus. (Ibid.)

The above quotation from Letter 5, separated into three sections, is one of those paragraphs where almost every word is important. Here we read about the greatest events (plural) of all ages and these events are to take place after June 2, 1889, when the letter was written. They are incomprehensible to worldly minds and cannot be explained by human science, and what are those events? She mentions two, the powers of the heavens being shaken and the second coming of Jesus, which are linked together, here nebulously but in other places more clearly, for "when he shall come to the earth again, he will shake 'not the earth only, but also heaven,'" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 780).

BUT even the second coming is not as big a mystery as the events to take place before the second coming, and she calls those events **the mystery of satanic agencies**.

Let us consider for a moment some of the agencies of Satan:

The law of God, through the **agency** of Satan, is to be made void. (Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p. 236.3)

In other words, the law of God is made void not by individual demons here and there but by a powerful agency.

. . . performed miracles through the **agency** of Satan… (White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 12, Ms 120, 1897, par. 6)

The **agency** of Satan must be understood as **a working, vigilant power**, awakening in every possible way the same activity in others to work evil, as he himself possesses. (White, *The Review and Herald*, June 19, 1888, par. 16)

Through paganism, and then through [the] Papacy Satan exerted his power for many centuries in an effort to blot from the earth God's faithful witnesses. Heathen and papists were actuated by **the same dragon spirit**. They differed only in that the Romish apostate, making a pretense of serving God, was the more dangerous and cruel foe. **Through the agency of Romanism**, Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the people of God suffered under the dragon's fire. At the time when [the] Papacy, robbed of its strength, was forced to desist from persecution, John beheld a new power coming up to echo the dragon's voice, and carry forward the same cruel and blasphemous work. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 14, Ms 51, 1899, par. 4; brackets in original)

This power, the last that is to wage war against the church and the law of God, was represented by a **beast with lamb-like horns**. The beasts preceding it had risen from the sea, but this came up out of the earth, representing the peaceful rise of the nation which it symbolized. The "two horns like a lamb" [Revelation 13:11] well represent the character of our own government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles, Republicanism and Protestantism. These principles are the secret of our power and prosperity as a nation. Those who first found an asylum on the shores of America rejoiced that they had reached a country free from the arrogant claims of popery and the tyranny of kingly rule. They determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. (Ibid., par. 5)

Right here in America this power will roar and stamp and breathe fire.

But the stern tracings of the prophetic pencil reveal a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamblike horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Prophecy declares that he will say to them that dwell on the earth "that **they should make an image to the beast,**" and that **it will cause "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell**, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." [Verses 12, 14, 16, 17.] **Thus Protestantism follows in the steps of [the] Papacy**. (Ibid., par. 6)

It is at this time that the third angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven . . . In marked contrast to the world, stands a little company that will not swerve from their allegiance to God. These are they of whom Isaiah speaks as repairing the breach which had been made in the law of God, they who are "building the old waste places," "raising up the foundation of many generations." [Isaiah 58:12.] (Ibid., par. 7)

The most solemn warning and the most awful threatening ever addressed to mortals is that contained in the third angel's message. . . . The message containing this warning is the last to be proclaimed before the revelation of the Son of man. . . . (Ibid., par. 8, 9)

Through his deceptive power, Satan made of none effect the fourth commandment, and men taught for doctrine the commandments of men. Sunday, the child of papacy, has been accepted and nourished and cherished by the religious world. They have looked upon Sunday as the Sabbath, the sanctified day of rest, when there is not a particle of Scriptural evidence to justify the claim of this spurious Sabbath. **Through the agency of the man of sin**,

men have been led to exalt Sunday where the Sabbath of the Lord alone should be exalted. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, April 25, 1893, par. 8)

And who is the man of sin? The following is the biblical description of the man of sin:

> 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–10)

The 1889 Fundamental Principles identify the man of sin to be the papacy. Ellen White uses the term to sometimes represent Satan himself and at other times to represent the papacy and/or the pope through which and through whom he works:

The papacy:

> The first day of the week, whose sacredness rests wholly on the authority of **the papacy, "the man of sin,"** is observed as a holy day by Catholics and Protestants alike . . . (Ellen White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 324.1)

> The prophetic declaration that the **Papacy** was to exalt itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, has been strikingly fulfilled in the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Wherever the papal Sabbath is honored in preference to the Sabbath of God, there **the man of sin** is exalted above the Creator of heaven and earth. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, November 1, 1899, par. 12)

> 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. (1889 Fundamental Principle XIII)

Satan:

> **The man of sin is worshiped in the person of the pope, and his representative, the cardinal**. But God has not given this power to pope or prelate. **The pope is** not regarded by God as anything more than a man who is **acting out in our world the character of the man of sin**, representing in his claims that power and authority which Satan claimed in the heavenly courts. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 12, Ms 163, 1897, par. 20)

> The time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day. **Satan** has caused the change of the Sabbath in the hope of carrying out his purpose for the defeat of God's plans. He seeks to make the commands of God of less force in the world than human laws. **The man of sin**, who thought to change times and laws, and **who has <u>always</u> oppressed the people of God**, will cause laws to be made enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. But God's people are to stand firm for Him. And the Lord will work in their behalf, showing plainly that He is the God of gods. (Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, p. 317.3)

The pope:

The man of sin in the following quotation is represented possibly by the pope, as the instrument of the prince of evil, or perhaps by the papacy itself:

> Satan is determined that the knowledge of God, of his creative power, shall be banished from the contemplation and remembrance of men. But he cannot accomplish his purpose while the fourth commandment is kept; for the Sabbath directs the minds of men to the Creator. Therefore **Satan has worked through the Papacy** to set aside this precept. **He inspired the Romish Church to "think to change" the times and laws of God**. In setting aside the true Sabbath, which is the sign of God's power and authority, and substituting the institution which is the sign of Rome's supremacy, the "man of sin" is indeed "sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God." He is turning the minds of men away from God, and directing them to himself, and to **the one whose instrument he is,—to the prince of evil**. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1893, par. 8)

> It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, **the pope has arrogated the very titles of Deity.** He styles himself "Lord God the Pope," assumes infallibility, and demands that all men pay him homage. Thus the same claim urged by Satan in the wilderness of temptation is still urged by him through the Church of Rome, and vast numbers are ready to yield him homage. (White, *The Great Controversy* (1888 ed.), p. 50.3)

Let us recall the original question—has the ark been captured by God's enemies today? In other words, does the same law that was placed in the ark still govern his people? Do all the beautiful concepts represented by the mercy seat ring true in our hearts today? Does the history of God's providence, represented by the pot of manna, resonate with us today, to the point that we will not desecrate or diminish his holy day? And does God's superlative Spirit speak to us now as his Shekinah glory and the Urim and Thummim spoke to his children of old?

God's Spirit

Let us also consider God's Spirit. Does its still, small voice speak to us in the clamour of this world, as it did to Elijah? Do we understand that the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit and not a third god of a trinity and that the Comforter promised by Jesus is representative of him—"I will come to you," he said (John 14:18).

Not long ago a leading General Conference officer tried to explain the supposedly third member of the trinity in a simple way by stating that since the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Bible as being grieved and as a teacher and is spoken of as interceding, pleading, striving, and witnessing to and for us, it is a personality or a being, as are the Father and the Son, but even if one choses to believe the Spirit is a being, it does not also mean it is a god! Remember, a mother cow separated from her calf will *grieve* and bellow. A mother raccoon can sweetly cajole and *plead* with her little ones to follow her up and over a fence to food, and a mother bear can quickly *instruct* her cubs as to what acceptable behavior is. But these attributes do not make the cow, the raccoon, and the bear beings or personalities similar to humans or even to God.

The minister also concluded that listing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together in Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:18, and Hebrews 10:9–15 is *evidence* that each is a God and that each is coequal with the other.

The *nature* of the Holy Spirit is a mystery, and silence is golden, should we ever be tempted to explain or define it:

> **The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it**, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, **silence is golden**. (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.1)

But we can understand the work of the Holy Spirit:

> **The office of the Holy Spirit is distinctly specified** in the words of Christ: "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements. (Ibid., p. 52.2)

Brothers and sisters, "the time is coming when God's people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day" (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 17, Manuscript 135, 1902), but we should also be ready for persecution because we refuse to accept the Holy Spirit as God and because we refuse to accept the trinitarian doctrine as biblical. If we had lived in 1533, as did Michael Servetus, renowned in the field of medicine and a polymath, we may very well have been executed, as was he, for non-trinitarian beliefs. This was a DEFCON 2-type scenario for the Roman Catholic Church, though nearly five hundred years ago, and the spiritual warfare of Level 1 is hovering over us today. Let us consider the Law of God as an example.

The law

Much of Christendom does not abide by the same Ten Commandment Law as did ancient Israel, for God's law has since been modified by man. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, found at the Vatican website (https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM), contains a list of the Ten Commandments. The list of the commandments themselves is a summary, which is what the word *catechism* means—a summary of principles of the Christian religion—and in this summary the Catholic Church re-numbers the commandments. The first commandment in this catechism combines the first two given in the King James Version. Because of this, the fourth commandment becomes the third commandment, according to the catechism, and the tenth commandment is divided into two, becoming the ninth and the tenth commandments.

Now, why is this important? The Douay-Rheims Bible and other Bibles the Catholic Church promotes for its members do not make these changes. The first two are not combined, for example; they remain as in the KJV, but in the official catechism of the Roman Catholic Church the changes are made. Most scholars today will say the numbering really should not make a difference because the commandments themselves remain, so they say, the same, so why should an issue arise over the numbering?

The catechism is the statement of the fundamental beliefs for the 1.4 billion members of the Catholic faith, the largest Christian denomination in the world. Every word in the catechism you may be sure has been chosen with care, and why the leaders chose to combine the first and second commandments into what they call the first commandment and then chose to divide the tenth commandment into what they call the ninth and tenth commandments, they have not said, as far as I know, but it has a purpose. The members of the Catholic Church are first and foremost taught from the

catechism. It is the foundation of their faith. It is a long document and contains much tradition, and if the catechism says the fourth commandment is to honor thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, then that is what they believe. So, when we, as Seventh-day Adventists, speak of the fourth commandment, of the seventh-day Sabbath, and of it being a memorial to creation, it is confusing to them right from the start just by the numbering alone, but the worst part is the explanation of the fourth commandment given in the catechism, for it changes or sidelines the meaning of the seventh-day Sabbath and replaces it with what they call the Lord's Day and more. It is here in the catechism that we see the papacy thinking to change times and laws. And the world wonders after the beast.

Yes, the magnificent ark of God is in the hands of the enemy. The beautiful plan of redemption, to which everything about it points, is a darkness hardly related to the original brilliance. The death of Christ is the death, as if it were possible, of a god. The resurrection of Jesus is now the reason for a change in the Sabbath day. The life of Jesus is not the example of our lives, for we hear we cannot be perfect until glorification. The high priestly ministry of Jesus in the most holy place in heaven is not the work of the final atonement. The voice of God is silenced in the hearts of his professed people as they reject and continue to reject the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen White, and the Urim and Thummim are dead stones. The Sabbath is lightly regarded, as prophesied, and books of a new order have been written, changing some of our doctrines into a worldly version acceptable to Laodicean Christians who are poor, blind, and naked. I know I have written such things before; but we still have time to turn things around, so I say them again. We can be as little giants waiting for the return of Jesus, 144,000-strong, a far cry from the physical statures of Adam and Eve but giants in spiritual stature, ready to meet the hosts of Satan through the power of God and his word. Won't you walk with Jesus in the light shining from Orion?

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion,
And turneth the shadow of death into the morning . . .
The LORD *is* his name:
Amos 5:8

Health Matters

One Health-Destroying Habit Commonly Ignored

By Sheri Stump

How precious is a newborn baby! The parents have experienced the challenges and stresses of pregnancy and delivery, and now they are rewarded with a tiny human who is totally dependent on them for his every need. Consider with me the possible counsel of a doctor after the delivery of, we will call him, David.

The doctor is speaking to the parents and says, "This child has some very special health needs. He will need to sleep one-third of his life, which means if this infant lives seventy-five years, he will sleep twenty-five of those years. Each day he will need to go to sleep at a specific time and for a certain duration of time. This may interrupt your lives and affect your routine and daily schedule somewhat. However, if your child is not allowed to sleep when necessary, his health will be negatively affected. Sleep deprivation leads to poor concentration and diminished ability to think clearly. David will be at higher risk of retaining excessive weight and be prone to allergies, among many other negatives. There are sleep stages that accomplish vital physical processes in this tiny baby, which, if deprived of sleep, will leave him susceptible to a wide variety of illnesses."

If only doctors gave basic health counsel or provided a manual on the basics of human health and longevity, but this manual does not exist, nor do doctors provide general health counsel to parents upon the birth of each new human. We must personally research to obtain basic health principles on our own.

The abuse of this health principle is rampant! I remember a good Adventist friend of mine telling me she hated wasting time sleeping each night. She was a hyper person. She told me that when she woke up in the night, she would often stay up doing quiet activities.

Another dear Adventist, a lady friend, recently told me she did her canning in the middle of the night while her husband was sleeping, and then she would work all day.

For some of us, our job requires the violation of this vital need of our bodies. Night shift workers are at higher risk for many health problems. Cancer is mentioned often as a consequence of the interruption of the circadian rhythm.

"This disruption of the natural sleep/wake cycle affects how the body functions and interferes with the natural release of hormones and chemicals in the body, leading to potential problems of the cardiovascular system, metabolism, digestion, immune system, mental health and even fertility and pregnancy" (https://www.franciscanhealth.org/

community/blog/working-night-shift-health-effects; accessed on November 28, 2025).

Evidence for the link between shift work and health risks also comes from research on sleep and circadian rhythms.

"Current scientific evidence suggests shift workers may be at higher risk for the following health problems:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Psychological disorders
- Cancer (breast cancer has been most researched)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Adverse reproductive outcomes
- Difficulty managing chronic diseases" (https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/work-hour-training-for-nurses/longhours/mod3/15.html; accessed on November 28, 2025)

We may not stay up all night as shift workers do; however, neglecting to sleep during the recommended hours for optimum health also undermines our health.

> Going to sleep before midnight matters—it can make a huge difference in our quality of sleep, productivity, and overall health. You may have heard the phrase "an hour of sleep before midnight is worth two after," and that's because we have an internal biological clock, or circadian rhythm, that sends signals to our brain that it's time for sleep once the sun goes down.
>
> By going outside of our circadian rhythm, or disrupting it, we can potentially throw off our internal biological clock and therefore impact our physical and mental health. (https://www.realsimple.com/health/preventative-health/sleep/sleep-before-midnight).

Ellen White confirmed this science long before it was proven.

> I know from the testimonies given me from time to time for brain workers that sleep is worth far more before than after midnight. Two hours' good sleep before twelve o'clock is worth more than four hours after twelve o'clock. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 5, Letter 85, 1888, par. 33).

Even the one-hour time change for daylight saving time, that the United States has mandated, has negative health consequences.

"'The scientific evidence points to acute increases in adverse health consequences from changing the clocks, including in heart attack and stroke,' says sleep expert, Adam Spira, PhD, MA, a professor in mental health.

"The change is also associated with a heightened risk of mood disturbances and hospital admissions, as well as elevated production of inflammatory markers in response to stress. The potential for car crashes also spikes just after the spring forward, Spira says; a 2020 study found that the switch raises the risk of fatal traffic accidents by 6%." (https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2023/7-things-to-know-about-daylight-saving-time).

Ellen White counsels us, as a general rule, to turn the lights off by 9:00 p.m.

> Make it a habit not to sit up after nine o'clock. Every light should be extinguished. This turning night into day is a wretched, health-destroying habit, and this reading much by brain workers, up to the sleeping hours, is very injurious to health. It calls the blood to the brain and then gives such a one restless sleep. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 5, Letter 76, 1888, par. 7)

And Ellen White recorded counsel she gave concerning J. N. Andrews:

> The subject before him is the all-absorbing theme. Health has been sacrificed by night labor. He has robbed himself of rest and sleep, using up his vigor in doing things which could just as well be done at his own home in Rochester. The extra amount which he need not have done has severely taxed both physical and mental strength. (Ellen White, *Testimony to the Church*, Pamphlet 159, p. 187.1)

A friend recently said, "We would frown upon gluttony, smoking, and drinking in our midst, but staying up late is viewed/commended as being a hard worker."

We must discipline ourselves to follow God's natural health remedies so that we will be healthy and energetic soldiers for God. God made our bodies to rest at specific times and to eat at specific times. Our bodies love routine.

> The importance of regularity in the time for eating and sleeping should not be overlooked. Since the work of building up the body takes place during the hours of rest, it is essential, especially in youth, that sleep should be regular and abundant. (Ellen White, *Child Guidance*, p. 363.2)

We must consider how we take care of our bodies. The Bible is clear:

> [16] Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Corinthians 3:16–17)
>
> [3] Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. [4] No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3–4)

We are in a spiritual battle. God is our commander-in-chief. We are responsible to discipline ourselves as good soldiers in God's army. No bugles announce when we are to

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Hid in My Heart

By Sheri Stump

The purpose of the Hid-in-My-Heart series is to meditate on and memorize scriptures that define the fundamentals of our faith so that we will be ready to give an answer for the faith that is in us. These Bible teachings are taken from the 1889 Fundamental Beliefs.

So far we have memorized or at least familiarized ourselves with scriptures that support the Father, the Son, the holy scripture, baptism, the new birth, prophecy, the fulfillment of prophecy, the truth about a temporal millennium, the prophetic correction of 1844, the prophetic ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the immutable Law of God, the Sabbath, Christ's peculiar people and how God would have his people dress, and this article features Fundamental Belief number sixteen on how we support God's work.

1889 Fundamental Belief number sixteen:

XVI – That means for the support of evangelical work among men should be contributed from love to God and love of souls, not raised by church lotteries, or occasions designed to contribute to the fun-loving, appetite-indulging propensities of the sinner, such as fairs, festivals, oyster suppers, tea, broom, donkey, and crazy socials, etc., which are a disgrace to the professed church of Christ; that the proportion of one's income required in former dispensation can be no less under the gospel; that it is the same as Abraham (whose children we are, if we are Christ's, Gal. 3:29) paid to Melchisedec (type of Christ) when he gave a tenth of all (Hebrews 7:1–4); the title is the Lord's (Leviticus 27:30); and this tenth of one's income is also to be supplemented by offerings from those who are able, for the support of the gospel. 2 Corinthians 9:6; Malachi 3:8,10.

Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness. God has arranged systematic benevolence to sustain His cause and relieve the necessities of the suffering and needy. He has ordained that giving should become a habit, that it may counteract the dangerous and deceitful sin of covetousness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death. Systematic benevolence is designed in the order of God to tear away treasures from the covetous as fast as they are gained and to consecrate them to the Lord, to whom they belong. (Ellen White, *Testimonies to the Church,* vol. 3, p. 548.1)

If you would like a complete biblical explanation on this Fundamental Principal here is the link of a sermon Pastor Allen Stump gave on Fundamental Principle number sixteen. https://youtu.be/F60YM_MAX9Q?si=6u9r-ZLj_NkhN2vse or scan the QR code.

The following are some verses for you to memorize/meditate upon:

I have included the first letter of each word following each verse. Memorizing the verse with this help will assure that you do not miss a word while reciting it and since each letter represents one word, it will be a help to prompt you on what the next word in the verse is.

[8] Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be meat in mine house, And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, And pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:8,10)

WamrG? Yyhrm. Bys, Whwrt? Itao. Byattits, Ttmbmimh, Apmnh, stLoh, Iiwnoytwoh, Apyoab, ttsnbretri. M 3:8,10

[9] Honour the Lord with thy substance, And with the firstfruits of all thine increase: [10] So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, And thy presses shall burst out with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9,10)

HtLwts, Awtfoati: Sstbbfwp, Atpsbownw. P 3:9,10

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

BtIs, Hwsssras; ahwsbsrab. 2 C 9:6

May God bless you as you meditate on these verses is my prayer for each of you!

Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the scriptures to memory, and then throw them right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, 'it is written.' This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them. (Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888, par. 9)

Youth's Corner—*Study the Scriptures*

By Ellen G. White

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11

We know the dangers and temptations that beset the youth at the present time are not few, nor small; and we understand that every means that can be employed to repress sin and to encourage righteousness should be entered into most earnestly by the youth themselves. We live in an age when to resist evil calls for constant watchfulness and prayer. God's precious word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory, and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said; and then let his word be strictly obeyed. When tested, and in trial, let the youth spread out the word of God before them, and with humble hearts, and in faith, seek the Lord for wisdom to find out his way, and for strength to walk in it. The Lord loves his children, and with a devotion stronger than that of a mother for her child; for in response to the question, "Can a woman forget her child?" the Lord, by his prophet, says, She "may forget, yet will I not forget."

Yesterday, in company with Mrs. M. K. White and her two children, I rode from Basel, Switzerland, into a portion of Germany. During the ride, we witnessed a painful scene, which I could not get out of my mind, even in the night season. It was a woman running after her five-year-old child, which, when she reached it, she struck several severe blows upon the head. Afterward she grasped her little one by the

Area of Basel, Switzerland, much as it might have looked like when Ellen White visited

hair of its head, twitched it back and forth repeatedly, at the same time continuing to strike it; and finally, seizing the little girl again by her hair, she shook her violently; and lifting her from her feet, threw her with great force into the house. All this time the child was screaming at the top of its voice. The thought that here was a woman, a mother, in a hurricane of passion, having the control of children, was painful in the extreme. What will be the effect upon children brought up in such an atmosphere? It was the first exhibition of the kind we had witnessed since coming to Europe.

But though the woman may forget, the Lord assures us he will not. Isaiah 49:15, 16 reads: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on" him? "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Christ bears the cruel prints of the nails into heaven, and can he forget the purchase of his blood? Will he leave the children and youth a prey to the temptations of the enemy? No, he has made ample provision for every youth, that when they call upon him in perplexity and trial, he will listen to their prayer, and will, with every temptation, make a way for their escape.

The Lord never corrects except in love and compassion. Jesus was himself a child, and knows the temptations and trials of childhood. He was himself a youth, and he understands the perplexities and disappointments of youth. He pities and sympathizes with the erring. He received the cruel wounds on the cross of Calvary, that left the marks in his hands, that he might bless and save the children and youth. He knows your conflicts; he knows, too, the desires of the enemy. He knows your heart sorrows for sins and your purposes to be right and do right, and he stands ready always to give you needed help when you shall call upon him.

You may have pure, noble characters, a rich experience in the service of Jesus Christ. But you must, like Joseph, set your hearts resolutely to resist the first insinuation from the tempter to do evil. Your only safety is in making the word of God your study. If you will hide his word in the heart, you will not mistake the path of duty and of safety. That blessed book will teach you to be honest, temperate in all things, frugal, industrious, truthful, and upright. Its counsels heeded will make you a faithful companion of youth, giving you an influence that will ever lead upward, to purity of character; an influence that will lead away from sin, into paths of righteousness.

Will such a life be without enjoyment? Ah, no! It will be full of comfort, full of satisfaction, because you are bringing heaven into your life, peace into your soul, and leaving a testimony that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."

I would that all the young could understand how precious is the offering of a youthful heart to God. How lovingly the angels guard the steps of God-fearing, God-loving youth. Jesus knows them by name, and their example is helping other youth to do right. The youth who has hidden within the heart and mind a store of God's words of caution and encouragement, of his precious pearls of promise, from which he can draw at any time, will be a living channel of light. He has connection with the Source of all light. The Sun of Righteousness sends its light and healing beams into his soul, irradiating rays of light to all around him.

I counsel the youth not to devote to the reading of story books or fictitious tales the precious moments now given them in which to make preparation for eternity. Such reading will surely unfit the mind for the enjoyment of solid reading, which strengthens the intellect and improves the morals. Story-book reading creates an appetite for exciting stories, leads the mind away from the Scriptures, and disqualifies for duty; it makes the precious words of God, which should be of the highest value, dry and uninteresting. The mind must be fed with pure food if the heart be pure. The moral taste is perverted by fictitious reading.

Let our young men institute a warfare against every habit that has the least danger of leading the soul from duty and devotion. Let them have stated seasons for prayer, never neglecting them if it can possibly be avoided. If they go out to battle with their vicious habits indulged as before they professed fellowship with Christ, they will soon fall an easy prey to Satan's devices. But armed with the word of God, having it treasured in heart and mind, they will come forth unharmed by all the assaults of the foes of God or man.

I appeal to our youth never to be found without the spiritual armor, wherewith they will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the adversary. In the name of God, lift your banner for truth and righteousness,—the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. You need the perfect armor of truth now, the sword of the Spirit, whose edge will never be blunted, but will cut its way through sin and unrighteousness. I repeat, The Bible is the standard for the young who would be loyal to the King of heaven. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (*The Youth's Instructor*, August 3, 1887)

Marriage Morsels

In the married life men and women sometimes act like undisciplined, perverse children. The husband wants his way, and the wife wants her way, and neither is willing to yield. Such a condition of things can bring only the greatest unhappiness. Both husband and wife should be willing to yield his or her way or opinion. There is no possibility of happiness while they both persists in doing as they please.

Unless men and women have learned of Christ, His meekness and lowliness, they will reveal the impulsive, unreasonable spirit so often revealed by children. The strong, undisciplined will will seek to rule. Such ones need to study the words of Paul: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" 1 Corinthians 13:11. (Ellen White, *Adventist Home*, p. 118.3–4)

Congregation from camp meeting in Kenya. (Please see page 24 for more information.)

"Health Matters" Continued from page 18

wake up in the morning nor when we turn the barracks lights off each evening. Our ability to please God and do our duty in service of our King depends upon our choices in regard to the care of our physical bodies. Neglect of our health will result in diminished effectiveness as a soldier, and the abuse of our bodies and the weakening of our health will give the enemy the advantage over us and our loved ones. We have been told:

> The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 248.1)

Parenting God's Way

Our Children Need Character Development

By Sheri Stump

Many parents today say that their children can decide whether they want to go to church or not. They seem to think that allowing their children to make these kinds of decisions is noble and right. However, the bible tells us to train up a child in the way he should go. (Proverbs 22:6) Not guiding children on God's path is terrible neglect and will end in sorrow and very possibly result in the loss of eternal life for that child.

Left unchecked the child's natural inclination to evil will prevail. The child will grow to please himself and will develop behavioral tastes that lead him/her far from God.

Parenting is a very important work! God inspired Ellen White with very clear instruction for parents. Please consider the following:

> The early training of children is a subject that all should carefully study. We need to make the education of our children a business, for their salvation depends largely upon the education given them in childhood. Parents and guardians must themselves maintain purity of heart and life, if they desire their children to be pure. As fathers and mothers, we should train and discipline ourselves. Then as teachers in the home, we can train our children, preparing them for the immortal inheritance. (Ellen White, *Child Guidance*, p. 27.1)

The best way to teach children is by example. Children are imitators. I have heard parents say, "Do as I say not as I do." But the opposite is reality. Children will copy their parents. They will do as their parents do and generally ignore what they say. Parents are responsible for how they live and what they do. Children are watching! Here are a few examples; If you want your children to be respectful, you must be respectful to others, even in difficult situations. If you want your children to use wholesome language you must refrain from using foul language. If you smoke cigarettes you can be assured your children will likely smoke cigarettes. If you want your children to worship God you need to worship God. Home worship and church attendance needs to be a priority in your life. Your children are being taught how to live their lives and you are their greatest example.

> Parents should be much at home. By precept and example they should teach their children the love and the fear of God; teach them to be intelligent, social, affectionate; to cultivate habits of industry, economy, and self-denial. By giving their children love, sympathy, and encouragement at home, parents may provide for them a safe and welcome retreat from many of the world's temptations. (Ellen White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 185.2)

We should teach our children all the attributes of living a Christian life. One very important and often neglected principle of honoring God is systematic giving. This discipline will starve selfishness.

> When divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. . . . (Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74.3)

> Your money means the salvation of souls. Let there be systematic giving on the part of all. Some may be unable to give a large sum, but all can lay aside each week something for the Master. Let the children act their part. Let parents teach their children to save their pennies to give to the Lord. The gospel ministry is to be supported by self-denial and sacrifice. Through the self-denying efforts of God's people others will be brought into the faith, and these in turn will help to increase the offerings made for the carrying forward of the Lord's work. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 55.1)

Recently I received a greeting card from some dear friends. Tucked inside were a few one dollar bills. The note inside indicated that the dollar bills were their very young children's offering to the Lord. What good parents!

In 2 Samuel we read about how important it is to offer to God something we earned with our own effort. Something that cost us personally. With this in mind, is it beneficial to give your children the coins they will give as an offering to the Lord? Has it cost them anything? Do they really understand what an offering is? Have they made the choice to give to God instead of buying a toy they want? Is it not better to allow them to give to God from funds they gained through their own effort?

> [24] . . . . neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (2 Samuel 24:24)

Even where we live is very important for character development. If our home is surrounded with city life, with evil influences, with the constant noise of many people, with small, manicured lawns and our homes are dependent on city water and electricity, we will enjoy the luxury and ease this life offers. But are we where God would have us live? Notice the conditions that benefited Jesus in his childhood on earth, in the humble town of Nazareth:

> Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the Infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and pa-

tient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul's communion with God–these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus. (White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 132.2)

Often we think we should make our children's lives easy and comfortable. This is a great mistake. An easy life will not develop godly character. The metaphorical phrase "idle hands are the devil's playground" proves true. Boredom leads to mischief. We are feeding the natural selfishness in our children when we make their lives easy. I am not saying we should abuse our children but we should allow the troubles and consequences of life to work out godly character in our children. How will our children know that God is their "ever present help in times of trouble" if they are not allowed to struggle and seek God for help?

[1] God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened. Trials well borne will develop steadfastness of character and precious spiritual graces. The perfect fruit of faith, meekness, and love often matures best amid storm clouds and darkness. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 61.1)

Today's parents also tend to allow their children to spend their money as they wish and often without supervision or parental counsel to guide the child into the wise use of money. Economy is not taught as it should be.

I know of a family with two children, both daughters. As they became teenagers the parents decided to give each teenager a specific amount of money each month. They had carefully calculated all the girls needs and some of their wants and arrived at an amount of money they felt would meet those needs and some important wants, if, they used their money carefully. Their goal was to teach their daughter's the value of money and how to use the money efficiently and economically. They carefully explained that they would no longer purchase shampoo, conditioner, or toiletries. (Remember these are daughters. They wanted lots of toiletries.) The parents made it clear that the daughters would need to purchase their own toiletries and clothing. It was up to them to use the money wisely. If they ran out of shampoo before the end of the month they would have to go without. If they had a special occasion and wanted a new dress and shoes they would need to make the purchase with their own money.

This worked well. By the time I learned of the daughter's monthly allowance the girls had been purchasing their own necessities for a few years with the allowance from their parents. The parents said they had saved a significant amount of money and the girls had worked through the process, they were functioning each month and were not going without. One of the daughters even saved money each month.

Even young children can learn how to spend their money wisely. It will take the involvement of parents. It is a full-time job parenting children. I appreciate a book titled *Because I Said So!* Here is an example of training children in economy:

> Parents should keep tabs on how a child intends to use his allowance and retain the right to not allow him spend it irresponsibly or in ways that are incompatible with the values of the family. Parents should take every available opportunity to teach their children how to be intelligent consumers - how to recognize quality, how to compare, how to shop for value, and so on. I remember when our son, Eric, was about eight years old, he took his two-dollar allowance and bought two cheap plastic cars, the kind that hold together about thirty minutes once they're out of the package. . . . When we found out what he had done with his money, we made him take one of them back for a refund. Several days later, we casually inquired about the car he had kept. "It broke," he said, with a don't-say-I-told-you-so look. Lesson learned. (John Rosemond, *Because I Said So!*, p. 261)

Teaching children the proper use of God's entrusted means is a vital part of their training.

Active parenting can yield wonderful results. And the opposite is true. You have surely seen children in grocery stores who want something and when their parent refuses their desire they have loud, horrible, tantrums. How embarrassing! This need not be. With good counsel, prayer and diligence you can raise obedient, loving children who are a delight to be around.

I pray that you will be strong and courageous in your parenting and that God will give you special wisdom to handle all the unique struggles of parenting.

Report from Kenya and Uganda Camp Meetings

By Allen Stump

Pastor Daniel Mesa and I were blessed last month to attend camp meetings in both Kenya and Uganda. The Kenya camp was organized by Gospel Sounders Ministry, a group working very closely with 1889 HSDA and working to organize soon. Uganda has a vibrant 1889 HSDA conference, and we were very pleased to work with both groups.

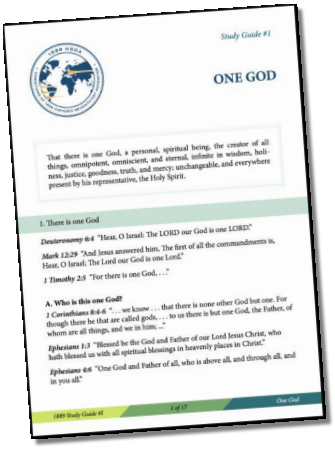
Both camps were well attended with the number of attendees being around 150 believers in each gathering.

The meetings in Kenya covered a wide range of topics, including final generation theology, Christology, prophecy, family life, reforms in balance, and others. Eight precious souls were baptized, including a former Muslim sister. There was a lot of wonderful singing by youth and adults, and all there were greatly blessed.

In Uganda the main theme was the foundational pillars of our faith. Pastor Daniel Mesa was also asked to speak about the ministry of the heavenly angels, and he gave several clear presentations on the subject with all being blessed.

Like in Kenya, there was wonderful sacred music given by both young and old and inspiring testimonies. I was very encouraged to see the advance of the publishing work in Uganda, a place where many still do not have Bibles. One item that was especially a blessing to see was a study guide book they had published on the 28 fundamentals of the 1889 Seventh-day Adventists. We are thankful that they are willing to share this work with you, and we have a PDF version of this now available at our website at the following URL: https://smyrna.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/1889_hsda_fundamental_principles.pdf. We will be making hard copies available for free to those who request them. (We thank those wishing to make a donation to cover the postage.) We are making both the hard and soft copies available for free because we believe the importance of knowing these truths is vital.

You may also scan this QR code to read the book.


Study Guide #1

ONE GOD

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit.

1. There is one God

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, . . ."

A. Who is this one God?

1 Corinthians 8:4-6 ". . . we know . . . that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, . . . to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him. . ."

Ephesians 1:3 "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 4:6 "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

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Brother Jordan Opio preaching in Uganda

Happy sisters in Uganda

Baptism in Kenya

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