

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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“He maketh me to lie
down in green pastures.”





Fundamental Pillars — The Third Angel's Message Part 1

By Allen Stump

The vital neglected part of the third angel's message

⁹ And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. ¹² Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14:9–12)

The third angel's message is a warning against worshipping the beast and his image. It speaks of the wrath of God which shall have no mercy mingled with it. Those who accept this mark will be eternally lost. There is nothing spoken of any stronger in the Bible, but this great message concludes with the assurance that God will have a people who will have victory over the beast and who will keep his commandments and have the faith of Jesus.

As Seventh-day Adventists we know that the mark of the beast will be over the day which God claims as his own, which reveals him as Creator and Redeemer versus the day which Satan has set up in opposition against God. But it is more than worshipping on a day. It ultimately comes down to worshipping the only true God or the god of the beast and his image.

In late November of last year, Pope Leo XIV visited modern day Iznik, anciently Nicaea, to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea.



Pope Leo XIV and Patriarch Bartholomew at modern-day Iznik anciently Nicaea

Writing for *Vatican News*, Christopher Wells noted:

The first Ecumenical Council in the history of the Church took place in 325, in an era of epochal change. After some two hundred fifty years of persecution, the decision of the Emperor Constantine to legalize Christianity allowed Christians to worship in freedom throughout the Roman Empire.

But the freedom for the Church was not without controversy. In the early years of the fourth century, an Alexandrian priest, Arius, provoked a firestorm when he challenged the true divinity of Jesus Christ. For Arius, Jesus was not fully God, but merely a creature—albeit a creature exalted to a position next to God the Father and above all others—and “there was a time when He was not.”

The doctrinal controversy soon swept throughout Christianity, threatening to divide the Church. In response, Constantine called together a universal synod, inviting all the bishops throughout the world.

Most were from the Greek-speaking east, but the

Latin-speaking west was represented by several bishops, as well as the legates of Pope Sylvester, and there were several bishops from beyond the confines of the Roman Empire.

They gathered in the city of Nicaea, not far from the new imperial capital of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), to determine definitively the faith of the Church.

After heated discussions, the bishops—traditionally numbering 318—composed a Symbol or Creed, a written statement of the Christian faith.

The teachings of Arius were definitively rejected with the formula, “We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of one Being [Greek: *homousious*, ‘of the same substance’] with the Father.”

Today, the Council of Nicaea is recognized as authoritative by all Christian Churches and communities, and the Creed proclaimed by the Council, with later additions by the Council of Constantinople, is recited by Christians around the world. (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2025-11/council-nicaea-history-arianism-divinity-christ.html>; brackets in original; last accessed April 16, 2026)

Let us consider a portion of the creed:

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, ***eternally*** begotten of the Father Light from Light, true God from true God, ***begotten, not made***; of one Being [Greek: *homousious*, ‘of ***the same substance***’] ***with the Father***.” (Emphasis supplied)

Notice the word *homousious*. In this context it does not mean two beings with identical substances, like two different men each having human flesh, but rather one being of the same substance.

What does *eternally begotten* mean? According to The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler, Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip:

It was apparently Athanasius, who was a secretary to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria at the time, who came up with the phrase “eternally begotten,” to describe the co-eternal existence of Christ, the Son, with the Father. He was trying to defend the early Trinitarian theology of the time, that Jesus the Christ had to be completely and eternally equal to the Father. For Athanasius, Jesus could not be lesser than the Father in any way; Jesus had to be of the same substance and of the same eternity.

Thus, the addition of the word, “eternally” to “begotten.” Yes, Jesus is the Son of God, but he has also always existed with (and as) God. He is as eternal as the Father. His relationship as the Son is “eternal,” which is to

say the relationship is “outside time.” God has always been Father, and Jesus has always been Son.

The argument can seem tedious and tiny, but it was critical to sustaining what would become the doctrine of the Trinity, that God is truly, and always, and eternally, three; there is no hierarchy within the Trinity. (<https://www.cathedralatl.org/sermons/what-does-eternally-begotten-mean/>)

According to Charles Lee Irons, PhD, writing for the Christian Research Institute:

The doctrine [of Eternal Generation] is important also because it is the linchpin of the doctrine of the Trinity. The classical doctrine of the Trinity states that within the one, undivided nature of God, there are three persons — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The divine nature is not divided into three parts, nor are there three gods; rather, the divine nature is one, simple, and undivided. (<https://www.equip.org/articles/begotten-father-ages/>; emphasis supplied)

Let me state this carefully. The Bible does not teach that Jesus is eternal, in the absolute sense of the Father, according to the way most use the term. He was certainly brought forth before other things existed. Speaking of Christ under the symbol of wisdom, we read:¹

²² The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. ²³ I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. ²⁴ When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: (Proverbs 8:22–25)

Some other translations put it this way:

²⁵ “Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth (born: footnote); (NASB95)

²⁵ before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, (NIV)

²⁵ Before the mountains were formed, before the hills, I was born— (NLT)

Jesus, in the most well-known verse among Christians, said he was the “only begotten Son” in John 3:16, and he taught he lived in subordination to the Father.

³⁰ I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. (John 5:30)

²⁸ Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. (John 8:28)

¹ See 1 Corinthians 1:30.

²⁸ Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. (John 14:28)

The third angel opens with the warning about worshipping the beast and his image and receiving the beast's mark in the forehead or hand. Worship is the great issue in the book of Revelation, and the issue of worship is the center of the third angel's message. The day we worship points to the God we worship, and Sunday is the day dedicated to the worship of the so-called Trinity.

With few exceptions, the worship of the Trinity and Sunday go hand in hand. The Trinity, like Sunday, is not biblical. As Catholic apologist Graham Green noted:

Our opponents [Protestants] sometimes claim that no belief should be held dogmatically which is not explicitly stated in scripture (ignoring that it is only on the authority of the Church we recognize certain Gospels and not others as true). But the Protestant churches have themselves accepted such dogmas as the Trinity for which there is no such precise authority in the Gospels. . . (Graham Green, "The Catholic Church's New Dogma: The Assumption Of Mary," *Life*, October 30, 1950)

The Mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 16)

This is also freely admitted by Adventism:

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

Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity. (*Adventist Review*, vol. 158, no. 31, p. 4; undated but published in July 1981)

The *linchpin* of the Trinity, that which is critical to sustaining it, denies that Jesus is really the begotten Son of God. Yes, they use those words but outside of what they really mean. Satan does not insist you worship the Trinity if he can get you to deny that Jesus is NOT the only begotten Son of God.

Others take a different approach. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is a son by creation, that he is the first and highest creation of God the Father, and that the Father put creative power into the Son. They quote Revelation 3:14 to help sustain this.

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; (Revelation 3:14)

Even Uriah Smith in 1865, noted in his very first edition of *Thoughts Critical and Practical on Revelation* noted:

Moreover he is the "beginning of the creation of God." Not the beginner, but the beginning, of the creation, the first created being, dating his existence back before any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God. (Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, 1865 ed., p. 59)

Why are the Jehovah's Witnesses and at one time Smith wrong? We begin with the Greek word, ἀρχή (*archē*), which is translated *beginning* in Revelation 3:14. This word can have either a passive or an active sense. Taken passively, it refers to that which is acted upon at the beginning. So interpreted here, it would mean that Christ was the first creature created. But this obviously could not be the correct translation, for Christ is not a created being. Taken actively, *archē* refers to that which initiates an action, a first cause, a prime mover. So understood here, it declares Christ to be the Creator. Such is plainly the meaning of the present passage, for Christ is

portrayed repeatedly in this same role elsewhere in the New Testament:

¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (Colossians 1:16)

Notice the text says that everything that was ever created, was created by Jesus Christ. In the case of Uriah Smith, he allowed the Bible to be its own interpreter, and in a later addition of his work, he wrote this:

This is, then, the final message to the churches ere the close of probation. And though the description of their condition which he gives to the indifferent Laodiceans is fearful and startling, nevertheless it cannot be denied; for the Witness is "faithful and true." Moreover, he is "the beginning of the creation of God." Some understand by



this language that Christ was the first created being, dating his existence anterior to that of any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God. But the language does not necessarily imply that he was created; for the words, “the beginning of the creation,” may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking, was begun by him. “Without him was not anything made.” Others, however, and more properly we think, take the word ἀρχή to mean the “agent” or “efficient cause,” which is one of the definitions of the word, understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called “the only begotten” of the Father. It would seem utterly inappropriate to apply this expression to any being created in the ordinary sense of that term. For “beginning,” read “beginner.” (Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, p. 371.2; 1897 ed.)

What about the Jehovah’s Witnesses? How do they circumvent this to try to keep Christ as a created being and not the literal begotten Son of God? They have actually changed the Bible to fit their ideas. In Colossians 1:16, they have added a word which totally changes the meaning of the text. In the Jehovah Witness’ Bible, Colossians 1:16 states:

because by means of him all **other** things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him. (New World Translation)

Notice the change? Instead of saying that all things were made by Christ, it says all other things, implying he, too, was created but before he created the rest of things.

What about Hindus and Buddhists? Hindus and Buddhists generally do not believe in Jesus as their own divine Savior, but many hold him in high regard as a great spiritual teacher, saint, or enlightened being.

The Muslims respect and venerate Jesus Christ as a great prophet but not as the Son of God. They consider him to be one of Almighty God’s greatest messengers to humankind. The Quran re-affirms his miraculous birth and his miraculous abilities. Furthermore, his mother, Mary, is regarded as one of the most pure and exalted women of all creation. However, the Quran denies the divinity of Jesus and his status as the only begotten Son of God in several verses. For example:

³. 'Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. 4. 'He begets not, nor is He begotten; (112:3)

Satan does not care what flavor or type of denial you choose, but among professed Christians, the Trinity doctrine is the one tool that has worked best for the devil. It, on one hand, says Jesus is the Son of God which is hard to deny

when the Bible proclaims at least forty times Jesus is the Son of God. On the other hand, if Satan redefines what that means to be what it does not mean, he has still succeeded in his mission to destroy faith in Jesus.

The importance of believing that Jesus is the Son of God was emphasized by the beloved John:

⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

⁹ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:8–10)

God showed, revealed, or manifested his love by sending “his only begotten Son into the world . . . to be the propitiation for our sins.” John is exact in his language. He then continues and writes:

¹¹ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. ¹³ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:11–13)

John is plain; he is exact; he is blunt and says if we have Jesus. Wait, John did not write if “we have Jesus.” Certainly Jesus is the one he is writing about, but he specifically calls him “the Son.” If we have *the Son*, we have life, and if we do not have the Son of God we do not have life. If we fail to see what John is speaking of here, we are missing the whole point of his writing. This, too, was the point of his writing the gospel that bears his name.

³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: ³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:30–31)

The call of the third angel’s message to the worship of the true God and his Son is so important that the issue of antichrist depends upon it. John, again, further writes:

²² Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. ²³ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. (1 John 2:22–23)

The apostle Paul tells us that “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4–5). I want to receive adoption, don’t you?



As God Sees

By Onycha Holt

If you were to visit the Colosseum in Rome, you would walk through an archway into an elliptical amphitheater, where in the AD 80s and onward gladiator fights, staged animal hunts with moveable trees and sets, and executions of criminals took place. The amphitheater seated 90,000 people. A gladiator school was connected to it and had its own smaller amphitheater for people to watch the training take place. The Circus Maximus was also nearby and was the largest arena of the time, seating about 250,000. It was mostly used for chariot races, but executions also took place in the center of the trackway.

Some of the criminals executed in the Colosseum were Christians—men, women, and sometimes children, free and bond, young and old, lettered and non, but only non-Roman Christians. Romans were not allowed to be tortured or publicly humiliated. That is why Paul was beheaded and not thrown to wild beasts and why Ignatius of Antioch was.

The blood of these Christian martyrs has made the Colosseum important to later Christians. Many today, however, walk across the ground of the Colosseum with only a superficial thought to the blood spilled and of the war fought for the hearts and minds of people over the centuries, whose faith pierced the heavens and reached the mighty throne of God and who received in return increased strength, faith, and hope. We can only image the intense drama and the rapt interest of the universe. They watched it all in real time, and God sees it all today as if it were happening at this very moment. He does not forget, even though he has waited long and even though he continues to hold in check the forces of evil until probation forever closes. Then his long-suffering and concern for the impenitent ends, and it will be as declared:

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. (Revelation 16:4–6)

The witness of Christian martyrs impacts us to this day:

When through Satan's malice the servants of Christ have been persecuted, their active labors hindered, when they have been cast into prison, or dragged to the scaffold or to the stake, it was that truth might gain a greater triumph. As these faithful ones sealed their testimony with their blood, souls hitherto in doubt and uncertainty were convinced of the faith of Christ and took their stand courageously for Him. From the ashes of the martyrs has sprung an abundant harvest for God. (Ellen White, *The*

Acts of the Apostles, p. 465.2)

There are many sites in the Roman Empire where Christians were martyred, and many paintings portray the scenes. Sitting atop some of this history is the Vatican City State, which horrendously continued the persecution and martyrdom of the Christian believers begun by pagan Rome.

Live, violent entertainment was a way of life for the ancient Romans and involved the murder of gladiators, criminals, and Christians and involved also the importation of leopards, lions, and elephants for use in the Colosseum. Gore and blood filled the minds of the people, as it does today, and understanding ancient Rome should help us relate to another time of trouble for God's people—the time of Jacob's trouble—but before we leave Rome, let us consider Nero and the burning of Rome.¹ Much of the city was destroyed—private mansions, blocks of tenements, and many temples, as well as art and riches obtained from the victories of war. Many of Nero's contemporaries believed he started the fire in order to rebuild the city after his own personal plan. Inspiration tells us:

A terrible fire about this time occurred in Rome, by which nearly one-half the city was consumed. Nero himself caused the flames to be kindled, and then, to avert suspicion, he made a pretense of great generosity in assisting the homeless and destitute. He was, however, accused of the crime. The people were excited and enraged, and Nero determined to clear himself, and also to rid the city of a class whom he feared and hated, by charging the act upon the Christians.

The Satanic device succeeded. Thousands of the followers of Christ—men, women, and children—were put to death in the most cruel manner. (Ellen White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, pp. 302.4–303.1)

Nero accused the Christians of starting the fire that he himself had started, and so began a ruthless massacre of believers. Thousands of Christians were martyred for their beliefs, but the time of trouble before us will have a different ending, for the promise is given that we shall be saved out of it:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; But he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:7)

Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of

¹ Here is a link for a translation of Tacitus' history of the burning of Rome which is interesting and easy to read—<https://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/tac/a15030.htm>.

God must pass just before Christ's second coming. The prophet Jeremiah, in holy vision looking down to this time, said, "... it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:5-7. (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.1)

When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. When Jesus leaves His position as man's intercessor before God, the solemn announcement is made, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. (Ibid., p. 201.2)

We may shy away from dwelling on this very often, as it is not pleasant to consider, but Jesus has warned us to watch and wait, to pray and study.

The "time of trouble, such as never was," is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 622.4)

But, remember, we shall be saved out of it, and we will not be alone:

Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. (Ibid., p. 627.1)

Paul instructed the Thessalonians:

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. There-

fore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6)

There will be no peace or safety for us, either, unless we fortify our hearts and minds for such a time and unless we learn to trust our heavenly Father and our Saviour, Jesus Christ now.

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 593.2)

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world's Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures. (Ibid., p. 624.1)

Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa

The supernatural events that will soon be revealed may remind some of us of Tecumseh and his brother, Tenskwatawa, Shawnee Indians born in the state of Indiana. Their father was a war chief who died fighting the English in Virginia. Both boys grew up in the angry environment of the white man's encroachment and take-over of their tribal lands. In response, Tecumseh and his people attacked American flatboats on the Ohio River and settlers in their homes. Council meetings between the warring sides took place, and Tecumseh became known as a skillful spokesman for his people, but still the Americans were called dogs by him and still the Indiana Territory Governor, William Henry Harrison, looked at the Indians as cruel enemies. There was no love between them. Tecumseh was familiar with the treaties signed before the War of 1812 and declared them illegal and null and void, and he traveled among tribal leaders to build a united front against the invaders. In the process, forts were assailed, homes were burned, and the War of 1812 broke out, during which Tecumseh was fatally shot, which ended the fragile confederacy he had built and which caused his fellow Indians to simply give up and scatter from the battlefield.

His people considered him a great warrior and hero, and he was even praised by his British and American contemporaries, but Tecumseh's younger brother was not a war hero.

He was not even a warrior, but he was a prominent leader, for he claimed to be a prophet of the Master of Life, and many native people believed he was.

Tenskwatawa supposedly died suddenly in 1805. What caused this sudden experience is hard to say. Some historians believe severe alcohol intoxication had caused a deep coma, but whatever happened, he revived from it during his own funeral and claimed to have been taken to the spirit world and given instructions for his people. He also claimed to be an incarnation of the deity, Manabozho, and as Manabozho, he promised his people plentiful game and the return of their deceased loved ones if they returned to their indigenous ways and stayed away from the white man. People loved what they heard and flocked by the thousands to live near him.

Neolin was a prophet of the Delaware Indians and a contemporary of Tenskwatawa. He also had had a so-called encounter with the "Great Spirit," who declared that the Delaware were being punished for tolerating the Europeans.

There were prophets also in the Seneca, the Wanapum, the Paiute, and the Kickapoo tribes during this time, and in visions these men were told that the tribes were to reject the white man's ways, they were to return to their old lifestyles and traditions, and they were not to not give up their lands. In exchange for obedience, their hunting would improve and their deceased ones would be returned to them.

If we are alive just before Jesus returns, we will face worse deceptions than these:

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion.

Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these **sorceries**, saying: This is "the great power of God." Acts 8:10. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 624.2; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

The Shawnee and other tribes gave heed to the sorceries of their false prophets. Neolin, and others, had an experience, but it was spiritualistic and satanic. Tenskwatawa predicted the Great Spirit would hide the sun, and a solar eclipse did occur, but he also declared certain men were witches and ordered their deaths. Smohalla, a Wanapan, predicted the earth would shake, and an earthquake later occurred, but he also claimed to have died twice and to have been resurrected both times by God, and he "taught that the Native Americans alone were real people, the first created, and that whites, blacks, and Chinese had been created later by God to punish the Native Americans for leaving their ancient ways" (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Smohalla>). It is important to remember that these "prophets" and their followers did not know the God of the Bible nor have his word to protect them from false doctrine and from false prophets, but we do. They were easily deceived. There have been, are, and will be false prophets in this world, but we are blessed with the written words of the Bible, sacred words, to keep and guide us, words such as:

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

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

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10)

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. (Mark 13:22)

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2:1)

It may be hard to recognize a false prophet or a false Christ today because most people usually do not claim to be such. Often they just preach, or teach, or write error, hoping others will follow along. It is easy to identify them in America centuries ago because they claimed to have gone to the spirit world and to have been taught by the Great Spirit himself. Because of this, people followed after them and even relocated to be near them. Why? They were hungering and

thirsting for spiritual guidance and truth, but they had no Bibles. No Bibles as an anchor for truth, no Bibles as the only source of truth, righteousness, and doctrine. The Native Americans only had man's word for so-called truth—Tenskwatawa's and Neolin's, for example.

Our Bibles are also the only true model of behavior, as we see depicted in the righteous lives of Abraham, Noah, Enoch, Elijah, both Johns, and more; and as revealed in the Ten Commandment Law, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of Jesus, and in the counsels to the seven churches of Revelation.

Not only do we read about godly behavior in the Bible, but we also read of doctrine, true doctrine, by which we are to test any tradition or teaching of man. Great signs and wonders have occurred and will continue to occur, it is true, but Satan and his followers can also perform so-called miracles. Miracles can be a revelation of the power of God, but they cannot be a test of truth. Only God's word is:

To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, It is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)

And in God's word we read of another test:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try (*dokimazo*: test) the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1–4)

We are also to consider the fruits of men. One way we can recognize the true from the false is by what is done:

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:16–20)

These quotations help us to discern the false from the true in prophets and in what is prophesied. The Bereans eagerly heard what Paul preached, but they went home and tested what they heard with Scripture to see if the things were so:

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

We should also remember:

Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 625.3)

The gift of prophecy and the spirit of prophecy

Paul wrote about the gift of prophecy, and John wrote about the spirit of prophecy. In both instances, the Greek word for prophecy is the same—*prōphēteia*—and it means the God-given ability of men to interpret God's will or purpose and/or the message itself.

About both the gift and the spirit of prophecy, we read:

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; (Romans 12:6)

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: (1 Corinthians 12:10)

... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10)

And in Revelation, we read the following about the testimony of Jesus:

Who bare record of the word of God, and of the **testimony** of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (Revelation 1:2)

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the **testimony** of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:9)

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the **testimony** of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the **testimony** of Jesus: worship God: for the **testimony** of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19:10)

Each occurrence of the word *testimony* in the King James version of the book of Revelation is a translation from the same Greek word, *martyria*, from which we get the English word *martyr*, and this Greek word can mean a witness or testimony found in action or deed, such as the actual death of a martyr, or it can mean the witness or testimony that is spoken or prophesied. We have read in Revelation 12:17 that the remnant have the testimony of Jesus, and Revelation 19:10 explains that this testimony is the spirit of prophecy. So, the spirit of prophecy is part and parcel of the remnant. In Revelation 12:17, the spirit of prophecy is also placed side by side with the keeping of the commandments of God. The remnant have both qualities. This is important, for we know how Satan hates the law of God and how he has sought to change it and to say it is not binding on us today, and we can be expect the same from him concerning the spirit of prophecy, especially that given for these last days. In fact, we have been told:

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." [Proverbs 29:18.] Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead and mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions, as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 6, Lt 12, 1890, par. 45)

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 211.1)

The more sure word of prophecy

The Scriptures are the surest words we can ever hold in our hands. Peter said he was eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus Christ and that he heard the voice of the Father saying this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. These are things to which he could testify. He saw the majesty; he

heard the words, but he tells us there is something more sure:

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: (2 Peter 1:16–19)

The Greek word translated *more sure* is *bebaios* and means reliable, trustworthy, firm, or dependable. It is also translated confirmed or established in the following verses:

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed (*bebaios*) in you. (1 Corinthians 1:6)

Now he which stablisheth (*bebaios*) us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; (2 Corinthians 1:21)

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished (*bebaios*) in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:7)

These collected meanings of *bebaios* give us an understanding for the word, and when we add the Greek grammar used, we understand better what Peter is saying. In 1 Peter 1:19, *bebaios* is connected grammatically with the verb, *have*, and not with the noun, *prophecy*.¹ There is something we *have* that is more sure, and that is God's word:

To our untutored minds it often seems that no evidence of truth is so weighty and impressive as that of miracles. We often think that could we but see one blind eye opened by the mere touch of Christ, or one dead body raised by his mere word, we should at once be convinced of his "advent" and "power." (Samuel Cox, "From Starlight to Sunlight," *The Expositor*, vol. 1, p. 176, Samuel Cox, ed.; 1875)

But Dr. Cox explains that Peter did not consider miracles in this way:

He had both seen and wrought miracles, and he was aware how slight and transient was the moral effect they produced. Like the other writers of the Bible, he lays comparatively little stress on them: to him, as to them, miracles are not worthy to be compared to any moral virtue or any spiritual power. Just as St. Paul argues that the miraculous gifts are as nothing to the love which may glow in the bosom of the least gifted of men, so St. Peter affirms that miracles, even in their most splendid and dazzling form, are as nothing to "the word" of truth

¹ Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 2 Peter 1:19

which is in all our hands. St. Paul knew a more excellent and desirable way of life than the exercise of the most rare and stupendous miraculous powers; and St. Peter knew a sounder basis for faith than that of signs and wonders. He had seen our Lord Jesus Christ receive honour and glory from God the Father in the holy mount; he had been dazzled and carried out of himself by visions and voices from heaven [at the transfiguration]: but, nevertheless, even when his memory and heart are throbbing with recollections of that sublime scene, he says, “We have something surer still” in “the prophetic word.” Marvels are like meteors, most brilliant and astonishing while they last; but their force is soon spent, their light soon extinguished: we cannot see to walk by them, nor to do our work. And his own experience furnishes the most expressive commentary on his words: for while he was on the holy mount, amid the full blaze of miraculous glory, “he wist not what he said,” and was for putting Moses and Elijah on a level with his Master; and when he came down from the mount, he wist not what he had been taught, and was for bringing his Master down to the level of ordinary manhood, counselling Him to pay the Temple-tax, from which, as the beloved Son of God, He surely was exempt. It was not the miracles of Christ by which he came to know Christ, but the word of Christ as interpreted by the Spirit of Christ. Miracles might arrest and astonish us; but only the word of truth, in our hearts and in our lives, can really save and renew us. (Ibid., pp. 176–177)

In other words and to reiterate, we have something more sure than miracles—the words of Scripture itself. The prophetic words they had in Scripture were made more established, more trustworthy. Until this time the prophecies concerning Christ had been accepted by faith, but they were made more sure when combined with the miracles Peter, James, and John had experienced on the Mount of Transfiguration. These miracles did not make the prophecies truer (they were already true) but more established and confirmed in their minds. The KJV expresses it as “more sure.” They stood firmer and clearer, as when something in a dark place is made clear by light. Other translations say:

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed . . . (ESV)

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed . . . (NKJV)

And we have more firm the prophetic word . . . (YLT)

Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. (NLT)

We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed . . . (CSB)

We have not personally heard and seen such things as Peter, James, and John did at the transfiguration or as Saul did

on his way to Damascus; yet, every time we hold the word of God in our hands, every time we open it and read it, we are experiencing something more magnificent, more sure than what they physically experienced on the mount or on the road to Damascus. No other word accurately predicts the rise and fall of nations as Daniel 2, no other predicts the birth and life of the Messiah as Daniel 9 and Isaiah 53, and no other foretells the work of Jesus in the most holy place as Daniel 8:14. No other shapes the lives of men as the words of the Sermon on the Mount and the words of the parables of Jesus. No other word teaches men to be men of service, men of charity, and men of obedience, and none other gives hope, reasoned faith, and courage and at the same time warns of wrath to come. This word is placed in our hands by God himself. It is his gift. He sends it with love.

The context of 2 Peter 1:19 is the prophecies about the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” which Peter had “made known” to them that had “obtained like precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1), and Paul explained the same prophecies to the Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul, Peter, James, and John never doubted their miraculous encounters with Jesus. They were real and true. These experiences changed them and propelled them to share the gospel through hardship, deprivation, and even in the face of death. Poignantly, Peter wanted to make sure his fellow believers understood before “his decease” (2 Peter 1:15) that no matter how wonderful and true such encounters were to him, God’s words of prophecy are more wonderful, dependable and trustworthy.

The prophetic voice not only speaks of the future but also expresses great truths of salvation and of God in the language of mortal man. Consider this description of the death of Christ:

The principalities and powers of darkness were assembled around the cross, casting the hellish shadow of unbelief into the hearts of men. When the Lord created these beings to stand before His throne, they were beautiful and glorious. Their loveliness and holiness were in accordance with their exalted station. They were enriched with the wisdom of God, and girded with the panoply of heaven. They were Jehovah’s ministers. But who could recognize in the fallen angels the glorious seraphim that once ministered in the heavenly courts?

Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing.

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His

faith and His submission to God. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ’s brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 760.3–761.2)

As we read further in the next few pages of *The Desire of Ages*, we find important principles that are “at stake in the great controversy,” principles upon which hang “the eternal destiny of the soul” (White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 141.2). Some principles mentioned in these pages are:

Principles 1–4—Justice does not destroy mercy; sin can be forgiven; the law is righteous; and the law can be perfectly obeyed:

By His life and His death, **God’s justice did not destroy His mercy**, but that **sin could be forgiven**, and that **the law is righteous**, and **can be perfectly obeyed**. Satan’s charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.4)

Principles 5–7—Mercy did not destroy justice; the law is changeless; and we are saved only through obedience to the precepts of the law:

Another deception was now to be brought forward. **Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice**, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father’s law. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan’s control. It was because **the law was changeless**, because **man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts**, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. (Ibid., p. 762.5)

Principle 8—Some specification of the law has been set aside by substituting human law for God’s law:

That the law which was spoken by God’s own voice is faulty, that **some specification has been set aside**, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. *It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world*. He needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained. For “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan’s power. By **substituting human law for God’s law**, Satan will seek to control the world. *This work is foretold in prophecy*. **Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan**, it is declared, “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand.” Daniel 7:25. (Ibid., p. 763.1)

Principle 9—Every person will choose either to obey the law of God or the laws of men:

The warfare against God’s law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. **All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men**. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

Then the end will come. *God will vindicate His law and deliver His people*. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. *Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch*, (Malachi 4:1),—Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, “Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God . . . I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” Then “the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;” “they shall be as though they had not been.” Ezekiel 28:6–19; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. (Ibid., p. 763.3–.4)

Principle 10—We reap what we have sown:

This [destruction] is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy **reap that which they have sown**. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is “alienated from the life of God.” Christ says, “All they that hate Me love death.” Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. **God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles**. This accomplished, **they receive the results of their own choice**. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very

presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. (Ibid., p. 764.1)

Principle 11—The completed plan of redemption reveals the character of God to all created intelligences:

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this [that we reap what we sow]. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A *doubt* of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. **Then**, the plan of redemption having been completed, **the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences.** *The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable.* Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. (Ibid., pp. 764.2–.3)

And here is a most important point, perhaps the most important of the article. For all the created beings of the universe the character of God was not completely understood at the death of Christ. There was more that had to be done to erase all doubt from the minds of his created beings concerning his character, though at the cross all sympathy **for Satan** was ended: "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. . . . The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken" (White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 760.3–761.2).

The last link was broken. Satan murdered the Son of God in a most detestable way. Any remaining sympathy for the being they knew as Lucifer was gone. Any indecision in their minds was now erased, individually, for every being. Every mind was made up and made up permanently, but this was only for an angel they once loved. There still remained, and remains, a doubt about God, a doubt that unless totally eradicated will endure as a seed that will germinate again sometime in the eons of the future. Every human mind must make a decision either for or against God, and every being in the universe must also. It **is** a great controversy. It involves you and me and all of humanity. That is great enough. But it also involves every other created being in the universe, a universe so big it is beyond our comprehension. Let us consider again some of the words we have read:

The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the

question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion **will be cut off. . . . I will destroy thee**, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." Then **"the wicked shall not be:** yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;" . . .

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. (Ibid., pp. 763.3–764.1)

This is what the universe still does not fully comprehend—that the destruction of the wicked is not an arbitrary act on God's part. So, God allows time for the characters of the wicked to be fully developed so that it is fully shown and clearly understood that they themselves have chosen their own fate and that God has not arbitrarily done it for them.

You may have wondered why an evil person continues to live to do evilly, to hurt innocent people, to kill, maim, and destroy. Why doesn't God do something? This is why.

God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their **characters** and reveal their **principles**. This is for the eternal security of the universe so no doubt remains. This is why evil continues, but there will come a point when time on this old earth will come to an end, and even Satan will bow his knee and confess that God is just. (See Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, page 670.2.)

To repeat, it will not be until the great controversy is ended and the great plan of salvation is completed that the character of God is revealed fully to all his created intelligences. God is finally vindicated, and all understand. Up to this point, the intelligences had not been entirely sure. A seed of doubt still lingered, but as they watched **us**, they learned more and more about the character of God and of his love not just for his people but for the wicked also. They now can see clearly that men truly do reap what they have sown.

None of us is important in the grand flow of things from the world's point of view. We don't move governments, stop wars, or cure the incurable, but we are individual lights, dim though they may seem to be in our families who care not or to scoffing neighbors and acquaintances, but they shine, brothers and sisters, straight and true to the hearts and minds of those in the universe. They care; they watch, and when the great controversy between Satan and Jesus is over, they will understand that **all** reap what they have sown. God does not make arbitrary decisions for us. If Satan and his an-

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Youth's Corner—Necessity of Thorough Bible Study

(The following article was taken from the The Youth's Instructor of February 19, 1879)

We are fast entering the perils of the last days, when views which conflict with the word of God will be presented by men of giant intellects, and we ought to be able to show the falsity of their claims. Our children also should be thoroughly furnished with Bible truth, so that they will not be moved by every new doctrine that is presented in their hearing.

Many parents do not see the necessity that their children should be so particular in learning their Sabbath-school lessons, and often neglect to give them the proper assistance of encouragement. The great object of thoroughness in the study of the Bible is that they may understand why they believe as they do, and that when the test shall come and the question be asked, "Will you obey God, or will you yield to the requirements of the world?" they will decide to serve God, because by studying his word they have learned to love him and his truth.

We desire that the youth shall be able to say, We have become familiar with the Scriptures, and we see that it is of the highest importance that we be obedient to the truth of God found in his word. We want the little children to understand the Bible, and grow up in the knowledge of the truth. And we as parents do not wish to be found among those who do not see the necessity of their children's understanding the Scriptures for themselves, and who are therefore negligent and cause their children to be negligent; but we want to be in earnest in these matters, and search the Scriptures, and see that our children search them. Christ said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." We should become firm in the truth, the word of God, which testifies of Him in whom all our hopes of everlasting life are centered. If you would know how to imitate the spotless life and character of Christ, obtain a knowledge of him as presented in the word of God.

The apostle says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If, therefore, you would be thus thoroughly furnished, and "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a rea-

son of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," study the Bible with all diligence.

The teachers in our Sabbath-schools should be God-fearing men and women who can have an interest in the spiritual condition of the members of their classes, as well as see that they have good lessons. They should be connected with God, and should feel it a duty to pray with and for each pupil in their classes.

The Sabbath-school teacher who is faithful in little things is preparing himself for a higher responsibility. We should be faithful in everything. It is a sin to forget. Many are heard again and again to excuse themselves for some gross error, by saying that they forgot. Have they not intellectual powers? and is it not a duty to discipline their minds to be retentive? It is a sin to neglect. If you form a habit of negligence you will find at last that you have neglected your own soul's salvation, and are unready for the kingdom of God.

Parents and teachers, let us awake to our duty; let us sense the responsibility of our position, and take hold of the Sabbath-school work with more zeal and earnestness, that God can approve of our efforts, and that our children may lay up sound knowledge, and with us be prepared for the future immortal life.

Punctuality

(The following article was taken from the The Youth's Instructor of March 19, 1879)

It is a sad failing with many that they are always behind time on Sabbath morning. They are very particular about their own time, they cannot afford to lose an hour of that; but the Lord's time, the only day out of the seven that the Lord claims as his, and requires us to devote to him, quite a portion of this is squandered away by sleeping late in the morning. In this they are robbing God. It causes them to be behind in everything; it makes confusion in the family; and finally results in the tardiness of the entire family at Sabbath-school, and perhaps at meeting. Now why can we not rise early with the birds, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God? Try it, brethren and sisters. Have your preparations all made the day before, and come promptly to the Sabbath-school and meeting, and you will thereby not only benefit others, but you will reap rich blessings for yourselves.



The Gospel through the Sanctuary: Steps to the Father 2

By Zaddoch Opiyo Ponde

It is important to notice that the earthly sanctuary was made up of the furniture, the sacrifices, the coverings, and the ministers, which include the high priest, the other priests, and Levites. The services were to be done within a stipulated length of time marked by the feast days. The entire plan of salvation was to be worked out between the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. In the antitypical sanctuary, we have the Son of God as the high priest, the angels minister to fallen humanity, and those of us who accept the grace of Christ are also called into the ministry of reconciliation.

In our last study we focused on the ministers within the sanctuary and were able to realize that in order to get to the Father, we need the ministry of Christ, the high priest, the angels (priests), and that of fellow human beings who have accepted Christ.

In this study we shall delve into the articles of the sanctuary and through these articles understand better how we can advance and bridge the gap between man and God.

We are told about Jesus, that as a child the first time he beheld the sanctuary services he would be lost into thoughts. The more he looked at it, the more he saw the meaning of the sanctuary.

For the first time the child Jesus looked upon the temple. He saw the white-robed priests performing their solemn ministry. He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With the worshipers He bowed in prayer, while the cloud of incense ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 78.1)

We are further told that:

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative Judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. (Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 312)

We are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to us. The sanctuary in Heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to our view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of

time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all who have received the light, both old and young, should thoroughly investigate these subjects, and be able to give an answer to every one that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them. (Ibid., p. 313.1)

The altar of burnt offering

As soon as the sinner enters the sanctuary courtyard, he is brought into contact with the altar of burnt offering. This was about nine feet square and nearly five and a half feet in height. It was overlaid with brass and was, as its name implies, used for the purpose of offering up sacrifices to God. (See Exodus 27:1-8; 37:1-7, 8.)

When the sinner came to the altar, he offered the sacrifice. The altar was a symbol of sacrifice and self denial. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Those who desire to follow Jesus must understand that the first step into Christianity is self denial and cross-bearing. They must with Christ deny self and take up the cross. We fast forward to see the 144,000 following the Lamb whithersoever he goes: "... these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Revelation 14:4).

They must be crucified with Christ, as Paul says "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Death to self is the first step into a Christian walk with Christ. No one can advance in their Christian walk without experiencing self-surrender and death to self. Those who are offered as a sacrifice upon the altar, are renewed in their minds. Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). That means they receive a new mind. This is the Spirit of Christ. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

They, therefore, are having the mind of Christ. They are justified by faith through Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). This is the mind of the Father that was given to Christ.

Death experience

Without death in the natural world of a seed, there is no growth. Using this truth as an illustration, the Saviour said,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

Not any single Christian can produce fruit or experience an increase without going through a death experience. The sanctuary instills in us a fundamental foundation of Christian growth.

In the ministry of Christ, his death was as the casting of one seed into the ground, and it is through this sole sacrifice that we are or through which we are now called into the family of God as sons and daughters of God. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

The Father knew the principle of multiplication was in death. As Christians, our faith and Christian experience cannot multiply if we live selfishly. We must allow self to die. We must be crucified with Christ. We must die to self that Christ may live. If we die with Christ and he lives in us through his abiding word, then when trials and temptations come our way, it is Christ's life, his word in us, that has now become a personality that lives and responds and reacts. We all know as Bible students that if someone who is declared dead begins to speak, then we are dealing with spiritualism, which is the spirits of Satan pretending as dead friends and relatives. We must desist from such deceptions. Even so in our Christian walk, when the old man keeps reacting and speaking, then we truly are not dead, and that is spiritualism. When we are dead to self, we are truly dead. We might miss the mark, but Christ, through his angels, will daily help us to see and tap into the power availed through his death to overcome the enemy.

At the end of time, the 144,000 are described as the first-fruits, meaning they are a produce that comes as a result of the death of a seed. We cannot manage the perfection of Christian character if we do not die to self.

The sinner was to individually bring a lamb, confess his sin on the head of the lamb, which was without blemish, and then kill the lamb. “And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering” (Leviticus 4:25). The process of the transfer of the blood signified the process of transfer of sin from the sinner into the sanctuary.

Here the theology of sin is clearly outlined. The sinner confessed their individual actions but not the actions of Adam or any of their forefathers. They took responsibility of their individual actions and did not expect to walk out of the sanctuary with a different nature but, rather, as a forgiven person.

The fire is lit today by God himself (Mark 9:43–48; Revelation 20:9) and is not to be quenched (Leviticus 6:13). It

consumed that which typified sin, and as the fires were continually burning, it has been called “the altar of continual atonement” (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 353.2).

Sin separates man from God, and all sin must be put away before the sinner can have at-one-ment with God. Therefore, the work done upon this altar was a symbol of the final destruction of sin which will be necessary before the redeemed can enjoy their eternal inheritance. This whole process symbolized the death of Christ on the cross.

¹⁰ We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. ¹¹ For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. ¹² Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. ¹³ Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (Hebrews 13:10–13)

The ashes were first taken up by the priest and placed “beside the altar” on the east side (Leviticus 6:10). When the time came to remove them from beside the altar, the priest laid aside his priestly robes, and “put on other garments;” then he carried the ashes forth without the camp, and poured them out in “a clean place” (Ezekiel 28:18–19). Ashes are all that will remain of sin, the devil, and sinners after the fires of the last day have finished their work. When the purifying fires of the Lord have removed the last trace of sin, there will appear a new earth, a clean place, without one taint of sin upon it; and as the righteous walk over the face of the clean, pure earth, the ashes of sin and all that clung to sin in this earth will be under their feet. Truly the type will then have met its antitype, and the ashes of all sin will be in “a clean place.” (Stephen N Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, p. 176.4)

Christ is our pascal lamb. “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

The high priest also herein offered his sacrifice:

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; ² And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. ³ Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. (Leviticus 16:1–3)

The altar of burnt offering represented the sacrifice of Christ, and no prayer or praise is acceptable to God except it be kindled in the heart Jesus.

And what was the meaning and purpose of these

things? Let us see: When any of the children of Israel had “done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which should not be done,” and so was “guilty,” then “of his own voluntary will” he brought to the door of the tabernacle his sacrificial lamb. Before the lamb was offered in sacrifice the individual who had brought it laid his hands upon its head and confessed his sins and it was “accepted for him to make atonement for him.” Then he who had brought the lamb and confessed his sins slew it. Its blood was caught in a basin. Some of the blood was sprinkled round about upon the altar of burnt offering,” which was at the door of the tabernacle; some of it was put “upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation;” some of it was sprinkled “seven times before the Lord before the veil of the sanctuary;” and all the rest of it was poured out “at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” The lamb itself was burnt upon the altar of burnt offering. And of all this service, it is written in conclusion: “and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.” The service was similar in case of the sin and confession of the whole congregation. Also there was a similar service, a continual service morning and evening, in behalf of the whole congregation. But whether the services were individual or general, the conclusion of it was always declared to be “The priest shall make an atonement for him [or them], and it shall be forgiven him.” See Leviticus chapters 1–5. (A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 63.2)

Let us crucify self, that in our hearts may grow up a strong love for Christ and for one another. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, February 24, 1903, par. 13)

Now is our time to prepare to meet Christ. God has given us this time, and if we use it in self-gratification instead of in crucifying self by sacrifice, we shall come up to the Judgment unprepared. (Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1901, par. 15)

Those who are willing to make any sacrifice for eternal life, will have it; and it will be worth suffering for, worth crucifying self for, and sacrificing every idol for. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory swallows up everything and eclipses every earthly pleasure. (Ellen White, *Counsels for the Church*, p. 42.3)

Are we crucifying self? Are we growing up into the full stature of men and women in Christ, preparing to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross? (Ellen White, *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 285.6)

Only those who die to self grow in Christ. Attempted growth without death to the seed is unnatural and impossible. Christians who struggle to produce fruits of righteousness without coming into the death experience do

not yet understand the gospel. This is true justification by faith.

It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of self is to be made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves. Therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him. Only by constant renunciation of self and dependence on Christ can we walk safely. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 159.4)

This is just as far as the sinner went in the sanctuary service. The rest of the services in the sanctuary concerning the other articles of furnishing he followed by faith.

The brazen laver

A most important step of service before the priests would enter into the holy place or the tabernacle was the washing or bathing. God gave instructions that a brazen basin, or laver, should be placed at the entrance porch of the sanctuary.

¹⁷ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹⁸ Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. ¹⁹ For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: ²⁰ When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: ²¹ So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations. (Exodus 30:17–21)

How important was the washing? Very important, for without it the priests and Aaron would die, if they entered the sanctuary. Sin brought the separation between the sinner and God, and it still does. God is keen on symbols typifying the removal of sin. No one comes into the Father's presence with sin. Every step has an element of removing sin or transferring sin. The problem is sin, and that is why understanding sin as a choice and not nature is so important, so vital to our salvation. Those who misunderstand the theology of sin, misunderstand or destroy the sanctuary unknowingly to them.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. (Isaiah 52:11)

The priests could not themselves officiate in the presence of God while unclean. They were called holy, as are Christ

and his angels. The priests could not officiate before the Father except they overcame sin and had victory over it.

⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:5, 9)

Elsewhere Paul tells the church:

¹⁶ What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:16–18)

Those who minister before the Father and to the world as ambassadors of Christ must be cleansed before they commence their ministry. Self-scrutiny and examination, confession of sin, and repentance are necessary before pastors, elders, evangelists, or any such persons go forth to share the gospel to a perishing world.

⁶ I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: ⁷ That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. (Psalm 26:6–7)

This was what Christ was to the world, a blameless lamb: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

The water represents the Holy Spirit of Christ:

³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:38–39)

And that Spirit is righteousness, “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Romans 8:10).

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

The Spirit of God is in his word, and so by the word we are cleansed. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

This washing basin was brazen and made of women’s looking glasses: “And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Exodus 38:8).

The word of God is also seen as a looking glass, and so is the law referred to as a mirror. It is for self examination. We have to spend time looking at ourselves against the word of God and his law before we proceed to minister to the world.

²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:23–25)

We are also told that “for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20), and that by beholding we become changed: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The word of God is the mirror that reveals sin, the grace of God working through the Spirit in the word is the power that cleanses the sinner from sin.

Every minister of the word must experience the word as an agent through which God gets them ready for ministry. A daily study of his word prepares our lives to be living epistles read of all men. Paul wrote that Christ “might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26).

E. J. Waggoner, writing in the United Kingdom edition of *The Present Truth*, notes, after quoting Ephesians 5:26 from the Revised Version:

The margin has, “Greek, laver,” for washing, showing what was symbolised by the laver in the earthly sanctuary. Some versions have it, “cleansed by a water bath in the Word.” If we believe the Word, we have the witness of the Spirit. (E. J. Waggoner, *The Present Truth*, December 26, 1895, p. 818.3)

The sanctuary is a routine manual on how to build character for eternity.

The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter’s trade with His father Joseph. His trade was significant. He had come into the world as the character builder, and as such all His work was perfect. Into all His secular labor He brought the same perfection as into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. He is our pattern. (White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 345.2)

Satan cannot hold the dead in his grasp when the Son of God bids them live. He cannot hold in spiritual death one soul who in faith receives Christ’s word of power. God is saying to all who are dead in sin, “Awake thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead.” Ephesians 5:14. That word is eternal life. As the word of God which bade the first man live, still gives us life; as Christ’s word, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise,” gave life to the youth of Nain, so that word, “Arise from the dead,” is life to the soul that receives it. God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Colossians 1:13. It is all offered us in His word. If we receive the word, we have the deliverance. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 320.2)

To Be Continued



Parenting God’s Way

By Sheri Stump

Self-esteem or self-respect

How different are the values being taught children today than they were in the past. The three “R’s” of a few generations ago were: 1. Respect for the fundamental dignity of every human being. 2. Responsibility for one’s own actions, a willingness to carry out tasks assigned by authority figures, and 3. Resourcefulness to tough it out and try, try, again.

Grandma’s goals for her children were to develop character in her children, to teach the child a set of values essential to good citizenship on earth and in heaven.

Grandma taught her children task responsibility by involving them in household duties. She insisted that her children accept accountability for their own behavior. Grandma expected her children to do their own homework, solve their own problems and entertain themselves when they had free time.

Grandma believed that she was raising and training her children to be independent, godly, and mature adults. She did as little as possible for her children so that they would learn to stand on their own two feet when they became adults.

Grandma expected her children to fight their own battles, and to lie in the beds which they made by their own choices and behavior. All too often today’s parents are found fighting their children’s battles, and lying in the beds their children have made by their poor choices. The children do not pay for their own mistakes; they let their parents pay.

Grandma was determined that her children would learn good manners, which are tangible demonstrations of respect for others. Grandma understood that respect for others, not

great self-esteem, defines emotional health. She knew that in the course of treating others with respect, a person slowly develops a sense of personal dignity, or self-respect, as they make a positive contribution to others in need.

Self-esteem and self-respect are not synonyms. They are quite opposite. Self-respect develops as one treats others with respect and dignity, no matter their station in life. As respect is given away, self-respect grows within. This becomes a healthy cycle. As one treats others with respect, self-respect develops, thus enhancing one’s respectful treatment of others, and so on. As the common saying goes: What goes around, comes around, and we reap what we sow. Galatians 6:7 says: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

On the other hand, a child develops self-esteem by getting what he wants, not by giving. Self-esteem is developed in the child by people who do things for the child, praising the child, crediting the child for undeserved success experiences, and encouraging the child to do for themselves what they want because he or she is so important. As self-esteem grows, respect for others diminishes. There are phrases that exhibit this thinking, such as look out for number one, if you don’t watch out for yourself no one else will, and to thine own self be true.

While the gospel constantly sanctifies and ennobles the receiver, it will never lead us to cherish selfish and exalted ideas of our own ability or merit in contrast with that of others. It never nurtures pride and self-esteem. Every soul who sees Christ as he is, will abase self. He will exalt the Saviour as the “chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.” (Ellen White, *Christian Education*, p. 201.2)

Self-respect springs from a generous heart, while the heart of the child with high self-esteem is selfish.

The child with high self-esteem has an insatiable craving for attention, recognition, status, dominance, and no amount of these will ever be enough. For people with high self-esteem, it’s all about what other people can and should be doing for them.

The person with high self-respect does the best job they can do because his sense of dignity will allow no less, and by doing a good job, he contributes to the well-being of others.

How do children develop high self-esteem? Mainly by parents and grandparents who think and act as though the world and all activities revolve around the children. Children today are generally not expected to participate in household chores. Often children are rewarded for doing nothing but existing. An unearned allowance is given them. These children are petted and pampered and rewarded and entertained from their first breath. I see families who take pictures of their children constantly and post them on Face-

book or show them to friends and family. The children pose for these pictures, which is often at the instruction of the parents. The little children learn quickly what is praise worthy, and they naturally enjoy the attention and praise. I believe these parents love their children and do not realize the long-term consequences of featuring their children to family and friends on Facebook. The children are being taught that they are important and their self-esteem is encouraged. As adults these petted children will face terrible reality checks, as they will not receive the pampering and petting as adults that they received in childhood.

Many fond parents make a mistake in giving their children special attentions, in petting, praising, and flattering them, and relieving them from duties they should be taught to do quite young. Parents will frequently call the attention of visitors to their children. They will exhibit their smartness, and urge forward their children for the purpose of receiving praise and commendation from them, of their children's capabilities and good qualities. The visitors think that as a matter of course they must say something in praise of these petted children, or they will be thought uncourteous. All this kind of education of children has a direct tendency to make them vain and to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. (Ellen White, *The Youth's Instructor*, March 1, 1873, par. 1)

The Bible says in Romans 12:3: For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Pride, self-esteem, and boldness are marked characteristics of the children of this day, and they are the curse of the age. When I see this un-Christlike, unlovely manifestation on every side, and then see parents and teachers seeking to display the ability and proficiency of their children and scholars, I am pained to the heart; for I know that it is exactly the opposite course from the one that should be pursued. (Ellen White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 45.2)

Your self-esteem must be overcome. You must learn to esteem others better than yourself. Your exalted opinion of your own acquirements must be given up, and you must obtain a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 301.1)

To be fit for heaven our children must be taught to esteem others more highly than they esteem themselves. Parents who truly love their children will teach them humility. They will not encourage pride and self-love in their children. We should take counsel from Grandma who understood how to grow a baby into a good citizen for earth and heaven.



Marriage Morsel

By Sheri Stump

Marriage can be a beautiful journey but it requires effort, understanding, and commitment from both spouses. While the initial stages of love can be exhilarating, maintaining a healthy marriage requires continuous work and dedication. Today we live in a work oriented world. We must pay bills so we must work and most lifestyles today requires the man and the woman to work eight to ten hours each day. The pressures of life, punching the clock at work and children's activities often create a serious challenge to married couples. How can you find time to nurture the marriage relationship amid busy schedules and responsibilities. Even worse: How can you build and maintain a relationship with your Heavenly Father when you are overwhelmed day by day with work and activities? However, with conscious effort and effective communication, couples can build a strong foundation and keep their marriages healthy and thriving. And, God has promised to give wisdom to us when we ask for it. He will help you rearrange if necessary, your busy schedules to prioritize your marriage and your relationship with God.

Here are twelve ways to build a strong marriage relationship:

1. Be intentional about spending time together and doing things you both enjoy. True companionship is found in walking together in faith, which helps unify the home and strengthens the marital bond. Couples should intentionally limit distractions like screens (phones or TV) to make room for deeper conversations, prayer, and simply enjoying each other's presence.

2. Forgive quickly. This sounds simple, but it is one of the most challenging parts of a marriage relationship for many. On the flip side, when you've made a mistake, admit it and humbly ask for forgiveness.

3. Surround yourself with fellow believers who will strengthen your marriage. Avoid people who will tear down your marriage or may even tempt you to compromise your character. Guard your morality, environment, and spiritual growth.

4. Keep communication lines open. Don't assume you know what your spouse is thinking or feeling. Misunderstandings can be avoided by asking for their thoughts and feelings and listening attentively when they are talking.

5. Join a thriving community of faith, even if it's an online church. A good church family and regular fellowship with other believers will strengthen your marriage.

Hebrews 10:25 says: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one

another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

6. Pick your battles. Don't waste time on nitpicking. If you believe the issue is truly important, discuss it in a respectful way with your spouse.

7. PRAY together. It is one of the most intimate acts a couple can experience together, and it will strengthen your bond.

8. Try to be the biggest servant in the house. Don't keep score of how well your spouse is serving you. Instead, ask yourself how you can serve your spouse more. If there is to be competition, let it be competing to show love better each day and looking for better ways to express your love for your spouse. Do not neglect the small, daily acts of kindness—the "little courtesies"—that show respect and love. Be sure to maintain the same level of care, kindness, and the small attentions you showed each other during your courtship.

9. Remember that your spouse can never meet all of your needs. They were not designed for that. Look to God as your source of satisfaction. The closer you draw to God, the closer you will be drawing to your godly spouse.

10. Keep in mind that you don't always need to offer solutions for your spouse's problems. Sometimes a hug and a listening ear communicate more love than your advice.

11. Remember that even in a strong marriage, it is rare that both spouses are feeling strong at the same time. It's normal for husbands and wives to take turns being strong for each other in the moments when the other feels weak.

12. Avoid distractions in marriage. Guard against letting outside pressures or a dictatorial spirit spoil the peace of the home, while encouraging a cheerful, loving, godly atmosphere.

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities. (Ellen White, *The Adventist Home*, p.18.5)



temperance, in spite of the trials they face; and if they choose to follow Satan, the results are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such (Galatians 5:19–23), in spite of the wooing of God's Spirit.

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 68.1–69.1)

The great conflict that Satan created in the heavenly courts is soon, very soon, to be forever decided. Soon all the inhabitants of the earth will have taken sides, either for or against the government of heaven. Now, as never before, Satan is exercising his deceiving power to mislead and to destroy every unguarded soul. We are called upon to **arouse the people to prepare for the great issues before them. We must give warning** to those who are standing on the very brink of ruin. God's people are to put forth every power in combating Satan's falsehoods and pulling down his strongholds. To every human being in the wide world who will give heed, **we are to make plain the principles at stake in the great controversy**—principles upon which hangs the eternal destiny of the soul. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 141.2; published 1902)

May we faithfully do our part. In the words of Uriah Smith,

O, brother be faithful! Soon Jesus will come,

For whom we have waited so long;

O, soon we shall enter our glorious home,

And join in the conqueror's song.



1889 HSDA Camp Meeting

Set your calendars for July 28–August 2 for the annual camp meeting to be held at Fall Creek Falls State Park near Spencer, Tennessee. We hope all will come and join with us in the fellowship and study of God's word.

The theme of the camp meeting is, "For such a time as this."

Our featured evening speaker will be Jean-Christophe Bolotte from France. Other speakers include Todd Brown, Rob Chisum, Daniel Mesa, and Allen Stump. A complete list will be given next month with the schedule. There will be a health expo, and one afternoon meeting per day has been deleted from the usual schedule to allow more social time. Please plan now to attend.



"As God Sees," continued from page 13

gels had been destroyed right away, this principle would not have been seen or understood. The great controversy would not have played out as it has, and doubt would have lingered that God was unfair and arbitrary; therefore, the controversy continues, with God giving every person the freedom of choice to follow him or not. Then he gives them the time to develop a character that aligns with their choice and time to show the results of that choice. And what are the results? If they choose to follow God, the results are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and

Health Matters

By Ellen White

(This article was taken from *The Health Reformer*, September 1, 1866)

Drug medication

There is a disposition with many parents, to keep up a perpetual dosing of their children with medicines. They will always have a supply on hand, and when any slight indisposition is manifested, caused by overeating or exhaustion, the medicine is poured down their throats; and if that does not satisfy them, they send for the doctor. If he is an honest physician, and declines to give the child medicine because he is wise enough to know it will be for its hurt, the parents are offended and think the physician inefficient, and send for another, who is less conscientious, and who will give medicine to satisfy the parents, who were blinded by ignorance in regard to the real condition and need of their child. And not unfrequently parents are so anxious to do all they can to save their child, that they change physicians, having two or three to attend the same case. The child is drugged to death, and the parents console themselves that they have done all they could, and wonder why it must die when they did so much to save it. Upon the grave stone of that child should be written, Died, of drug Medication.

Many parents substitute drugs for judicious nursing. I have seen parents in constant terror, lest a breath of air should come upon their children. They place them perhaps in a crib or cradle near a hot stove. Their faces are red from heat, and they are pressed for air, and almost gasping for breath. But the mother does not seem to understand their wants. She thinks her children sick, and runs for a cordial which only stupefies them, but makes them no better. The only cordial the suffocated, suffering innocent needed, was pure, fresh air. Several instances have come under my notice, where children were being murdered by inches by the mistaken kindness of parents. They deprived them of air as though it were a deadly poison. The rich blessing which Heaven has freely bestowed upon all, was not allowed to come to their children. I have stood by the cradle of these abused innocents thus unwisely nursed, and have felt indignant at the cruel course pursued with them. I have stripped the coverings from the cradle, and opened the window, and

let in the richest of heaven's earthly blessing,—pure, fresh air,—to the immediate relief of the sufferers.

Children also are fed too frequently, which produces fever and suffering in various ways. The stomach should not be kept constantly at work; it should have its periods of rest. Without it, children will be peevish and irritable, and frequently sick. The parents do not trace the existing effect to the true cause—a transgression on their part—but hasten for a doctor, expecting that he will set things all right. The mother abuses the laws which govern that child's life, and then commits another transgression by interfering with nature in introducing poisonous drugs into the system. Children who might have retained a good constitution, are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Many die prematurely, and



Ellen White

others live to be life-long sufferers, a burden to themselves and to society. Who is to blame for all this weight of evil? not our kind Creator surely, for he does not take pleasure in seeing his creatures suffer. He wishes them to be healthful and happy. The parents and physicians are the instruments who have caused this weight of woe. They were ignorant of the terrible wake they left behind them. Ignorance is sin, when knowledge can be obtained. Parents should read and inform themselves in regard to the laws God has established in our beings. Instead of trying to allay with medicine every trifling com-

plaint, they might trace the disturbance to some defect in their nursing, or a change made in their food, air, clothing, or exercise, and they would be rewarded for their investigation, by soon seeing a change for the better.

Parents should give their children abundance of fresh air. If they have kept them smothered with flannels, with windows and doors closed, fearing they would get their death of cold, let them make haste and reform, if they would save their children. You have not given the body any chance to breathe through the millions of little mouths which nature has provided for it; and in consequence, these pores have become clogged, and cannot perform the task allotted them, and so the internal organs have a double task thrown upon them, and the whole system is deranged. But now the doctor must be sent for, and if the little patients live through the terrible ordeal he prescribes, the credit is given to his skill, when the only reason they lived was, because they had a stronger hold on life than most such small members of the human family have.

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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, the change of the law of God, Christ's peculiar people, how God would have his people dress, giving to God, the nature of man, man's dependance on God, gifts of the Spirit, and this article features Fundamental Belief # 20, the three angels' messages;

1889 Fundamental Belief #20

XX – That God, in accordance with his uniform dealings with the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; and that this work is symbolized by the three messages of Revelation 14, the last one bringing to view the work of reform on the law of God, that his people may acquire a complete readiness for that event.

Here we find a proclamation of the Second Coming of Christ in the three angels' messages in Revelation chapter 14. We need this information today. We must know about the fall of Babylon in the last days and how to be sure we are on God's side and not in deception.

If you would like a complete biblical explanation on this Fundamental Principle here is the link of a sermon Pastor Allen Stump gave on Fundamental Principle #20.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XR0myTvxzq0&list=PLsE-5c918fZEdGxPn-qrO6mmkyPe708owA&index=24>



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.

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)

Aisaafitmoh, htegtputtdote, aten, ak, at, ap, Swaly, FG, ag-gth; fthohjic: awhtmh, ae, ats, atfow. R 14:6-7

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5–6)

B, IwsyEtpbctotgaddotL: Ahstthotfttc, athotcttf, Ilcas-tewac.

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, That ye be not partakers of her sins, And that ye receive not of her plagues. (Revelations 18:4)

Aihavfh, s, Cooh, mp, Tybnpohs, Atyrnohp. R 18:4

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, *The Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888, par. 9)





PROPHETIC TRUTH FOR TROUBLED TIMES

DATE: MAY 7 - JUNE 6, 2026

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 7pm EST
 Registration: prophetictruthfortroubledtimes.com
 Email: info@prophetictruthfortroubledtimes.com

Event Features

Decoding Bible Prophecies
Health Talks
Live Q&A
Spirit-filled Music
Prayer Warriors
And more!



**Evangelist Allen
Stump & a Robust
Spirit-led Team**

Zoom Information

Meeting ID:
613 212 7443

Passcode:
916919

Evangelistic Meetings

The USA conference of 1889 HSDA will be hosting an evangelistic effort via Zoom May 7 – June 6, 2026. There will be meetings three evenings each week, plus Sabbath morning and afternoon meetings on the last two weeks.

As noted in the advertisement above, the meetings will have health talks with each session. We plan to use Zoom breakout rooms where the participants can get a brief overview of the message to come and have time for group prayer. We will have question and answer sessions also.

We plan to make business cards with the important information on them, including a QR code link, to distribute to persons of interest. We will also make postal flyers available for those wishing to do a mail-out advertisement in their local areas. Thus a church or eager person or family could also help by possibly leading out in a breakout room for any participants in their area.

Pastor Allen Stump will be the main speaker for the series, with Todd Brown and Rob Chisum as co-moderators to help guide the programs through their different stages. We will be posting more information soon, but please mark these dates on your calendars and try to attend and support each meeting.



Online Virtual Service Schedule

We provide on-site, as well as virtual services. All times are EST or EDT, depending on the time of the year.

Sabbath: Sabbath School—9:10 am; Worship Service—11:00 am

Monday: Story Hour—7:00 pm

Wednesday: Prayer Meeting—7:00 pm

Thursday: History/Theology Study—7:00 pm

Zoom Room Information: ID—613 212 7443. Passcode—916919. Phone—1-646-931-3860, enter conference ID 613 212 7443, followed by the # symbol when prompted, and press the # symbol again.



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