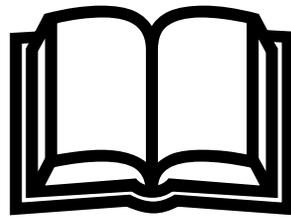


The 1844 Study Bible



The Science of Salvation

Under Construction
Not for Publication

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To find specific Books of the Bible
search
"Book of XYZ"
With XYZ = name of the Bible book

Abbreviations

What is the 1844 Study Bible?

Quotes for Bible Study

"Is not my Word like a fire?" Jeremiah 23:29

"Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps 119:105).

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4).

"For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

"I visit many good books . . . but I live in the Bible" (Spurgeon).

"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education" (Theodore Roosevelt).

""So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year" (John Quincy Adams).

"If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible" (Voltaire).

""A man's word is a little sound, that flies into the air, and soon vanishes; but the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth, yea, greater than death and hell, for it forms part of the power of God, and endures everlastingly . . . The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me" (Luther).

""A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own happiness, and your own duty" (Woodrow Wilson).

"There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write 'damnation' with your fingers" (Charles Spurgeon).

"Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scripture or by manifest reasoning I stand convicted by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word. I cannot or will not recant anything. For to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. . . . A man's word is a little sound, that flies into the air, and soon vanishes; but the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth, yea, greater than death and hell, for it forms part of the power of God, and endures everlastingly . . . The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me" (Martin Luther).

"I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18).

Ellen White on the Study of the Scriptures

“The study of the Bible is superior to all other study in strengthening the intellect” (MYP 253).

“The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation” (3SM 339).

This is a lengthy section, but read the following quotes first; they will inspire you to study the Bible (more) seriously.

Why quotes from Ellen White in a resources that focuses on Scripture?

“Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth; but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days” (3SM 83-84).

And, if for a second you’re tempted to ask Why don’t we just read the Bible, esp. in a study that is focused on Sola Scriptura? – Consider this statistic:

Criteria	Ellen White Readers	Non-Ellen White Readers
Relationship with Christ	85%	59%
Bible Study with non-SDA	75%	26%
Witnessing	73%	49%
Family Worship	77%	42%
Bible Reading	82%	47%

Adapted from Dudley & Cumins, 1982

In case you missed it . . . Ellen White readers read the Bible more than non-Ellen White readers!

As you go through this section, ask yourself . . .

- Which quotes speaks the most to you?
- Which quotes present the greatest challenge to you?

Prayer

“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. . . . Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer if we will seek Him for light that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance” (SC 91).

“We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the HOLY Spirit; and the promise is sure that it will be given” (TM 108).

“As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God’s Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures” (COL 113).

“The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. . . . If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute” (COL 100).

“The word of God is to be our study. We are to educate our children in the truths found therein. It is an inexhaustible treasure; but men fail to find this treasure because they do not search until it is within their possession” (COL 109).

“The Scriptures need not be read by the dim light of tradition or human speculation. As well might we try to give light to the sun with a torch as to explain the Scriptures by human tradition or imagination. God’s holy word needs not the torchlight glimmer of earth to make its glories distinguishable. It is light in itself - the glory of God revealed, and beside it every other light is dim. But there must be earnest study and close investigation. Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. No earthly blessing can be obtained without earnest, patient, persevering effort. If men attain success in business, they must have a will to do and a faith to look for results. And we cannot expect to gain spiritual knowledge without earnest toil. . . . No halfhearted, indifferent work will avail. It is essential for old and young, not only to read God’s word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding. . . . **Our salvation depends on a knowledge of the truth contained in the Scriptures. It is God’s will that we should possess this. Search, O search the precious Bible with hungry hearts. Explore God’s word as the miner explores the earth to find veins of gold. Never give up the search until you have ascertained your relation to God and His will in regard to you**” (COL 111).

“If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. **Search in order to learn what the Lord says.** If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God’s word” (COL 112).

“No one can search the Scriptures in the spirit of Christ without being rewarded. When man is willing to be instructed as a little child, when he submits wholly to God, he will find the truth in His word. If men would be obedient, they would understand the plan of God’s government” (COL 114).

“The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study” (COL 132).

“We are to comprehend the deep things of God. . . . As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand” (COL 133).

“Let every student take his Bible and place himself in communion with the great Teacher. Let the mind be trained and disciplined to wrestle with hard problems in the search for divine truth” (COL 334).

Method: Less is More

“But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets you may read a passage and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind” (SC 90).

Youth

“The reason why the youth, and even those of mature years, are so easily led into temptation and sin, is that they do not study the word of God and meditate upon it as they should. The lack of firm, decided will power, which is manifest in life and character, results from neglect of the sacred instruction of God’s word” (MH 458).

“If the word of God were appreciated as it should be, both young and old would possess an inward rectitude, a strength of principle, that would enable them to resist temptation” (MH 459).

“God’s precious Word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said” (MLT 315 (1887)).

Character

“If God’s word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose, that is rarely seen in these times” (FCE 126).

“Go below the surface; the richest treasures of thought are waiting for the skillful and diligent student” (FCE 127).

“A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given. And in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it. **All that God’s word commands, we are to obey.** All that it promises, we may claim. The life which it enjoins is the life that, through its power, we are to live. Only as the Bible is thus held can it be studied effectively” (Ed 189).

Memorization

“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 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” (RH April 10, 1888).

“Hang in memory’s hall the precious words of Christ. They are to be valued far above silver or gold” (6T 81)

“Keep a pocket Bible with you as you work, and improve every opportunity to commit to memory its precious promises” (RH April 27, 1905).

“The time will come when many will be deprived of the written Word. But if this Word is printed in the memory, no one can take it from us” (MR 20:64 1906).

“Study the Word of God. Commit its precious promises to memory so that, when we shall be deprived of our Bibles, we may still be in possession of the Word of God” (MR 10:298 1909; LDE 67).

Study for Yourself

“Young men should search the Scriptures for themselves.” . . . “We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions.” TM 109

“When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth and not be found as were the Jews fighting against God. While warning men to beware of accepting anything unless it is truth, we should also warn them not to imperil their souls by rejecting messages of light, but to press out of the darkness by earnest study of the word of God” (TM 110).

Ministers

“By rising early and economizing their moments, ministers can find time for a close investigation of the Scriptures. They must have perseverance, and not be thwarted in their object, but persistently employ their time in a study of the word, bringing to their aid the truths which other minds, through wearing labor, have brought out for them, and with diligent, persevering effort, prepared to their hand. There are ministers who have been laboring for years, teaching the truth to others, while they themselves are not familiar with the strong points of our position. I beg of such to have done with their idleness. It is a continual curse to them. God requires them to make every moment fruitful of some good to themselves or to others. “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” “He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster” (2T 500).

The Waldensians

“The Bible was their chief study. They committed the Gospels of Matthew and John to memory, as well as many of the Epistles” (GC xzy).

“Like the ark on the rolling seas, the Word of God outrides the storms that threaten it with destruction. Like a mine that has rich veins of gold and silver hidden beneath the surface, the Holy Scriptures have treasures of truth that only the humble, prayerful seeker will find. God designed the Bible to be a lessonbook to all mankind as a revelation of Himself. Every truth that we see is a fresh disclosure of its Author’s character” (GC xyz).

Wycliffe

“The great movement that Wycliffe began to set free the nations so long tied to Rome- had its origin in the Bible.” LF 41-42 “It was the Bible that made him [Wycliffe] what he was. The study of the Bible will make noble every thought, feeling, and ambition as no other study can. It gives firmness of purpose, courage, and strength. An earnest, reverent study of the Scriptures would give the world people of stronger intellect and of nobler principle than has ever resulted from the best raining available from human philosophy.” . . . “A divine hand was preparing the way for the Great Reformation” (GC xyz).

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles" (MS 13, 1888).

“Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind” (GC 519).

“The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls—heresies prepared to suit the varied tastes and capacities of those whom he would ruin. It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His word assent to some principles of truth and pass as Christians, and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as Scriptural doctrines” (GC 520).

“The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan’s most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth” (GC 520).

“The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world are the work of our great adversary to confuse minds so that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exist among the churches of Christendom are in a great measure due to the prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory. Instead of carefully studying God’s word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original” (GC 520).

“In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret them to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible” (GC 521).

“Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning. The papal leaders select such

portions of Scripture as best serve their purpose, interpret to suit themselves, and then present these to the people, while they deny them the privilege of studying the Bible and understanding its sacred truths for themselves. **The whole Bible should be given to the people just as it reads.** It would be better for them not to have Bible instruction at all than to have the teaching of the Scriptures thus grossly misrepresented” (GC 521).

“The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. Said the Lord by the prophet Habakkuk: “Write the vision, and make it plain, ... that he may run that readeth it.” Habakkuk 2:2. **The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart.** Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. “Light is sown for the righteous.” Psalm 97:11. **And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure”** (GC 521).

“By the cry, Liberality, men are blinded to the devices of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the Bible by human speculations, the law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free” (GC 522).

“To many, scientific research has become a curse. God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but even the greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to investigate the relations of science and revelation (GC 522).

“Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God’s word is to be tested by the teachings of “science falsely so called.” 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is regarded as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a step further and doubt the existence of God and attribute infinite power to nature. Having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity” (GC 522).

“Thus many err from the faith and are seduced by the devil. Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed through the eternal ages. If men would but search and understand what God had made known of Himself and His purposes, they would obtain such a view of the glory, majesty, and power of Jehovah that they would realize their own littleness and would be content with that which has been revealed for themselves and their children” (GC 522).

“It is a masterpiece of Satan’s deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known and which He does not intend that we shall understand. It was thus that Lucifer lost his place in heaven. He became dissatisfied because all the secrets of God’s purposes were not confided to him, and he entirely disregarded that which was revealed concerning his own work in the lofty position assigned him. By arousing the same discontent in the angels under his command, he caused their fall. Now he seeks to imbue the minds of men with the same spirit and to lead them also to disregard the direct commands of God” GC 523).

“Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet the conscience. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favor with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the Scriptures with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion. Satan is ready to supply the heart’s desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth. He who looks with horror upon one deception will readily receive another. The apostle Paul, speaking of a class who “received not the love of the truth, that they might be

saved,” declares: “For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. With such a warning before us it behooves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive” (GC 523).

“The soul must be barricaded by prayer and study of the Scriptures. Armed with these weapons, Jesus encountered our wily foe on the field of battle, and overcame him” (OHC 330).

"Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His experience testifies to the power of importunate prayer. It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith. **The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power**" (PP 203).

"The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God's Word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One" (6T 393).

"The great plan of redemption, as revealed in the closing work of these last days, should receive close examination. The scenes connected with the sanctuary above should make such an impression upon the minds and hearts of all that they may be able to impress others. All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above. When this grand truth is seen and understood, those who hold it will work in harmony with Christ to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God, and their efforts will be successful. **By study, contemplation, and prayer God's people will be elevated above common, earthly thoughts and feelings, and will be brought into harmony with Christ and His great work of cleansing the sanctuary above from the sins of the people.** Their faith will go with Him into the sanctuary, and the worshipers on earth will be carefully reviewing their lives and comparing their characters with the great standard of righteousness. They will see their own defects; they will also see that they must have the aid of the Spirit of God if they would become qualified for the great and solemn work for this time which is laid upon God's ambassadors" (5T 575).

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross" (GC 489).

"The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as **scripture is explained by scripture.** Many will read with eagerness the messages reproofing wrong, that they may learn what they may do to be saved.... Light will dawn upon the understanding, and the Spirit will make an impression on minds, **as Bible truth is clearly and simply presented in the messages that since 1846 God has been sending His people.** These messages are to find their place in hearts, and transformations will take place" (Letter 73, 1903; 1SM 42).

Perils of Dissecting Inspired Messages

"Some sit in judgment on the Scriptures, declaring that this or that passage is not inspired, because it does not strike their minds favorably. They cannot harmonize it with their ideas of philosophy and science, "falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20). Others for different reasons question portions of the Word of God. Thus many walk blindly where the enemy prepares the way. Now, it is not the province of any man to pronounce sentence upon the Scriptures, to judge or condemn any portion of God's Word. When one presumes to do this, Satan will create an atmosphere for him to breathe which will dwarf spiritual growth. When a man feels so very wise that he dares to dissect God's Word, his wisdom is, with God, counted foolishness. When he knows more, he will feel that he has everything to learn. And his very first lesson is to become teachable. "Learn of me," says the Great Teacher; "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29) (1SM 42).

"The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday; and none will mistake and lose their way except those who

follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the words of God for ourselves” (SC 89).

“The winds of doctrine will blow fiercely about us, but we should not be moved by them. God has given us a correct standard of righteousness and truth—the law and the testimony. There are many who profess to love God, but when the Scriptures are opened before them and evidences are presented showing the binding claims of God’s law, they manifest the spirit of the dragon. They hate the light and will not come to it, lest their deeds should be reprov’d. They will not compare their faith and doctrine with the law and the testimony. They turn away their ears from hearing the truth, and impatiently declare that all they want to hear about is faith in Christ” (FH 309).

“One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man’s ideas or arguments” (7T 71).

“. . . Biblical inspiration is a mediated process in which God imparts information that is then “contaminated” by the social, cultural, historical, and language context of the human author. In its nature, Scripture, while containing the divine message, also contains human baggage.” Jan Barna, “Ordination of Women and the Two Ways to Unity: Ecclesiastical and Biblical,” Paper Presented for the Adventist Society for Religious Studies, Nov. 21, 2013. *What do you think about that?!*

“In God’s word only do we behold the power that laid the foundations of the earth, and that stretched out the heavens. Here only do we find an authentic account of the origin of nations. Here only is given a history of our race unsullied by human pride or prejudice” (MH 263).

“Eve was beguiled by the serpent and made to believe that God would not do as He had said. She ate, and, thinking she felt the sensation of a new and more exalted life, she bore the fruit to her husband. The serpent had said that she should not die, and she felt no ill effects from eating the fruit, nothing which could be interpreted to mean death, but, instead, a pleasurable sensation, which she imagined was as the angels felt. Her experience stood arrayed against the positive command of Jehovah, yet Adam permitted himself to be seduced by it” (CH 108-109).

“In the face of the most positive commands of God, men and women will follow their own inclinations, and then dare to pray over the matter, to prevail upon God to allow them to go contrary to His expressed will. Satan comes to the side of such persons, as he did to Eve in Eden, and impresses them. They have an exercise of mind, and this they relate as a most wonderful experience which the Lord has given them. But true experience will be in harmony with natural and divine law; false experience arrays itself against the laws of nature and the precepts of Jehovah” (CH 109).

“Since it was the Spirit of God that inspired the Bible, it is impossible that the teaching of the Spirit should ever be contrary to that of the word. “The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. Says the apostle John, ‘Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ I John 4:1. And Isaiah declares, ‘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.” (GC vii).

“When the Savior imparts His peace to the soul, the heart will be in perfect harmony with the Word of God, for the Spirit and the Word agree. The Lord honors His Word in all His dealings with humanity. It is His own will, His own voice, that is revealed to them and He has no new will, no new truth, aside from His Word, to unfold to His children **If you have a wonderful experience that is not in harmony with the expressed directions of God’s Word, you may well doubt it, for its origin is not from above. The peace of Christ comes through the knowledge of Jesus whom the Bible reveals**” (FH 299).

“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” (GC 625).

Saul

“At Gilgal, Saul had made an appearance of great conscientiousness, as he stood before the army of Israel offering up a sacrifice to God. But his piety was not genuine. A religious service performed in direct opposition to the command of God only served to weaken Saul’s hands, placing him beyond the help that God was so willing to grant him. In his expedition against Amalek, Saul thought he had done all that was essential of that which the Lord had commanded him; but the Lord was not pleased with partial obedience, nor willing to pass over what had been neglected through so plausible a motive. **God has given men no liberty to depart from His requirements.** The Lord had declared to Israel, “Ye shall not do ... every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes;” but ye shall “observe and hear all these words which I command thee.” Deuteronomy 12:8, 28. **In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God.** “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12. (PP 634).

“To obey is better than sacrifice.” The sacrificial offerings were in themselves of no value in the sight of God. They were designed to express on the part of the offerer penitence for sin and faith in Christ and to pledge future obedience to the law of God. But without penitence, faith, and an obedient heart, the offerings were worthless. **When, in direct violation of God’s command, Saul proposed to present a sacrifice of that which God had devoted to destruction, open contempt was shown for the divine authority. The service would have been an insult to Heaven.** Yet with the sin of Saul and its result before us, how many are pursuing a similar course. While they refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. **No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in willful violation of one of His commands”** (PP 634).

“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” Rebellion originated with Satan, and all rebellion against God is directly due to satanic influence. Those who set themselves against the government of God have entered into an alliance with the archapostate, and he will exercise his power and cunning to captivate the senses and mislead the understanding. He will cause everything to appear in a false light. Like our first parents, those who are under his bewitching spell see only the great benefits to be received by transgression” (PP 635).

It is a perilous step to slight the reproofs and warnings of God’s word or of His Spirit. Many, like Saul, yield to temptation until they become blind to the true character of sin. They flatter themselves that they have had some good object in view, and have done no wrong in departing from the Lord’s requirements. Thus they do despite to the Spirit of grace, until its voice is no longer heard, and they are left to the delusions which they have chosen.(PP 635.4)

A Knowledge of the Sanctuary

The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross” (GC 489).

“The great plan of redemption, as revealed in the closing work of these last days, should receive close examination. The scenes connected with the sanctuary above should make such an impression upon the minds and hearts of all that they may be able to impress others. **All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above. When this grand truth is seen and understood, those who hold it will work in harmony with Christ to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God, and their efforts will be successful.** By study, contemplation, and prayer God’s people will be elevated above common, earthly thoughts and feelings, and will be brought into harmony with Christ and His great work of cleansing the sanctuary above from the sins of the people. Their faith will go with Him into the sanctuary, and the worshipers on earth will be carefully reviewing their lives and comparing their characters with the great standard of righteousness. They will see their own defects; they will also see that they must have the aid of the Spirit of God if they would become qualified for the great and solemn work for this time which is laid upon God’s ambassadors” (5T 575).

“God has given us His word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us. When the lawyer came to Jesus with the inquiry, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” the Saviour referred him to the Scriptures, saying: “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God’s law; because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and claims. **It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do**

what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul's salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything" (GC 598).

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God. The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error" (GC 598).

"We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God and a sincere desire to learn His will. We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth" (GC 599).

"Many a portion of Scripture which learned men pronounce a mystery, or pass over as unimportant, is full of comfort and instruction to him who has been taught in the school of Christ. One reason why many theologians have no clearer understanding of God's word is, they close their eyes to truths which they do not wish to practice. **An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness.** The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. We should make the psalmist's petition our own: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Ps 119:18. Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19" (GC 599).

"We need to search the Scriptures daily, that we may know the way of the Lord, and that we be not deceived by religious fallacies. The world is full of false theories and seductive spiritualistic ideas, which tend to destroy clear spiritual perception, and to lead away from truth and holiness. Especially at this time do we need to heed the warning, "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Eph 5:6) (1SM 170).

"We must be careful lest we misinterpret the Scriptures. The plain teachings of the Word of God are not to be so spiritualized that the reality is lost sight of. Do not overstrain the meaning of sentences in the Bible in an effort to bring forth something odd in order to please the fancy. Take the Scriptures as they read. Avoid idle speculation concerning what will be in the kingdom of heaven" (MS 30, 1904; 1SM 170).

Feelings

“Genuine faith is founded on the Scriptures; but Satan uses so many devices to wrest the Scriptures and bring in error, that great care is needed if one would know what they really do teach. It is one of the great delusions of this time to dwell much upon feeling, and to claim honesty while ignoring the plain utterances of the word of God because that word does not coincide with feeling. Many have no foundation for their faith but emotion. Their religion consists in excitement; when that ceases, their faith is gone. Feeling may be chaff, but the word of God is the wheat. And “what,” says the prophet, “is the chaff to the wheat?” (RH Nov 25, 1884, par. 26).

“Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the Author of the living oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips” (Isa 6:5) (1SM 18).

“Simplicity and plain utterance are comprehended by the illiterate, by the peasant, and the child as well as by the full-grown man or the giant in intellect. If the individual is possessed of large talents of mental powers, he will find in the oracles of God treasures of truth, beautiful and valuable, which he can appropriate. He will also find difficulties, and secrets and wonders which will give him the highest satisfaction to study during a long lifetime, and yet there is an infinity beyond” (1SM 18).

“Men of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the living oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is willfully blind” (1SM 18).

“We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes” (MS 16, 1888; written at Minneapolis, Minn., autumn 1888; 1SM 18).

“The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit. Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human mind, ingenious in evading truth, many read and understand the Bible to please themselves. **It is not that the difficulty is in the Bible.** Opposing politicians argue points of law in the statute book, and take opposite views in their application and in these laws” (1SM 19).

“The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is “first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit,” “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us” (1SM 19).

“There is not always perfect order or apparent unity in the Scriptures. The miracles of Christ are not given in exact order, but are given just as the circumstances occurred, which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ. The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread. Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word” (1SM 20).

“The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes” (1SM 20).

“The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ” (1SM 20).

Emmaus

“The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised, and as a man He talked with them. Beginning at Moses and the prophets He taught them in all things concerning Himself, that His life, His mission, His sufferings, His death were just as the Word of God had foretold. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened” (1SM 20).

“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God” (MS 24, 1886, from Europe; 1SM 21).

“Let the youth, then, be taught to give close study to the word of God. Received into the soul, it will prove a mighty barricade against temptation. “Thy word,” the psalmist declares, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” Ps 119:11; 17:4 (Ed 190).

“The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found” (Ed 190).

“Every part of the Bible is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The Old Testament no less than the New should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert” (Ed 191).

“The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Revelation 1:1. None should become discouraged in the study of the Revelation because of its apparently mystical symbols. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” Js 1:5. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” Revelation 1:3 (Ed 191).

“When a real love for the Bible is awakened, and the student begins to realize how vast is the field and how precious its treasure, he will desire to seize upon every opportunity for acquainting himself with God’s word. Its study will be restricted to no special time or place. And this continuous study is one of the best means of cultivating a love for the Scriptures. Let the student keep his Bible always with him. As you have opportunity, read a text and meditate upon it. While walking the streets, waiting at a railway station, waiting to meet an engagement, improve the opportunity to gain some precious thought from the treasure house of truth” (Ed 191).

“The great motive powers of the soul are faith, hope, and love; and it is to these that Bible study, rightly pursued, appeals. The outward beauty of the Bible, the beauty of imagery and expression, is but the setting, as it were, for its real treasure—the beauty of holiness. In its record of the men who walked with God, we may catch glimpses of His glory. In the One “altogether lovely” we behold Him, of whom all beauty of earth and heaven is but a dim reflection. “I, if I be lifted up,” He said, “will draw all men unto Me.” Jn 12:32. As the student of the Bible beholds the Redeemer, there is awakened in the soul the mysterious power of faith, adoration, and love. Upon the vision of Christ the gaze is fixed, and the beholder grows into the likeness of that which he adores. The words of the apostle Paul become the language of the soul: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ... that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.” Phil 3:8-10. The springs of heavenly peace and joy unsealed in the soul by the words of Inspiration will become a mighty river of influence to bless all who come within its reach. Let the youth of today, the youth who are growing up with the Bible in their hands, become the recipients and the channels of its life-giving energy, and what streams of blessing would flow forth to the world!—influences of whose power to heal and comfort we can scarcely conceive—rivers of living water, fountains “springing up unto everlasting life” (Ed 192).

“The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come. And these principles may be understood by all. No one with a spirit to appreciate its teaching can read a single passage from the Bible without gaining from it some helpful thought. But the most valuable teaching of the Bible is not to be gained by occasional or disconnected study. Its great system of truth is not so presented as to be discerned by the hasty or careless reader. Many of its treasures lie far beneath the surface, and can be obtained only by diligent research and continuous effort. The truths that go to make up the great whole must be searched out and gathered up, “here a little, and there a little.” Isa 28:10. When thus searched out and brought together, they will be found to be perfectly fitted to one another. Each Gospel is a supplement to the others, every prophecy an explanation of another, every truth a development of some other truth. The types of the Jewish economy are made plain by the gospel. Every principle in the word of God has its place, every fact its bearing. And the complete structure, in design and execution, bears testimony to its Author. Such a structure no mind but that of the Infinite could conceive or fashion. **In searching out the various parts and studying their relationship, the highest faculties of the human mind are called into intense activity. No one can engage in such study without developing mental power** (Ed 124).

“And not alone in searching out truth and bringing it together does the mental value of Bible study consist. It consists also in the effort required to grasp the themes presented. The mind occupied with commonplace matters only, becomes dwarfed and enfeebled. If never tasked to comprehend grand and far-reaching truths, it after a time loses the power of growth. As a safeguard against this degeneracy, and a stimulus to development, nothing else can equal the study of God’s word. **As a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined.** The greatness of its themes, the dignified simplicity of its utterances, the beauty of its imagery, quicken and uplift the thoughts as nothing else can. **No other study can impart such mental power as does the effort to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation.** The mind thus brought in contact with the thoughts of the Infinite cannot but expand and strengthen” (Ed 124).

“And even greater is the power of the Bible in the development of the spiritual nature. Man, created for fellowship with God, can only in such fellowship find his real life and development. Created to find in God his highest joy, he can find in nothing else that which can quiet the cravings of the heart, can satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. He who with sincere and teachable spirit studies God’s word, seeking to comprehend its truths, will be brought in touch with its Author; and, except by his own choice, there is no limit to the possibilities of his development” (Ed 124).

“In its wide range of style and subjects the Bible has something to interest every mind and appeal to every heart. In its pages are found history the most ancient; biography the truest to life; principles of government for the control of the state, for the regulation of the household—principles that human wisdom has never equaled. It contains philosophy the most profound, poetry the sweetest and the most sublime, the most impassioned and the most pathetic. Immeasurably superior in value to the productions of any human author are the Bible writings, even when thus considered; but of infinitely wider scope, of infinitely greater value, are they when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought. Viewed in the light of this thought, every topic has a new significance. In the most simply stated truths are involved principles that are as high as heaven and that compass eternity (Ed 125).

Central Theme

“The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, “They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads” (Revelation 22:4), the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme,—man’s uplifting,—the power of God, “which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57 (Ed 125).

“He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God’s word” (Ed 126).

“The science of redemption is the science of all sciences; the science that is the study of the angels and of all the intelligences of the unfallen worlds; the science that engages the attention of our Lord and Saviour; the science that enters into the purpose brooded in the mind of the Infinite—“kept in silence through times eternal” (Romans 16:25, R.V.); the science that will be the study of God’s redeemed throughout endless ages. This is the highest study in which it is possible for man to engage. As no other study can, it will quicken the mind and uplift the soul. “The excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.” “The words that I speak unto you,” said Jesus, “they are spirit, and they are life.” “This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send.” Eccl 7:12; Jn 6:63; 17:3, R.V. **The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life.** Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. The life thus imparted is in like manner sustained. “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4) shall man live. The mind, the soul, is built up by that upon which it feeds; and it rests with us to determine upon what it shall be fed. It is within the power of everyone to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character. Of every human being privileged with access to the Scriptures, God says, “I have written to him the great things of My law.” “Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Hos 8:12; Jer 33:3. **With the word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose.** In its pages he may hold converse with the noblest and best of the human race, and may listen to the voice of the Eternal as He speaks with men. As he studies and meditates upon the themes into which “the angels desire to look” (1 Pet 1:12), he may have their companionship. He may follow the steps of the heavenly Teacher, and listen to His words as when He taught on mountain and plain and sea. He may dwell in this world in the atmosphere of heaven, imparting to earth’s sorrowing and tempted ones thoughts of hope and longings for holiness; himself coming closer and still closer into fellowship with the Unseen; like him of old who walked with God, drawing nearer and nearer the threshold of the eternal world, until the portals shall open, and he shall enter there. He will find himself no stranger. The voices that will greet him are the voices of the holy ones, who, unseen, were on earth his companions—voices that here he learned to distinguish and to love. He who through the word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven’s companionship. (Ed 127).

“Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now. (Jer 17:15) The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.²⁹ **Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (Jer 23:28)** Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness. (Jer 23:9) Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: (Jer 26:2).

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.” Every position of truth taken by our people will bear the criticism of the greatest minds; the highest of the world’s great men will be brought in contact with truth, and therefore every position we take should be critically examined and tested by the Scriptures. Now we seem to be unnoticed, but this will not always be. Movements are at work to bring us to the front, and if our theories of truth can be picked to pieces by historians or the world’s greatest men, it will be done” (Ev 69).

“We must individually know for ourselves what is truth, and be prepared to give a reason of the hope that we have with meekness and fear, not in a proud, boasting, self-sufficiency, but with the spirit of Christ. We are nearing the time when we shall stand individually alone to answer for our belief. Religious errors are multiplying and entwining themselves with Satanic power about the people. There is scarcely a doctrine of the Bible that has not been denied” (Letter 6, 1886; Ev 69).

"His words are not permits, not suggestions, but the decisions of an infallible Judge. They are divine maxims, the very specified laws which will judge us in the last days. No man is excusable for acting as though he were at liberty to cancel the decisions of God, to disregard His directions and injunctions, to review them, criticize them, reverse them as he sees fit. The words of God are righteousness and truth, but they are strangely unheeded. If men cannot shape His sayings to their liking, they depart from His directions, and break His commandments. But thank God we have the living oracles, the lamp of life, and he only is wise who walks in the light. God cannot change the word that has gone out of His lips. Man cannot depart from God's plans, except at the peril of his soul. He cannot sit safely in judgment upon the word of God; for that word is to judge him when he shall stand before the great white throne. Let all bear in mind that the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every one shall be judged according to his works. **The religion of every man must be in harmony with the Bible.** No man can disregard one word of God, or walk contrary to his expressed will, receiving or rejecting it as he pleases, and be guiltless in the judgment. He will be brought face to face with the record, and will have to answer to the charge against him” (Letter 24, 1890, pp. 7, 8. To "Dear Brother Saxby," August 13, 1890; 4MR 450).

“The soul must fully own the power and authority of the word of God. Then, though we may make mistakes, we always have a touchstone by which to test our ways and a standard by which we may, by true service, recall the heart and conscience” (Letter 48, p. 5. - To Dr. and Mrs. D. H. Kress, April 1, 1903.)

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezr 7:10).

“Shall we let the example of Ezra teach us the use we should make of our knowledge of the Scriptures? The life of this servant of God should be an inspiration to us to serve the Lord with heart and mind and strength. We each have an appointed work to do, and this can be accomplished only by consecrated effort. We need first to set ourselves to know the requirements of God, and then to practise them. Then we can sow seeds of truth that will bear fruit unto eternal life” (RH February 6, 1908, Art. A, par. 3).

“When God’s Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God’s Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, “It is written.” Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline” (The Review and Herald, December 15, 1885; 1SM 416).

Higher Criticism

“The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God’s word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives. By spiritualism, multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself” (AA 474).

“Even Bible study, as too often conducted in the schools, is robbing the world of the priceless treasure of the word of God. The work of “higher criticism,” in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation; it is robbing God’s word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives” (Ed 227).

“Both in the [Battle Creek] Tabernacle and in the college the subject of inspiration has been taught, and finite men have taken it upon themselves to say that some things in the Scriptures were inspired and some were not. I was shown that the Lord did not inspire the articles on inspiration published in the Review [see RH Jan. 15, 1884], neither did He approve their endorsement before our youth in the college. When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this” (Letter 22, 1889; 1SM 23).

“It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. **As an educating power the Bible is without a rival.** In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, **and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages.** It lights up the far-distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God’s word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in His word the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers” (PP 596; see also Ed 173; 5T 25).

“The teaching of the Bible has a vital bearing upon man’s prosperity in all the relations of this life. It unfolds the principles that are the cornerstone of a nation’s prosperity—principles with which is bound up the well-being of society, and which are the safeguard of the family—principles without which no man can attain usefulness, happiness, and honor in this life, or can hope to secure the future, immortal life. There is no position in life, no phase of human experience, for which the teaching of the Bible is not an essential preparation. Studied and obeyed, the word of God would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect than will the closest application to all the subjects that human philosophy embraces. It would give men of strength and solidity of character, of keen perception and sound judgment—men who would be an honor to God and a blessing to the world” (PP 599).

“God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven” (1SM 16).

“Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do, unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations. And He [God] has not, while presenting the perils clustering about the last days, qualified any finite man to unravel hidden mysteries or inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us” (1SM 17).

“I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God’s Word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom. These men are, many of them, smart men, learned men, they have eloquence and talent, the whole lifework [of whom] is to unsettle minds in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures. They influence many to see as they do. And the same work is passed on from one to another, just as Satan designed it should be, until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8) (1SM 17).

“Brethren, let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do” (1SM 17).

“Men should let God take care of His own Book, His living oracles, as He has done for ages. They begin to question some parts of revelation, and pick flaws in the apparent inconsistencies of this statement and that statement. Beginning at Genesis, they give up that which they deem questionable, and their minds lead on, for Satan will lead to any length they may follow in their criticism, and they see something to doubt in the whole Scriptures. Their faculties of criticism become sharpened by exercise, and they can rest on nothing with a certainty. You try to reason with these men, but your time is lost. They will exercise their power of ridicule even upon the Bible. They even become mockers, and they would be astonished if you put it to them in that light” (1SM 17).

“Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the Author of the living oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5) (1SM 18).

“Simplicity and plain utterance are comprehended by the illiterate, by the peasant, and the child as well as by the full-grown man or the giant in intellect. If the individual is possessed of large talents of mental powers, he will find in the oracles of God treasures of truth, beautiful and valuable, which he can appropriate. He will also find difficulties, and secrets and wonders which will give him the highest satisfaction to study during a long lifetime, and yet there is an infinity beyond” (1SM 18).

“Men of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the living oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is willfully blind” (1SM 18).

“We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes” (MS 16, 1888; written at Minneapolis, Minn., autumn 1888; 1SM 18).

"But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted" (DA 253).

“Jesus knew that he could do the scribes and Pharisees no good, unless they would empty themselves of self-importance. He chose new bottles for his new wine of doctrine, and made fishermen and unlearned believers the heralds of his truth to the world. And yet, though his doctrine seemed new to the people, it was in fact not a new doctrine, but the revelation of the significance of that which had been taught from the beginning. It was his design that his disciples should take the plain, unadulterated truth for the guide of their life. They were not to add to his words, or give a forced meaning to his utterances. **They were not to put a mystical interpretation upon the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and draw from theological stores to build up some man-made theory. It was through putting a mystical meaning upon the plain words of God, that sacred and vital truths were made of little significance, while the theories of men were made prominent. It was in this way that men were led to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and that they rejected the commandment of God, that they might keep their own tradition**” (RH June 2, 1896, par. 7; 5BC 1089).

Martin Luther

“I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. **I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures**

do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt" (GC 140-141; from D'Aubigne, b. 6, ch. 3).

"It is a light thing to die for the Word, since the Word which was made flesh hath Himself died" (GC 141).

"I consent with all my heart, that the emperor, the princes, and even the meanest Christian, should examine and judge my works; **but on one condition, that they take the word of God for their standard. Men have nothing to do but to obey it**"(GC 166).

"Both read the Bible day and night, But thou read'st black where I read white." - William Blake, The Everlasting Gospel (1818)

In the end, I conclude with and suggest the following paradigm for consideration:

Scripture > Self
Bible > Biography
Christ > Culture

To what extent is Scripture > Self reality in your life?! What needs to change?

Old Testament Notes

Judges 9:45: salt! – Mt 5:13!

The Book of Daniel - Introduction

Class of 1993 – we are closer to the end than we are to the beginning (unless you're Morris Lowry).
Are beginnings better or endings?

The Hebrews had the unique idea to name the first five books of the Pentateuch by the first word or phrase:

Genesis: b'reshit = beginnings

Exodus: shemot = these are the names

Leviticus: vayikra = called out

Numbers: bemidbar = in the wilderness

Deuteronomy: devarim = the words

Germans are much too technical for that. We just call Genesis – Deuteronomy 1st Mose, 2nd Mose, 3rd Mose, etc.).
Incidentally, it's a good thing that they went with the first word, not the last –Genesis ends with "a coffin in Egypt".

So, are beginnings better or endings?

I like going on trips, traveling, conferences, mission trips, enjoying the moment of an experience (Carpe Diem, anybody?), but I have to admit that I am always glad when I sit back in the airplane, or better yet, sleep in my own bed, and it's over. Something is finished and done. Closure and completion. It doesn't even have to be something bad, but we like to say, "Glad that is over."

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl 7:8) (11 words in English – only 4 in Hebrew!).
Secret: Endings are new beginnings!

Key Insight: Every chapter begins with a human king and ends with the people of God.

Hint: Guess who's got the final word and the last say?!

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl 7:8) – because endings are always new beginnings.

Personal Testimony: Baptism – end, beginning.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl 7:8) – because endings are always new beginnings.

Confession: I was quite a book worm when I grew up, and I must confess that I read the last chapter before I ever began reading the book – "let me see how this end!" End of Revelation (we're taking a peak at the end of the book!): "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev 22:13). "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev 22:20-21).

And in the case of the end of the world? That, too, is the beginning of something brand and grand new. Are you ready for that?

Key Patterns

Intricate Interplay between the Literal-Local and the Eschatological-Universal

Message behind the Method: life on earth is about eternity.

Investigation in Daniel

- 1:4! „Children in whom was no blemish“ = investigated!

- 1:5! “that at the end thereof they might stand before the king” = to be investigated “at the end”!
- 1:6! “Now among these were . . .” = some passed, some didn’t
- 1:8! Name – Education - Food! SL p. 19: “Among the viands placed before the king were swine’s flesh and other meats which were declared unclean by the law of Moses, and which the Hebrews had been expressly forbidden to eat.”

Investigation Pattern

Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar Investigates	Daniel 7: God Investigates
2:4b-11 4 sets of counselors “standing before king” are investigated	7:9-10 angels stand before Ancient of Days, judgment sits, books opened
2:12-13 wise men to be killed, burned	7:11 4th living creature killed, body burned
2:14-23 Daniel asks for time 4 pray not to be destroyed with the rest of the wise men	7:12 extension of life granted to rest of living creatures for a time
2:24 Daniel to Arioch; destruction halted; Daniel before king (intercession!); declare interpretation	7:13a one like Son of man coming before king; intercession?!; declare interpretation
2:25 Arioch brings Daniel before king	7:13b Son of man before Ancient of Days

- Dan 2:2, 25, 35!
- Dan 3:3, 8, 13, 27
- Dan 4:30, 31, 37!
- Dan 5: “drink” 4x in vv 1-4, 23
- Dan 5-6: 12x “found”! Dan 5:11, 12, 27; 6:4, 4, 5, 5, 11, 22, 23
- Dan 6:25-26: 3 Angels’ Message! “all people, nations, and languages” . . . “fear God” . . . “heaven and earth”
- Dan 12:9-10!

The Day of Atonement Relation between Daniel and Leviticus

Daniel 7-9	Leviticus 10, 16
Judgment in favor of the saints (7:9, 10, 22) Result: Saints vindicated (7:22) Result: end of little horn power (7:26)	Judgment in favor of the saints Result: saints declared clean (16:19, 30) Result: end of Azazel
Daniel afflicts his soul (9:4-19)	Saints afflict their souls (16:29)
Confession + Intercession (9:4-19)	Confession + Intercession (16:21, 33)
Apostate Priesthood: Little horn	Apostate priesthood (10:1, 2; 16:1)
End of probation (9:26-27)	16:20-22; 23:29
What happens to little horn, happens to Satan (7:11, 21)	What happens to representatives of Satan and false priesthood happens to Satan and all those who are lost (10:2) – outside the camp!
Probationary time limited	Probationary time limited

Daniel 8:14: When God cleanses a place He actually wants to cleanse His people!
- When God is your judge, your day in court is your new creation!

Example: Temple Cleansing: “And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them” (Mt 21:15).

The Book of Matthew

Step 1: Thoughtfully read the book of Matthew cover to cover. If you have read it before, resist the idea that “I “know all this already”. The Scriptures are an infinite gold mine. Without distractions (early morning, late at night?!), read, highlight, pause, ponder.

As you proceed through this study, keep your Bible at hand. I recommend you use a real paper Bible, not an electronic one. Your brain longs for a 3-dimensional interaction with reality. Develop your own Study Bible – a Bible which, if lost, you would miss like a lost friend.

Also keep a **highlighter** at hand – even though some really important items I have already highlighted for you!

Background Check

Though Matthew, Mark, and Luke sound similar at times, they each have their unique fingerprint and signature:

Gospel	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1 st Audience	Jews	Romans	Greeks	People
1 st Focus	Kin	Neighbor	Country	World

Who was Matthew?

- a tax collector named called Levi (“my heart”): see Mark 2:14; 5:27, 29.
- Matthew: Mt 9:9; 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15.

Here is some more historical background to this question:

Papias: “Therefore, Matthew wrote down the sayings (τά λόγια, *ta logia*) in the Hebrew dialect, and each man translated as he was able” (Eusebius, [Histoire Ecclesiastique](#), 3.39.16). Of course, this is debated.

Irenaeus: “Indeed, Matthew, among the Hebrews, wrote a gospel in their own language, and wrote letters when Peter and Paul were evangelizing and establishing the church in Rome” (5.8.2).

Origen: “the first gospel was written according to the former tax collector, and later apostle of Jesus Christ, Matthew. And he gave it to the believers from Judaism, arranged in the Hebrew language” (6.25.4). “[Matthew] was a tax collector; but he was not of the number of the apostles, except according to one of the copies of the gospel according to Mark” (Origen, [Contra Celsum](#), 1.62 [Chadwick]).

Eusebius: “Matthew first preached to the Hebrews, and as he was about to go to another people, he gave [them] the gospel according to him in their native language” (3.24.6).

Jerome: “Out of respect and honor, the other evangelists were unwilling to call him by the common name of Matthew. Instead they called him Levi. In fact, he went by two names” (Jerome, Commentary, 107 [Scheck]).

Matthew’s profession: tax collector (Mt 9:9; older term: publican). He was not a fisherman who could return to fishing like Peter did (John 21:3). In contrast, by giving up his tax collecting booth, Matthew’s decision to follow Jesus is a display of radical discipleship.

Notice how decisive Matthew's decision to follow Jesus is worded in his own Gospel:

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him" (Mt 9:9).

Just one sentence. The call. And the response. "He arose, and followed him." Simple as that. As radical as that.

Do you need to arise? What did you give up to follow Jesus? What do you still need to give up?

Interesting . . .

- 60% of Matthew are the words of Jesus; 15% of the Gospel covers the final days of Jesus' life
- 90% overlap with Mark (original source?!)
- frequent use of the Septuagint (1:23; 11:10; 12:21; 13:14-15; 21:16, etc.)
- many Old Testament quotations and allusions (from 19 books, utilizing 15 Old Testament characters)
- "fulfilled" > 17x = the Old Testament is a must to fully understand and appreciate Matthew's appeal
- Hebrew writing style and patterns, like synonymous parallelisms (A → A'); example:

Ask and it will be given to you
 Seek and you will find
 Knock and the door will be opened for you (Mt 7:7)

But many who are first will be last
 And the last will be first

When did Matthew write his Gospel?

The dating of Matthew is subject to debate: before or after the infamous destruction of the temple in AD 70?

Matthew cites Jesus in Matthew 24:2 using the future tense in the sense of predictive prophecy; that is, as an event that has not yet taken place: "that shall not be thrown down".

I further favor a dating before AD 70 because . . .

- Matthew is a highly organized writer, as could be expected from an accountant (even using more precise numismatic nomenclature for identifying coins – xyz).
- the sequence "when . . . then" (Mt 24:15-16) sound future not just for Jesus in AD 31, but from the perspective of Matthew as a writer.
- Matthew writes with his current situation in mind: "to this day" (Mt 27:8) and "until this day" (Mt 28:15).
- Matthew is the only Gospel writer to discuss the temple tax (Mt 17:24-27); would he not report the destruction of that very temple?!
- the Sadducees are more prominent in Matthew than in the other Gospel writers. In AD 70 they lost their power and influence (and their lives!) – a curious fact if the temple was no longer functional at the time of Matthew writing.

"Sadducee"	Matthew: 7x	Mark: 1x	Luke: 1x (5x in Acts)	John: 0x
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- Matthew 22:7 "But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" - This is a parable, not an actual historical reference.
- The split between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church was more pronounced after AD 70, and would have

made Matthew's outreach to the Jews proportionally more difficult. A more likely scenario is that Matthew wrote before AD 70.

Unique to Matthew:

Only Matthew records the magi, church (!), the flight to Egypt, the massacre of the infants, renaming Peter, Peter walking on water, Judas' suicide, Pilate's wife, Pilate washing his hands, temple tax, resurrection of saints at crucifixion, bribery of the guard, baptismal commission.

Matthew likes mountain backdrops: Matt 4:8; 5:1–8:1; 14:23; 15:29; 17:1–9; 24:3; 26:30; 28:16–20.

Matthew's Key Theme: "Kingdom"

Incidentally, only Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven", presumably out of respect for Jewish sensitivities towards the name of God.

Kingdom Theme	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
"Kingdom of Heaven"	32	0	0	0
"Kingdom of God"	5	15	33	2

Word Statistics

Jesus: 152 "He said": 119 "Behold": 62 "I say": 61
 "Amen": 31 "Lord" (Vocative): 34 "come/go": 292 "kingdom": 55

Key Questions Matthew's Gospel addresses:

- Is Jesus the Old Testament Messiah?
- If yes, where is His kingdom?
- When will the kingdom come?
- How can God's kingdom start so small?

Basic Outline of Matthew's Gospel:

1-4: Arrival: Introduction
 5-7: Announcement: The Sermon from the Mount
 8-12: Action: Practical Ministry
 13: Appeal: The Parables (centerpiece)
 14-20: Attack: Conflict
 21-27: Abandonment: The Cross
 28: Alive!: The Resurrection

The Time Pattern:

"From that time on . . ." (Mt 4:17)
 "From that time on . . ." (Mt 16:21)
 "From then on Judas . . ." (Mt 26:16)

The Sermon Pattern (possibly mirroring the Pentateuch):

1. Sermon from the Mount (5-7): "When Jesus had finished this sermon" (7:28)
2. Discipleship (10): "When Jesus had finished . . ." (11:1)

3. Parables (13): "When Jesus had finished . . ." (13:53)
 4. Relationships (14-19): "When Jesus had finished . . ." (19:1)
 5. Preparation (24-25): "When Jesus had finished . . ." (26:1)

The Ministry Pattern:

Cycle 1: "Jesus went . . . teaching, preaching, healing" (4:23)

Cycle 2: "Jesus went . . . teaching, preaching, healing" (9:35)

The Story/Teaching Pattern:

Story:	1:1-4:25	Infancy, Baptism
Teaching:	5:1-7:29	Sermon from the Mount
Story:	8:1-9:34	Healings
Teaching:	9:35-11:1	Discipleship
Story:	11:2-12:15	
Teaching:	13:1-52	Parables
Story:	13:52-17:27	Ministry
Teaching:	18:1-35	Community
Story:	19:1-22:46	
Teaching:	23:1-25:46	Last Day Events
Story:	26:1-28:20	Cross & Resurrection

Chiasm: The Immanuel (God with us) Bookends

A chiasm is a story-telling technique, in which the beginning and the end of a story (and elements in between) match symmetrically, with the middle forming and identifying the centerpiece.

Example: "Do not ask, what your country can do for you. Ask, what you can do for your country" (John F. Kennedy).

College Students! "Do not kiss a fool, and do not let a fool kiss you . . ."

Matthew ends his Gospel the way he begins it - with God's presence:

Mt 1:23 Immanuel ("God with us") → Mt 28:20 "I will be with you"

Matthew 1-4: Birth - Baptism - Beginnings

Matthew 1

Mt 1:1 "the son of David, the son of Abraham"

Matthew's first verse is quite intriguing; it sets the tone for the entire Gospel! Think . . . Why is David mentioned first when Abraham came first? Matthew wants to start his genealogy with Abraham, so the order creates a convenient Segway in this regard. But the sequence David - Abraham also reveals a potential outline of the Gospel:

son of David: King Solomon	= Jesus is our King (crown)
son of Abraham: Isaac, the sacrifice	= Jesus is our Sacrifice (cross)

The Genealogy of Jesus: Who belongs to Whom?!

Don't skip the genealogy!

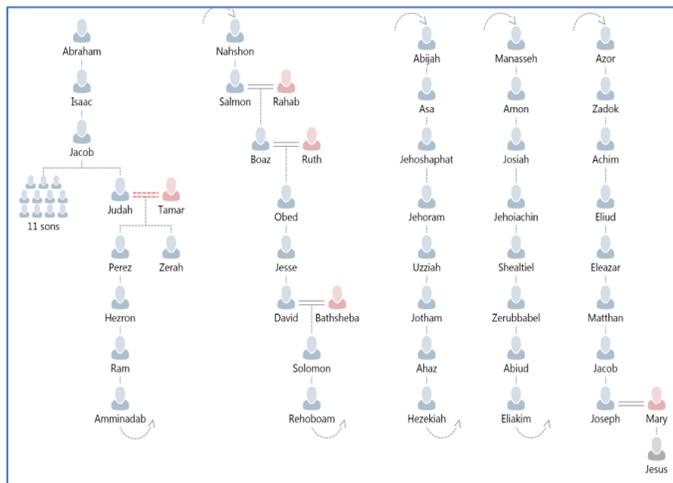
Ray Stevens sings a country song, in which relations get a bit, well, complicated: two related couples each have a baby: ♪♪ “This made my dad my son-in-law, my daughter was my mother, cause she was my father’s wife. Father’s wife then had a son, he became my grandchild, for he was my daughter’s son. My wife is now my mother’s mother, now if my wife is my grandmother, then I’m her grandchild . . . As husband of my grandmother, I’m my own Grandpa.”

The genealogy of Jesus as presented by Matthew is worth a closer look. Relationships are complicated. Don’t skip the genealogy! It might have your name in it one day . . .

The Numeric Pattern of 14 is based on the numeric value of the name “David”. Hebrew was originally written without vowels = DVD טוּד: D=4 V=6 D=4 = 14.

14 generations each: Abraham → David | David → Babylonian Captivity | Babylonian captivity → Christ

Matthew sure likes order!



Logos Bible Software

Who is in your family tree?

What phases or patterns do you detect in your life?

Types of people in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus:

Belonging to Jesus’ family tree carries no salvation value; it is nevertheless interesting to note the various people that make up Jesus’ lineage. **The point is not that we as (sinful) humans belong, but that Jesus chose to belong to our human family!**

1. Famous Men

Abraham: father of the Jewish nation (Gen 12)

Isaac: son of the promise; prefigured Jesus’ sacrifice (Gen 22; PP 153-154)

Jacob: becomes “Israel” after a struggle with God (Gen 32:22-32; PP 198)

David: the king of Israel

2. Infamous Men

Jeconiah/Jehoiachin (Jer 22-27): cut off without successor to throne; reigned a mere 100 days (598-597); "As I live," says the LORD, "though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off!" "Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol-- A vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know" (Jer 22:24, 28)? His name is also spelled Coniah = Jeconiah without Yah(weh)! Nonetheless: "'I will bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon,' says the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon'" (Jer 28:4).

3. The Nobodies

vv 13-15: Abihud, Azor, Achim, Eliud, Matthan - only mentioned here in the Bible! So, we don't know what these guys did!

4. Infamous Women

- 1) **Tamar** (v3): Gentile, incest (Gen 38)
- 2) **Rahab** (v5): Gentile, prostitute (Heb 11:31; James 2:25)
- 3) **Ruth** (v5): Moabite (Deut 23:3-6!)
- 4) **Bathsheba**: Matthew does not mention Bathsheba by name; he simply states "of whom". Hittite, innocent (2 Sam 11), and innocently dragged into adultery
- 5) **Mary** (v16): innocent, but apparently pregnant-out-of-wedlock

5. Joseph - Mt 1:18-20 "betrothed" = engaged

In Judaism an engagement was dissolved only by divorce. *Sample Divorce Decree*: "I, xyz, divorce and release of my own free will today you, Mary, who had been my wife before this time. You are free on your part to go and become the wife of any Jewish man you wish. This is for you a writ of release and a bill of divorce. . . . At any time that you ask me, I will replace this document for you." Masada, AD 72 (in S. Miller, *The Jesus of the Bible*, 45). Joseph could have walked out on Mary – but for verses 24-25 to see his decision!

Mt 1:18 with child from the Holy Spirit

Just like in creation, the Holy Spirit is active agent in the creation of life - precisely the reason why He is necessary in the new birth as well. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit; so we must be born of the Spirit (Jn 1:13; 3:5-9).

Having said this, God the Father is the Father of Christ, not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the "vehicle" or "mechanism" by which the Father accomplishes the incarnation.

Mt 1:21 "Jesus"

Jesus is the acoustic equivalent of Greek Ἰησοῦς *Iesous*, from Hebrew יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *Y'hoshua* = the Lord (Yahweh) is salvation. There is no relation to the Greek god *Zeus*. Since the Gospels do not call Jesus *Y'hoshua* we are not obligated to call Him by that name either, although respect for names should be maintained. But it is biblically appropriate to call Jesus by the English name Jesus. To insist on only calling Him *Y'hoshua* or *Yeshua* would mean that the writers of the New Testament were wrong, as was Ellen White.

Mt 1:21 He will save His people from their sins"

A most intriguing – and most important – verse that identifies; a veritable purpose statement of Christ's ministry! You might want to pause right here and give this section a fresh start – it should and will affect you personally and eternally!

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Act 3:19).

"To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

Special Focus: Ellen White on Matthew 1:21

“The sinner is not saved in his sins, but from his sins” (FW 31).

“Through every device possible Satan has sought to make of none effect the sacrifice of the Son of God, to render His expiation useless and His mission a failure. **He has claimed that the death of Christ made obedience to the law unnecessary and permitted the sinner to come into favor with a holy God without forsaking his sin.** He has declared that the Old Testament standard was lowered in the gospel and that men can come to Christ, **not to be saved from their sins but in their sins**” (FW 90).

“**Jesus died to save His people from their sins, and redemption in Christ means to cease the transgression of the law of God and to be free from every sin;** no heart that is stirred with enmity against the law of God is in harmony with Christ, who suffered on Calvary to vindicate and exalt the law before the universe” (FW 95).

“**Jesus died, dear youth, not to save you in your sins, but from your sins**” (FLB 313).

“**Jesus died, not to save man in his sins, but from his sins.** Man is to leave the error of his ways, to follow the example of Christ, to take up his cross and follow Him, denying self, and obeying God at any cost” (4T 250).

“**Jesus came into the world to save sinners, not in their sins but from their sins,** and to sanctify them through the truth; and in order that He may become a perfect Saviour to us, we must enter into union with Him by a personal act of faith. Christ has chosen us, we have chosen Him, and by this choice we become united to Him and are to live from henceforth, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who has died for us. But this union can only be preserved by constant watchfulness, lest we fall into temptation and make a different choice, for we are free always to take another master if we so desire. **Union with Christ means an unflinching preference for Him in every act and thought . . .**” (TMK 361).

“The uncertain experience of many professed Christians—sinning and repenting and continuing in the same dwarfed spiritual condition—is the result of worldliness and unholiness of life. The saving grace of Christ is designed for everyday life. **Christ came not to save man in his sins, but from his sins.** The principles of truth, abiding in the heart, will sanctify the life” (MS 35, January 8, 1893, “Publishing Work; UL 22).

“Christ invites all to come to Him, but when they come, **they are to lay aside their sins.** All their vices and follies, all their pride and worldliness, are to be laid at [the foot of] His cross. This He requires because He loves them, and desires to save them; **not in their sins but from their sins.** He who accepts the truth longs for transformation, and the light comes to him in bright rays” (UL 169).

“Because Christ was one with the Father, equal with Him, He could make an atonement for transgression, and save man—**not in his sins, but from his sins.** Those who have despised His grace will see what they have lost by treating with contempt the One who humbled Himself to stand at the head of humanity. They hear the words of condemnation, “Depart from Me. By your example you have caused many to err. You have led them astray from the commandments in obedience to which they would have found eternal life” (UL 272).

“The tempter’s agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. **There is no excuse for sinning.** A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life. Jesus was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man; yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was God in the flesh. His character is to be ours. The Lord says of those who believe in Him, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” 2 Corinthians 6:16. Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of

heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us. He bids us by faith in Him attain to the glory of the character of God. Therefore are we to be perfect, even as our “Father which is in heaven is perfect” (DA 311).

Instead of minimizing these quotes with the typical “Nobody is perfect” . . . what is the Good News in these quotes? Are you enslaved? Honestly, do you live in sin? Do you wish to be free – truly free?

Mt 1:23 “Virgin . . . Immanuel”

Old Testament background: Isaiah 7: Ahaz (Judah) ↔ Rezin (Syria) + Pekah (Israel) = war!

- “So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind” (Isa 7:2). A most difficult situation for Israel indeed. Now watch God’s dealing with Israel in a tight spot:

- God: “Do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands” (Isa 7:3) but “If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established” (7:9), so “Ask a sign” (v11); Ahaz’ incredulous response: “No”!

Sign: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: “Behold, the virgin [עַלְמָה *almah* παρθένος *parthenos*] shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa 7:14).

Hebr. עַלְמָה *almah* in Gen 24:14, 16, 43, 55 = unmarried woman (Rebekah) = virgin; elsewhere “young” woman. Another term for virgin is בְּתוּלָה *betulah*, also translated by the Septuagint as *parthenos* (Ex 22:16). Matthew understood *parthenos* in Isa 7:14 in the sense of virgin, not just young woman (see also *betulah* = *parthenos* in Lev 21:3, 14; 22:14, 17, 19, 23, 28; Jer 2:32) – contrary to the rendering of the RSV in Isa 7:14.

Mt 1:24-25 Joseph has to make a conscious decision to stay with Mary + Jesus

Notice that Joseph had to choose to belong to Jesus’ family tree! Appeal by Matthew: You need to choose too! Have you? Really?! If you haven’t, why not do so right now?!

What value do dreams have in the life of a 21st century believer?

Matthew 2

Mt 2:1 magi: in Acts 13:6, 8 *magos* refers to Elymas the sorcerer. In the past I defended them as astronomers, not astrologers, but the lexical consensus appears to identify them as astrologers:

Friberg Lexicon: μάγος, ου, ὁ from Persian magus (great); (1) magus, plural magi, the high priestly caste of Persia; wise man of the Magian religion (MT 2.1); (2) magician, sorcerer, one using witchcraft or magic arts (AC 13.6)

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon: μάγος, μαγου, ὁ (Hebrew מַג, plural מַגִּי; a word of Indo-Germanic origin; cf. Gesenius, Thesaurus, ii., p. 786; J. G. Müller in Herzog viii., p. 678; (Vanicek, Fremdwörter, under the word; but the word is now regarded by many as of Babylonian origin; see Schrader, Keilinschriften as above with 2te Aufl., p. 417ff)); from Sophocles and Herodotus down; the Septuagint Dan. 2:2 and several times in Theodotion ad Dan. for μαγῶν; a magus; the name given by the Babylonians (Chaldaeans), Medes, Persians, and others, to the wise men, teachers, priests, physicians, astrologers, seers, interpreters of dreams, augurs, soothsayers, sorcerers etc.; cf. Winer’s RWB, under the word; J. G. Müller in Herzog, the passage cited, pp. 675-685; Holtzmann in Schenkel iv., p. 84f; (BB. DD., under the word Magi). In the N. T. the name is given:

BDAG: 1. a Magus, a (Persian [Snyberg, D. Rel. d. alten Iran ’38], then also Babylonian) wise man and priest, who was expert in astrology, interpretation of dreams and various other occult arts (so Hdt.+; Jos., Ant. 20, 142; s. Da 2:2, 10 . . .

2. magician (trag. et al.; Aeschin. 3, 137 [μάγος=πονηρός]; Diod. S. 5, 55, 3; 34 + 35 fgm. 2, 5 τὶς ... ἄνθρωπος μάγος, a false prophet, who πολλοὺς ἐξηπάτα; Vett. Val. 74, 17; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 93; TestReub 4:9) of Barjesus=Elymas on Cyprus Ac 13:6, 8. Cp. Hm 11:2 v.l. . . .

EGW: “The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism. As these magi studied the starry heavens, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, they beheld the glory of the Creator. Seeking clearer knowledge, they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures. In their own land were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher. Balaam belonged to the magicians, though at one time a prophet of God; by the Holy Spirit he had foretold the prosperity of Israel and the appearing of the Messiah; and his prophecies had been handed down by tradition from century to century. But in the Old Testament the Saviour’s advent was more clearly revealed. The magi learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord” (DA 59).

Mt 2:2 the star: angels

Other extraordinary stars: China: supernova 5 BC; Haley’s Comet 12 BC; Jupiter/Saturn - pisces (fish) constellation 7 BC, but none match the phenomenon of Bethlehem.

In Revelation 1:20, angels are symbolized by stars, and Ellen White confirms, “**That star was a distant company of shining angels**, but of this the wise men were ignorant. Yet they were impressed that the star was of special import to them. They consulted priests and philosophers, and searched the scrolls of the ancient records. The prophecy of Balaam had declared, “There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel.” Numbers 24:17. Could this strange star have been sent as a harbinger of the Promised One? The magi had welcomed the light of heaven-sent truth; now it was shed upon them in brighter rays. Through dreams they were instructed to go in search of the newborn Prince” (DA 60).

Purpose of the Wise Men: Local Mission

“Through the wise men, God had called the attention of the Jewish nation to the birth of His Son. Their inquiries in Jerusalem, the popular interest excited, and even the jealousy of Herod, which compelled the attention of the priests and rabbis, directed minds to the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and to the great event that had just taken place” (DA 64).

Mt 2:3 Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him - because the potential outburst against a rival king could spell trouble for Jerusalem’s inhabitants.

Mt 2:5-6 The Bethlehem Prophecy - Micah 5:2

The famous prophecy of the Messiah born in Bethlehem is carefully structured (as a chiasm):

Messiah (5:1-14)	
<i>Future Restoration</i>	
Bad Leaders (3:1-12)	Bad Leaders (6:16)
<i>parallels: hear now; justice, love, eating, mouth</i>	
Bad People (woe; 2:1-13)	Bad People (woe; 7:1-7)
Defeat and Destruction (1:1-16)	Reversal of Defeat and Destruction (7:8-20)
<i>parallels: sin, exile, walls</i>	

adapted from David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 299.

Mt 2:8 that I may worship Him also: worship is the anatomical heart of the Great Controversy! Worship was an issue in the Garden of Eden; between Cain and Abel; the Exodus (Ex 3:18); between Daniel and Babylon (Dan 3); in Satan’s final attempt of breaking Jesus (Mt 4:9), and it will be the final issue between good and evil (Rev 3:9; 4:10; 9:20; 11:1; 13:8, 12, 15; 14:7, 11; 15:4; 19:10; 22:8-9).

Scholars estimate that about 20-30 babies were killed. Considering the small size of villages and population numbers, Jer 31:15 is an appropriate prophetic lamentation.

“All this terrible calamity was suffered of God, to humble the pride of the Jewish nation. Their crimes and wickedness had been so great that the Lord permitted the wicked Herod to thus punish them. **Had they been less boastful and ambitious, their lives pure, their habits simple and sincere, God would have preserved them from being thus humiliated and afflicted by their enemies.** God would, in a signal manner, have made the wrath of the king harmless to his people, had they been faithful and perfect before him. But he could not especially work for them, for their works were abhorred by him” (2SP 28).

Rejection of God affects the innocent! This reflects on the wickedness of humans more than it does on the wrath of God.

Does punishment for sin resulting in innocent suffering fit into your theological framework?!

Whenever God wants to do something big, Satan tries to destroy an entire generation:

- Cain/Abel: true worshiper is killed
- Moses: new generation of the Exodus is killed
- Jesus: new generation killed
- End-Time: youth paralyzed by sex, drugs, rock'n roll, secularism, entertainment, etc.

What is killing you?

God will fix all unfairness in the end: “As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers’ arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life” (Hvn 45).

Mt 2:19-23 Nazareth Phase - Is God’s will static or dynamic?

Another threat arises, diverting the family to Nazareth and thus facilitating the prophetic reality of “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Mt 2:23). This is a reference to a location, but also creates a pun on the group called Nazirites: “You shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Jdg 13:5).

In any case, carefully read Mt 2:19-23 right now. Joseph was told in a dream to return to Galilee but was then, nonetheless, diverted to Nazareth. You are witnessing the interplay between divine foresight and changing human conditions.

Your Plan B might be God’s Plan A! Are you sensitive to His leading?

Was Jesus born on December 25?

- Bethlehem is on the same latitude as Waco, TX. Flocks would not be out in the fields during the cold winter months – but that’s how Luke describes the night of Jesus’ birth (Lk 2:8).
- the first record of Christmas: AD 336, after Constantine.
- Origen: “let’s not celebrate His birthday”.
- Dec. 25 was picked because of the pagan holiday *Natalis Solis Invicta* - Saturnalia (Dec 17-24), which was celebrated in

honor of Saturn, the father of Jupiter (Zeus)

- Interestingly, Hanukkah (= feast of lights) also falls on December
- Mithraism: born in blood xyz
- Herod died April 4 BC (Nisan); Jesus must have been born before 1 BC!

Christmas and the Great Controversy: Parallels between Jesus' 1st and 2nd Coming

The table below shows some intriguing parallels between the 1st coming of Jesus and the 2nd coming:

1st Coming	2nd Coming
John the Baptist: Elijah Message	Elijah Message
Rome	Rome
Death Decree (Mt 2)	Death Decree (Rev 13:10, 15)
Legal Decree: Taxation	Legal Decree: Buy/Sell Prohibition (Rev 13:17)
Angels (Lk 2:): "Glory to God"	Angels (Rev 14:6-7): "Give God the glory"
outsiders carry the testimony of Jesus (shepherds)	outsiders carry the testimony of Jesus (remnant)
song	song
Mary	Mary → Church (Rev 12)

Can you find more parallels?!

Matthew 3

John the Baptist

- after 400 year of silence, a prophetic voice resurfaces, patterned after the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8).
- OT background: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa 40:3)

Mt 3:1 Repent . . . Confess

The Greek word *meta-noeo* literally means "to think afterwards", in the sense of changing one's attitude and changing one's action.

Confess: The Greek term 'to confess' (*homo-logeō*) means "to speak the same" = agreeing with God about your true condition!

This confession is directly to God, not to a fellow human being (unless you have offended someone and you need to ask for forgiveness in that regard).

The Urgency of Repentance

"All who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. **There must be deep, faithful searching of heart.** The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all

nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (CIHS 126).

In what way do you need to repent? Do you need to change your mind? Do you need to change your actions?

Mt 3:2 the kingdom of heaven

Note: ethical (behavioral) urgency is based on proximity to divinity → alteration of activity is in direct relation to being present in His presence.

Characteristics of the Kingdom:

- "kingdom of heaven" 162x in the NT; 134x in the synoptics; 32x in Matthew
- Origen called it the "autobasileia"= the kingdom in person
- free of suffering, sickness, and sin, even death
- starts in the heart, works from the inside out = principle-based
- **kingdom = life**: notice the "synonymous parallelism" in Mk 9:45, 47:
 "If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. **It is better for you to enter life** lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--⁴⁶ "where Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched."⁴⁷
 "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. **It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God** with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire."

Conversely, the kingdom does not tolerate evil: "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:28).

Mt 3:4 Did John the Baptist eat grasshoppers?

"And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey."

The terms *locusts* and *carob pods* sound similar in Greek:

Locusts (Mt 3:4/Mk 1:6): ἀκρίς *akris* (a clean insect; Lev 11:22; Plin. Hist. Natur. 6:35; 11:32, 35).

Carob pods: ἐγκρίδες *egkrides*.

"For years the Lord has been calling the attention of His people to health reform. **This is one of the great branches of the work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man.** John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. **He was a representative of those living in these last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. John was a reformer. The angel Gabriel, direct from heaven, gave a discourse upon health reform to the Father and mother of John.** He said that he should not drink wine or strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth. . . . John separated himself from friends (!), and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel's hair, was a standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priests, and of the people generally. **His diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite, and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed** (CH 72; 3T 62).

Is "locusts and wild honey" a sub-category of "purely vegetable", or is it "purely vegetable" + locusts (grasshoppers) + honey?

The prophet Malachi declares, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Malachi 4:5, 6. Here the prophet describes the character of the work. **Those who are to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ, are represented by faithful Elijah, as John came in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first advent. The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things. The self-denial, humility, and temperance required of the righteous, whom**

God especially leads and blesses, is to be presented to the people in contrast to the extravagant, health-destroying habits of those who live in this degenerate age” (CH 72).

“God has shown that health reform is as closely connected with the third angel’s message as the hand is with the body. There is nowhere to be found so great a cause of physical and moral degeneracy as a neglect of this important subject. **Those who indulge appetite and passion and close their eyes to the light for fear they will see sinful indulgences which they are unwilling to forsake, are guilty before God.** Whoever turns from the light in one instance hardens his heart to disregard the light upon other matters. **Whoever violates moral obligations in the matter of eating and dressing, prepares the way to violate the claims of God in regard to eternal interests”** (CH 73).

So, the above quote . . . What changes do you need to make in relation to CH 72-73?

Mt 3:7 O generation of vipers

“The Pharisees were very strict in regard to the outward observance of forms and customs, and were filled with haughty, worldly, hypocritical self-righteousness. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels, and were skeptical in regard to God. This sect was largely composed of unworthy characters, many of whom were licentious in their habits. By the word “vipers” John meant those who were malignant and antagonistic, bitterly opposed to the expressed will of God. John exhorted these men to “bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” That is, Show that you are converted, that your characters are transformed.... **Neither words nor profession, but fruits—the forsaking of sins, and obedience to the commandments of God—show the reality of genuine repentance and true conversion”** (MS 112, 1901).

Mt 3:12 "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." This reminds of Psalm 1: “He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴ **The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.** ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

On threshing, see Ruth 2:17; Job 39:12.

Mt 3:13-17 Jesus’ Baptism

If Jesus was perfect (without sin), why was He baptized?

Was Jesus our Substitute or our Example?

Jesus was baptized “to fulfill all righteousness”. As our example He renders baptism a necessity. According to Jesus, rejecting a gift or mandate from God equals rejecting the giver of the gift! “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him” (Lk 7:30).

Acts 2:37-38: “Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The baptism of Jesus was so important that God marked this event in the prophetic stream of time.

The Timing of Jesus’ Baptism: Prophetic Fulfillment

2,300 Years (evening-morning) Daniel 8:14									
70 weeks = 490 years (Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6)									
7 weeks 49 years	+62 week s 483 years	1 week				1,260 years Dark Ages: Counterfeit priesthood, corrupt penance, popery, persecution (GC 55)			
Fall 457 BC	40 8 BC	Fall 27	Spring 31	Fall 34	AD 70	508	538	1798	1844
Artaxerxes Decree to Restore Jerusalem		Baptism	Crucifixion	Stephen stoned; Paul converted; Gospel to Gentiles	Destruction of the Temple	Papacy Religions	Papacy Political	French Revolution	Heavenly Day of Atonement = Cleansing of Sanctuary
Ezra 7:11-13; 21-27; Neh 2:5, 17; Dn 9:24-27; Jer 25:11		Mk 1:15 Lk 3:1-3, 21 Gal 4:4	Nisan 15 "middle of the week" Dan 9:27 Age 33 (DA 830) 30 years ministry (ST Feb 15, 1899; 2SP 99-100)	Acts 7:53-11:18	Mt 24 Mk 13 Lk 21 Xyz Ed 226? Xyz	Clovis defeats Visigoths +1290 +1335 Dan 12:11-12	+1260 Decree of Justinian	Feb 15 1798: Pope Pius VI prisoner of General Berthier ("mortal wound") Mt 24:22 Rev 11 GC 266	<i>καθαρισθήσεται</i> Dan 8:14 (Job 4:17; 15:14; 17:9; 25:4; Ps 18:20; 51:4)

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Baptism = Anointing = Official Inauguration of Jesus’ Ministry

"...that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the **baptism** which John preached: ³⁸ "how God **anointed** [ἔχρισεν *echrisen*] Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Act 10:37-38)

"Jesus was our example in all things that pertain to life and godliness. **He was baptized in Jordan, just as those who come to him must be baptized.** The heavenly angels were looking with intense interest upon the scene of the Saviour’s baptism, and could the eyes of those who were looking on, have been opened, they would have seen the heavenly host surrounding the Son of God as he bowed on the banks of the Jordan. The Lord had promised to give John a sign whereby he might know who was the Messiah, and now as Jesus went up out of the water, the promised sign was given; for he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, hovered over the head of Christ, and a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (YI June 23, 1892).

"What does this scene mean to us? **How thoughtlessly we have read the account of the baptism of our Lord, not realizing that its significance was of the greatest importance to us, and that Christ was accepted of the Father in man’s behalf.** As Jesus bowed on the banks of Jordan and offered up his petition, humanity was presented to the Father by him who had clothed his divinity with humanity. Jesus offered himself to the Father in man’s behalf, that those who had been separated from God through sin, might be brought back to God through the merits of the divine Petitioner. **Because of sin the earth had been cut off from heaven, but with his human arm Christ encircles the fallen race, and**

with his divine arm he grasps the throne of the Infinite, and earth is brought into favor with heaven, and man into communion with his God. The prayer of Christ in behalf of lost humanity cleaved its way through every shadow that Satan had cast between man and God, and left a clear channel of communication to the very throne of glory. The gates were left ajar, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God, in the form of a dove, encircled the head of Christ, and the voice of God was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The voice of God was heard in answer to the petition of Christ, and this tells the sinner that his prayer will find a lodgment at the throne of the Father. **The Holy Spirit will be given to those who seek for its power and grace, and will help our infirmities when we would have audience with God. Heaven is open to our petitions, and we are invited to come "boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We are to come in faith, believing that we shall obtain the very things we ask of him"** (ST April 18, 1892, par. 5-6).

Satan at Jesus' Baptism

"When Christ presented himself to John for baptism, Satan was among the witnesses of that event. He saw the lightnings flash from the cloudless heavens. He heard the majestic voice of Jehovah that resounded through Heaven, and echoed through the earth like peals of thunder, announcing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He saw the brightness of the Father's glory overshadowing the form of Jesus, thus pointing out with unmistakable assurance the One in that crowd whom he acknowledged as his Son. **The circumstances connected with this baptismal scene were of the greatest interest to Satan. He knew then for a certainty that unless he could overcome Christ, from thenceforth there would be a limit to his power. He understood that this communication from the throne of God signified that Heaven was now more directly accessible to man than it had been, and the most intense hatred was aroused in his breast** (ST August 4, 1887, par. 6).

"When Satan led man to sin, he hoped that God's abhorrence of sin would forever separate him from man, and break the connecting link between Heaven and earth. When from the opening heavens he heard the voice of God addressing his Son, it was to him as the sound of a death-knell. It told him that now God was about to unite man more closely to himself, **and give moral power to overcome temptation**, and to escape from the entanglements of Satanic devices. Satan well knew the position which Christ had held in Heaven as the Son of God, the Beloved of the Father; and that Christ should leave the joy and honor of Heaven, and come to this world as a man, filled him with apprehension. He knew that this condescension on the part of the Son of God boded no good to him" (ST August 4, 1887, par. 7). "Satan could not comprehend the mystery of this great sacrifice for the benefit of fallen man. His selfish soul could not understand how there could exist benevolence and love for the deceived race, so great as to induce the Prince of Heaven to leave his home, and come to a world marred with sin and with the traces of the curse. Satan knew that the value of Heaven far exceeded man's anticipation and appreciation, and that the most costly treasures of the world would not compare with it in worth. He had a knowledge of the inestimable value of eternal riches that man did not possess. He had experienced the pure contentment, the peace, the exalted happiness and unalloyed joys, of the heavenly abode. He had realized, before his rebellion, the satisfaction of the full approval of God. He had had a full appreciation of the glory that enshrouded the Father, and knew that there was no limit to his power" (ST August 4, 1887, par. 8).

Satan wants us out of Heaven:

"The loss he had sustained was well known to Satan. And as the riches and glories of Heaven were lost to him through his rebellion, he determined to be revenged by causing as many as he could to share in his fall. He would lead them to undervalue Heaven, and to place their affections upon things of earth" (ST August 4, 1887, par. 9).

"The time had now come when Satan's empire over the world was to be contested, his right disputed, and he feared that his power would be broken. He knew, through prophecy that a Saviour was predicted, and that his kingdom would not be established in earthly triumph and with worldly honor and display. He knew that the prophecies foretold a kingdom to be established by the Prince of Heaven upon the earth which he claimed as his dominion. This kingdom would embrace all the kingdoms of the world, and then the power and glory of Satan would cease, and he would receive his retribution for the sins he had introduced into the world, and for the misery he had brought upon the human race. He knew that everything which concerned his prosperity was depending upon his success or failure in overcoming Christ with his temptations; and he brought to bear on the Saviour every artifice at his command to allure him from his integrity" (ST August 4, 1887, par. 10).

Jesus tempted beyond our experience

“Man can never know the strength of the temptations to which the Son of God was subjected. All the temptations that seen so afflicting to man in his daily life, so difficult to resist and overcome, were brought to bear upon him in as much greater degree as he is superior in his excellence of character to fallen man” (ST August 4, 1887, par. 11).

“Our Redeemer was tempted in all points like as we are. As man’s representative, he met the strongest force of Satan, his most wily temptations, and conquered in man’s behalf. **It is impossible for man to be tempted above that he is able to bear while he relies upon Jesus, the infinite Conqueror, whose grace and strength are sufficient for all our needs** (ST August 4, 1887, par. 12).

Do you know what actually happens at the point of you resisting temptation?!

“In our behalf the Saviour laid hold of the power of Omnipotence, and as we pray to God, we may know that Christ’s prayer has ascended before, and that God has heard and answered it. With all our sins and weaknesses we are not cast aside as worthless. “He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” **The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us.** It tells of the power of prayer,—how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. **The light that fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour, will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation.** The voice that spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, “This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased” (Manuscript 125, 1902; 5BC 1079.2).

Assurance = Acceptance

“Through the gates ajar there streamed bright beams of glory from the throne of Jehovah, and this light shines even upon us. **The assurance given to Christ is assurance to every repenting, believing, obedient child of God that he is accepted in the Beloved**” (ST July 31, 1884, par. 15).

“Christ’s prayer on the banks of the Jordan includes every one who will believe in him. The promise that you are accepted in the Beloved comes to you. God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” This means that through the dark shadow which Satan has thrown athwart your pathway Christ has cleaved the way for you to the throne of the infinite God. He has laid hold of almighty power, and you are accepted in the Beloved” (GCB April 4, 1901, Art. A, par. 17).

Application = Assurance = Appeal

“And now the question for each one to settle is, Will you leave the dark abodes of sin and woe, and seek the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for his followers? In his name we beseech you to plant your feet firmly on the ladder, and climb upward. **Forsake your sins, overcome your defects of character, and cling with all your powers to Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. We may every one of us succeed. None who shall persevere will fail of everlasting life. Those who believe on Christ shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.** Evil angels will try to weaken their hold on Christ, and to attract their eyes to earth; but God will send holy, ministering angels to help them and to strengthen their hands” (ST July 31, 1884, par. 17 - context: the baptism).

Do you need to get baptized?

Matthew 4**The Temptation: As Christ, so Christians**

“What a battle was this! No language is adequate to describe it. But in the near future it will be understood by those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony” (Letter 19, 1901).

Spend some time on comparing the temptations:

Temptation	Identity	Avenue	Dimension	Reference
Stones to Bread	Jesus	Food (Physical)	Physical: Self	Deut 8:3
Jump from Temple	Jesus	Fame (Social)	Social: Others	Deut 6:16
Worship Satan	Satan	Falsehood (Spiritual)	Spiritual: Great Controversy	Deut 6:13

Observations:

- after spiritual high, during physical low
- desert: opposite of garden = hint of curse reversal?
- incomplete Scripture with misapplication (presumption):

Satan: "He shall give His angels charge over you," and, "In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone" (Mt 4:6, from Ps 91:11-12).

Full wording: "For He shall give His angels charge over you, **To keep you in all your ways.** ¹² **In *their* hands they shall bear you up,** Lest you dash your foot against a stone" (Ps 91:11-12).

- Satan re-prioritized values (Satan employs the Deuteronomy sequence backwards!)
- Satan uses multiple approaches: name change: devil (1); tempter (v3); Satan (v10).

Temptation Patterns: Who's in charge? Notice the different names and titles of Satan:

- v3: "the **tempter** came and said to Him"
- v5: "the **devil** took Him, had Him stand"
- v8: "again, the **devil** took Him"
- v10: "Away with you, Satan!"
- v11: "the **devil** left Him"

Devil: Greek *diabolos* = the one who throws you around

Satan: your adversary in court

What do you make of the different sequence between Matthew and Luke?

Matthew	Luke
Stones to Bread	Stones to Bread
Jump from Temple	Worship Satan
Worship Satan	Jump from Temple

Ellen White on the Temptation Scene

"All was lost when Adam yielded to the power of appetite. The Redeemer, in whom was united both the human and the divine, stood in Adam's place, and endured a terrible fast of nearly six weeks. **The length of this fast is the strongest evidence of the extent of the sinfulness and power of debased appetite upon the human family**" (RH August 4, 1874, par. 5).

Resistance as Human:

"If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. **It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature**" (1SM 408).

“In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined. Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity by being united to divinity withstood the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness. The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was an hungered, and suggested to Him to command the stones to become bread. But the plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man’s experience. He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities” (1SM 408).

“Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. How?—By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. **Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them”** (1SM 409).

“Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed” (YI, July 20, 1899; 3SM 132).

“The love and justice of God, and also the immutability of his law, are made manifest by the Saviour’s life, no less than by his death. He assumed human nature, with its infirmities, its liabilities, its temptations.... He was “in all points tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). He exercised in his own behalf no power which man cannot exercise. As man he met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him of God. **He gives us an example of perfect obedience.** He has provided that we may become partakers of the divine nature, and assures us that **we may overcome as he overcame. His life testified that by the aid of the same divine power which Christ received, it is possible for man to obey God’s law”** (MS 141, 1901;3SM 132).

An Awful Appetite

“Christ was our example in all things. As we see his humiliation in the long trial and fast in the wilderness to overcome the temptations of appetite in our behalf, we are to take this lesson home to ourselves when we are tempted. **If the power of appetite is so strong upon the human family, and its indulgence so fearful that the Son of God subjected himself to such a test, how important that we feel the necessity of having appetite under the control of reason.** Our Saviour fasted nearly six weeks, that he might gain for man the victory upon the point of appetite. **How can professed Christians with an enlightened conscience, and Christ before them as their pattern, yield to the indulgence of those appetites which have an enervating influence upon the mind and heart? It is a painful fact that habits of self-gratification at the expense of health, and the weakening of moral power, is holding in the bonds of slavery at the present time a large share of the Christian world.** Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ’s long period of fasting and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from enduring the pangs of hunger as from his sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. **He knew that appetite would be man’s idol, and would lead him to forget God, and would stand directly in the way of his salvation”** (RH September 1, 1874, par. 2-3).

Hunger

“While in the wilderness, Christ fasted, but He was insensible to hunger. **Engaged in constant prayer to His Father for a preparation to resist the adversary, Christ did not feel the pangs of hunger. He spent the time in earnest prayer, shut in with God. It was as if He were in the presence of His Father.** He sought for strength to meet the foe, for the assurance that He would receive grace to carry out all that He had undertaken in behalf of humanity. The thought of the warfare before Him made Him oblivious to all else, and His soul was fed with the bread of life, just as today those tempted souls will be fed who go to God for aid. He ate of the truth which He was to give to the people as having power to deliver them from Satan’s temptations. He saw the breaking of Satan’s power over fallen and tempted ones. He saw

Himself healing the sick, comforting the hopeless, cheering the desponding, and preaching the gospel to the poor,—doing the work that God had outlined for Him; and He did not realize any sense of hunger until the forty days of His fast were ended” (5BC 1080.2).

“The vision passed away, and then, with strong craving Christ’s human nature called for food. Now was Satan’s opportunity to make his assault. He resolved to appear as one of the angels of light that had appeared to Christ in His vision” (Letter 159, 1903).

“”He told Satan that in order to prolong life, obedience to God’s requirements was more essential than temporal food. **To pursue a course of deviation from the purpose of God, in the smallest degree, would be more grievous than hunger or death**” (*Redemption*, p. 48).

Christ’s Example

“Fallen man, when brought into straightened places, could not have the power to work miracles on his own behalf, to save himself from pain or anguish, or to give himself victory over his enemies. It was the purpose of God to test and prove the race, and give them an opportunity to develop character by bringing them frequently into trying positions to test their faith and confidence in His love and power. The life of Christ was a perfect pattern. He was ever, by His example and precept, teaching man that God was his dependence, and that in God should be his faith and firm trust” (RH August 18, 1874; 5BC 1080.5).

“Bear in mind that it is none but God that can hold an argument with Satan” (Letter 206, 1906).

The Temptation Scene described in the *Desire of Ages* (with supplementary subtitles)

Satan in Attack Mode

“Not without hindrance was the Commander of heaven to win the souls of men to His kingdom. From the time when He was a babe in Bethlehem, He was continually assailed by the evil one. The image of God was manifest in Christ, and in the councils of Satan it was determined that He should be overcome. No human being had come into the world and escaped the power of the deceiver. The forces of the confederacy of evil were set upon His track to engage in warfare against Him, and if possible to prevail over Him” (DA 116).

Satan at Jesus’ Baptism

“At the Saviour’s baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father’s glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam’s sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity in Christ. Satan had hoped that God’s abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored” (DA 116).

The Extent of the Battle

“**Satan saw that he must either conquer or be conquered.** The issues of the conflict involved too much to be entrusted to his confederate angels. He must personally conduct the warfare. All the energies of apostasy were rallied against the Son of God. Christ was made the mark of every weapon of hell. Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. **But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. Never does one leave the ranks of evil for the service of God without encountering the assaults of Satan.** The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours. With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test upon appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us” (DA 116).

Adam & Eve

“Satan had pointed to Adam’s sin as proof that God’s law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. **In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam’s failure.** But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. **It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan.** For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; **and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation**” (DA 117). **[Nature of Christ!]**

“Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam’s position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. **But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured**” (DA 117).

Appetite

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. **Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin.** As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome.”

“From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man’s behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness” (DA 117).

Hunger

“When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father’s glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” Isaiah 52:14. Now was Satan’s opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ” (DA 118).

Satan vs the Word of God: Deception

“There came to the Saviour, as if in answer to His prayers, one in the guise of an angel from heaven. He claimed to have a commission from God to declare that Christ’s fast was at an end. As God had sent an angel to stay the hand of Abraham from offering Isaac, so, satisfied with Christ’s willingness to enter the bloodstained path, the Father had sent an angel to deliver Him; this was the message brought to Jesus. The Saviour was faint from hunger, He was craving for food, when Satan came suddenly upon Him. Pointing to the stones which strewed the desert, and which had the appearance of loaves, the tempter said, “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (DA 118).

“Though he appears as an angel of light, these first words betray his character. “If Thou be the Son of God.” Here is the insinuation of distrust. Should Jesus do what Satan suggests, it would be an acceptance of the doubt. The tempter plans to overthrow Christ by the same means that were so successful with the human race in the beginning. How artfully had Satan approached Eve in Eden! “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Genesis 3:1. Thus far the tempter’s words were truth; **but in his manner of speaking them there was a disguised contempt for the words of God.** There was a covert negative, a doubt of the divine truthfulness. Satan sought to instill into the mind of Eve the thought that God would not do as He had said; that the withholding of such beautiful fruit was a contradiction of His love and compassion for man. So now the tempter seeks to inspire Christ with his own sentiments. “If Thou be the Son of God.” The words rankle with bitterness in his mind. In the tones of his voice is an expression of utter incredulity. Would God treat His own Son thus? Would He leave Him in the desert with wild beasts, without food, without companions, without comfort? He insinuates that God never meant His Son to be in such a state as this” (DA 118).

“The words from heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17), were still sounding in the ears of Satan. But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this testimony. The word of God was Christ’s assurance of His divine mission. He had come to live as a man among men, and it was the word that declared His connection with heaven. It was Satan’s purpose to cause Him to doubt that word. If Christ’s confidence in God could be shaken, Satan knew that the victory in the whole controversy would be his. He could overcome Jesus. He hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in His Father, and work a miracle in His own behalf. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken” (DA 119).

The Great Controversy

“When Satan and the Son of God first met in conflict, Christ was the commander of the heavenly hosts; and Satan, the leader of revolt in heaven, was cast out. Now their condition is apparently reversed, and Satan makes the most of his supposed advantage. One of the most powerful of the angels, he says, has been banished from heaven. The appearance of Jesus indicates that He is that fallen angel, forsaken by God, and deserted by man. A divine being would be able to sustain his claim by working a miracle; “if Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” Such an act of creative power, urges the tempter, would be conclusive evidence of divinity. It would bring the controversy to an end. Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch-deceiver. **But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan, or to explain the reason of His humiliation.** By conceding to the demands of the rebel, nothing for the good of man or the glory of God would be gained. Had Christ complied with the suggestion of the enemy, Satan would still have said, Show me a sign that I may believe you to be the Son of God. Evidence would have been worthless to break the power of rebellion in his heart. **And Christ was not to exercise divine power for His own benefit. He had come to bear trial as we must do, leaving us an example of faith and submission.** Neither here nor at any subsequent time in His earthly life did He work a miracle in His own behalf. His wonderful works were all for the good of others. Though Jesus recognized Satan from the beginning, He was not provoked to enter into controversy with him. Strengthened with the memory of the voice from heaven, He rested in His Father’s love. He would not parley with temptation” (DA 119) **Nature of Christ!**

How to deal with temptation

“Jesus met Satan with the words of Scripture. “It is written,” He said. **In every temptation the weapon of His warfare was the word of God.** Satan demanded of Christ a miracle as a sign of His divinity. **But that which is greater than all miracles, a firm reliance upon a “Thus saith the Lord,” was a sign that could not be controverted. So long as Christ held to this position, the tempter could gain no advantage”** (DA 120).

Perseverance till the End!

“It was in the time of greatest weakness that Christ was assailed by the fiercest temptations. Thus Satan thought to prevail. By this policy he had gained the victory over men. **When strength failed, and the will power weakened, and faith ceased to repose in God, then those who had stood long and valiantly for the right were overcome”** (DA 120).

Moses

“Moses was wearied with the forty years’ wandering of Israel, when for the moment his faith let go its hold upon infinite power. He failed just upon the borders of the Promised Land” (DA 120).

Elijah

“So with Elijah, who had stood undaunted before King Ahab, who had faced the whole nation of Israel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal at their head. After that terrible day upon Carmel, when the false prophets had been slain, and the people had declared their allegiance to God, Elijah fled for his life before the threats of the idolatrous Jezebel. Thus Satan has taken advantage of the weakness of humanity” (DA 120).

Humanity

“And he will still work in the same way. **Whenever one is encompassed with clouds, perplexed by circumstances, or afflicted by poverty or distress, Satan is at hand to tempt and annoy. He attacks our weak points of character.** He seeks to shake our confidence in God, who suffers such a condition of things to exist. We are tempted to distrust God, to question His love. Often the tempter comes to us as he came to Christ, arraying before us our weakness and infirmities. He hopes to discourage the soul, and to break our hold on God. Then he is sure of his prey. **If we would**

meet him as Jesus did, we should escape many a defeat. By parleying with the enemy, we give him an advantage" (DA 120).

Man shall not live by bread alone

"When Christ said to the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," He repeated the words that, more than fourteen hundred years before, He had spoken to Israel: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.... And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Deuteronomy 8:2, 3. In the wilderness, when all means of sustenance failed, God sent His people manna from heaven; and a sufficient and constant supply was given. **This provision was to teach them that while they trusted in God and walked in His ways He would not forsake them.** The Saviour now practiced the lesson He had taught to Israel. By the word of God succor had been given to the Hebrew host, and by the same word it would be given to Jesus. He awaited God's time to bring relief. He was in the wilderness in obedience to God, and He would not obtain food by following the suggestions of Satan. In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from the will of God" (DA 121).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. **But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33.** Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other" (DA 121).

Conditions During the Final Conflict

"In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11-17. **But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live.** When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19. To that time of distress the prophet Habakkuk looked forward, and his words express the faith of the church: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" Habakkuk 3:17, 18 (DA 121).

Appetite - Again . . .

"Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God" (DA 122).

"The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. **His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God"** (DA 122).

How To Resist Temptation - Practical Advice

"In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. **And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome.** It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world" John 16:33 (DA 122).

"Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, "I thirst." He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours" (DA 123).

"Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, "The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: ... and I know that I shall not be ashamed.... Behold, the Lord God will help Me." Pointing to His own example, He says to us, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, ... that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Isaiah 50:7-10 (DA 123).

"The prince of this world cometh," said Jesus, "and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. **He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character"** (DA 123).

Method

"**And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation.**" "It is written," He said. And unto us are given "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God's word is ours. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" are we to live. **When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word.** All its strength is yours. "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 119:11; 17:4 (DA 123).

Satan's Limitations

"The tempter thought to take advantage of Christ's humanity, and urge Him to presumption. **But while Satan can solicit, he cannot compel to sin.** He said to Jesus, "Cast Thyself down," knowing that he could not cast Him down; for God would interpose to deliver Him. Nor could Satan force Jesus to cast Himself down. Unless Christ should consent to temptation, He could not be overcome. Not all the power of earth or hell could force Him in the slightest degree to depart from the will of His Father" (DA 125).

"**The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold.** Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ" (DA 125).

"Yet we should not lose courage when assailed by temptation. Often when placed in a trying situation we doubt that the Spirit of God has been leading us. But it was the Spirit's leading that brought Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. **When God brings us into trial, He has a purpose to accomplish for our good.** Jesus did not presume on God's promises by going unbidden into temptation, neither did He give up to despondency when temptation came upon Him. Nor should we. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." He says, "Offer unto

God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” 1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 50:14, 15 (DA 126).

Satan’s Operation – Christ’s Objection

“By the one who had revolted in heaven the kingdoms of this world were offered Christ, to buy His homage to the principles of evil; but He would not be bought; He had come to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and He would not abandon His purpose. With the same temptation Satan approaches men, and here he has better success than with Christ. To men he offers the kingdom of this world on condition that they will acknowledge his supremacy. He requires that they sacrifice integrity, disregard conscience, indulge selfishness. Christ bids them seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; but Satan walks by their side and says: Whatever may be true in regard to life eternal, in order to make a success in this world you must serve me. I hold your welfare in my hands. I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness. Harken to my counsel. Do not allow yourselves to be carried away with whimsical notions of honesty or self-sacrifice. I will prepare the way before you. Thus multitudes are deceived. They consent to live for the service of self, and Satan is satisfied. While he allures them with the hope of worldly dominion, he gains dominion over the soul. But he offers that which is not his to bestow, and which is soon to be wrested from him. In return he beguiles them of their title to the inheritance of the sons of God” (DA 130).

“Satan had questioned whether Jesus was the Son of God. In his summary dismissal he had proof that he could not gainsay. **Divinity flashed through suffering humanity. Satan had no power to resist the command. Writhing with humiliation and rage, he was forced to withdraw from the presence of the world’s Redeemer**” (DA 130).

“Christ’s victory was as complete as had been the failure of Adam.”

So we may resist temptation, and force Satan to depart from us. Jesus gained the victory through submission and faith in God, and by the apostle He says to us, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” James 4:7, 8. We cannot save ourselves from the tempter’s power; he has conquered humanity, and when we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to his devices; but “the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” Proverbs 18:10. **Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty name**” (DA 130).

After the Temptation

“After the foe had departed, Jesus fell exhausted to the earth, with the pallor of death upon His face. The angels of heaven had watched the conflict, beholding their loved Commander as He passed through inexpressible suffering to make a way of escape for us. He had endured the test, greater than we shall ever be called to endure. The angels now ministered to the Son of God as He lay like one dying. He was strengthened with food, comforted with the message of His Father’s love and the assurance that all heaven triumphed in His victory. Warming to life again, His great heart goes out in sympathy for man, and He goes forth to complete the work He has begun; to rest not until the foe is vanquished, and our fallen race redeemed” (DA 131).

When it’s all said and done . . .

“Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” Revelation 5:12 (DA 131).

Now What?! Satan - From Christ to Christian . . .

“Although Satan had failed in his most powerful temptations, yet he had not given up all hope that he might, at some future time, be successful in his efforts. He looked forward to the period of Christ’s ministry, when he should have opportunities to try his artifices against Him. **Baffled and defeated, he had no sooner retired from the scene of conflict than he began to lay plans for blinding the understanding of the Jews, God’s chosen people, that they might not discern in Christ the world’s Redeemer.** He determined to fill their hearts with envy, jealousy, and hatred against

the Son of God, so that they would not receive Him, but would make His life upon earth as bitter as possible" (5BC 1083.7).

Satan's Next Step

"Satan held a council with his angels, as to the course they should pursue to prevent the people from having faith in Christ as the Messiah whom the Jews had so long been anxiously expecting. He was disappointed and enraged that he had prevailed nothing against Jesus by his manifold temptations. But he now thought if he could inspire in the hearts of Christ's own people, unbelief as to His being the Promised One, he might discourage the Saviour in His mission and secure the Jews as his agents to carry out his own diabolical purposes. So he went to work in his subtle manner, endeavoring to accomplish by strategy what he had failed to do by direct, personal effort" (The Spirit of Prophecy 2:97, 98). (5BC 1083.8).

Special Focus on Fasting

Fasting has been a much-neglected practice in Christianity. Please thoughtfully read the following collection of quotes on fasting and draw your own conclusion!

Fasting To Understand the Scriptures

"There are in the Scriptures some things which are hard to be understood and which, according to the language of Peter, the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction. We may not, in this life, be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are no vital points of practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. **When the time shall come, in the providence of God, for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out and united in a perfect chain.** Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err or walk in darkness" (2T 692).

Ellen White on the Temptation Scene

A 6 week fast . . . to match the sinfulness of humanity

"All was lost when Adam yielded to the power of appetite. The Redeemer, in whom was united both the human and the divine, stood in Adam's place, and endured a terrible fast of nearly six weeks. **The length of this fast is the strongest evidence of the extent of the sinfulness and power of debased appetite upon the human family**" (RH August 4, 1874, par. 5).

Resistance as Human

"If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. **It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature**" (1SM 408).

"In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined. Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place, but humanity by being united to divinity withstood the fiercest test of temptation in the wilderness. The prince of this world came to Christ after His long fast, when He was an hungered, and suggested to Him to command the stones to become bread. But the plan of God, devised for the salvation of man, provided that Christ should know hunger, and poverty, and every phase of man's experience. **He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God.** Man may become a partaker of the divine nature; not a soul lives who may not summon the aid of Heaven in temptation and trial. Christ came to reveal the source of His power, that man might never rely on his unaided human capabilities" (1SM 408).

"Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. How?—By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the

victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. **Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them**" (1SM 409).

"Unless there is a possibility of yielding, temptation is no temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action; and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed" (The Youth's Instructor, July 20, 1899; 3SM 132).

We May Overcome as Christ Overcame—The love and justice of God, and also the immutability of his law, are made manifest by the Saviour's life, no less than by his death. He assumed human nature, with its infirmities, its liabilities, its temptations.... He was "in all points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). He exercised in his own behalf no power which man cannot exercise. As man he met temptation, and `overcame in the strength given Him of God. **He gives us an example of perfect obedience.** He has provided that we may become partakers of the divine nature, and assures us that **we may overcome as he overcame. His life testified that by the aid of the same divine power which Christ received, it is possible for man to obey God's law**" (Manuscript 141, 1901; 3SM 132).

"Paul was ever on the watch lest evil propensities should get the better of him. He guarded well his appetites and passions and evil propensities" (Letter 27, 1906).

Scripture on Fasting: "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Mt 17:21)

"Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD" (Judges 20:26).

"So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah" (1 Sam 7:6).

"Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days" (1 Sam 31:13).

"David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground" (2 Sam 12:16).

"Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions." . . . So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer" (Ez 8:21, 23).

"So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven" (Neh 1:4).

"Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads" (Neh 9:1).

"And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes" (Est 4:3).

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esth 4:16)

"But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart" (Ps 35:13).

"When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach" (Ps 69:10).

“My knees are weak through fasting, And my flesh is feeble from lack of fatness” (Ps 109:24).

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?” (Isa 58:6)

““When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence” (Jer 14:12).

“Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him” (Dn 6:18).

“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” (Dn 9:3).

“Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD” (Joel 1:14).

““Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning” (Joel 2:12).

“So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them” (Jonah 3:5).

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2).

“So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23).

“Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor 7:5).

“in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Cor 11:27).

Ellen White on Appetite

“Christ was our example in all things. As we see his humiliation in the long trial and fast in the wilderness to overcome the temptations of appetite in our behalf, we are to take this lesson home to ourselves when we are tempted. **If the power of appetite is so strong upon the human family, and its indulgence so fearful that the Son of God subjected himself to such a test, how important that we feel the necessity of having appetite under the control of reason.** Our Saviour fasted nearly six weeks, that he might gain for man the victory upon the point of appetite. **How can professed Christians with an enlightened conscience, and Christ before them as their pattern, yield to the indulgence of those appetites which have an enervating influence upon the mind and heart? It is a painful fact that habits of self-gratification at the expense of health, and the weakening of moral power, is holding in the bonds of slavery at the present time a large share of the Christian world.** Many who profess godliness do not inquire into the reason of Christ’s long period of fasting and suffering in the wilderness. His anguish was not so much from enduring the pangs of hunger as from his sense of the fearful result of the indulgence of appetite and passion upon the race. **He knew that appetite would be man’s idol, and would lead him to forget God, and would stand directly in the way of his salvation**” (RH September 1, 1874, par. 2-3).

“While in the wilderness, Christ fasted, but He was insensible to hunger. **Engaged in constant prayer to His Father for a preparation to resist the adversary, Christ did not feel the pangs of hunger. He spent the time in earnest prayer, shut in with God. It was as if He were in the presence of His Father.** He sought for strength to meet the foe, for the

assurance that He would receive grace to carry out all that He had undertaken in behalf of humanity. The thought of the warfare before Him made Him oblivious to all else, and His soul was fed with the bread of life, just as today those tempted souls will be fed who go to God for aid. He ate of the truth which He was to give to the people as having power to deliver them from Satan's temptations. He saw the breaking of Satan's power over fallen and tempted ones. He saw Himself healing the sick, comforting the hopeless, cheering the desponding, and preaching the gospel to the poor, — doing the work that God had outlined for Him; and He did not realize any sense of hunger until the forty days of His fast were ended" (5BC 1080.2).

"The vision passed away, and then, with strong craving Christ's human nature called for food. Now was Satan's opportunity to make his assault. He resolved to appear as one of the angels of light that had appeared to Christ in His vision" (Letter 159, 1903).

"He told Satan that in order to prolong life, obedience to God's requirements was more essential than temporal food. To pursue a course of deviation from the purpose of God, in the smallest degree, would be more grievous than hunger or death" (Redemption: or the First Advent of Christ, p. 48).

"Christ had entered the world as Satan's destroyer and the Redeemer of the captives bound by his power. He would leave an example in His own victorious life for man to follow, and thus overcome the temptations of Satan. — As soon as Christ entered the wilderness of temptation His visage changed. The glory and splendor which were reflected from the throne of God and His countenance when the heavens opened before Him, and the Father's voice acknowledged Him as His Son in whom He was well pleased, were now gone. The weight of the sins of the world was pressing His soul, and His countenance expressed unutterable sorrow, a depth of anguish that fallen man had never realized. He felt the overwhelming tide of woe that deluged the world. He realized the strength of indulged appetite and unholy passion which controlled the world and had brought upon man inexpressible suffering" (Con 36).

The indulgence of appetite had been increasing and strengthening with every successive generation since Adam's transgression, until the race was so feeble in moral power that they could not overcome in their own strength. Christ, in behalf of the race, was to overcome appetite by standing the most powerful test upon this point. He was to tread the path of temptation alone, and there must be none to help Him, none to comfort or uphold Him. Alone He was to wrestle with the powers of darkness. **As in his human strength man could not resist the power of Satan's temptations, Jesus volunteered to undertake the work and to bear the burden for man, and overcome the power of appetite in his behalf.** In man's behalf He must show self-denial, perseverance, and firmness of principle paramount to the gnawing pangs of hunger. He must show a power of control stronger than hunger and even death" (Con 36-37).

Christ's Example

"Fallen man, when brought into straightened places, could not have the power to work miracles on his own behalf, to save himself from pain or anguish, or to give himself victory over his enemies. It was the purpose of God to test and prove the race, and give them an opportunity to develop character by bringing them frequently into trying positions to test their faith and confidence in His love and power. The life of Christ was a perfect pattern. He was ever, by His example and precept, teaching man that God was his dependence, and that in God should be his faith and firm trust" (RH August 18, 1874; 5BC 1080.5).

Ellen White on Fasting - From the *Desire of Ages*: "The Temptation"

"When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. **By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel.** But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him" (DA 114).

With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. **Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin.** As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome. "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth

of God." From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. **For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death.** And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness. When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah 52:14. Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ" (DA 118).

"There came to the Saviour, as if in answer to His prayers, one in the guise of an angel from heaven. He claimed to have a commission from God to declare that Christ's fast was at an end. As God had sent an angel to stay the hand of Abraham from offering Isaac, so, satisfied with Christ's willingness to enter the bloodstained path, the Father had sent an angel to deliver Him; this was the message brought to Jesus. The Saviour was faint from hunger, He was craving for food, when Satan came suddenly upon Him. Pointing to the stones which strewed the desert, and which had the appearance of loaves, the tempter said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (DA 118).

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." **Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God.** "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. **Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other"** (DA 121).

"In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Revelation 13:11-17. But to the obedient is given the promise, "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Isaiah 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live. When the earth shall be wasted with famine, they shall be fed. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." Psalm 37:19. To that time of distress the prophet Habakkuk looked forward, and his words express the faith of the church: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17, 18. **Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord's first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God. The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ's first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming.** Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour's fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. **His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God. In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. "Be of good cheer," He says; "I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, "I thirst." He has endured all that it is**

possible for us to bear. His victory is ours. Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, “The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: ... and I know that I shall not be ashamed.... Behold, the Lord God will help Me.” Pointing to His own example, He says to us, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, ... that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” Isaiah 50:7-10. “The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. **There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character. And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. “It is written,” He said. And unto us are given “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God’s word is ours. “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours.** “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” “By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.” Psalm 119:11; 17:4. (DA 123).

“Jesus had shown in what righteousness consists, and had pointed to God as its source. Now He turned to practical duties. In almsgiving, in prayer, in fasting, He said, let nothing be done to attract attention or win praise to self. Give in sincerity, for the benefit of the suffering poor. In prayer, let the soul commune with God. In fasting, go not with the head bowed down, and heart filled with thoughts of self. The heart of the Pharisee is a barren and profitless soil, in which no seeds of divine life can flourish. It is he who yields himself most unreservedly to God that will render Him the most acceptable service. For through fellowship with God men become workers together with Him in presenting His character in humanity” (DA 312).

“Through the day He labored earnestly to do good to others, to save men from destruction. He healed the sick, comforted the mourning, and brought cheerfulness and hope to the despairing. He brought the dead to life. After His work was finished for the day, He went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the city, and His form was bowed in some retired grove in supplication to His Father. At times the bright beams of the moon shone upon His bowed form. And then again the clouds and darkness shut away all light. The dew and frost of night rested upon His head and beard while in the attitude of a suppliant. He frequently continued His petitions through the entire night. He is our example. If we could remember this, and imitate Him, we would be much stronger in God” (2T 202).

“If the Saviour of men, with His divine strength, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of prayer—fervent, constant prayer! **When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, He ate nothing.** He committed Himself to God and, through earnest prayer and perfect submission to the will of His Father, came off conqueror. **Those who profess the truth for these last days, above every other class of professed Christians, should imitate the great Exemplar in prayer**” (2T 202).

Fasting and Healing

“In cases of severe fever, abstinence from food for a short time will lessen the fever and make the use of water more effectual. But the acting physician needs to understand the real condition of the patient and not allow him to be restricted in diet for a great length of time until his system becomes enfeebled. While the fever is raging, food may irritate and excite the blood; but as soon as the strength of the fever is broken, nourishment should be given in a careful, judicious manner. If food is withheld too long, the stomach’s craving for it will create fever, which will be relieved by a proper allowance of food of a right quality. It gives nature something to work upon. If there is a great desire expressed for food, even during the fever to gratify that desire with a moderate amount of simple food would be less injurious than for the patient to be denied. When he can get his mind upon nothing else, nature will not be overburdened with a small portion of simple food” (2T 384).

“There are some who would be benefited more by abstinence from food for a day or two every week than by any amount of treatment or medical advice. To fast one day a week would be of incalculable benefit to them” (7T 134).

“Persons who have indulged their appetite to eat freely of meat, highly seasoned gravies, and various kinds of rich cakes and preserves cannot immediately relish a plain, wholesome, and nutritious diet. Their taste is so perverted they have no appetite for a wholesome diet of fruits, plain bread, and vegetables. They need not expect to relish at first food so different from that which they have been indulging themselves to eat. If they cannot at first enjoy plain food, they should fast until they can. That fast will prove to them of greater benefit than medicine, for the abused stomach will find that rest which it has long needed, and real hunger can be satisfied with a plain diet” (CH 148).

“It will take time for the taste to recover from the abuses which it has received and to gain its natural tone. But perseverance in a self-denying course of eating and drinking will soon make plain, wholesome food palatable, and it will soon be eaten with greater satisfaction than the epicure enjoys over his rich dainties. The stomach is not fevered with meats and overtaxed, but is in a healthy condition and can readily perform its task. There should be no delay in reform. Efforts should be made to preserve carefully the remaining strength of the vital forces, by lifting off every overtaxing burden. The stomach may never recover health, but a proper course of diet will save further debility, and many will recover more or less, unless they have gone very far in gluttonous self-murder” (Spiritual Gifts 4a:130, 131 1864; CH 148).

“There are some who would be benefited more by abstinence from food for a day or two every week than by any amount of treatment or medical advice. To fast one day a week would be of incalculable benefit to them” (CH 477).

“Ministers of Christ, you may be connected with God if you will watch and pray. Let your words be seasoned with salt, and let Christian courtesy and true elevation pervade your demeanor. If the peace of God is ruling within, its power will not only strengthen, but soften your hearts, and you will be living representatives of Christ. The people who profess the truth are backsliding from God. Jesus is soon to come, and they are unready. The minister must reach a higher standard himself, a faith marked with greater firmness, an experience that is living and vivid, not dull and common place, like that of the nominal professors. The word of God sets a high mark before you. **Will you, through fasting and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character?** You should make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. A close connection with God will bring to you in your labor that vital power which arouses the conscience, and convicts the sinner of sin, leading him to cry: “What shall I do to be saved?” (4T 400-401).

“God wants men to cultivate force of character. Those who are merely timeservers are not the ones who will receive a rich reward by and by. He wants those who labor in His cause to be men of keen feeling and quick perception. They should be temperate in eating; rich and luxurious food should find no place upon their tables; and when the brain is constantly taxed and there is a lack of physical exercise, they should eat sparingly, even of plain food. Daniel’s clearness of mind and firmness of purpose, his strength of intellect in acquiring knowledge, were due in a great degree to the plainness of his diet in connection with his life of prayer” (4T 515-516).

“As our numbers are increasing, broader plans must be laid to meet the increasing demands of the times; but we see no special increase of fervent piety, of Christian simplicity, and earnest devotion. The church seem content to take only the first steps in conversion. They are more ready for active labor than for humble devotion, more ready to engage in outward religious service than in the inner work of the heart. Meditation and prayer are neglected for bustle and show. Religion must begin with emptying and purifying the heart, and must be nurtured by daily prayer” (4T 535).

“The steady progress of our work, and our increased facilities, are filling the hearts and minds of many of our people with satisfaction and pride, which we fear will take the place of the love of God in the soul. Busy activity in the mechanical part of even the work of God may so occupy the mind that prayer shall be neglected, and self-importance and self-sufficiency, so ready to urge their way, shall take the place of true goodness, meekness, and lowliness of heart. The zealous cry may be heard: “The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these.” “Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.” But where are the burden bearers? where are the fathers and mothers in Israel? Where are those who carry upon the heart the burden for souls and who come in close sympathy with their fellow men, ready to place themselves in any position to save them from eternal ruin? “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” “Ye are,” says Christ, “the light of the world.” What a responsibility! **There is need of fasting, humiliation, and prayer over our decaying zeal and languishing spirituality**” (4T 535-536).

Fake Fast?

“This is the special work now before us. All our praying and abstinence from food will avail nothing unless we resolutely lay hold of this work. Sacred obligations are resting upon us. Our duty is plainly stated. The Lord has spoken to us by His prophet. The thoughts of the Lord and His ways are not what blind, selfish mortals believe they are or wish them to be. The Lord looks on the heart. If selfishness dwells there, He knows it. We may seek to conceal our true character from our brethren and sisters, but God knows. Nothing can be hid from Him. The fast which God can accept is described. It is to deal thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poor which are cast out to thy house. Wait not for them to come to you. The labor rests not on them to hunt you up and entreat of you a home for themselves. You are to search for them and bring them to your house. You are to draw out your soul after them. You are with one hand to reach up and by faith take hold of the mighty arm which brings salvation, while with the other hand of love you reach the oppressed and relieve them. It is impossible for you to fasten upon the arm of God with one hand while the other is employed in ministering to your own pleasure” (2T 34-35).

“You may raise the inquiry, “Wherefore have we fasted,” “and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?” God has given reasons why your prayers were not answered. You have thought that you had found reasons in others and have charged the fault upon them. But I saw that there are sufficient reasons in yourself. You have a work to do to set your own heart in order. You should realize that the work must begin with yourself. You have oppressed the destitute and have benefited yourself by taking advantage of their necessities. In regard to means, you have been close and dealt unjustly. You have not possessed that kind, noble, and generous spirit which should ever characterize the life of a follower of Christ. You have oppressed the hireling in her wages. You saw a poorly clad, hard-working person who you knew was conscientious and God-fearing; yet you took advantage of her because you could do so. I saw that the neglect of seeing and understanding her wants, and the small wages paid her, are all written in heaven as done to Jesus in the person of one of His saints. As you have done this unto the least of Christ’s disciples, you have done it unto Him. Heaven has regarded all your closeness to those who have served in your house, and it will stand faithfully chronicled against you unless it is repented of and restitution made. One wrong move does more harm than can be undone in years; if the wrongdoer could see the extent of the evil, it would wring from his soul cries of anguish. You are selfish in regard to means. In the case of Brother K the angel of God pointed to you and said: “Inasmuch as ye have done this to one of Christ’s disciples, ye have done it to Jesus in His person” (2T 156).

“It has not cost Brother K hard effort to search out the truth; for chosen men of God have prepared arguments to his hand, clear, plain, and convincing. Difficult points of present truth have been reached by the earnest efforts of a few who were devoted to the work. Fasting and fervent prayer to God have moved the Lord to unlock His treasures of truth to their understanding. Wily opponents and boasting Goliaths have had to be met, sometimes face to face, but more frequently with the pen. Satan has urged men on to fierce opposition, to blind the eyes and darken the understanding of the people. The few who had the interest of the cause and truth of God at heart were aroused to its defense. They did not seek for ease, but were willing to venture even their lives for the truth’s sake” (2T 650).

“A legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. **Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God.** The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposing sacrifice, proclaim that the doer of these things regards himself as righteous, and as entitled to heaven; but it is all a deception. Our own works can never purchase salvation” (DA 280).

“In the case of Sister F, there needed to be a great work accomplished. Those who united in praying for her needed a work done for them. Had God answered their prayers, it would have proved their ruin. In such cases of affliction, where Satan has control of the mind, before engaging in prayer there should be the closest self-examination to discover if there are not sins which need to be repented of, confessed, and forsaken. Deep humility of soul before God is necessary, and firm, humble reliance upon the merits of the blood of Christ alone. **Fasting and prayer will accomplish nothing while the heart is estranged from God by a wrong course of action.** “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy

soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (2T 145).

"It is heartwork that the Lord requires, good works springing from a heart filled with love. All should carefully and prayerfully consider the above scriptures, and investigate their motives and actions. The promise of God to us is on condition of obedience, compliance with all His requirements. "Cry aloud," saith the prophet Isaiah, "spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?" (2T 146).

Transition to Ministry

- Matthew skips the Judean ministry phase (Jn 1-4):

- Jn 1:35-42: call to salvation
- Mt 4:18-19: call to service!

The Gospel = Good News

Matthew 4:23 is the first use of the term "Gospel", which, in secular contexts, meant the "saving news from the emperor to make the world a better place".

Greek origin: εὐαγγέλιον *eu-aggellion* = "good message"

Latin origin: *evangelium* ("evangelical"!)

The 3-fold Ministry of Jesus (Mt 4:23-25):

"Jesus went throughout all of Galilee,

mental (head) "teaching in their synagogues"	spiritual (heart) "preaching the gospel of the kingdom"	physical (hand) "healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people"
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Interestingly, Jesus resisted Satan on precisely those 3 levels and subsequently ministered on these 3 levels.

The Sermon from the Mount (Mt 5-7)

Which sermon do you remember the most? Why?

Important section, as this is arguably the most famous and most important sermon ever preached. The sermon shames us, challenges us, contradicts us, has to be read again and again to penetrate our sin-crusted hearts. It leaves no room for hypocrisy. It allows no Christian wallpaper behind which to hide our

How Jesus Prepared for this Sermon: "Alone upon a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had spent all night in prayer for these chosen ones" (MB 4).

"I thank the Lord that such plain directions are given to believers. **If we had no other instruction than is contained in these few words, here is sufficient, so that none need become bewildered.** But we have a whole Bible full of precious

instruction. None need be in darkness and uncertainty. Those who will seek by faith and prayer and earnest study of the Scriptures to obtain the virtues here brought to view, will easily be distinguished from those who walk not in the light. Those who refuse to follow a "Thus saith the Lord" will have no excuse to render for their persistent resistance of the Word of God" (Letter 258, 1907). (5BC 1083.10)

Key to the Sermon from the Mount: Contrasts & Application

In the Sermon from the Mount, Jesus consistently contrasts His life and method with that of tradition and/or the world.

Recommendation: Before you proceed, read Matthew 5-7 without distractions or interruptions in one sitting, observing, listening, wrestling, noting, accepting, pondering . . . Why not read it right now?!

Gandhi

"In my humble opinion, what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount ... I am speaking of the Christian belief, of Christianity as it is understood in the west" (Gandhi).

(Unconfirmed) conversation between the Hindu leader Gandhi and the former British Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin: Lord Irwin asked Gandhi what he thought would solve the problems between Great Britain and India. Gandhi picked up a Bible and opened it to Mt 5 and said: **"When your country and mine shall get together on the teachings laid down by Christ in this Sermon on the Mount, we shall have solved the problems not only of our countries but those of the whole world"** (<http://www.2006torino.org/sermon.htm>).

Do we need to know this?!

And Simon Peter said: "Do we have to write this down?"

And Philip said: "Will this be on the test?"

And John said: "Would you repeat this?"

And Andrew said: "John the Baptist's disciples don't have to learn this."

And Matthew said: "Huh?"

And Judas said: "What's that got to do with real life?"

And Nathanael said: "Is the textbook available on Kindle?"

And John said: "Hey, Phillip, check out my new iPhone."

And Peter had to say something again: "Is there an app for this?"

And Thomas, who had been absent, said: "Did we do anything important today?"

And Jesus wept.

[source: unknown]

Matthew 5

The Beatitudes

- from Lat. "beatus": blessed - not circumstantial shallow happiness, but the undeserved favor of God
- we have many mountain themes in the Bible, but if for no other reason, the location facilitates hearing – the hills around the Sea of Galilee formed natural amphitheatres – the perfect place for an important sermon!

"Their hearts open to Him, and, as they listen, the Holy Spirit unfolds to them something of the meaning of that lesson which humanity in all ages so needs to learn" (MB 6).

"As if enshrouded in a cloud of heavenly brightness, Christ pronounced from the mount of beatitudes His benedictions. The words spoken by Him were of an entirely different character from those which had fallen from the lips of the scribes and pharisees. The ones whom He pronounced blessed were the very ones they would have denounced as cursed of God. To that large concourse of people He declared that He could dispense the treasures of eternity to whomsoever He willed. Although His divinity was clothed with humanity, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. In this public

manner He described the attributes of those who were to share the eternal rewards. He pointed out in particular those who would suffer persecution for His name's sake. They were to be richly blessed, becoming heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Great would be their reward in heaven" (Manuscript 72, 1901; 5BC 1084.1).

A Pope on the Beatitudes

Pope Benedict the 16th wrote some interesting paragraphs in relation to the Beatitudes – here are some samples:

"Anyone who reads Matthew's text attentively will realize that the Beatitudes present a sort of veiled interior biography of Jesus, a kind of portrait of his figure . . . The Beatitudes display the mystery of Christ himself, and they call us into communion with him. But precisely because of their hidden Christological character, the Beatitudes are also a road map for the Church, which recognizes in them the model of what she herself should be" (J. Ratzinger, *Jesus*, 74).

The Structure of the Beatitudes

The structure – the logical flow – of the beatitudes reveals much to appreciate. From parallel patterns to strategic repetition to chiasm and alliterations.

How many structures can you detect in the chart below? See if you can find additional structures and profiles in the Beatitudes!

v.	Blessing	Pattern	Insight	Structure
	Section 1		Absence	1-4: 36 words
3	poor in spirit	lack salvation	acknowledgement of absence alliteration: πτωχοὶ <i>ptochoi</i> poor	kingdom of heaven
4	mourn	lack joy	mourn over sin alliteration: πενθοῦντες <i>penthountes</i> mourning	3rd plural
5	meek	lack pride	humble approach; Gr.: wild horse broken in alliteration: πραεῖς <i>praeis</i> meek	
6	hunger & thirst	lack righteousness	receive righteousness at all cost alliteration: πεινῶντες <i>peinōntes</i> hunger	
	Section 2		Presence	5-8: 36 words
7	merciful	have mercy	horizontal mercy catalyzes vertical reciprocity alliteration: ἐλεήμονες· ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται	
8	pure in heart	absence of dirt	= thought-level cleansing alliteration: καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ	
9	peacemakers	interpersonal	proactive people skills	
10	persecuted	reaction	Christian progression prompts external provocation	kingdom of heaven
11	persecuted	reaction	historical perspective: prophetic equivalence	2nd plural

Mt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit = poor in relation to the Spirit

"Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed" (MB 7).

"I will put My Spirit within you" (Ezek 36:27).

Courage!

"Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to

Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness" (MB 9).

Do you sense your spiritual poverty before God?

Mt 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn

"The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin" (MB 9).

"God reveals to us our guilt that we may flee to Christ, and through Him be set free from the bondage of sin, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God. In true contrition we may come to the foot of the cross, and there leave our burdens" (MB 10).

"When He permits trials and afflictions, it is 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (MB 10).

"The Saviour's words have a message of comfort to those also who are suffering affliction or bereavement. . . . **The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character.** Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace" (MB 10).

"But when tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending—the Angel of the covenant; and, weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. **We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him**" (MB 11).

Comfort

"To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealings of His presence" (MB 12).

"It was through suffering that Jesus obtained the ministry of consolation. In all the affliction of humanity He is afflicted; and "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Isa 63:9; Heb 2:18. In this ministry every soul that has entered into the fellowship of His sufferings is privileged to share. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." 2 Cor 1:5. The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow. "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ... comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor 1:3, 4 (MB 13).

Has sin driven you to the point of reaching out to God?

Mt 5:5 Blessed are the meek

"Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher" (MB 13-14).

True Happiness

"It is the love of self that destroys our peace. . . . Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying

circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail" (MB 16).

"The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. 'We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.' 'There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.'" 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 22:3 (MB 17).

"Lowliness of heart, that meekness which is the fruit of abiding in Christ, is the true secret of blessing" (MB 17).

What life experience has humbled you the most?

Mt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Interestingly, the uses of this word for hunger in the Septuagint communicate famine, weariness, utter exhaustion (Gen 41:55; Deut 25:18; Jdg 8:4; 1 Sam 2:5; 2 Sam 17:29; 2 Kgs 7:12; Ps 106:5; Prov 6:30, etc.). It is also used in this sense during Jesus' temptation (Mt 4:2)! This hunger exceeds a mere in-between appetite; this is an existential hunger.

"Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and "God is love." 1 Jn 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for "all Thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps 119:172), and "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him" (MB 18).

"The more we know of God, the higher will be our ideal of character and the more earnest our longing to reflect His likeness" (MB 19).

"As the Holy Spirit opens to you the truth you will treasure up the most precious experiences and will long to speak to others of the comforting things that have been revealed to you. . . . The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart you will receive in richer and more abundant measure" (MB 20).

"The poor and needy seek water, but *there is* none, Their tongues fail for thirst. I, the LORD, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. ¹⁸ I will open rivers in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land springs of water" (Isa 41:17-18).

What is your life's deepest hunger?

Mt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful

With this beatitude, Jesus transitions from people lacking something to people having something . . . merciful.

"To the appeal of the erring, the tempted, the wretched victims of want and sin, the Christian does not ask, Are they worthy? but, How can I benefit them? In the most wretched, the most debased, he sees souls whom Christ died to save and for whom God has given to His children the ministry of reconciliation" (MB 22).

"There are many to whom life is a painful struggle; they feel their deficiencies and are miserable and unbelieving; they think they have nothing for which to be grateful. Kind words, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would be to many a struggling and lonely one as the cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of sympathy, an act of kindness, would lift burdens that rest heavily upon weary shoulders. And every word or deed of unselfish kindness is an expression of the love of Christ for lost humanity. The merciful "shall obtain mercy." "The soul of blessing shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Prov 11:25, margin. There is sweet peace for the compassionate spirit, a

blessed satisfaction in the life of self-forgetful service for the good of others. The Holy Spirit that abides in the soul and is manifest in the life will soften hard hearts and awaken sympathy and tenderness. You will reap that which you sow. “Blessed is he that considereth the poor.... The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.” Ps 41:1-3. He who has given his life to God in ministry to His children is linked with Him who has all the resources of the universe at His command. His life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises with the life of God. The Lord will not fail him in the hour of suffering and need. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Phil 4:19. **And in the hour of final need the merciful shall find refuge in the mercy of the compassionate Saviour and shall be received into everlasting habitations”** (MB 23-24).

Who is the recipient of your mercy? Who is not?!

Mt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart

Purity is actively achieved; purity is not derived from a passive state.

“Jesus does not mention this ceremonial purity as one of the conditions of entering into His kingdom, but points out the need of purity of heart. The wisdom that is from above “is first pure.” James 3:17. **Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner”** (MB 24).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

True Innocence

This has “a deeper meaning—not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, **but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul**, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike” (MB 25).

“It is when we are hid in Christ that we behold the love of God. . . . “The pure in heart see God in a new and endearing relation, as their Redeemer; and while they discern the purity and loveliness of His character, they long to reflect His image” (MB 26).

What if your purity was judged by your entertainment, internet usage, and what you do and think when nobody’s watching?!

Mt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers

Growing up in Germany, I remember the peace movement in the 80s. Tension was high between the Western powers and the “evil empire” of the Soviet Union. Did politics and public pressure really cause the demise of communism? In any case, what really is true peace?

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6).

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom 5:1) “There is no other ground of peace than this. . . . “Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partake of this heavenly peace.” Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker”

(MB 27-28).

Are you a peacemaker or a troublemaker?

Mt 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

When you start living the beatitudes, your environment will inevitably react!

“Though His every word and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity. So it is with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. **Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict**” (MB 29).

“While the Lord has not promised His people exemption from trials, He has promised that which is far better. He has said, ‘As your days, so shall your strength be.’ ‘My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Deut 33:25; 2 Cor 12:9. If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet” (MB 43).

“In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, **but in dying they became conquerors**. They revealed in their steadfast faith a mightier One than Satan. Satan could torture and kill the body, but he could not touch the life that was hid with Christ in God. He could incarcerate in prison walls, but he could not bind the spirit. They could look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17 (MB 30).

Does persecution seem realistic to you, now? Why? Why not? Are we too timid? Too conforming?

Mt 5:11-12 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Notice something here: in the context of persecution, Jesus switches from 3rd person (“Blessed or those”) to 2nd person (Blessed are you)! Jesus takes personal note when you come under attack!

“While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character. That is in God’s keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as “seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27); looking “not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor 4:18). . . . Christ is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misrepresented by men. His children can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels” (MB 32).

Before you move on . . . memorize the Beatitudes. And then go back to the first one and actually put each one into practice, one at a time.

Salt and Light

Mt 5:13 You are the salt of the earth

In Russia (and a number of other countries and cultures), visitors are often greeted with bread and salt. The custom is also included at weddings.

Salt: flavor (taste); other functions: purity, preservation. And: the word “salary” comes from the Latin word for salt (*salaris*). But here Jesus utilizes the aspect of flavor, seasoning. Also interesting: Salt is a key ingredient in sacrifices: “And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt” (Lev 2:13).

OT: “And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt” (Jdg 9:45).

“In His teachings, Christ likened His disciples to objects most familiar to them. He compared them to salt and to light. . . . These words were spoken to a few poor, humble fishermen. Priests and rabbis were in that congregation of hearers, but these were not the ones addressed. With all their learning, with all their supposed instruction in the mysteries of the law, with all their claims of knowing God, they revealed that they knew Him not. To these leading men had been committed the oracles of God, but Christ declared them to be unsafe teachers. He said to them, Ye teach for doctrine the commandments of men. “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” Turning from these men to the humble fishermen, He said, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (RH, August 22, 1899; 5BC 1085).

“Salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. **So it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses, but as individuals. Personal influence is a power. We must come close to those whom we desire to benefit**” (MB 36).

How, where, when are you salty? Are you stale?

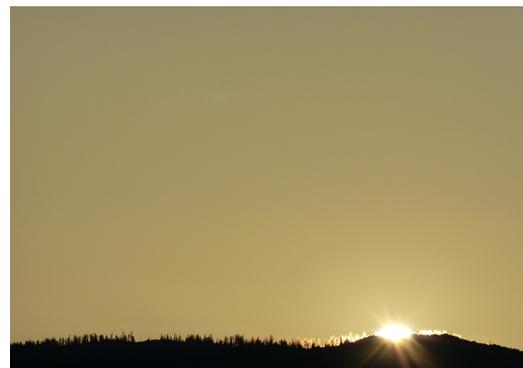
Mt 5:14-16 You are the light of the world

“Jesus was speaking as the sun was rising over the eastern sky” (MB 38).

“The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven’s appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven’s light and power to souls that are ready to perish. Shall the human agent fail of accomplishing his appointed work? Oh, then to that degree is the world robbed of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit!” (MB 40).

Selfie

“The light that shines from those who receive Jesus Christ is not self-originated. It is all from the Light and Life of the world. He kindles this light, even as He kindles the fire that all must use in doing His service. Christ is the light, the life, the holiness, the sanctification of all who believe, and His light is to be received and imparted in all good works. In many different ways His grace is also acting as the salt of the earth; whithersoever this salt finds its way, to homes or communities, it becomes a preserving power to save all that is good, and to destroy all that is evil” (RH August 22, 1899; 5BC 1085.2).



Sunrise over Lake Tahoe

July 2015

Are you light?

Jesus and the Old Testament: “He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable” (Isa 42:21).

Mt 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

“The law given upon Sinai was the enunciation of the principle of love, a revelation to earth of the law of heaven” (MB 46).

“Before this earth was called into being, God’s law existed” (MB 48).

Law & Order

Do police officers cancel the speed limit when they write you a warning? No! Contrary to most Christians, the speed limit remains in effect, even if you find yourself under grace!

The Pope: “It suffices to note that Jesus has no intention of abrogating the Ten Commandments. On the contrary, he reinforces them” (Ratzinger, *Jesus*, 71).

“The Decalogue is not, as we have seen, some burden imposed upon man from the outside. It is a revelation of the essence of God himself - to the extent that we are capable of receiving it - and hence it is an exegesis of the truth of our being” (Ratzinger, *Jesus*, 148).

“By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. . . . Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why Jesus came as our Redeemer. It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven. **When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted.** The apostle Paul asks, **“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Rom 3:31.**” (MB 49-50).

The new-covenant promise does not cancel the law; it just emphasizes the location: “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them” (Heb 10:16).

Mt 5:18 “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

jot: smallest Hebrew letter: י

tittle: the serif-hook on a Hebrew letter; compare a *resh* ר to a *daleth* ד.

“In their fidelity to His law, God’s servants should be as firm as the unchanging hills” (GC 66).

“Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam” (MB 49).

Do you keep the law?

Case Study: The Sabbath

“The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” **So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power.** And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. “From one Sabbath to another” the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up “to worship before Me, saith the Lord.” Mt 5:18; Isa 66:23.” (DA 283).

The Cross and the Law

“It was impossible for the sinner to keep the law of God, which was holy, just, and good; but this impossibility was removed by the impartation of the righteousness of Christ to the repenting, believing soul. The life and death of Christ in behalf of sinful man were for the purpose of restoring the sinner to God’s favor, through imparting to him the righteousness that would meet the claims of the law and find acceptance with the Father. But it is ever the purpose of Satan to make void the law of God and to pervert the true meaning of the plan of salvation. Therefore he has originated the falsehood that the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary’s cross was for the purpose of freeing men from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God. He has foisted upon the world the deception that God has abolished His constitution, thrown away His moral standard, and made void His holy and perfect law. Had He done this, at what terrible expense would it have been to Heaven! Instead of proclaiming the abolition of the law, Calvary’s cross proclaims in thunder tones its immutable and eternal character. Could the law have been abolished, and the government of heaven and earth and the unnumbered worlds of God maintained, Christ need not have died. **The death of Christ was to forever settle the question of the validity of the law of Jehovah.** Having suffered the full penalty for a guilty world, Jesus became the Mediator between God and man, to restore the repenting soul to favor with God by giving him grace to keep the law of the Most High. **Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them to the very letter. The atonement of Calvary vindicated the law of God as holy, just, and true, not only before the fallen world but before heaven and before the worlds unfallen. Christ came to magnify the law and to make it honorable”** (FW 118).

Mt 5:19 “Whoever . . . shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”

They won’t be in heaven; they’re just *called* least in heaven. (See quote below).

“We cannot disregard one word, however trifling it may seem to us, and be safe. . . . **By venturing to disregard the will of God upon one point, our first parents opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. And every individual who follows their example will reap a similar result.**

The love of God underlies every precept of His law, and he who departs from the commandment is working his own unhappiness and ruin” (MB 52).

“This is the judgment pronounced in the kingdom of heaven. Some have thought that the commandment-breaker will be there, but will occupy the lowest place. This is a mistake. Sinners will never enter the abode of bliss. The commandment-breaker, and all who unite with him in teaching that it makes no difference whether men break or observe the divine law, will by the universe of heaven be called least among the human agencies. For not only have they been disloyal themselves, but they have taught others to break the law of God. Christ pronounces judgment upon those who claim to have a knowledge of the law, but who, by precept and example, lead souls into confusion and darkness. They are teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and making void the law of God through their traditions. “For I say unto you [my disciples], That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (RH November 15, 1898, par. 6).

Mt 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Key Verse to understand the sermon and Jesus’ mandate!

- Mt 3:15 (righteousness fulfilled at baptism)
- Mt 5:6 (hunger and thirst for righteousness)
- Mt 6:33 (seek first His righteousness)
- Mt 21:32 (John came in the way of righteousness)

Pharisees: Focus on . . .

- external obedience + cases:
- 613 laws (248 positive laws, 365 negatives laws)
- plus loopholes

Jesus: Focus on . . .

- internally-motivated obedience + concepts
- 2 laws (God + neighbor)
- plus intensification of 10 Commandments

Ellen White on the Law and Christ

“God’s law reaches the feelings and motives, as well as the outward acts. It reveals the secrets of the heart, flashing light upon things before buried in darkness. God knows every thought, every purpose, every plan, every motive. The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. By His law He measures the character of every man. As the artist transfers to the canvas the features of the face, so the features of each individual character are transferred to the books of heaven. **God has a perfect photograph of every man’s character, and this photograph He compares with His law.** He reveals to man the defects that mar his life, and calls upon him to repent and turn from sin” (ST July 31, 1901 par. 3).

False Gospel

“There are those who say, “Give me Christ, but I want nothing of the law.” They talk of the grace of Christ, but they know not the meaning of grace; for God does not use His grace to make void the law. Satan has confused their minds, leading them to look upon the law as a yoke of bondage, a hindrance to spirituality. They talk of faith, but they know not the meaning of the word; for faith is never found apart from truth. The peace which they boast their faith gives them is but self-righteous confidence. Let no one claim that he has been accepted by Christ, and is living without sin, while at the same time he is, like Lucifer, waging war against God’s law, aiding the enemy in the very work which he commenced in heaven and is carrying forward on this earth” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 3-4).

“Thousands today are transgressing God’s law, advocating the ideas which for ages Satan has been manufacturing. Like the proud Pharisees, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. Wrapped in the darkness of unbelief, they refuse to search the Scriptures for themselves. They accept fables in the place of truth. They claim God’s promises while they break His precepts. In the last great day they will say to Christ, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” But Christ will answer, “I never knew you; depart from Me” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 5).

Great Controversy

“The natural heart rebels against the requirements of God’s law. It was the law against which Satan fought in heaven, and those who are controlled by him will hate its principles. But let them remember that when they cast reproach at the law, they cast reproach at Him with whom the law originated. He who while trampling on the law of God claims that Christ has forgiven his sins, knows not of what he is talking. John declares that sin is the transgression of the law. **If there were no law, there would be no sin. Those who claim to love Christ, while at the same time they refuse to obey Him, are like fountains which send forth impure water. Professing to follow Christ, they do the work of the adversary. Their faith is dead; for it is unsupported by good works. They can no more be saved by their faith than can the fallen angels, who believe and tremble, by their faith**” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 6).

“For the highest good of His creatures, God has given a perfect law, a law that demands perfect obedience. God compels no one to obey this law. He leaves men free to decide whether they will obey and receive the reward of obedience, or disobey and receive the punishment of transgression” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 7).

“Let us study God’s law in connection with the work of Christ. Man broke the law. Christ came to this earth to make an atonement for transgression. His atonement was complete in every part. As He hung on the cross, He could say, “It is finished.” The demands of justice were satisfied. The way to the throne of grace was opened for every sinner” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 8).

“The law stands firm, and justice sternly points the sinner to its holy precepts. It is not the province of the law to save the sinner, but to condemn, not to pardon, but to convict. It can not be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. Then how is God’s justice to be satisfied and His favor obtained? Not by works; “for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” In his own strength the sinner can not meet the demands of God. He must go for help to the One who paid the ransom for him. It is impossible for him of himself to keep the law. But Christ can give him strength to do this. The Saviour came to this world and in human flesh lived a life of perfect obedience, that the sinner might stand before God justified and accepted” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 9).

“Christ is our hope. Those who trust in Him are cleansed. The grace of Christ and the government of God walk together in perfect harmony. When Jesus became man’s substitute, mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. The cross of Calvary bears witness to the high claims of God’s law. **Christ did not die to encourage man in rebellion against God, but to provide a way whereby he might keep the whole law.** His garment of spotless righteousness clothes the repenting, believing sinner. He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (ST July 31, 1901, par. 10).

Case Studies from the Ten Commandments

“The law is but a transcript of the character of God” (MB 77).

When you are truly converted, the law is not hard to keep but hard not to keep!

Mt 5:21-26 Murder

“I don’t think that the big men, the politicians and the capitalists alone are guilty of the war. No, no, the little man is just as keen, otherwise the people of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There is an urge and rage in people to destroy, to kill, to murder, and until all mankind, without exception, undergoes a great change, wars will be waged, everything that has been built up, cultivated and grown, will be destroyed and disfigured, after which mankind will have to begin all over again” (Anne Frank).

Interrelational Implementation: Take the first step towards reconciliation!

1. Take the initiative.
2. Avoid avoidance (esp. religious!) – go towards your neighbor that is upset with you.
3. Do it immediately! And I have found it doesn’t work via phone, email or texting; go in person.
4. Remember the implications: eternity is at stake - your horizontal relationships affect your vertical destiny!

People Skills

“His example is for us. When we are brought in conflict with the enemies of Christ, we should say nothing in a spirit of retaliation or that would bear even the appearance of a railing accusation. He who stands as a mouthpiece for God should not utter words which even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with Satan. We are to leave with God the work of judging and condemning” (MB 57).

Who do you murder in your heart?

Mt 5:27-30 Adultery

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

Men – are you reading this?! Keep reading; I’m talking to you!

At what point do we cross the line from natural attraction to sinful lust?

Attraction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Lust
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I remember a billboard in Germany with a priest holding a “men’s” magazine, with a thought bubble that read, “You

made all this?!" (The ad didn't last very long . . .).

Origen's solution to lust: castration. But a blind summer camper once told me that he can lust after a woman whom he has never seen! Sorry, Origen. Though we sometimes need to look the other way, our wicked hearts must be kept under constraint as well.

Interestingly, Jesus suggests amputation. Of course, we are quick to dismiss this as hyperbole, but what if Jesus actually meant it?! Would you seriously continue to sin even if it literally cost you your eye(s)?! Exactly Jesus' point: That's how serious we should take sinning. Sinful thoughts are as bad as a physical amputation!

Remember Mt 1:21? Embedded in Jesus' very name is the message of freedom and victory over sin:

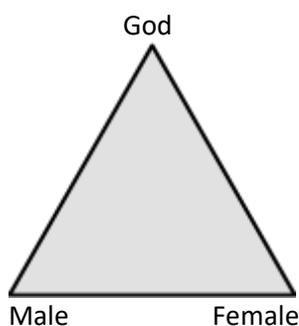
“. . . and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

“God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. . . . It is through the will that sin retains its hold upon us. The surrender of the will is represented as plucking out the eye or cutting off the hand” (MB 61).

“Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one” (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man” (MB 63).

“Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. “Fear not,” He says; “thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” Isa 54:4, 5; Jer 3:14. In the “Song of Songs” we hear the bride's voice saying, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” And He who is to her “the chiefest among ten thousand,” speaks to His chosen one, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” SW 2:16; 5:10; 4:7 (MB 64).

“The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven. . . . Now, as in Christ's day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon heaven's ideal of this sacred relation. Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers a solace. The patience and gentleness which His Spirit can impart will sweeten the bitter lot. The heart in which Christ dwells will be so filled, so satisfied, with His love that it will not be consumed with longing to attract sympathy and attention to itself. And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human wisdom fails to do. Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are firmer and more enduring than those of earth—the golden bonds of a love that will bear the test of trial” (MB 65).



In marriage counseling, instead of trying to solve the male-female relationship, I now focus on getting the male and the female closer to God. By pure geometric convention, they then grow closer to each other. This is highly effective, since it doesn't set the couple up for failure. Anybody willing can pray, study their Bible, and go to church together. As problems take a back-seat, problems become in reality secondary, or disappear altogether. This approach does not deny problems but puts them in a better perspective.

Are you battling lust? Here are some texts that will help. *Why not memorize them this week?!*

“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1).

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. ¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Ps 119:9-11).

(Some translations have “keep his way clean”, but *zakhah* “to make clean”, “to cleanse” is in the piel form, suggesting some defilement has already taken place).

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1Cor 10:13).

Case Study: David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)

David’s fall was the result of ignoring several simple safeguards. Respecting some stop signs on the way to sin could have prevented this moral disaster. But running enough stop signs without consequences inevitably (and statistically) leads to a crash at some point!

Notice these roadside markers:

Stop Sign 1) 2 Sam 11:2: “And it came to pass” – often an affair begins in absolute innocence, unplanned.

Stop Sign 2) 2 Sam 11: 2: “and the woman was very beautiful to look upon” - David could have seen Bathsheba on the rooftop and turned around and gone back inside. Disaster averted! But he took another look! Men, quit gazing at that other woman! Make sure that the shine in her eyes is not a reflection of the shine in yours! Don’t look, don’t linger, don’t lust.

Stop Sign 3) 2 Sam 11:3: “And David sent and enquired after the woman” – Bad move. He followed up on impure thoughts. Could have still stopped right there, especially with a servant reminding the king that Bathsheba was “the wife of Uriah the Hittite”.

Stop Sign 4) 2 Sam 11:4: “And he took her” – adulterous thoughts lead to adulterous action. Like a slippery ski jump, so is the inevitable allure of immorality.

Sin. Crash! Catastrophic failure!

“Sent”

Note: The story contains a clever parody on the word “sent”: David sends Joab into battle (2 Sam 11:1); David sends after the woman (v3); he “sends” for Bathsheba (v4); Bathsheba “sends” info to David (v5); David sends for Joab (v6, 14); Joab “sends” to David (v18, 22); David sends for Bathsheba (v27); God “sends” Nathan (12:1, 25); Joab sends to David (12:27).

Enough is enough . . . At some point, God has enough of David’s “sending” and “sends” a prophet to stop this shenanigans.

“One thing I of the Lord desire
For all my way has darksome been
Be it by earthquake, wind, or fire,
Lord, make me clean, Lord, make me clean” (Walter Chalmers Smith; 1824-1908).

How do you deal with lust in your life? Do you need to be cleansed?

Mt 5:31-32 Divorce & Remarriage

"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'³² 'But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.'"

"When a man divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears" (Rabbinic wisdom).

Divorce and remarriage are such difficult topics to deal with; each case is different, and human relations are complex – and the text above is so short! Two verses!

The context is important to consider: the righteousness (or lack thereof) of the Pharisees (Mt 5:20). So Jesus' point of reference is not our different situations, but the mindset of the Pharisees – and that becomes apparent later in Mt 19. They are not hiding their mindset very well when they ask Jesus:

"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Mt 19:3).

Notice that when it came to marriage, the Pharisees tried to find a way out. Jesus reminded of a way to stay in.

In his subsequent explanation, Jesus is not addressing case studies; he deals with the concept of marriage, based on creation. After reminding his listeners of the creation of gender (Mt 19:4) and marriage (Mt 19:5-6), he again draws them back to the origins and permanence of the marital relationship: "but from the beginning it was not so" (Mt 19:8).

And the disciples realize the gravity of Jesus' statement (Mt 19:10)!

Case studies ("but what about . . .") are often a copout, an attempt to avoid accountability, a clever way to bypass the straight testimony of Scripture. We excuse ourselves with unique situations. But instead of providing for a loophole in the law, Jesus draws us back to the origin of God's intent.

"In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. . . . Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. . . . He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. . . . Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary" (MB 63).

According to Ephesians 5, marriage is the mirror of God's love to the world!

And that's why Satan attacks marriage with such vigor.

Marriage Counseling

"The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be - an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven" (MB 65).

"Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are

firmer and more enduring than those of earth - the golden bonds of a love that will bear the test of trial" (MB 65).

But what about abuse?! Abuse is not part of Jesus' appeal. Men MUST quit abusing women; it's that simple. Men, go back to God's original intent for marriage, eliminate all competition, distractions, and aberrations, and save and preserve your family! That will make you a real man.

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house . . . "

"The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?"⁴ And He answered and said to them, "**Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning`made them male and female,**⁵ **and said,`For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh`?**⁶ **So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**"⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"⁸ He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."⁹ "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."¹⁰ His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry."¹¹ But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given" (Mt 19:3-11).

Notice how in Matthew 19, Jesus again goes back to creation. In short, Jesus focuses on the principle that created marriage, not on case studies that allow for divorce.

"Rejoice with the wife of your youth" (Prov 5:18).

Divorce-proofing your marriage:

1. Pray together
2. Read the Bible together
3. Go to church together
4. Spend time together

Men, in your relationship, are you part of the problem or part of the solution?

Mt 5:33-37 Oaths - Speech Therapy (Longer than Jesus' words on lust or divorce!)

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old,`You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'³⁴ "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;³⁵ "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.³⁶ "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black."³⁷ "But let your`Yes' be`Yes,' and your`No,'`No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

"Oaths arise because men are so often liars" (A.M. Hunt).

"You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name" (Deut 10:20).

"But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment" (Jam 5:12).

"Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth" (2 Cor 1:23).

"These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful" (MB 68).

“If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And “whatsoever is more than” truth, “is of the evil one” (MB 68).

Are you true to your word? Straight-forward, without hidden agenda?

Mt 5:38-42 Non-Resistance

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away" (OT: see Ex 21:24, Lev 24:20, and Deut 19:21).

Meaning: public reparation, not private retaliation! In other words, “eye for an eye” is about restricting damage, not returning damage. (3rd party interventions (police, military) are not addressed here).

Interestingly, striking someone on the right cheek assumes usage of the left hand – an unusual practice. Scholars therefore dismiss this phrase as just a verbal insult, but the other two examples (tunic, one mile) seem real. And, neither Jesus nor Paul always turn the other cheek:

“The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.²⁰ Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.²¹ Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."²² And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"²³ Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" (John 18:19-23).

“And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?" (Act 22:25).

So, I am still wrestling with the implications and implementation of this. Do you turn the other cheek to an active shooter? Would you not defend your family from an intruder? When do you actually not resist an evil person?

It is worthy of note that none of the 3 examples by Jesus are life-threatening situations. In fact, only the first one involves some measure of bodily harm. The other two involve fiscal or temporary inconveniences.

When should you stand your ground, when should you be a doormat?

Mt 5:43-48 Love your Enemies

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Not that “hate your enemy” is not from the Old Testament. Jesus is controverting human tradition and learned

(mis)behaviors, not divine instruction.

“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink” (Prov 25:21).

“For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom 5:10).

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

“To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate” (MB 75).

“Even the enmity of the wicked will prove a blessing by disciplining you for heaven” (MB 110).

Do you love your enemy?

Perfection?

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

We are quick to make excuses when we hear the p-word: nobody’s perfect - He who is without sin . . . - the church is a hospital for sinners - we all make mistakes – etc.

But the direct context of Mt 5:43-47 points towards a horizontal perfection, not a theological-vertical sinlessness. It’s about treating our neighbor the way God has already treated us.

This is supported by the parallel text in Lk 6:36: ““Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

Perfection Possible

“The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace” (MB 76).

“That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law” (MB 78).

“. . . because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, **you may become like Him in character**, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels” (MB 76).

Chapter 5 reveals an interesting (and logical) progression: Brother – Gender Relations - Family - People - Enemy

Re-read Matthew 5 - what is your biggest challenge from this chapter?

Matthew 6: Hypocrites - Are You Real?!

Mt 6:1-18: Don’t hide behind a cloak of fake piety!

Mt 6:2: “Hypocrites”: the term simple means “actors” in Greek. It’s someone who is not real, but fake.

Offerings

“The work of beneficence is twice blessed. While he that gives to the needy blesses others, he himself is blessed in a still greater degree” (MB 82).

Mt 6:19-24: Notice the contrasts between earth vs heaven, darkness vs light, God vs money

Mt 6:25-34: Worry distorts and damages the value of life, the quantity of life, the quality of life.

Worry is fundamentally atheistic. Worry says that a) God can't handle it, b) you don't trust God to handle it.

Do you worry? Why?

Mt 6:5 When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites

“Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him” (MB 84).

“By beholding, we become changed” (GC 555; DA 441).

“The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances” (MB 85).

Learning to Pray

“The Pharisees had stated hours for prayer; and when, as often came to pass, they were abroad at the appointed time, they would pause wherever they might be—perhaps in the street or the market place, amid the hurrying throngs of men—and there in a loud voice rehearse their formal prayers. Such worship, offered merely for self-glorification, called forth unsparing rebuke from Jesus. He did not, however, discountenance public prayer, for He Himself prayed with His disciples and in the presence of the multitude. But He teaches that private prayer is not to be made public. **In secret devotion our prayers are to reach the ears of none but the prayer-hearing God.** No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions” (MB 83).

Make God your Prayer Partner

“When thou prayest, enter into thy closet.” **Have a place for secret prayer. Jesus had select places for communion with God, and so should we. We need often to retire to some spot, however humble, where we can be alone with God.**

“Pray to thy Father which is in secret.” In the name of Jesus we may come into God's presence with the confidence of a child. No man is needed to act as a mediator. Through Jesus we may open our hearts to God as to one who knows and loves us. In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts” (MB 84).

“**The soul that turns to God for its help, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness.** By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances. If we draw near to God, He will put a word in our mouth to speak for Him, even praise unto His name. He will teach us a strain from the song of the angels, even thanksgiving to our heavenly Father. In every act of life, the light and love of an indwelling Saviour will be revealed. **Outward troubles cannot reach the life that is lived by faith in the Son of God**” (MB 85).

Mt 6:7 When you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.

“Prayer is not expiation for sin; it has no virtue or merit of itself. The repetition of set, customary phrases, when the

heart feels no need of God, is of the same characters as the 'vain repetitions' of the heathen" (MB 86).

"God does not desire our ceremonial compliments, but the unspoken cry of the heart broken and subdued with a sense of its sin and utter weakness finds its way to the Father of all mercy" (MB 87).

The Lord's Prayer

". . . as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the sense of refreshment that seemed to pervade His presence. It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works" (MB 102-103).

Did you read that? "Hours of prayer".

The Position of the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon from the Mount

Lord's Prayer	
Introduction	Conclusion
Duty to God	Duty to God
Duty to People	Duty to People
5 Old Laws	5 New Laws
Law & Prophets	Law & Prophets
Blessings	Blessings & Curses

Geographical progression: Heaven . . . Earth; God . . . Humans

From God to Us:

1st Person Plural: Our Father in heaven,

2nd Person Singular

Hallowed be **Your** name.

¹⁰ **Your** kingdom come.

Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven.

1st Person Plural

¹¹ Give **us** this day **our** daily bread.

¹² And forgive **us our** debts, As **we** forgive **our** debtors.

¹³ And do not lead **us** into temptation, But deliver **us** from the evil one.

2nd Person Singular

For **Yours** is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Mat 6:9)

Mt 6:9 Our Father in Heaven

"The very first step in approaching God is to know and believe the love that He has to us (1 Jn 4:16); for it is through the drawing of His love that we are led to come to Him" (MB 104).

"Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with Heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race, He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him" (GW 511).

Mt 6:9 Hallowed be thy name

“In prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High” (MB 106).

Mt 6:10 Your kingdom come

When you pray “Your kingdom come” you are declaring that you a) are ready for His kingdom to come, b) you *want* His kingdom to come . . . *Are both a) and b) true for you?!*

On a scale from 1 - 10, how ready are you for His kingdom to come?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What needs to change in your life to move this number towards 10?

Mt 6:10 Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven

Notice: not “Your will be *known*”, but “Your will be *done*” - a most radical prayer, as it foreshadows Jesus’ struggle and victory in the Garden of Eden on precisely in this regard (Mt 26:39).

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart (Ps 40:8).

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Heb 10:7).

Mt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread – bread, not cheesecake . . .

“Anyone who asks for bread for today is poor” (Cyprian).

“If you have renounced self and given yourself to Christ you are a member of the family of God, and everything in the Father’s house is for you. All the treasures of God are opened to you, both the world that now is and that which is to come. . . . You shall receive day by day what is required for the day’s need” (MB 110).

“The prayer for daily bread includes not only food to sustain the body, but that spiritual bread which will nourish the soul unto life everlasting” (MB 112).

Mt 6:12 Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

Notice that God forgives debts; we forgive people!

“We forgive” is grammatically the only “indicative” mood = an action in reality. The other verbs are wishes and solicitations, but inter-personal forgiveness is an assumed condition!

Forgiveness is one of the hardest things in life. It’s so difficult to forgive someone who has wronged us. I have asked students to change one thing about themselves over the course of a semester; to overcome one habit. By the far the most intense struggle involves not weight loss or even addictions, but forgiveness. One difficulty lies in rejection – people who don’t accept our forgiveness. But we must ask for forgiveness first, or be the first to forgive! And it’s not ‘forgive and forget’; nevertheless, the apostle Paul reminds:

Love “thinks no evil”. It does not calculate evil, and it does not keep bringing it up.

Satan “will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers and will not bless and save us” (MB 115).

Do you need to forgive?

Mt 6:13 Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

Does God lead into temptation? No. “Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive

the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:12-13).

"Lead us not into temptation" is a plea to be led away from temptation victoriously. Here is how:

Resisting Temptation

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor 10:13). *Have you memorized this verse?!*

"Yielding to temptation begins in permitting the mind to waver, to be inconstant in your trust in God" (MB 92).

"Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ" (MB 117).

"We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing" (MB 117).

"It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us" (MB 118).

"The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness" (MB 118).

Mt 6:13 For Yours is the Kingdom, and the Glory, and the Power, Forever

"Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*; Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. ¹² Both riches and honor *come* from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand *is* power and might; In Your hand *it is* to make great And to give strength to all" (1Ch 29:11-12).

The Greek *Textus Receptus* (and thus the KJV) contains this phrase; modern versions do not. A good case can be made to include this conclusive praise to the Lord's Prayer:

One one hand . . . most manuscripts (L W Θ 0233 ἰ¹³ 33 Ū sy sa Didache 2nd c. [100 AD]; Syriac Peshitta 2nd/3rd c.; the majority of Greek minuscule 28, 33, 565, 700, 892, 1009, 1010, 1071, 1079, 1195, 1216, 1230, 1241, 1242, 1365, 1546, 1646, 2174; Greek lectionaries; Old Syrian, Coptic, Chrysostom (4th c.) read (though some with slight variation) ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν ("for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen") here.

Notice the vague objectivity of text-critical scholarship (underlining supplied): "The reading without this sentence, though, is attested by generally better witnesses κ) B D Z 0170 ἰ¹ pc lat mae Or(. The phrase was probably composed for the liturgy of the early church and most likely was based on 1 Chr 29:11–13; a scribe probably added the phrase at this point in the text for use in public scripture reading (see TCGNT 13–14). Both external and internal evidence argue for the shorter reading" (adapted from the NET Bible).

Ellen White assumes this closing line to be genuine (MB 121-122).

Mt 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

xyz

Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mammon: In the Aramaic language the word for (worldly) wealth, (material) possessions.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. ⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim 6:6-10).

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;¹⁸ That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;¹⁹ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim 6:17-19).

And, of course, remember the (tragic) story of the rich young ruler who turned from Jesus for the price of, well, stuff:

“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God. ¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. ²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. ²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. ²² **And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.** ²³ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁴ And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁶ And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? ²⁷ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible” (Mk 10:17-27).

“He who does not give himself wholly to God is under the control of another power, listening to another voice, whose suggestions are of an entirely different character. Half-and half service places the human agent on the side of the enemy as a successful ally of the hosts of darkness. . . . **The strongest bulwark of vice in our world is not the iniquitous life of the abandoned sinner or the degraded outcast; it is that life which otherwise appears virtuous, honorable, and noble, but in which one sin is fostered, one vice indulged.** . . . Genius, talent, sympathy, even generous and kindly deeds, may become decoys of Satan to entice other souls over the precipice of ruin for this life and the life to come” (MB 94).

Who really is your master?

Mt 6:28-29 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: ²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

“In the loveliness of the things of nature you may learn more of the wisdom of God than the schoolmen know” (MB 96).

“Through the flowers, God would call our attention to the loveliness of Christlike character” (MB 97).

“Every flower is an expression of the love of God” (Letter 24, 1899).

“Notwithstanding the curse was pronounced upon the earth that it should bring forth thorns and thistles, **there is a flower upon the thistle.** This world is not all sorrow and misery. God’s great book of nature is open for us to study, and from it we are to gain more exalted ideas of his greatness and unexcelled love and glory. He who laid the foundation of

the earth, who garnished the heavens and marshaled the stars in their order, he who has clothed the earth with a living carpet, and beautified it with lovely flowers of every shade and variety, would have his children appreciate his works, and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which he has adorned their earthly home” (RH October 27, 1885, par. 4).

“Christ sought to draw the attention of his disciples away from the artificial to the natural: “If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!” Why did not our heavenly Father carpet the earth with brown or gray? He chose the color that was most restful, the most acceptable to the senses. How it cheers the heart and refreshes the weary spirit to look upon the earth, clad in its garments of living green! Without this covering the air would be filled with dust, and the earth would appear like a desert. **Every spire of grass, every opening bud and blooming flower is a token of God’s love, and should teach us a lesson of faith and trust in him.** Christ calls our attention to their natural loveliness, and assures us that the most gorgeous array of the greatest king that ever wielded an earthly scepter was not equal to that worn by the humblest flower. You who are sighing for the artificial splendor which wealth alone can purchase, for costly paintings, furniture, and dress, listen to the voice of the divine Teacher. He points you to the flower of the field, the simple design of which cannot be equaled by human skill” (RH October 27, 1885, par. 5).

Mt 6:33 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow. . . . Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

“Though it is a spiritual kingdom, fear not that your needs for this life will be uncared-for. **If you give yourself to God’s service, He who has all power in heaven and earth will provide for your needs.** . . . We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure, that would hinder the outworking of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord” (MB 99).

**“If you have given yourself to God, to do His work, you have no need to be anxious for tomorrow”
(MB 100).**

“When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it is certain to befall us. But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God” (MB 100).

“If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ,—the yoke of obedience and service,—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved” (MB 101).

Matthew 7

Mt 7:1 Do not judge

Judging a fellow human being is different from discernment and warning an erring brother/sister.

Mt 7:3 Speck-tacular?

“No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins” (MB 128).

Mt 7:6 pigs

xyz

Mt 7:7 Ask, Seek, Knock

Notice the parallel passage in Luke 11:13: Ask, Seek, Knock is specifically about asking for the Holy Spirit:

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lk 11:13).

Old Testament background: not a blank check for self-gratification through material goods, but an appeal to find God:

"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever" (1 Chron 28:9).

“We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience chamber. The first disciples who followed Jesus were not satisfied with a hurried conversation with Him by the way; they said, ‘Rabbi, . . . where dwellest Thou? . . . They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.’ John 1:38, 39. So we may be admitted into closest intimacy and communion with God” (MB 131).

Mt 7:12 The Golden Rule: Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Other cultures have similar rules:

“Let us show our generosity in the same manner we would want it shown to us” (Seneca, 4 BC-AD 65).

“What you consider hateful, don’t do it to your neighbor” (Rabbi Hillel, 70 BC - 10 AD).

“Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you” (Confucius, 400s BC)

“In your association with others, put yourself in their place” (MB 134).

“The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus” (MB 135).

Appeal: Mt 7:13-27: In the end, we have 2 choices:

- 2 roads: finality
- 2 trees: fruit
- 2 builders: foundation

“If you cling to any besetting sin you will find the way too narrow for you to enter” (MB 138).

The Greatest Battle Ever Fought

“The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. **The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love.** The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up” (MB 141).

Mt 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets . . . you shall know them by their fruits.

“Teachers of falsehood will arise to draw you away from the narrow path and the strait gate. Beware of them; though concealed in sheep’s clothing, inwardly they are ravening wolves. Jesus gives a test by which false teachers may be distinguished from the true. “Ye shall know them by their fruits,” He says. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” We are not bidden to prove them by their fair speeches and exalted professions. They are to be judged by the word of God. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.” “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 19:27 (MB 145).

“A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. . . . Obedience is the test of discipleship” (MB 146).

Mt 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Mt 7:23 “work iniquity” - the Greek word iniquity is *anomia* – literally “lawlessness”.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice **lawlessness!**'" "Those who claim modern sanctification would have come boastfully forward, saying, "Lord, Lord, do you not know us? Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" **The people here described, who make these pretentious claims, apparently weaving Jesus into all their doings, fitly represent those who claim modern sanctification, but who are at war with the law of God.** Christ calls them workers of iniquity, because they are deceivers, having on the garments of righteousness to hide the deformity of their characters, the inward wickedness of their unholy hearts. Satan has come down in these last days, to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His Satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. **The sheep’s clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf cannot be discerned only as we go to God’s great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah”** (RH August 25, 1885, par. 8).

Did you catch this is a sign of the end?! “Satan has come down in these last days” . . .

“In the sermon on the mount Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. **The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds.** Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but, "What do ye more than others?" Matt. 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds” (COL 272).

False Faith, Fatal Feelings, and Fake Followers

“The faith in Christ that saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. “Believe, believe,” is their cry; “only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.” **While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God.** Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 Jn 2:4). **It is unsafe to trust to feelings or impressions; these are unreliable guides. God’s law is the only correct standard of holiness. It is by this law that character is to be judged. If an inquirer after salvation were to ask, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” the modern teachers of sanctification would answer, “Only believe that Jesus saves you.” But when Christ was asked this question He said, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?”** And when the questioner replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, ...and thy neighbour as thyself,” Jesus said, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (Lk 10:25-29). True sanctification will be evidenced by a conscientious regard for all the commandments of God, by a careful improvement of every talent, by a circumspect conversation, by revealing in every act the meekness of Christ” (FW 52-53).

Mt 7:25 It fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

“Do you desire to become a follower of Christ, yet know not how to begin? Are you in darkness and know not how to find the light? Follow the light you have. **Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God.** His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey. As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God’s word, and your character will be builded after the similitude of the character of Christ. . . . As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come” (MB 150).

“We build on Christ by obeying His word. . . . Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. **It is through action that character is built**” (MB 149).

Mt 7:28-29 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

“There were occasions when Christ spoke with an authority that sent His words home with irresistible force, with an overwhelming sense of the greatness of the speaker, and the human agencies shrunk into nothingness in comparison with the One before them. They were deeply moved; their minds were impressed that He was repeating the command from the most excellent glory. As He summoned the world to listen, they were spellbound and entranced and conviction came to their minds. Every word made for itself a place, and the hearers believed and received the words that they had no power to resist. Every word He uttered seemed to the hearers as the life of God. He was giving evidence that He was the light of the world and the authority of the church, claiming pre-eminence over them all” (Ms 118, 1905; 5BC 1084.7).

Matthew 8-23: The Ministry of the Messiah

A Chain of Impossibilities: Human Inability = Divine Opportunity

Notice this sequence of situations that surpass human resources and capabilities:

- Mt 8:1-4: leprosy
- Mt 8:5-13: paralytic
- Mt 8:14-22: fever
- Mt 8:23-27: storm
- Mt 8:28-34: demon possession
- Mt 9:1-8: paralytic
- **Mt 9:8-13: Call of Matthew**
- Mt 9:18-26: sickness & death
- Mt 9:27-31: blindness
- Mt 9:32-34: demon possession
- **Mt 10: Call of the Twelve**

The Ministry of Healing: “Christ was a physician of the body as well as of the soul” (RH Oct. 24, 1899).

“During His ministry, **Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching.** . . . As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy” (MH 19-20).

People in the 1st century must have appreciated Jesus’ healing powers, especially when we consider some common healing practices at the time. Here are some samples:

Conventional 1st century healing methods (Pliny, AD 23–79 *Natural History*):

Ailment	Treatment
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Snake Bite	Ear Wax
Toothache	rub with wood struck by lightning
Joint ache	wrestler sweat
water in ear	hop on one foot
ringing ears	breast milk, honey, and pre-teen child urine
eyes	hyena liver, gravy roasted
Itching	Donkey urine + bone marrow
Insomnia	Rabbit Meat
Depression	boiled calf excrement in wine; drink

Source: [reference]

Fever?

“Any fire started by a human can be put out by a human. But a sick person is engulfed by a fire sent from heaven. what human can possibly put that out?” (Talmud, *Nedarim* 41a).

Jesus can! He did it for Peter’s mother-in-law! (Mt 8:14-15).

Was blind but now I see!

“The fat of all kinds of fish-freshwater and saltwater-melted in the sun and mixed with honey is an excellent treatment for improving eyesight” (Pliny, *Natural History, Remedies from Aquatic Animals*, book 32).

“To cure inflammation of the eyes, wash the eyes each morning with spit from your overnight fast” (Pliny, *Natural History, Remedies from Living Creatures*, book 28, ch. 10).

“To protect your eyes from developing eye diseases including inflammation of the eyes, do this and you will never again develop an eye disease. Each time you wash the dust off your feet, touch your eyes three times with the muddy water” (Pliny, *Natural History, Remedies from Living Creatures*, book 28, ch. 10).

Matthew 8

One can tell that Matthew had an accounting background – look how logically Jesus’ miracles are arranged. Notice, too, that the disciples’ apprenticeship begins not upon “graduation”, but right away:

3 Healings	3 Victories	3 Healings
1. lepers 2. gentile servant 3. Peter’s mother-in-law (8:14-15)	1. over nature 2. over demons 3. over sin	1. 2 women 2. 2 blind men 3. 1 mute
Discipleship Training	Discipleship	Discipleship

These groupings of miracles underscored their authenticity – and Jesus’ authority, especially in an Old Testament-oriented Jewish culture: “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established” (Deut 19:15; Mt 18:16).

Leprosy: Symbiosis between Theology & Therapy

Lat. *lepra* = scaly. Biblical Leprosy: various dermatological conditions (Miriam, Namaan the Syrian, etc.)

Modern Leprosy: Hansen’s disease (Gerhard Armauer Hansen), caused by *mycobacterium leprae* and *mycobacterium*

lepromatosis

- often dormant for 5-20 years
- symptoms: granulomas of nerves, compromise of peripheral nerves, deformation of extremities, loss of eyesight
- curable: Dapsone + Rifampicin (+ Clofazimine), 6-12 months, free via WHO
- 2012: ~ 180,000 cases, >50% India, but in general 95% of population immune
- transmission: in underdeveloped areas: nasal droplets; elsewhere: monkeys, armadillos

Correlation theology & therapy:

“Who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases” (Ps 103:3).

“By His stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:5).

“He still has the same life-giving power as when on earth He healed the sick, and spoke forgiveness to the sinner” (DA 270).

“Physical disease, however malignant and deep-seated, was healed by the power of Christ; but the disease of the soul took a firmer hold upon those who closed their eyes against the light. Leprosy and palsy were not so terrible as bigotry and unbelief” (DA 271).

Jesus' Motto for His Healing Ministry: If I can heal you physically . . . I can save you spiritually!

The same word for healing is used for salvation:

Mt 9:22 "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well [σέσωκέ]."

Luke 7:50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved [σέσωκέ] you."

Mt 8:5-13 Healing #2: The Long-Distance Effectiveness of the Jesus' Word

Jesus' Word is as good as His touch!

I learned this powerful line of truth from Dr. Jon Paulien in 1995. A group of seminarians were huddled in the Jerusalem Study Center on a cold, rainy Sabbath. Expounding on the book of John, my eyes were opened to the beauty and richness of the Gospel of John, but applicable here in Matthew of course as well.

Healing without touching is especially intriguing since elsewhere Jesus touches the sick person: Mt 8:3, 15; 9:21, 25, 29.

Modern Miracles?

I'm asked at times why Jesus doesn't heal like this anymore. He doesn't?! Read this testimony by Bill Tucker from the Quiet Hour Ministry:

“One man had boils all over his chest. They were too painful even to touch. When I laid hands on him and prayed, they disappeared. This is one of many miraculous answers to prayer during my recent trip to Ghana.”

Rx Food: The Case for the Adventist Health Message

People wonder what food might have to do with faith? And: Does God really care? Notice the role of food in these key moments in Bible history:

Genesis: food (a vegan diet) is specifically prescribed within the creation account of Adam & Eve (Gen 1:30)

Adam and Eve: the original sin involved food (though, of course, the bigger issue of obedience was at stake)

Esau: Birthright or Beans?

Exodus: Manna

Leviticus: clean/unclean

Daniel: 1:8 = food?!

Jesus: Satan's first temptation for Jesus involved food

Revelation: Laodicea – Food Offer (3:20); Marriage Supper (19:9)

“The gospel of health has able advocates, but their work has been made very hard because so many ministers, presidents of conferences, and others in positions of influence, have failed to give the question of health reform its proper attention. **They have not recognized it in its relation to the work of the message as the right arm of the body.** While very little respect has been shown to this department by many of the people, and by some of the ministers, the Lord has shown His regard for it by giving it abundant prosperity. When properly conducted, **the health work is an entering wedge**, making a way for other truths to reach the heart. When the third angel's message is received in its fullness, health reform will be given its place in the councils of the conference, in the work of the church, in the home, at the table, and in all the household arrangements. Then the right arm will serve and protect the body” (CD 73).

“I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work”
CH 533 (1901).

“Light has been given me that in medical missionary work we have lost great advantages by failing to realize the need of a change in our plans in regard to the location of sanitariums. It is the Lord's will that these institutions shall be established outside the city. They should be situated in the country, in the midst of surroundings as attractive as possible. In nature—the Lord's garden—the sick will always find something to divert their attention from themselves and lift their thoughts to God” (7T 80).

“**Nature is God's physician.** The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving—the elixir of life. Outdoor life is the only medicine that many invalids need. Its influence is powerful to heal sickness caused by fashionable life, a life that weakens and destroys the physical, mental, and spiritual powers” (7T 77).

“Why deprive patients of the health-restoring blessing to be found in outdoor life? I have been instructed that as the sick are encouraged to leave their rooms and spend time in the open air, cultivating flowers, or doing some other light, pleasant work, their minds will be called from self to something more health-giving. Exercise in the open air should be prescribed as a beneficial, life-giving necessity. The longer patients can be kept out of doors the less care will they require. The more cheerful their surroundings, the more hopeful will they be. Surround them with the beautiful things of nature; place them where they can see the flowers growing and hear the birds singing, and their hearts will break into song in harmony with the song of the birds” (7T 82).

“Let the leaders in our work instruct the people that sanitariums should be established in the midst of the most pleasant surroundings, in places not disturbed by the turmoil of the city, places where by wise instruction the thoughts of the patients can be bound up with the thoughts of God. Again and again I have described such places; but it seems that there has been no ear to hear. Recently in a most clear and convincing manner the advantage of establishing our institutions, especially our sanitariums and schools, outside the cities was presented to me” (7T 81).

How could we re-establish truly self-supporting sanitariums and garden-centric places of healing?

Mt 8:14-15: Healing #3: Peter's Mother-in-Law

Observations:

Mt 8:16-17: Healing #4: Demon-Possession

Demon-Possession

Conventional Exorcism in Antiquity:

"He had a ring tied to a baaras root. It was the same kind of root Solomon used to exorcise demons. Eleazar put the ring of the possessed man's nose, and then pulled the demon out through the man's nostrils. Instantly, the man collapsed. Eleazar started reciting incantations he had composed, which mentioned Solomon and ordered the demon never to come back. To assure witnesses that the demon had come out., Eleazar ordered it to knock over a cup of water he set up in the room" (Josephus, Ant. 8:2, 5).

Ellen White's approach to demon possession: Lifestyle Matters!

"The secret cause of the affliction that had made this man a fearful spectacle to his friends and a burden to himself was in his own life. He had been fascinated by the pleasures of sin, and had thought to make life a grand carnival. He did not dream of becoming a terror to the world and the reproach of his family. He thought his time could be spent in innocent folly. But once in the downward path, his feet rapidly descended. **Intemperance and frivolity perverted the noble attributes of his nature, and Satan took absolute control of him. Remorse came too late.** When he would have sacrificed wealth and pleasure to regain his lost manhood, he had become helpless in the grasp of the evil one. He had placed himself on the enemy's ground, and Satan had taken possession of all his faculties. The tempter had allured him with many charming presentations; but when once the wretched man was in his power, the fiend became relentless in his cruelty, and terrible in his angry visitations. **So it will be with all who yield to evil; the fascinating pleasure of their early career ends in the darkness of despair or the madness of a ruined soul**" (DA 256).

→ Therefore, always check for and eliminate lifestyle triggers when dealing with demon possession.

Demon Experiences - Real Stories

One girl in my Bible class started talking strangely, visibly upset and antagonistic. Students suggested she was possessed, and we should perform a demon exorcism. A trip to the psych ward at the local hospital confirmed our suspicion - she had a thyroid imbalance which was managed with some medication. Demonic symptoms vanished!

A Catholic family in a major US city once called me because they heard voice in their house. After visiting with them for a while I noticed teenagers in the back room. I asked them what they were doing? "Nothing." "Nothing" always means something . . . They were into ouija boards, tarot cards, levitation, etc. That had to stop for the voices to stop! You have to eliminate direct sources of evil.

A student once came to my office, claiming he was possessed and needed demons expelled. After much probing into his lifestyle, a serious addiction to pornography emerged. Thus we dealt with internet usage, accountability, etc. "Just praying" would not have closed the door to this most devastating addiction. We had to get to the root cause.

During an evangelistic series in the Northwest we encountered a lady with signs of demonic depression. She also wore spiritualistic jewelry and poor hygiene. I suggested that she destroy all her jewelry, and take a shower with soap. She returned the next day with a smile on her face!

I once was called to the home of a family who claimed their 8-year-old daughter had exposed to the spell of a real witch while trick-or-treating. Visiting with the family for a while, I noticed that the problem was one of poor parenting: the girl had no boundaries; violations of rules met no consequences - the parents were at a loss of what to do! The poor girl simply needed the security of defined and predictable boundaries, and measured consequences for violations of parental authority!

The principal of a church school where I pastored brought me a student who was just out of control. Calming him (and the principal) I asked what he had for breakfast. "Two hotdogs from the gas station and a Coke."

#granola #soymilk #helloworldparents?!

I remember Pastor Ben Hassenpflug during the evangelistic outreach "Target Houston" in 1993. After preaching for an evangelistic series, he and his wife retired to their motel room for the night. In the middle of the night he heard something of a chain rattling. A voice shrieked, "Ben, I'm here to get you!" They quickly knelt by their bedside and prayed the Lord's Prayer. A cold air rushed through the room, and the door slammed shut. The evil disappeared.

Do you have all avenues shut that could allow evil to enter? Are your doors to your heart locked to evil?

Mt 8:18-22 Discipleship - Follow me NOW!

Mt 8:21 Let me first go and bury my father: indefinite delay of discipleship is not acceptable

Ancient burial practices involved placing the body in a limestone box; the material acted as a catalyst on the body, and within a year the corpse was nothing but bones, ready for the actual burial. Thus the inquirer probably only asked for 6-12 months of delay. But when Jesus calls, it's time to rise and follow!

Mt 8:23-27 Stilling the Storm

We are usually quick to spiritualize this story and interpret it as Jesus being able to calm our spiritual, emotional, situational storms. While that may be true, Jesus could calm real storms!

Mt 8:28-34 Healing #5: Demon-Possession

Consider the following questions, and find a biblical answer:

- Why did the demons ask to go into the swine?
- Did the demons drown with the swine?

Matthew 9

Mt 9:1-8 Healing #6: The Paralytic

"It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. **The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth, had spoken life to the dying paralytic.** And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart. He who at creation "spoke, and it was," who "commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart. Christ bade the paralytic arise and walk, "that ye may know," He said, "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. **He needed health of soul before he could appreciate health of body. Before the physical malady could be healed, Christ must bring relief to the mind, and cleanse the soul from sin. This lesson should not be overlooked.** There are today thousands suffering from physical disease who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, "Thy sins are forgiven." The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can impart would restore vigor to the mind and health to the body" (MH 77).

Mt 9:9-13 Discipleship: Tax Collector

Mt 9:14-17 Fasting

Why do we no longer practice this?

I am aware of several individuals and churches that have re-discovered fasting. See the many quotes on fasting in the section on Matthew 4.

Mt 9:17 “new wine in old wineskins”?

“These who had never been to the rabbis, who had never sat in the schools of the prophets, who had not been members of the Sanhedrin, whose hearts were not bound about with their own ideas,—these he took and educated for his own use. **He could make them as new bottles for the new wine of his kingdom.** These were the babes to whom the Father could reveal spiritual things; but the priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be the depositories of knowledge, could give no room for the principles of Christianity, afterward taught by the apostles of Christ. The chain of truth, link after link, was given to those who realized their own ignorance, and were willing to learn of the great Teacher” (RH June 2, 1896, par. 6).

“Jesus knew that he could do the scribes and Pharisees no good, unless they would empty themselves of self-importance. **He chose new bottles for his new wine of doctrine, and made fishermen and unlearned believers the heralds of his truth to the world. And yet, though his doctrine seemed new to the people, it was in fact not a new doctrine, but the revelation of the significance of that which had been taught from the beginning. It was his design that his disciples should take the plain, unadulterated truth for the guide of their life. They were not to add to his words, or give a forced meaning to his utterances. They were not to put a mystical interpretation upon the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and draw from theological stores to build up some man-made theory. It was through putting a mystical meaning upon the plain words of God, that sacred and vital truths were made of little significance, while the theories of men were made prominent.** It was in this way that men were led to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and that they rejected the commandment of God, that they might keep their own tradition” (RH June 2, 1896, par. 7).

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. . . Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers” (GC 611-612).

Sequence:

Mt 9:18-26 Healings #7-8: A Resurrection and a Healing

Mt 9:27-31: Healing #9: Two Blind Men

Mt 9:32-34: Healing #10: A Mute Man Speaks

Mt 9:35-38: Appeal for more workers

Matthew 10

Mt 10:1-8 The list of disciples is a curious lineup of crooks, cheaters, liars, and betrayers – and from the start He gave them power! Notice this dual pair of verbs:

Jesus: He called He gave Purpose: to cast out to heal

Do not wait to serve Jesus until “you have your act together”. While we need leaders that fit the following famous characteristics, the Christian apprenticeship begins right away:

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall” (Ed 57).

Mt 10:22 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

Notice the repetition in Mt 24:13.

Mt 10:32 Whoever confesses me . . . Denying Christ through Christ-less attitudes and actions

“He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. **A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession.** Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life’s burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And “whosoever shall deny Me before men,” He says, “him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven” (DA 357).

Mt 10:34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."

Jesus has in mind result based on human response, not purpose based on divine intention:

“Christ declared, “I came not to send peace, but a sword.” **Why? Because men would not receive the word of life.** Because they warred against the message sent them to bring them joy and hope and life. We look upon the Jews as inexcusable because they rejected and crucified Christ. But today the messages that the Lord sends are often received in a manner similar to the way in which the Jews received Christ’s message. If the instruction of the Lord does not harmonize with the opinions of men, anger takes control of reason, and men play into the enemy’s hands by opposing the message that God sends. Satan uses them as sharp instruments to oppose the progress of truth” (Ms 31, 1889).

Matthew 11

Mt 11:12 the violent take the kingdom by force

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy-seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation. Our supplications would be full of earnestness, full of a sense of our great need; and we would not be denied. The truth would be expressed by life and character, and by lips touched with the living coal from off God’s altar. When this experience is ours, we shall be lifted out of our poor, cheap selves, that we have cherished so tenderly. We shall empty our hearts of the corroding power of selfishness, and shall be filled with praise and gratitude to God. We shall magnify the Lord, the God of all grace, who has magnified Christ. And he will reveal his power through us, making us as sharp sickles in the harvest-field” (RH Feb. 14, 1899, par. 13).

How serious – and appropriately aggressive - are you about the Father’s kingdom?

Mt 11:14 The Elijah Message

“In the spirit and with the power of Elijah, John denounced the corruptions of the Jews, and raised his voice in reproving their prevailing sins. **His discourses were plain, pointed, and convincing.** Many were brought to repentance of their sins, and, as evidence of their repentance, were baptized of him in Jordan. This was the preparatory work for the ministry of Christ. Many were convicted because of the plain truths uttered by this faithful prophet; but, by rejecting the light, they became enshrouded in deeper darkness, so that they were fully prepared to turn from the evidences attending Jesus, that he was the true Messiah” (2SP 48-49).

Mt 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Compare the Old Testament background of Jer 6:16-17 with Mt 11:28-30 – notice the parallels?!

Context: the impending invasion by Nebuchadnezzar

Also don't miss Israel's incredulous (rude!) reaction to God's final appeal before the looming disaster:

Jer 6:16-17	Mt 11:28-30
<p>Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way <i>is</i>, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, `We will not walk <i>in it.</i>' ¹⁷ Also, I set watchmen over you, <i>saying</i>, `Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, `We will not listen.'"</p> <p>καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀγνισμόν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν (LXX)</p>	<p>"Come to Me, all <i>you</i> who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ "For My yoke <i>is</i> easy and My burden is light."</p> <p>καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν</p>

Simply put, Jesus tells us that we are in an as serious situation as the Israelites were!

EGW Quotes on Mt 11:28-30

"In being co-workers with Christ in the great work for which He gave His life, we shall find true rest. When we were sinners, He gave His life for us. He wants us to come to Him and learn of Him. Thus we are to find rest" (GCB April 4, 1901).

"In accepting Christ's yoke of restraint and obedience, you will find that it is of the greatest help to you. Wearing this yoke keeps you near the side of Christ, and He bears the heaviest part of the load. . . . To learn the lessons of Christ teaches is the greatest treasure students can find. Rest comes to them in the consciousness that they are trying to please the Lord" (Letter 144, 1901).

"There is a condition to the rest and peace here offered us by Christ. It is that of yoking up with him. All who will accept the condition will find that the yoke of Christ will help them to bear every burden needful for them to carry. Without Christ at our side to bear the heaviest part of the load, we must indeed say that it is heavy. But yoked with him to the car of duty, the burdens of life may all be lightly carried. And just as a man acts in willing obedience to the requirements of God, will come his peace of mind. He will give evidence of clear judgment and a steadfastness of character in cooperating with God to redeem himself through faith in Christ" (ST July 22, 1897, par. 2).

"We are to bear the yoke of Christ that we may be placed in complete union with him. "Take my yoke upon you," he says. Obey my requirements. But these requirements may be in direct opposition to the will and purposes of the human agent. What then is to be done?—Hear what God says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." **The yoke and the cross are symbols representing the same thing,—the giving up of the will to God.** Wearing the yoke unites finite man in companionship with the dearly beloved Son of God. Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We can not follow Christ without wearing his yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps" (RH October 23, 1900, par. 3).

"The Lord does not encourage the wisest, the most cherished plans of human beings if he sees that they are not for the health of the spirituality of his cause. Sometimes the Lord's purposes come in direct opposition to plans in which the human agent can not see a flaw. Then it is that the right hand must be sacrificed and the right eye taken out. Purposes that seem in every way desirable may have to be given up. The Lord sees that for the spiritual health of the human agent and for the future well-being of his cause all self-confidence must be cut away. Human wisdom and self-sufficiency must be broken down. Men frame for their own necks yokes that seem light and pleasant to wear, but they prove galling in the extreme. Christ sees this, and he says, Take my yoke upon you. The yoke you would place upon your own neck, thinking it a precise fit, will not fit at all" (RH October 23, 1900, par. 4).

"Your work is not to gather up burdens of your own. As you take the burdens that Christ would have you, then you can realize what burdens he carried. Let us study the Bible, and find out what kind of yoke he bore. He was a help to those around him. He says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." You see there is a yoke to bear. Now this is the very faith that we want,—a faith that will grasp the promises of God, one that will take the yoke of

Christ and bear the burdens that he would have us. We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens; but when we bear his yoke and carry his burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and his burdens are light, because he has made provision for these. **But when you feel depressed and discouraged, do not give up the battle; you have a living Saviour that will help you, and you will have rest in him.** You must not put your neck under the yoke of fashion, and yokes that God has never designed that you should bear. It is not our work to study how to meet the world's standard, but the great question with each one should be, **How can I meet God's standard.** Then it is that you will find rest to the soul; for Christ has said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (RH May 10, 1887, par. 14).

"When you have a yoke that is galling to the neck, you may know it is not Christ's yoke; for he says his yoke is easy. What God wants of us is to be learning every day of our lives how to build our characters for time and for eternity. He does not want us to get into one channel and never turn out of that; to have fixed ideas, and hold them fast, whether they are right or wrong. He will place us amid trials and difficulties, and when we have learned to overcome obstacles in a right spirit, with high and holy purpose, he will give us another lesson. And if we have not the meekness of Christ to be constantly learning of Jesus in his school, then we must know that we have not the yoke of Christ" (RH May 10, 1887, par. 15).

"If you are willing to learn meekness and lowliness of heart in Christ's school, He will surely give you rest and peace. **It is a terribly hard struggle to give up your own will and your own way. But this lesson learned, you will find rest and peace.** Pride, selfishness, and ambition must be overcome; your will must be swallowed up in the will of Christ" (Letter 14, 1887).

"Take hold of the arm of God, and say, 'I am nothing, and Thou art everything. Thou hast said, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Now, Lord, I must have Thee abiding in me, that I may abide in Thee.' Then advance step by step, by living faith abiding in Jesus Christ. This is wearing His yoke, the yoke of obedience" (MS 85, 1901).

"Wearing the yoke with Christ, means to work in His lines, to be a copartner with Him in His sufferings and toils for lost humanity. It means to be a wise instructor of souls. We shall be what we are willing to be made by Christ in these precious hours of probation. We shall be the sort of a vessel that we allow ourselves to be molded into. We must unite with God in the molding and fashioning work, having our wills submitted to the divine will" (Letter 71, 1895).

"The Lord calls His yoke easy, and His burden light. Yet that yoke will not give us a life of ease and freedom and selfish indulgence. The life of Christ was one of self-sacrifice and self-denial at every step; and with consistent, Christlike tenderness and love, His true follower will walk in the footsteps of the Master; and as he advances in this life, he will become more and more inspired with the spirit and life of Christ" (ST April 16, 1912).

Do you have rest in your life? Are you carrying the yoke of Christ?

Matthew 12

Mt 12:10-13 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"-- that they might accuse Him. . . .Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

OT Parallel: "Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before" (1 Kings 13:6).

Mt 12:29-30 "He that is not with me is against me"

"He who is with Christ, maintaining His unity, enthroning Him in the heart, and obeying His orders, is safe from the snares of the wicked one. He who unites himself with Christ will gather to himself the graces of Christ, and will give

strength and efficiency and power to the Lord by winning souls to Christ. When Christ takes possession of the citadel of the soul, the human agent becomes one with Him. By cooperation with the Saviour, he becomes the instrument through which God works. Then when Satan comes and strives to take possession of the soul, he finds that Christ has made him stronger than the strong man armed" (Ms 78, 1899).

Mt 12:31-32 The Sin/Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit = The Unpardonable Sin

At what point do you commit the sin against the Holy Spirit? When do you reach the point of no return?

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We can find a progressive rejection of Jesus in Matthew:

Joseph (1:19) → Herod (2:13) → Gadarenes (8:34) → Scribes (9:3) → Pharisee (9:11) → "Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me" (11:6) → Jesus' generation (11:16) → 3 cities (11:21-24) → Pharisees (12:14; first murder conspiracy!)

Definition:

The sin against the Holy Spirit is not a continuous action of sin but a continuous rejection of salvation

"No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. **The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent**" (RH, June 29, 1897).

"Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end. The last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so," said Jesus, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." **There are none so hardened as those who have slighted the invitation of mercy, and done despite to the Spirit of grace. The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting Heaven's invitation to repent.** Every step in the rejection of Christ is a step toward the rejection of salvation, and toward the sin against the Holy Spirit. In rejecting Christ the Jewish people committed the unpardonable sin; and by refusing the invitation of mercy, we may commit the same error. We offer insult to the Prince of life, and put Him to shame before the synagogue of Satan and before the heavenly universe when we refuse to listen to His delegated messengers, and instead listen to the agents of Satan, who would draw the soul away from Christ. So long as one does this, he can find no hope for pardon, and he will finally lose all desire to be reconciled to God" (DA 324).

"Stubborn, sullen, ironhearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed the unpardonable sin" (RH Jan. 18, 1898).

"They think they are following sound reason, but they are following another leader. They have placed themselves under the control of a power which in their blindness they are wholly ignorant of. They have resisted the only Spirit that could lead them, enlighten them, save them. They are following in the path of guilt for which there can be no forgiveness, in this life or in the life to come. Not that any degree of guilt would exhaust the mercy of God, but because pride and persistent stubbornness leads them to do despite to the Spirit of God, to occupy a place where no manifestation of the Spirit can convince them of their error. They will not yield their stubborn wills" (5BC 1092.9).

"In this our day men have placed themselves where they are wholly unable to fulfill the conditions of repentance and confession: therefore they cannot find mercy and pardon. **The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence**" (Ms 30, 1890).

In what sense is God convicting you right now?

Mt 12:37 For by your words shall you be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned

“Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another; for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God’s holy name as verily as you would were you to swear” (5BC 1093.4).

“We need especially to guard against having a tongue that is sanctified to Satan. The tongue that God has given is to be used to glorify Him in speech. Unless it is, we shall be standing directly in the way of God’s work in this world, and the judgments of heaven will surely fall upon us” (Ms 95, 1906).

Mt 12:39-41 The Sign of Jonah

How was Jesus in the dead 3 days and 3 nights? By simply counting partial days as full days!

Friday 3 pm: Crucifixion	Sabbath: Rest in Grave	early Sunday: Resurrection
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Examples of such counting:

- 2 Kgs 18:9-10: Shalmaneser besieged Samaria: 3 years

begins: 4th year of Hezekiel/7th year of Hoshea end: 6th year of Hezekiel/9th year of Hoshea

- Daniel 1:5, 18; 2:1: 3 years of study by Nebuchadnezzar’s 2nd year!

- NT: Lk 13:32-33 (cross & resurrection); 24:21 (“3rd day”), 46 (“3rd day”); 1 Cor 15:4 (“3rd day”)

Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday: “Now after the Sabbath [*sabbaton*], as the first *day* of the week [*sabbaton*] began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb” (Mt 28:1).

“first of the Sabbath” = Sunday

[for more info, see SDA BC 5:235ff.; www.wednesdaycrucifixion.com]

Mt 12:42 greater than Solomon

“To be superior to him was . . . to be more than human, to possess the prerogatives of Deity” (YI Sept. 23, 1897).

Mt 12:43-45 seven unclean spirits returning home

“Christ shows that there can be no such thing as neutrality in His service. The soul must not be satisfied with anything short of entire consecration - consecration of thought, voice, spirit, and every organ of mind and body. It is not enough that the vessel be emptied; it must be filled with the grace of Christ. . . . Self-righteousness is a curse, a human embellishment, which Satan uses for his glory. Those who garnish the soul with self-praise and flattery prepare the way for the seven other spirits more wicked than the first. In their very reception of the truth these souls deceive themselves. They are building upon a foundation of self-righteousness. The prayers of congregations may be offered to God with a round of ceremonies, but if they are offered in self-righteousness God is not honored by them. The Lord declares, “I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.” In spite of all their display, their garnished habitation, Satan comes in with a troop of evil angels and takes his place in the soul, to help in the deception. The apostle writes, “If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (Manuscript 78, 1899).

Matthew 13

The Parables

Parables are short stories based on reality that call for a decision about the kingdom. They are spicy. Someone once stated that the parables contain “the pungent scent of gun powder”.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries” (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 4:3).

“Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide” (James Russell Lowell).

- Their structure and meaning is simple but profound: Earthly Story – Heavenly Reality
- The Greek term *parabole* means something thrown along something else = a comparison
- 7x “the kingdom of God is like” (13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47)

Notice their central position and role in the Gospel of Matthew:

Story:	1:1-4:25	Infancy, Baptism
Lesson:	5:1-7:29	Sermon from the Mount
Story:	8:1-9:34	Healings
Lesson:	9:35-11:1	Discipleship
Story:	11:2-12:15	
Lesson:	13:1-52	Parables
Story:	13:52-17:27	Ministry
Lesson:	18:1-35	Community
Story:	19:1-22:46	
Lesson:	23:1-25:46	Last Day Events
Story:	26:1-28:20	Cross & Resurrection

The Reason for Parables:

- they serve as attention-getters by telling familiar stories
- they function as mnemonic devices: short, simple, repetitious = easy to remember
- they are a fulfillment of prophecy (Mt 13:13 - Isa 6:9-10)
- they are safe: innocent on the surface, with pointed truth underneath (the religious folk didn't get it because you can't wake up someone who pretends to be sleeping)
- they make a strong, urgent appeal: for example, Nathan used a parable to confront David of his sin (2 Sam 12:1-7). Self-incrimination at its best!

Interpretation

“The struggle to understand the parables correctly is ever present throughout the history of the Church. Even historical-critical exegesis has repeatedly had to correct itself and cannot give us any definite information” (J. Ratzinger, *Jesus*, 184).

In the history of the church, the parables have received many interpretations, including:

- Allegorical (Augustine): examples: David's 5 stones have theological meaning
- one point only

In any case, they could be understood, and they should be understood.

Ellen White on the Parables: The Power of Simplicity

“Again, Christ had truths to present which the people were unprepared to accept or even to understand. For this reason also He taught them in parables. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts. Afterward, as they looked upon the objects that illustrated His lessons, they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour's teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident” (COL 21).

“Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness” (COL 21).

“And He had another reason for teaching in parables. Among the multitudes that gathered about Him, there were priests and rabbis, scribes and elders, Herodians and rulers, world-loving, bigoted, ambitious men, who desired above all things to find some accusation against Him. Their spies followed His steps day after day, to catch from His lips something that would cause His condemnation, and forever silence the One who seemed to draw the world after Him. The Saviour understood the character of these men, and He presented truth in such a way that they could find nothing by which to bring His case before the Sanhedrin. **In parables He rebuked the hypocrisy and wicked works of those who occupied high positions, and in figurative language clothed truth of so cutting a character that had it been spoken in direct denunciation, they would not have listened to His words, and would speedily have put an end to His ministry. But while He evaded the spies, He made truth so clear that error was manifested, and the honest in heart were profited by His lessons.** Divine wisdom, infinite grace, were made plain by the things of God’s creation. Through nature and the experiences of life, men were taught of God. “The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world,” were “perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity.” Romans 1:20, R. V. (COL 22).

“In the Saviour’s parable teaching is an indication of what constitutes the true “higher education.” Christ might have opened to men the deepest truths of science. He might have unlocked mysteries which have required many centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention to the close of time. But He did not do this. He said nothing to gratify curiosity, or to satisfy man’s ambition by opening doors to worldly greatness. In all His teaching, Christ brought the mind of man in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men’s theories about God, His word, or His works. He taught them to behold Him as manifested in His works, in His word, and by His providences” (COL 22).

“**Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character, that which will enlarge man’s capacity for knowing God, and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life, and that take hold upon eternity**” (COL 23).

Parable Patterns: Power Points!

Normal Life	Catastrophic Failure or Triumphant Success	New (Kingdom) Life
daily embedding	surprising value, resulting in outrageous impact	eternal implications

Mt 13:1-23 The Parable of the Sower

Seed	Info	Interpretation
on the wayside	birds devour seed	shallowness
on stony ground	scorched by sun: withered	Emotionalism
among thorns	thorns choke seed	Worldliness
on good ground	bears fruit	Fruitfulness

Prayerfully consider this famous parable. What soil are you? Is the seed of the Word of God growing in your life? What helps its growth, what hinders it?

Mt 13:24-30 The Tares (Weeds)

Clear message:

- the enemy is proactive
- malignant growth of evil is an unfortunate reality
- good wheat and bad weeds look alike until the harvest

“The growth of the tares among the wheat would draw special attention to it. The grain would be subjected to severe criticism. Indeed, the whole field might be set down as worthless by some superficial observer, or by one who delighted to discover evil. The sower might be condemned by him, as one who had mingled the bad seed with the good for his own wicked purpose. Just so the erring and hypocritical ones who profess to follow Jesus bring reproach upon the cause of Christianity, and cause the world to doubt concerning the truths of Christ. **As the presence of the tares among the wheat counteracted to a great degree the work of the sower, so sin among the people of God, frustrates, in a measure, the plan of Jesus to save fallen man from the power of Satan and render the barren ground of the human heart fruitful of good works**” (2SP 248).

Mt 13:31-32 The Mustard Seed

Lesson: small beginnings can have big endings! Or: Do not be discouraged by small beginnings!

Example: In 1640, John Harvard emigrated to America, stayed 1 year, left £700 and >200 books – and returned to England! But now there is a Harvard University!

Mt 13:33-42 The Leaven (Yeast)

- 3 measures of flour = 50 lbs = hyperbole: The kingdom will grow big!

Mt 13:45-46 The Pearl of Great Price

- origin: under water (= hard to get to)
- process: pain
- product: priceless!

Mt 13:47-50 The Dragnet

- mix of good and bad until the final judgment

Mt 13:52 “things old and new” - How Old and New Testament relate to each other

“In this parable, Jesus presented before His disciples the responsibility of those whose work it is to give to the world the light which they have received from Him. The Old Testament was all the Scripture then in existence; but it was not written merely for the ancients; it was for all ages and for all people. Jesus would have the teachers of His doctrine diligently search the Old Testament for that light which establishes His identity as the Messiah foretold in prophecy, and reveals the nature of His mission to the world. **The Old and the New Testament are inseparable, for both are the teachings of Christ.** The doctrine of the Jews, who accept only the Old Testament, is not unto salvation, since they reject the Saviour whose life and ministry was a fulfillment of the law and the prophecies. And the doctrine of those who discard the Old Testament is not unto salvation, because it rejects that which is direct testimony of Christ. Skeptics begin with discounting upon the Old Testament, and it takes but another step to deny the validity of the New, and thus both are rejected” (5BC 1094).

“It is the voice of Christ that speaks through patriarchs and prophets, from the days of Adam even to the closing scenes of time. **The Saviour is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New.** It is the light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty. The miracles of Christ are a proof of His divinity; but a stronger proof that He is the world’s Redeemer is found in comparing the prophecies of the Old Testament with the history of the New” (DA 799).

The Jews have little influence over the Christian world in showing them the importance of the commandments, including the binding law of the Sabbath, because in bringing forth the old treasures of truth, they throw aside the new ones in the personal teachings of Jesus. On the other hand, the strongest reason why Christians fail to influence the Jews to

accept the teachings of Christ as the language of divine wisdom, is because, in bringing forth the treasures of His Word, they treat with contempt the riches of the Old Testament, which are the earlier teachings of the Son of God, through Moses. They reject the law proclaimed from Sinai, and the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, instituted in the Garden of Eden. **But the minister of the gospel, who follows the teachings of Christ, will gain a thorough knowledge of both the Old and New Testament, that he may present them in their true light to the people an inseparable whole—the one depending upon and illuminating the other.** Thus, as Jesus instructed His disciples, they will bring forth from their treasure “things new and old” (2SP 254-255).

Can you explain Jesus from the Old Testament alone?!

Matthew 14: Food for Thought

Feeding 5,000: 12 baskets left over = Jesus can feed Israel

Feeding 4,000: 7 baskets left over = Jesus can feed the world

Mt 14:9 Was Herod (Antipas) bound by his vow to Salome? No!

“David had taken an oath that Nabal and his household should perish; but now he saw that it was not only wrong to make such a vow, but it would be wrong to keep it. If Herod had had the moral courage of David, no matter how humiliating it might have been, he would have retracted the oath that devoted John the Baptist’s head to the ax of the executioner, that the revenge of an evil woman might be accomplished, and he would not have had upon his soul the guilt of the murder of the prophet of God” (ST Oct 26, 1888).

Matthew 15

Mt 15:21-18 The Canaanite Woman - Racism?!

Do you discriminate against certain people?

Listen to this story below; what is your first reaction?

A father and his son went for a nice drive through the countryside. During a terrible crash the father gets killed on impact, the son gets airlifted to the nearest hospital. Immediate surgery is required. As the family gathers in the OP waiting room, the doors open and the chief of surgery emerges with the news, “I can’t continue this surgery. That’s my son.” *What happened?*

The chief of surgery was the son’s mother! Now, did you think there was something wrong with that story? Did you think, “I thought the father was killed?!” That’s a form of discrimination - against women! The thought didn’t even enter your mind that the chief of surgery could be a woman!

Watch Jesus’ treatment of this outsider woman:

1. v23 silent treatment
2. v24 “I’m only sent to Jews”
3. v26 “the Gospel is for Jews only”

What is Jesus doing?!

Here Jesus mirrors (and rebukes!) the discriminating attitude of the disciples. In the end Jesus heals the girl anyway!

He taught the disciples a much needed lesson.

Do you discriminate?

Matthew 16 - Jesus Builds His Church

Context: Cross + Resurrection (ch. 16) - Second Coming (ch. 17) - Ministry (ch. 18-20)

Initial Observations

- among the Gospels, the term “church” is only mentioned in Matthew, and only 3x (Mt 16:18; 18:17)
- etymology: the Greek term “ekklesia” means “called out”, “assembly”, “council”
- the English word “church” comes from the old English “kerk”, which is derived from the Greek *kyriakos* = “that which belongs to the Lord”

What is really interesting, however, is the location where this dialogue between Jesus and the disciples takes place: Caesarea Philippi – the northern extreme of Israel’s territory

“You are Peter [*petros*], and on this Rock [*petra*] I will build My church.”

Peter: *petros*, masculine means little rock

But when Jesus says “this rock”, He uses the feminine *petra*, which means big rock

The argument that Jesus spoke Aramaic, thus invalidating the word play, doesn’t hold since Matthew conveys his (His!) Gospel to us in Greek.

Simply put, the church was not built on Peter, but on Jesus Christ Himself, the Rock (Ex 17:6; Zech 4:7; Dan 2:34-35; Mt 7:24; 21:44 Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 1:23; 3:11; 10:4; Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:6-8).

☒ “His expression ‘this rock,’ applied to Himself as the foundation of the Christian church” (ST Oct. 28, 1913).

The Keys to the Kingdom

“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered” (Lk 11:52).

- “Whatever you bind on earth . . .”: whatever, not whoever!

- future passive = “will have been bound by God already” – so the disciples only confirm what has already been established by God

Example: Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-4); Acts 15 (Lev 18)

Mt 16:21 “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

Mt 16:22-23 Get thee behind me, Satan!

“See what the Lord said to Peter.... He said, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” What was Satan doing? He came right up face to face with Peter and between the Lord and Peter, so that Peter even took it upon him to reprove the Lord. But the Lord came close to Peter and Satan was put behind Christ. The Lord told Peter that Satan had desired him, that he might sift him as wheat, but He says, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” **If Peter had learned the lessons he ought to have learned, if he had stood right with God at the time of his trial, he would have stood then. If he had not been indifferent to the lessons Christ taught, he would have never denied his Lord**” (Ms 14, 1894).

☒ “Satan was speaking through Peter, making him act the part of the tempter. Satan’s presence was unsuspected by Peter, but Christ could detect the presence of the deceiver, and in His rebuke to Peter He addressed the real foe” (Letter 244, 1907).

☒ “Satan’s work was to discourage Jesus as He strove to save the depraved race, and Peter’s words were just what he wished to hear. They were opposed to the divine plan; and whatever bore this stamp of character was an offense to God. They were spoken at the instigation of Satan; for they opposed the only arrangement God could make to preserve His law and control His subjects, and yet save fallen man. Satan hoped they would discourage and dishearten Christ; but Christ addressed the author of the thought, saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (RH, April 6, 1897).

Mt 16:24 Take up your cross

☒ “The cross lifts you up from the lowlands of earth, and brings you into sweetest communion with God. Through bearing the cross your experience may be such that you can say, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth,’ and because He lives, I shall live also.’ What an assurance is this!” (MS 85, 1901).

Matthew 17 - The Transfiguration

- Greek “transfiguration”: *meta-morphosis*

- Old Testament background to transfiguration: “Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud” (Ex 24:16).

- the Bible is rich with meaningful mountain themes: Ararat, Sinai, Temptation, Olives, Blessings, Transfiguration, Ascension, Cross

- in Luke 9:31, the transfiguration is a new Exodus – the actual word ἔξοδος *exodus* is used.

What is Jesus doing with the Transfiguration?

Focus on the Second Coming outweighs the fear of the coming crisis

Why did Moses + Elijah appear?

Moses represents the dead believers at the Second Coming

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. ⁶ And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day” (Deut 34:5-6).

“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 1:9).

Elijah represents the living believers at the Second Coming

“Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kgs 2:11).

The Resurrection of Moses according to Ellen White

“There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which Jehovah sent him to do ... and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.” Had not the life of Moses been marred with that one sin, in failing to give God the glory of bringing water from the rock at Kadesh, he would have entered the Promised Land, and would have been translated to heaven without seeing death. But he was not long to remain in the tomb. Christ Himself, with the angels who had buried Moses, came down from heaven to call forth the sleeping saint. Satan had exulted at his success in causing Moses to sin against God, and thus come under the dominion of death. The great adversary declared that the divine sentence—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19)—gave him possession of the dead. The power of the grave had never been broken, and all who were in the tomb he claimed as his captives, never to be released from his dark prison

house. **For the first time Christ was about to give life to the dead.** As the Prince of life and the shining ones approached the grave, Satan was alarmed for his supremacy. With his evil angels he stood to dispute an invasion of the territory that he claimed as his own. He boasted that the servant of God had become his prisoner. He declared that even Moses was not able to keep the law of God; that he had taken to himself the glory due to Jehovah—the very sin which had caused Satan’s banishment from heaven—and by transgression had come under the dominion of Satan. The archtraitor reiterated the original charges that he had made against the divine government, and repeated his complaints of God’s injustice toward him. Christ did not stoop to enter into controversy with Satan. He might have brought against him the cruel work which his deceptions had wrought in heaven, causing the ruin of a vast number of its inhabitants. He might have pointed to the falsehoods told in Eden, that had led to Adam’s sin and brought death upon the human race. He might have reminded Satan that it was his own work in tempting Israel to murmuring and rebellion, which had wearied the long-suffering patience of their leader, and in an unguarded moment had surprised him into the sin for which he had fallen under the power of death. But Christ referred all to His Father, saying, “The Lord rebuke thee.” Jude 9. **The Saviour entered into no dispute with His adversary, but He then and there began His work of breaking the power of the fallen foe, and bringing the dead to life. Here was an evidence that Satan could not controvert, of the supremacy of the Son of God. The resurrection was forever made certain.** Satan was despoiled of his prey; the righteous dead would live again. **In consequence of sin Moses had come under the power of Satan. In his own merits he was death’s lawful captive; but he was raised to immortal life, holding his title in the name of the Redeemer. Moses came forth from the tomb glorified, and ascended with his Deliverer to the City of God.** Never, till exemplified in the sacrifice of Christ, were the justice and the love of God more strikingly displayed than in His dealings with Moses. God shut Moses out of Canaan, to teach a lesson which should never be forgotten—that He requires exact obedience, and that men are to beware of taking to themselves the glory which is due to their Maker. He could not grant the prayer of Moses that he might share the inheritance of Israel, but He did not forget or forsake His servant. The God of heaven understood the suffering that Moses had endured; He had noted every act of faithful service through those long years of conflict and trial. On the top of Pisgah, **God called Moses to an inheritance infinitely more glorious than the earthly Canaan.** Upon the mount of transfiguration Moses was present with Elijah, who had been translated. They were sent as bearers of light and glory from the Father to His Son. And thus the prayer of Moses, uttered so many centuries before, was at last fulfilled. He stood upon the “goodly mountain,” within the heritage of his people, bearing witness to Him in whom all the promises to Israel centered. Such is the last scene revealed to mortal vision in the history of that man so highly honored of Heaven.

Moses was a type of Christ. He himself had declared to Israel, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.” Deut. 18:15. **God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty before he could be prepared to lead the hosts of Israel to the earthly Canaan. The Israel of God, journeying to the heavenly Canaan, have a Captain who needed no human teaching to prepare Him for His mission as a divine leader; yet He was made perfect through sufferings;** and “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:10, 18. Our Redeemer manifested no human weakness or imperfection; yet He died to obtain for us an entrance into the Promised Land. “And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Hebrews 3:5, 6 (PP 478-480).

Peter’s Testimony

“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses of His majesty.** ¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Pet 1:16-18).

☐ “Elijah, in his position as a prophet to Israel, had represented Christ, and his work had been, in a degree, similar to that of the Saviour. And Moses, as the leader of Israel, had stood in the place of Christ, communing with him and following his directions; therefore, these two, of all the hosts that gathered around the throne of God, were fittest to minister to the Son of God” (2SP 329).

Transition: Mountain - Multitude - Mistake - Ministry

Mt 17:21 - Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Compare this verse in KJV/NKJV with a modern translation. *What do you notice?*

Mt 17:24-27 Jesus and Taxes

- temple tax: prophets + Levites were tax-exempt, but Jesus avoid conflict when it does not involve compromise!

When should you avoid compromise, when should you stand your ground at all cost?

Matthew 18**Mt 18:10 Angels?**

"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Mt 18:10).

Relationship Context

- Parable of the Lost Sheep
- Restoring Relationships
- Parable of the Unforgiving Slave

Church Discipline as Community Effort to Save the Lost

Church discipline is as complicated as human relationships are, and it is counterintuitive in our grace-oriented, non-judgmental culture. Here are some biblical perspectives on this much neglected – and much misunderstood – practice:

- church discipline is primarily about sins against individuals
- church discipline comes only after progressive intervention to contain the damage
- 70x7 forgiveness: this is “prophetic-formulaic”; It reflects Jesus’ own practice of forgiveness with His people (Dan 9:24 “70 weeks” = 70x7 = 490!).
- treat them like you would treat a Gentile/tax collector: start evangelistic attention and effort towards the offending member, but not complete shunning
- church discipline assumes that a sinful lifestyle is indicative of loss of salvation!

Church Membership?

“The names of those who sin and refuse to repent should not be retained on the church books, lest the saints be held accountable for their evil deeds. Those who pursue a course of transgression should be visited and labored with, and if they then refuse to repent, they should be separated from church fellowship, in accordance with the rules laid down in the Word of God.... Those who refuse to hear the admonitions and warnings given by God’s faithful messengers are not to be retained in the church. They are to be disfellowshipped; for they will be as Achan in the camp of Israel—deceived and deceiving. Who, after reading the record of Achan’s sin and punishment, can think it according to the will of God that those who do wickedly, refusing to repent, are to be retained in the church? **To retain them would be an insult to the God of heaven”** (Letter 215, 1902).

Our culture, however, excuses sin with some favorite clichés and mindsets: . . . the church should just love me like Jesus! . . . nobody’s perfect . . . we all make mistakes . . . who am I to judge? . . . he who is without sin cast the first stone . . . aren’t we supposed to love? . . .

“For whom the LORD loves He chastens [disciplines], And scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb 12:6).

“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. . . . And if anyone does not obey our word in

this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother” (2Th 3:6, 14-15).

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church” (COL 71).

Redemptive Discipline

Kingdom	Church	World
overlap (but not identity) between kingdom and church	church sends sinner to world	assumption: sinner realizes thereby potential loss of the kingdom action: sinner returns to church

If (since!) church discipline is biblical, why are we emotionally so averse to it? Why is it so rarely practiced? If it is redemptive, why do we not practice it more?

Matthew 19

Mt 19:13-15 Blessing the Children

Mother’s Day

“Could the afterlife of that little group be opened before us, we should see the mothers recalling to the minds of their children the scene of that day, and repeating to them the loving words of the Saviour. We should see, too, how often, in after years, the memory of these words kept the children from straying from the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. **Jesus knows the burden of every mother’s heart.** He who had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation, sympathizes with every mother in her labors. He who made a long journey in order to relieve the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman will do as much for the mothers of today. He who gave back to the widow of Nain her only son, and in His agony upon the cross remembered His own mother, is touched today by the mother’s sorrow. In every grief and every need, He will comfort and help. **Let mothers come to Jesus with their perplexities. They will find grace sufficient to aid them in the care of their children. The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burdens at the Saviour’s feet.** He who said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not” (Mark 10:14), still invites mothers to bring their little ones to be blessed by Him” (MH 41-42; ST Dec. 18, 1907).

Mt 19:16-30 The Rich Young Ruler: “the plague spot in his character”

How would we deal with the rich young ruler today?

“Christ’s words were verily to the ruler the invitation, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. The choice was left with him. **Jesus was yearning for his conversion.** He had shown him **the plague spot in his character,** and with what deep interest He watched the issue as the young man weighed the question! If he decided to follow Christ, he must obey His words in everything. He must turn from his ambitious projects. With what earnest, anxious longing, what soul hunger, did the Saviour look at the young man, hoping that he would yield to the invitation of the Spirit of God! Christ made the only terms which could place the ruler where he would perfect a Christian character. His words were words of wisdom, though they appeared severe and exacting. In accepting and obeying them was the ruler’s only hope of salvation. His exalted position and his possessions were exerting a subtle influence for evil upon his character. If cherished, they would supplant God in his affections. To keep back little or much from God was to retain that which would lessen his moral strength and efficiency; for if the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing. The ruler was quick to discern all that Christ’s words involved, and he became sad. If he had realized the value of the offered gift, quickly would he have enrolled himself as one of Christ’s followers. He was a member of the honored council of the Jews, and Satan was tempting him with flattering prospects of the future. **He wanted the heavenly treasure, but he wanted also the temporal advantages his riches would bring him.** He was sorry that such conditions existed; he desired eternal life, but he was not willing to

make the sacrifice. The cost of eternal life seemed too great, and he went away sorrowful; “for he had great possessions.” His claim that he had kept the law of God was a deception. He showed that riches were his idol. He could not keep the commandments of God while the world was first in his affections. He loved the gifts of God more than he loved the Giver” (DA 520f.)

Matthew 20

Mt 20:21: We’d like to sit next to you in the kingdom!

Interesting contrast: We only get to sit by the road! (Mt 20:30)

“The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love, -love that ‘vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,’ 1 Cor 13:4,5. - love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity” (DA 547-549).

Matthew 21

The Triumphal Entry: Conquest of the World

OT background: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech 9:9) = reminds of Alexander the Great, trip to Egypt, riding on donkey, died ~ 30, but the actual prophecy is about Jesus!

The Cleansing of the Temple: Conquest of the Heart

“My house will be called a house of prayer”

- Tabernacle: Ex 25:8
- 1st temple: Solomon’s (1 Kgs 6-7)
- 2nd temple: after Babylonian captivity (Ez 6:15)
- 3rd temple: 19 BC - AD 64

“In cleansing the temple from the world’s buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul” (DA 161).

“The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.” Malachi 3:1-3. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. No man can of himself cast out the evil thron that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.” Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; ... and they shall be My people.” “He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21, 22 (DA 161).

Bible Principle: When God cleanses a place, God wants to cleanse His people!

OT Background: "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*," says the LORD" (Jer 7:11).

"For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it" (Jer 7:30; see also 32:34; 34:15).

Situation: Nebuchadnezzar overtaking Jerusalem!

Two cleansings, not one! Feeding 5,000 + 4,000 = one feeding or two? Contrary to scholarly consensus, the Bible portrays two cleansings, not one: at the beginning of His ministry, and at the end.

Temple Cleansing Comparison

Mt 21:12-22	Mk 11:15-19	Lk 19:45-48	Jn 2:13-25
after triumphal entry to sellers: "house of prayer" confrontation: next day (17-23)	after triumphal entry to sellers: "house of prayer"	after triumphal entry to sellers and buyers: "house of prayer"	after the first miracle to dove-sellers: "house of merchandise" confrontation: immediate (Jn 2:18)
No whip	No whip	No whip	Whip of cords
Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11; Ps 8:2	Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11	Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11	Ps 69:9

Mt 21:18-22 The Cursing of the Fig Tree - Why?

- not season for figs, but big leaves misled passerbys!
- hypocrisy = curse!

"When the Lord is with the people who have knowledge and advantages in spiritual enlightenment, and when they impart that which they have received from God, they are fruit-bearing branches. They receive God's rich blessing, and are producers of fruit. As a sure result, in the hand of God and under the influence of the Holy Spirit they are mighty men. Constantly they represent before the world the great goodness of God, not only in spiritual lines, but in temporal lines as well. They shall prevail; for of a truth God is with them" (Ms 65, 1912).

"The history of Israel as presented in this parable should be studied by all who would practice the teachings of Christ. The vineyard represents the church. The two sons are the two classes of men and women in the world. **The Lord calls every member of His church to work in His vineyard. We are to understand our relation to Christ. Christ must abide in our hearts that we may keep before us pure principles, high incentives to moral rectitude. Our work is not merely to promise, but to do.** Honesty and integrity must bind us up with God to fulfill His word to the letter. Let those who hear the message God sends today beware, lest they follow the example of the self-exalted Jews. God does not propose to remove from our path everything that creates question or doubt in regard to the working of His servants. He gives ground for faith sufficient to convince the candid, sincere mind; but more evidence than this will never change the inward determination to resist light" (Ms 127, 1899).

Matthew 22

Mt 22:1-14 The Heavenly Banquet

"All who have had the light of truth are being tested, as were the Jews. As a people, we have been exalted to the highest privileges. The Lord has been revealed to us in ever-increasing light. Our privileges are far greater than were the privileges of the Jews. We have not only the great light committed to ancient Israel, but we have also the increased evidence of the great salvation brought to us through Christ. That which was type and symbol to the Jews is reality to us. They had the Old Testament history; we have that and the New Testament also. We have the assurance of a Saviour who has come,—a Saviour who has been crucified, has risen, and has proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection, and the life." In our knowledge of Jesus and his love, the kingdom of God has been placed in the midst of us. Christ has been proclaimed to us in sermons and chanted to us in songs. **The spiritual banquet has been set**

before us in rich abundance. We have had presented to us by the messengers of God the richest feast,—the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God in his word, free access to the Father by Jesus Christ, the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. We ask, What could God do for us that he has not done in preparing the great supper, the heavenly banquet?" (RH January 17, 1899, par. 14).

"A banquet has been prepared for us. **The Lord has spread before us the treasures of His Word.** But we must not come to the repast clothed in citizen's dress. We must have on the white robe of Christ's righteousness, which has been prepared for all the guests" (Ms 70, 1901).

"Remember that every one who shall be found with the wedding garment on will have come out of great tribulation" (RH April 17, 1894; see also Rev 7:13-14).

A Lesson of the highest consequence

"**The parable of the wedding garment opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence. By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding. In this parable, as in that of the great supper, are illustrated the gospel invitation, its rejection by the Jewish people, and the call of mercy to the Gentiles.** But on the part of those who reject the invitation, this parable brings to view a deeper insult and a more dreadful punishment. The call to the feast is a king's invitation. It proceeds from one who is vested with power to command. It confers high honor. Yet the honor is unappreciated. The king's authority is despised. While the householder's invitation was regarded with indifference, the king's is met with insult and murder. They treated his servants with scorn, despitefully using them and slaying them" (COL 307).

Judgment

"**By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment.** The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. **But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples.** Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. . . . **It is while men are still dwelling upon the earth that the work of investigative judgment takes place in the courts of heaven.** The lives of all His professed followers pass in review before God. All are examined according to the record of the books of heaven, and according to his deeds the destiny of each is forever fixed" (COL 310).

Going to a wedding naked?

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Rev 19:8; Eph 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Rev 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering. This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God" (COL 311).

Not Enough

"It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His

commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 1 John 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness" (COL 312).

24/7

"The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice" (COL 314).

"God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom. The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God's commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven. Clothed in the glorious apparel of Christ's righteousness, they have a place at the King's feast. They have a right to join the blood-washed throng" (COL 315).

Dress Code

"The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today. They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin. They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. Yet they think that they are good enough in themselves, and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Hearers of the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness" (COL 315).

"Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honor Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world. (COL 315.3) All these expect to be saved by Christ's death, while they refuse to live His self-sacrificing life. They extol the riches of free grace, and attempt to cover themselves with an appearance of righteousness, hoping to screen their defects of character; but their efforts will be of no avail in the day of God. (COL 316.1) The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin. A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the judgment. (COL 316.2) God is love. He has shown that love in the gift of Christ. When "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," He withheld nothing from His purchased possession. (John 3:16.) He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary. But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not connive at our sins or overlook our defects of character. He expects us to overcome in His name. (COL 316.3) Those who reject the gift of Christ's righteousness are rejecting the attributes of character which would constitute them the sons and daughters of God. They are rejecting that which alone could give them a fitness for a place at the marriage feast. (COL 316.4)

Sad will be the retrospect in that day when men stand face to face with eternity. The whole life will present itself just as it has been. The world's pleasures, riches, and honors will not then seem so important. Men will then see that the righteousness they despised is alone of value. They will see that they have fashioned their characters under the deceptive allurements of Satan. The garments they have chosen are the badge of their allegiance to the first great apostate. Then they will see the results of their choice. They will have a knowledge of what it means to transgress the commandments of God. (COL 318.3)

Mt 22:23-33 Marriage & the Resurrection

- OT background: Levirate marriage (next brother marries widow to continue family name)
- issue: not nature of celestial marriage but the veracity of the resurrection itself (see vv. 23, 28, 31)

Sadducees' case: denial of theological reality due to impractical nature of its implications: "It doesn't make sense to me."

Caution: experiential theology can lead to a false theology!

- "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" = alive now? No! Necessity of resurrection!

Speculation vs Scripture

"There are men today who express their belief that there will be marriages and births in the new earth; but those who believe the Scriptures cannot accept such doctrines. The doctrine that children will be born in the new earth is not a part of the "sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet 1:19). The words of Christ are too plain to be misunderstood. They should forever settle the question of marriages and births in the new earth. Neither those who shall be raised from the dead, nor those who shall be translated without seeing death, will marry or be given in marriage. They will be as the angels of God, members of the royal family. I would say to those who hold views contrary to this plain declaration of Christ, Upon such matters silence is eloquence. It is presumption to indulge in suppositions and theories regarding matters that God has not made known to us in His Word. We need not enter into speculation regarding our future state. To my ministering brethren I would say, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim 4:2). Do not bring to the foundation wood, and hay, and stubble—your own surmisings and speculations, which can benefit no one. Christ withheld no truths essential to our salvation. Those things that are revealed are for us and our children, but we are not to allow our imagination to frame doctrines concerning things not revealed. The Lord has made every provision for our happiness in the future life, but He has made no revelations regarding these plans, and we are not to speculate concerning them. Neither are we to measure the conditions of the future life by the conditions of this life (1SM 171-173).

Mt 22:37-39 The Greatest Law

"The law of God requires that man shall love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself. When through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is perfectly done, we shall be complete in Christ" (Letter 11, 1892).

Matthew 23: Judgment - The End as a Verdict, not as an Event

Caution, religious folk!

7x Woe: "The end has arrived when Jesus cannot have a beginning in your life."

Mt 23:8 "Be not called Rabbi"

"By these words Christ meant that no man is to place his spiritual interest under another as a child is guided and directed by his earthly father. This has encouraged a spirit to desire ecclesiastical superiority, which has always resulted in the injury of the men who have been trusted, and addressed as 'Father.' It confuses the sense of the sacredness of the prerogatives of God" (Ms 71, 1897).

Mt 23:13-33 Woes against the Pharisees

"The rebuke of Christ to the Pharisees is applicable to those who have lost from the heart their first love. A cold, legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christ-less religion" (Ms 154, 1897).

Mt 23:37-39 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem

"Christ's heart had said "How can I give thee up?" He had dealt with Israel as a loving, forgiving father would deal with an ungrateful, wayward child. With the eye of Omniscience He saw that the city of Jerusalem had decided her own destiny. For centuries there had been a turning away from God. Grace had been resisted, privileges abused, opportunities slighted. The people themselves had been loading the cloud of vengeance which unmingled with mercy was about to burst upon them. With choked, half-broken utterance, Christ exclaimed, "O that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." The irrevocable sentence was pronounced" (Ms 30, 1890).

Matthew 24

Repeat Warning: "Watch out!" Mt 24:42, 44, 46, 51; Mk 13:37; Lk 21:36.

Mt 24:1-3 The Destruction of Jerusalem

"not one stone left upon another": The fires of destruction burned so hot that the gold of the temple melted from into the cracks of the rocks. Titus tried to prevent his soldiers from burning the Temple, but to no avail.

"Men will continue to erect expensive buildings, costing millions of money; special attention will be called to their architectural beauty, and the firmness and solidity with which they are constructed; but the Lord has instructed me that despite the unusual firmness and expensive display, **these buildings will share the fate of the temple in Jerusalem.** That magnificent structure fell. Angels of God were sent to do the work of destruction, so that one stone was not left one upon another that was not thrown down" (Ms 35, 1906).



Mt 24:4-5 Sign #1: deception [spiritual]

Sample deception: "In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?" (RH May 25, 1905; Ev 224).

Mt 24:6-7 Sign #2: wars and rumors of wars, nation shall rise against nation [war → death]

Mt 24:7 Sign #3: famines [nature → death]

Mt 24:7 Sign #4: pestilences [body → death]

Mt 24:7 Sign #5: earthquakes [nature → death]

Earthquakes in Revelation

"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood" (Rev 6:12).

"In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven (Rev 11:13) . . . Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev 11:19).

"And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth" (Rev 16:18).

Mt 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows

Signs are not just indicators that Jesus IS coming back soon but that Jesus BETTER come back soon!

Who is responsible for suffering in the world?

Scenario #1: Circumstances

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all

other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³ "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish (Luk 13:1).

"Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵ "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:4).

"As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (Jn 9:1-3).

Scenario #2: Satan

". . . the Lord will do just what He has declared that He would--He will withdraw His blessings from the earth and remove His protecting care from those who are rebelling against His law and teaching and forcing others to do the same. Satan has control of all whom God does not especially guard. He will favor and prosper some in order to further his own designs, and he will bring trouble upon others and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them. While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. **In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power.** He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away," "the haughty people . . . do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:4, 5 (GC 589).

The believer's reassuring perspective on inexplicable evil (*text to memorize!*):

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive" (Gen 50:20).

Scenario #3: God

"The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom. . . . It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with. Already His judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm" (5T 234).

Indirectly God, as He removes His protective hand from the earth:

"They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place--that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. **Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture**" (Ed 179-180).

The Yearning of Nature

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, ²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom 8:19).

The Mega-Pattern of Scripture: Creation → Judgement → Re-Creation

You will find this sequence in your own life, which means it's never good to quit during a downturn. Since every green light is followed by a red light, every light will eventually turn green - for sure at the Second Coming. *Quit? Never!*

Mt 24:9 Sign #6: death penalty [people → death]

Mt 24:10 Sign #7: hatred and betrayal [people → death]

Mt 24:11 Sign #8: false prophets [spiritual → death]

Spiritualism

“Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience” (GC 588).

Sanctuary

“In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?” (RH May 25, 1905; Ev 224).

Mt 24:12 Sign #9: iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold [people → death]

Perversion

"I was referred to Romans 1:18-32, as a true description of the world previous to the second appearing of Christ" (Appeal to Mothers, 27).

Mt 24:13 But he that endures to the end will be saved

Any time you quit, you quit too soon.

LDE 172-174 Internal Divisions and External Persecutions

“Divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest” (2SM 114 1896).

“There will be a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. It is the very time when the genuine will be the strongest” (Letter 46, 1887).

“The history of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram is being repeated, and will be repeated till the close of time. Who will be on the Lord's side? Who will be deceived, and in their turn become deceivers? (Letter 15, 1892).

“The Lord is soon to come. There must be a refining, winnowing process in every church, for there are among us wicked men who do not love the truth or honor God” (RH March 19, 1895).

“We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands” (6T 332 1900). “Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church (4T 89 (1876).

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to

yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church" (5T 81 1882; LDE 173).

"In the absence of the persecution there have drifted into our ranks men who appear sound and their Christianity unquestionable, but who, if persecution should arise, would go out from us" (Ev 360 1890; LDE 174).

"When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (2SM 368 1891; LDE 174).

Mt 24:14 Sign #10: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations; and then will the end come!"

It's not about WHAT happens at the end but WHO makes the end happen!

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet 3:12).

The text says it: We can hasten the Second Coming!

Jesus could have come back already!

"Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, **the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward**" (Ev 695).

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in "because of unbelief." Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them" (Ev 696).

"It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years" (Ms 4, 1883; Ev 696).

"We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel" (Letter 184, 1901; Ev 696).

"By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return" (DA 633 1898; Ev 696).

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain" (8T 22, 23 (1904) (Ev 696).

Mt 24:15 Sign #11: The Abomination of Desolation

- v15: Daniel = 1,260 years = 538 - 1798

[see special section below]

"And the Saviour warned His followers: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay" (GC 26).

Mt 24:16 flee to the mountains

“I was shown the Waldenses, and what they suffered for their religion. They conscientiously studied the word of God, and lived up to the light which shone upon them. They were persecuted, and driven from their homes; their possessions, gained by hard labor, were taken from them, and their houses burned. They fled to the mountains, and there suffered incredible hardships. They endured hunger, fatigue, cold, and nakedness. The only clothing which many of them could obtain was the skins of animals. And yet the scattered and homeless ones would assemble to unite their voices in singing and praising God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ’s name. They encouraged and cheered one another, and were grateful for even their miserable retreat. Many of their children sickened and died from cold and hunger; yet the parents did not for a moment think of yielding their religion. They prized the love and favor of God far above earthly ease or worldly riches. They received consolation from God, and with pleasing anticipations looked forward to the recompense of reward” (GW92 57).

Mt 24:17 on housetop? don’t come down to take anything from house

Mt 24:18 on field? don’t go back for clothes

Mt 24:19 Woe to those with child and nurse

Mt 24:20 Pray that your flight might not be in the winter or on the Sabbath

Clear indication that the Sabbath is still valid 40 years after the Cross!

Mt 24:21 great tribulation

Mt 24:22 days shortened (for the sake of the elect)

Mt 24:23 “Here is the Christ” - don’t believe it!

Mt 24:24 false Christs, false prophets, great signs and wonders to deceive the very elect

“We need to be anchored in Christ, rooted and grounded in the faith. Satan works through agents. He selects those who have not been drinking of the living waters, whose souls are athirst for something new and strange, and who are ever ready to drink at any fountain that may present itself. Voices will be heard, saying, ‘Lo, here is Christ,’ or ‘Lo, there;’ but we must believe them not. We have unmistakable evidence of the voice of the True Shepherd, and He is calling upon us to follow Him. He says, ‘I have kept my Father’s commandments.’ He leads His sheep in the path of humble obedience to the law of God, but He never encourages them in the transgression of that law. ‘The voice of a stranger’ is the voice of one who neither respects nor obeys God’s holy, just, and good law. Many make great pretensions to holiness, and boast of the wonders they perform in healing the sick, when they do not regard this great standard of righteousness. But through whose power are these cures wrought? Are the eyes of either party opened to their transgressions of the law? And do they take their stand as humble, obedient children, ready to obey all of God’s requirements?” . . . We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness. Brethren, we must beware of the pretended holiness that permits transgression of the law of God. Those cannot be sanctified who trample that law under their feet, and judge themselves by a standard of their own devising” (RH Nov. 17, 1885).

Mt 24:25 “See, I have told you before”

Mt 24:26 “He is in the desert” - don’t go

Mt 24:27 “As the lightning comes from the east and shines to the west, so will the coming of the Son of man be”

Mt 24:28 “For wherever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together”

A word of confirmation: as surely as eagles gather when/where there is a carcass, as surely Jesus’ words will come to pass.

Mt 24:29 After tribulation: 538 - 1798 AD = Dark Ages

- Lisbon earthquake Nov 1, 1755 9.0 magnitude; 10,000-100,000 deaths
- sun darkened May 19, 1780 see below
- moon without light
- stars fall from heaven Nov 13, 1833
- powers of heaven shaken

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood” (Rev 6:12).

Special Focus: *The Great Controversy and the Signs of the End*

“These signs were witnessed before the opening of the nineteenth century. In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland. It pervaded an extent of not less than four million square miles. In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction” (GC 304).

“It was in Spain and Portugal that the shock manifested its extreme violence. At Cadiz the inflowing wave was said to be sixty feet high. Mountains, “some of the largest in Portugal, were impetuously shaken, as it were, from their very foundations, and some of them opened at their summits, which were split and rent in a wonderful manner, huge masses of them being thrown down into the subjacent valleys. Flames are related to have issued from these mountains.”—Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, page 495. (GC 304-305).

“At Lisbon “a sound of thunder was heard underground, and immediately afterwards a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes sixty thousand persons perished. The sea first retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet or more above its ordinary level.” “Among other extraordinary events related to have occurred at Lisbon during the catastrophe, was the subsidence of a new quay, built entirely of marble, at an immense expense. A great concourse of people had collected there for safety, as a spot where they might be beyond the reach of falling ruins; but suddenly the quay sank down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface.”—*Ibid.*, page 495. (GC 305).

“The shock” of the earthquake “was instantly followed” by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and more than one fourth of the houses. In about two hours after the shock, fires broke out in different quarters, and raged with such violence for the space of nearly three days, that the city was completely desolated. The earthquake happened on a holyday, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped.”—*Encyclopedia Americana*, art. “Lisbon,” note (ed. 1831). “The terror of the people was beyond description. Nobody wept; it was beyond tears. They ran hither and thither, delirious with horror and astonishment, beating their faces and breasts, crying, ‘*Misericordia! the world’s at an end!*’ Mothers forgot their children, and ran about loaded with crucifixes. Unfortunately, many ran to the churches for protection; but in vain was the sacrament exposed; in vain did the poor creatures embrace the altars; images, priests, and people were buried in one common ruin.” It has been estimated that ninety thousand persons lost their lives on that fatal day” (GC 305).

“Twenty-five years later appeared the next sign mentioned in the prophecy—the darkening of the sun and moon. What rendered this more striking was the fact that the time of its fulfillment had been definitely pointed out. In the Saviour’s conversation with His disciples upon Olivet, after describing the long period of trial for the church,—the 1260 years of papal persecution, concerning which He had promised that the tribulation should be shortened,—He thus mentioned certain events to precede His coming, and fixed the time when the first of these should be witnessed: “In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” Mark 13:24

“The 1260 days, or years, terminated in 1798. A quarter of a century earlier, persecution had almost wholly ceased. Following this persecution, according to the words of Christ, the sun was to be darkened. On the 19th of May, 1780, this prophecy was fulfilled” (GC 306).

“Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind, ... stands the dark day of May 19, 1780,—a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England.”—R. M. Devens, *Our First Century*, page 89.

An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: “In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o’clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o’clock on a summer evening.... (GC 306).

“Fear, anxiety, and awe gradually filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from their labor in the fields; the 307carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge, the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. ‘What is coming?’ queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things” (GC 306).

“Candles were used; and hearth fires shone as brightly as on a moonless evening in autumn.... Fowls retired to their roosts and went to sleep, cattle gathered at the pasture bars and lowed, frogs peeped, birds sang their evening songs, and bats flew about. But the human knew that night had not come.... (GC 307).

“Dr. Nathanael Whittaker, pastor of the Tabernacle church in Salem, held religious services in the meeting-house, and preached a sermon in which he maintained that the darkness was supernatural. Congregations came together in many other places. The texts for the extemporaneous sermons were invariably those that seemed to indicate that the darkness was consonant with Scriptural prophecy.... The darkness was most dense shortly after eleven o’clock.”—*The Essex Antiquarian*, April, 1899, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 53, 54. “In most parts of the country it was so great in the daytime, that the people could not tell the hour by either watch or clock, nor dine, nor manage their domestic business, without the light of candles.... (GC 307).

“The extent of this darkness was extraordinary. It was observed as far east as Falmouth. To the westward it reached to the farthest part of Connecticut, and to Albany. To the southward, it was observed along the seacoasts; and to the north as far as the American settlements extend.”—William Gordon, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the U.S.A.*, vol. 3, p. 57.

“The intense darkness of the day was succeeded, an hour or two before evening, by a partially clear sky, and the sun appeared, though it was still obscured by the black, heavy mist. “After sundown, the clouds came again overhead, and 308it grew dark very fast.” “Nor was the darkness of the night less uncommon and terrifying than that of the day; notwithstanding there was almost a full moon, no object was discernible but by the help of some artificial light, which, when seen from the neighboring houses and other places at a distance, appeared through a kind of Egyptian darkness which seemed almost impervious to the rays.”—Isaiah Thomas, *Massachusetts Spy; or, American Oracle of Liberty*, vol. 10, No. 472 (May 25, 1780). Said an eyewitness of the scene: “I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete.”—Letter by Dr. Samuel Tenney, of Exeter, New Hampshire, December, 1785 (in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 1792, 1st series, vol. 1, p. 97). Though at nine o’clock that night the moon rose to the full, “it had not the least effect to dispel the deathlike shadows.” After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood” (GC 307).

“May 19, 1780, stands in history as “The Dark Day.” Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded. The description of this event, as given by eyewitnesses, is but an echo of the words of the Lord, recorded by the prophet Joel, twenty-five hundred years previous to their fulfillment: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.” Joel 2:31

“Christ had bidden His people watch for the signs of His advent and rejoice as they should behold the tokens of their coming King. “When these things begin to come to pass,” He said, “then look up, and lift up your heads; for your

redemption draweth nigh." He pointed His followers to the budding trees of spring, and said: "When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Luke 21:28, 30, 31 (GC 308-309).

Sun darkened

"This extraordinary darkness came on between the hours of 10 and 11 am and continued till the middle of the next night." "An Account of a very uncommon Darkness, in the State of New England, May 19, 1780" in The Analytical Review, Or History of Literature, Domestic and Foreign, on an Enlarged Plan, p. 519.

Mt 24:30 Sign of Son of man in Heaven

Mt 24:31 angels with trumpet sound

Mt 24:32 parable of the fig tree

Mt 24:33 When you see these things, it's even at the doors

Mt 24:34 This generation shall not pass, till all these things are fulfilled

- people alive during Mt 24 would witness AD 70

Mt 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will not pass away

Mt 24:36 But of that day and hour knows no man, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only

Mt 24:37 as the days of Noah, so will the coming of the Son of man be

Mt 24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark

Mt 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be

Mt 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left

Mt 24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left

It has long been discussed whether those taken will be saved, or those left behind. Two views are possible:

1) those "left" behind will be lost, and those "taken" will be saved:

- immediate context: Mt 24:28 "For where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

- Jn 14:3 "receive" is the same word as "taken"; left = left to die

2) those "taken" will be lost, and those "left" will be saved:

- contrary view: Noah's flood - "left behind = saved"; "taken" = as taken away by the flood

Mt 24:42 Watch therefore, because you do not know what hour your Lord will come.

Mt 24:43 the timing of the thief

Mt 24:44 Therefore be ready

Mt 24:45 faithful and wise servant: provides food in due season

Mt 24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes finds so doing

Mt 24:47 He will make him ruler over all his goods

Mt 24:48 evil servant: my master is delayed*The Delay*

- Mt 24:48: "My lord delayeth his coming"
- Mt 25:5: the bridegroom "tarried"
- Mt 25:19: "after a long time"

Mt 24:49 strikes fellow servants, eats and drinks with the drunkards**Mt 24:50 the master comes at an unexpected time****Mt 24:51 master cuts evil servant to pieces, portion with the hypocrites; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth****The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70**

"Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity,¹⁰ Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity:¹¹ Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us" (Mic 3:9-11).

Timeline

- Aug 66: Cestius attacks, withdraws
- 67-68: Vespasian advances, but Nero's death; siege delayed
- 70: son Titus succeeds

"The ruin of Jerusalem was a symbol of the final ruin that shall overwhelm the world. The prophecies that received a partial fulfillment in the overthrow of Jerusalem have a more direct application to the last days. We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed" (MB 120, 121).

"The members of the Jerusalem church, by means of an oracle given by revelation to acceptable persons there, were ordered to leave the city before the war began and settle in a town in Perea called Pella. To Pella those who believed in Christ migrated from Jerusalem" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5.3).

"For nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation. Wonderful was the long-suffering of God toward the rejectors of His gospel and the murderers of His Son. The parable of the unfruitful tree represented God's dealings with the Jewish nation. The command had gone forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke 13:7) but divine mercy had spared it yet a little longer. There were still many among the Jews who were ignorant of the character and the work of Christ. And the children had not enjoyed the opportunities or received the light which their parents had spurned. Through the preaching of the apostles and their associates, God would cause light to shine upon them; they would be permitted to see how prophecy had been fulfilled, not only in the birth and life of Christ, but in His death and resurrection. The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity" (GC 27).

"The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. Her children had spurned the grace of Christ, which would have enabled them to subdue their evil impulses, and now these became the conquerors. Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason—controlled by impulse and blind rage. They became satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, among the highest and the lowest classes alike, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. There was no safety anywhere. Friends and kindred betrayed one another. Parents slew their

children, and children their parents. The rulers of the people had no power to rule themselves. Uncontrolled passions made them tyrants. The Jews had accepted false testimony to condemn the innocent Son of God. Now false accusations made their own lives uncertain. By their actions they had long been saying: "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Isaiah 30:11. Now their desire was granted. The fear of God no longer disturbed them. Satan was at the head of the nation, and the highest civil and religious authorities were under his sway" (GC 28).

"The leaders of the opposing factions at times united to plunder and torture their wretched victims, and again they fell upon each other's forces and slaughtered without mercy. Even the sanctity of the temple could not restrain their horrible ferocity. The worshipers were stricken down before the altar, and the sanctuary was polluted with the bodies of the slain. Yet in their blind and blasphemous presumption the instigators of this hellish work publicly declared that they had no fear that Jerusalem would be destroyed, for it was God's own city. To establish their power more firmly, they bribed false prophets to proclaim, even while Roman legions were besieging the temple, that the people were to wait for deliverance from God. To the last, multitudes held fast to the belief that the Most High would interpose for the defeat of their adversaries. But Israel had spurned the divine protection, and now she had no defense. Unhappy Jerusalem! rent by internal dissensions, the blood of her children slain by one another's hands crimsoning her streets, while alien armies beat down her fortifications and slew her men of war! **All the predictions given by Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled to the letter.** The Jews experienced the truth of His words of warning: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2 (GC 29).

"For seven years a man continued to go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, declaring the woes that were to come upon the city. By day and by night he chanted the wild dirge: "A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! a voice against Jerusalem and against the temple! a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! a voice against the whole people!"—Ibid. This strange being was imprisoned and scourged, but no complaint escaped his lips. To insult and abuse he answered only: "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" "woe, woe to the inhabitants thereof!" His warning cry ceased not until he was slain in the siege he had foretold. **Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.** Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," said Jesus, "then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out." Luke 21:20, 21. After the Romans under Cestius had surrounded the city, they unexpectedly abandoned the siege when everything seemed favorable for an immediate attack. The besieged, despairing of successful resistance, were on the point of surrender, when the Roman general withdrew his forces without the least apparent reason. But God's merciful providence was directing events for the good of His own people. The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour's warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city. At this time the country also had been cleared of enemies who might have endeavored to intercept them. At the time of the siege, the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. Without delay they fled to a place of safety—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan" (GC 30).

Titus

"Titus would willingly have put an end to the fearful scene, and thus have spared Jerusalem the full measure of her doom. He was filled with horror as he saw the bodies of the dead lying in heaps in the valleys. Like one entranced, he looked from the crest of Olivet upon the magnificent temple and gave command that not one stone of it be touched. Before attempting to gain possession of this stronghold, he made an earnest appeal to the Jewish leaders not to force him to defile the sacred place with blood. If they would come forth and fight in any other place, no Roman should violate the sanctity of the temple. Josephus himself, in a most eloquent appeal, entreated them to surrender, to save themselves, their city, and their place of worship. But his words were answered with bitter curses. Darts were hurled at him, their last human mediator, as he stood pleading with them. The Jews had rejected the entreaties of the Son of God, and now expostulation and entreaty only made them more determined to resist to the last. In vain were the efforts of Titus to save the temple; One greater than he had declared that not one stone was to be left upon another. . . . Titus found it impossible to check the rage of the soldiery; he entered with his officers, and surveyed the interior of the sacred edifice. The splendor filled them with wonder; and as the flames had not yet penetrated to the holy place, he made a last effort to save it, and springing forth, again exhorted the soldiers to stay the progress of the conflagration. The

centurion Liberalis endeavored to force obedience with his staff of office; but even respect for the emperor gave way to the furious animosity against the Jews, to the fierce excitement of battle, and to the insatiable hope of plunder. The soldiers saw everything around them radiant with gold, which shone dazzlingly in the wild light of the flames; they supposed that incalculable treasures were laid up in the sanctuary. A soldier, unperceived, thrust a lighted torch between the hinges of the door: the whole building was in flames in an instant. The blinding smoke and fire forced the officers to retreat, and the noble edifice was left to its fate" (GC 32-33).

The Future

"The Savior's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy. . . . But in that day, as in the time of Jerusalem's destruction, God's people will be delivered" (GC 36-37).

"Let men beware lest they neglect the lesson conveyed to them in the words of Christ. As He warned His disciples of Jerusalem's destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape; so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come. Jesus declares: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations." Luke 21:25; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24-26; Revelation 6:12-17. Those who behold these harbingers of His coming are to "know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:33. "Watch ye therefore," are His words of admonition. Mark 13:35. They that heed the warning shall not be left in darkness, that that day should overtake them unawares. But to them that will not watch, "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5 (GC 37).

"The world is no more ready to credit the message for this time than were the Jews to receive the Saviour's warning concerning Jerusalem. Come when it may, the day of God will come unawares to the ungodly. When life is going on in its unvarying round; when men are absorbed in pleasure, in business, in traffic, in money-making; when religious leaders are magnifying the world's progress and enlightenment, and the people are lulled in a false security—then, as the midnight thief steals within the unguarded dwelling, so shall sudden destruction come upon the careless and ungodly, "and they shall not escape." Verse 3. (GC 38).

The Abomination of Desolation

<p>Mt 24:15-22 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place " (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."</p>	<p>Lk 21:20-24 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹ "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²² "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³ "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴ "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."</p>
<p>Daniel 9:24-27 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy,</p>	<p>"And the Saviour warned His followers: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."</p>

And to anoint the Most Holy. ²⁵ "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. **And on the wing [KJV: overspreading] of abominations shall be one who makes desolate**, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay" (GC 26).

Common Interpretations:

- **Antiochus Epiphanes**: interrupted temple sacrifices from 168 BC - 165 BC and offered a pig on the altar
- **future antichrist** who will claim the temple in Jerusalem as his throne
- the **Roman standards or ensigns** with eagles as emblems that the Romans brought in spring AD 67 - fall AD 70 (Josephus, *War* 6.6).

Old Testament Background:

"The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift as the eagle* flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, ⁵⁰ "a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. ⁵¹ "And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. ⁵² "They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land [Jerusalem, AD 70]; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you (Deut 28:49-52).

from afar: soldiers in the Roman army came from France, Spain, Britain (Julius Severus, Vespasian, and Hadrian left Britain to fight the Jews).

"He was accused by Judas and Matthias; for the king had erected over the great gate of the temple a large eagle, of great value, and had dedicated it to the temple" (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.6.2).

"These lamented those that were put to death by Herod, because they had cut down the golden eagle that had been over the gate of the temple" (Josephus, *War* 2.2.5).

"After these came the ensigns, with the eagle; and before those ensigns came the trumpeters belonging to them" (Josephus, *War* 5.2.1).

"Then came the ensigns encompassing the eagle, which is at the head of every Roman legion, the king, and the strongest of all birds, which seems to them a signal of dominion, and an omen that they shall conquer all against whom they march" (Josephus, 3.6.2).

Description of the dire situation in AD 70:

"Her name was Mary. . . . She did an unnatural thing. She held up her son who had been breastfeeding and said, 'Oh unfortunate child, who am I saving you for in this war, this famine, this rebellion? If the famine doesn't kill us, the Romans will, or the rebels. The best we can hope for is slavery. So come and be my meal.' . . . She killed her son. Then she roasted him, ate half of him, and hid the other half for later. Rebels smelled the meat and threatened to cut Mary's throat if she didn't show them her food. She said she saved an excellent portion for them, and brought out what was left

of her son. 'This is my own son. I cooked him myself. Come and eat. I've already eaten.' . . . The men left, trembling more terrified than they had ever been before. . . . When word got out about this, people considered their fellow Jews who had already died as lucky, for they hadn't lived long enough to see such misery" (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 6.3.4).

Phase 1: The Days of Daniel (1st temple)

Jer 7:30: "For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. "They have set their **abominations** in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it."

For comparison, see 2 Kgs 6:28-29: Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

Hos 9:10: "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. *But* they went to Baal Peor, And separated themselves *to that* shame; They became an **abomination** like the thing they loved."

Reason: Evil Leaders

Jehoiakim: "Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ⁶ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze *fetters* to carry him off to Babylon. ⁷ Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. ⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, **the abominations which he did**, and what was found against him, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place" (2Chron 36:5-8).

Jehoiachin: "he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chron 36:9-11).

Zedekiah: "He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. ¹³ And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear *an oath* by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁴ Moreover **all the leaders of the priests and the people** transgressed more and more, **according to all the abominations of the nations**, and defiled [polluted] the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem" (2Chron 36:12-14).

Zedekiah specifically did not submit to the prophetic authority of Jeremiah! Evil leadership produces to evil people!

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house **of God**, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house **of his god**; and he brought the articles into the treasure house **of his god**" (Dan 1:1-2). **Note the shift from God to god!**

The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 would have to be reminiscent of this disaster: "Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions" (2Chron 36:19).

The destruction of God's people goes hand in hand with the destruction of God's place!

The Sabbath Connection: The Abomination is tightly linked to Sabbath-breaking!

"To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. **As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years**" (2Chron 36:21).

Jer 17:19-26: avoid disaster by keeping the Sabbath holy . . . "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (Jer 17:27).

Sabbath Violation

"So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and **their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east**" (Ezek 8:16).

Daniel was keenly aware of this "abomination" and the condition of the sanctuary:

"O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; **because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.**¹⁷ "Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake **cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.**¹⁸ "O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and **see our desolations**, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies." (Dan 9:16)

Phase 2: 1st Century AD (2nd Temple)

Now the pendulum swung the opposite direction: from license to sin to legalistic strictness, obscuring the actual Sabbath law with myriads of sub-laws. Legalism is one of the most sinister forms of disobedience since it is lived under the deceptive cloak of faithfulness. **Adding to God's law subtracts from it!** For example:

- Don't leave an egg out in the sun on the Sabbath; the sun might cook it!
- Don't spit on the ground; it might irrigate the roots of a plant
- You can't move a chair on the Sabbath but you can pick up a child; so . . . you put child on chair and move both!
- Ladies are forbidden to look in the mirror on Sabbath for fear of being tempted to pull out a grey hair

"He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: `This people honors Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁷ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.'⁸ "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men-- the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."⁹ He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."¹⁰ "For Moses said, `Honor your father and your mother'; and, `He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'¹¹ "But you say, `If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban "-- '(that is, a gift *to God*),¹² "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,¹³ "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do" (Mk 7:6-13).

"And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. **For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God**" (Lk 16:15).

Jesus cleansed the temple twice - but alas, in the end . . . "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.⁴³ "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,⁴⁴ "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Lk 19:41-44).

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!" (Mt 23:37-38).

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Mt 21:43).

When? Luke 21:20 - "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near."

Phase 3: The End-Time Abomination

Daniel 8:13: Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be, concerning* the daily [*sacrifices*] and **the transgression of desolation**, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?"

Daniel 11:31: "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily [*sacrifices*], **and place *there* the abomination of desolation.**"

Daniel 12:11: "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, **and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days.**"

Summary

Apostasy in relation to Sanctuary (false priesthood) & Sabbath → Anti-Adventist Legislation ("Jerusalem surrounded by armies") → flee the cities → the end will unfold rapidly

"It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with. Already His judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm" (5T 234).

"When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ - the constraint of divine love" (MB 127).

Matthew 25 Parables for Preparation: *What To Do While Waiting*

Transition: Mt 24:42 "Therefore . . ."

Mt 24-25 Proportion: 31 verses response to disciples' question; 65 verses on actual readiness!

Parable	Dimension	Relation	Aspect
Virgins	watching	self (internal) → God	spiritual
Talents	working	self (external) → God	financial
Sheep/Goats	welfare	self → others → God	physical

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up” (COL 411).

“The proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the reception of His kingdom. "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage” (GC 427).

“All who wait for the heavenly Bridegroom are represented in the parable as slumbering because their Lord delayed His coming; but the wise roused themselves at the message of His approach, and responded to the message, and their spiritual discernment was not all gone, and they sprang into line. As they took hold of the grace of Christ, their religious experience became vigorous and abundant, and their affections were set upon things above. They discerned where was the source of their supply, and appreciated the love that God had for them. They opened their hearts to receive the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. Their lights were trimmed and burning, and sent forth steady rays into the moral darkness of the world. They glorified God, because they had the oil of grace in their hearts, and did the very work that their Master did before them - went forth to seek and to save those who were lost” (ST June 28, 1910).

The Talents

“To every man is committed individual gifts, termed talents. Some regard these talents as being limited to certain men who possess superior mental endowments and genius. But God has not restricted the bestowal of His talents to a favored few. To every one is committed some special endowment, for which he will be held responsible by the Lord. Time, reason, means, strength, mental powers, tenderness of heart - all are gifts from God, entrusted to be used in the great work of blessing humanity. Some apparently have few talents, but by diligent trading on their Lord’s goods their endowments will be greatly increased. . . . The Lord is watching everyone to see whether he will use his talents wisely and unselfishly, or whether he will seek his own advancement. The talents are distributed to every man according to his several ability, that he may add to them by wise investment. Each one must give an account to the Master for his own actions. The Lord will not require from those who are poor that which they have not to give; He will not require from the sick the active energies which bodily weakness forbids. No one need mourn because he cannot glorify God with talents that were never entrusted to Him. But if you have only one talent, use it well, and it will accumulate. If the talents are not buried, they will gain yet other talents. The goods we receive are not our own. The entrusted capital is to be used, and when the returns are made, they are still the Lord’s property. We have no right to hoard these talents; when the Lord Jesus returns He expect to receive His own with usury” (Letter 180, 1907).

Matthew 26-28: The Cross & Resurrection

Matthew 26

26:3 high priest - office acquired by fraud

“Those who assumed the office of high priest prior to, and at, the time of Christ’s first advent, were not men divinely appointed to the sacred work. They had eagerly aspired to the office through love of power and show. They desired a position where they could have authority, and practice fraud under a garb of piety, and thereby escape detection. The high priest held a position of power and importance. He was not only counselor and mediator, but judge; and there was no appeal from his decision. The priests were held in restraint by the authority of the Romans, and were not allowed the power of legally putting any one to death. This power rested with those who bore rule over the Jews. Men of corrupt hearts sought the distinguished office of high priest, and frequently obtained it by bribery and assassination. The high priest, clad in his consecrated and expensive robes, with the breastplate upon his breast, the light flashing upon the precious stones inlaid in the breastplate, presented a most imposing appearance, and struck the conscientious, true-hearted people with admiration, reverence, and awe. The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent

Christ, who was to become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec This order of priesthood was not to pass to another, or be superseded by another" (RH Dec. 17, 1872).

"Virtually Caiaphas was no high priest. He wore the priestly robes, but he had no vital connection with God. He was uncircumcised in heart. Proud and overbearing, he proved his unworthiness ever to have worn the garments of the high priest. He had no authority from heaven for occupying the position. He had not one ray of light from God to show him what the work of the priest was, or for what the office was instituted. So perverted had the priesthood become that when Christ declared himself the Son of God, Caiaphas, in pretended horror, rent his robe, and accused the Holy One of Israel of blasphemy. **Many today who claim to be Christians are in danger of rending their garments, making an outward show of repentance, when their hearts are not softened nor subdued. This is why so many continue to make failures in the Christian life. An outward appearance of sorrow is shown for wrong, but their repentance is not that which needs not to be repented of. May God grant to his church true contrition for sin. Oh that we might feel the necessity of revealing true sorrow for wrong-doing!**" (RH June 12, 1900).

The Anointing

- **alabaster jar**: Jesus' broken body
- **fragrance**: resurrection

"Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2Cor 2:14).

What is your Christian scent? What scent do you diffuse??

Passover: Read Exodus 12 and Psalms 113-118 (the "Hallel-Psalms")

Roman Catholicism believes that the priest's pronouncement of the Latin "Hoc Est Corpus Meum" ("this is my body") means a "transubstantiation", a transformation of the mere physical bread and wine into the physical body and blood of Jesus.

"For this is My blood of the **new covenant**, which is shed for many for **the remission of sins**. But I say to you, I will not drink of **this fruit of the vine** from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. And when **they had sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Mat 26:28-30).

new covenant = New Testament, ratified by the death of Jesus

The death of the owner transfers the content of a will to the one listed in the will!

- remission of sins: the death of Jesus was required
- fruit of the vine: non-alcoholic grape juice
- they had sung a hymn: they certainly did not incorporate pagan music and baptize secular tones . . . These were Scripture songs!

Gethsemane

Gethsemane: Gath = garden, shemen = oil - Garden of the Oil (Press)
In Gethsemane, Jesus was squeezed to the core.

Mt 26:36-46 Compare the 3 phases of Jesus in Gethsemane:

1. Entrance: Death vs Life

2. Encounter: Life & Death Struggle

3. Exit: Life vs Death

When you find your Father you can face your future!!

Ellen White on Gethsemane: Agony

“At the thought of the grievous character of the guilt of the world, Christ felt that He must go apart, and be alone.”

Satan

“The hosts of darkness are there to make sin appear as extensive, deep, and horrible as possible. In his hatred of God, in falsifying His character, in manifesting irreverence, contempt, and hatred toward the laws of His government, Satan had made iniquity reach unto the heavens, and it was his purpose to swell iniquity to such great proportions, that it would make atonement seem impossible, so that the Son of God, who sought to save a lost world, should be crushed beneath the curse of sin. The working of the vigilant foe in presenting to Christ the vast proportions of transgression, caused such poignant pain that He felt that He could not remain in the immediate presence of any human being. He could not bear that even His disciples should witness His **agony** as He contemplated the woe of the world. Even His most dearly loved friends must not be in His companionship. The sword of justice was unsheathed, and the wrath of God against iniquity rested upon man’s substitute, Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father” (Ms35-1895.11).

Agony

In the Garden of Gethsemane Christ suffered in man’s stead, and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin, until from His pale and quivering lips was forced the agonizing cry, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:” but if there is no other way by which the salvation of fallen man may be accomplished, then “not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Human nature would then and there have died under the horror of the sense of sin, had not an angel from heaven strengthened Him to bear the **agony**. The power that inflicted retributive justice upon man’s substitute and surety, was the power that sustained and upheld the suffering One under the tremendous weight of wrath that would have fallen upon a sinful world. Christ was suffering the death that was pronounced upon the transgressors of God’s law. It is a fearful thing for the unrepenting sinner to fall into the hands of the living God. This is proved by the history of the destruction of the old world by a flood, by the record of the fire which fell from heaven and destroyed the inhabitants of Sodom. But never was this proved to so great an extent as in the **agony** of Christ, the Son of the infinite God, when He bore the wrath of God for a sinful world. It was in consequence of sin, the transgression of God’s law, that the Garden of Gethsemane has become pre-eminently the place of suffering to a sinful world. No sorrow, no **agony**, can measure with that which was endured by the Son of God. Man has not been made a sin-bearer, and he will never know the horror of the curse of sin which the Saviour bore. No sorrow can bear any comparison with the sorrow of Him upon whom the wrath of God fell with overwhelming force. Human nature can endure but a limited amount of test and trial. The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs; but the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering; for the human existed in the divine nature, and created a capacity for suffering to endure that which resulted from the sins of a lost world. The **agony** which Christ endured, broadens, deepens, and gives a more extended conception of the character of sin, and the character of the retribution which God will bring upon those who continue in sin. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ to the repenting, believing sinner (Ms 35, 1895). (Genesis 3:1-24.)

Eden and Gethsemane

“The Garden of Eden with its disobedience and the Garden of Gethsemane with its obedience are presented before us. What a costly work was that in Eden! How much was involved in the fatal eating of the forbidden tree! But many are following in the very same footprints, in disobedience, in breaking away from the law of God. When men selfishly enter a course of disobedience to God they go on imperceptibly. They do not calculate what the sure result will be when they enter the path of temptation, and make but feeble efforts to resist, and some make none at all. But when the scroll is unrolled, and God looks over it, He will find that He has been denied in that place, dishonored in another place; and as the roll is opened more and more, the results of un-Christlike actions are revealed. The Word of God was not fed upon,

therefore their actions were not the result of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God" (Letter 69, 1897).

"The Garden of Eden with its foul blot of disobedience, is to be carefully studied and compared with the Garden of Gethsemane, where the world's Redeemer suffered superhuman agony when the sins of the whole world were rolled upon Him.... Adam did not stop to calculate the result of His disobedience (Ms 1, 1892). See EGW comment on Romans 8:11. (5BC 1103.7) (Mark 14:36; Luke 12:50; 22:42, 53; Philippians 2:7).

"The human nature of Christ was like unto ours, and suffering was more keenly felt by Him; for His spiritual nature was free from every taint of sin. Therefore His desire for the removal of suffering was stronger than human beings can experience. How intense was the desire of the humanity of Christ to escape the displeasure of an offended God, how His soul longed for relief, is revealed in the words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (5BC 1103.8).

"Yet Christ had not been forced to take this step. He had contemplated this struggle. To His disciples He had said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness." He had volunteered to lay down His life to save the world (ST December 9, 1897) (5BC 1104.1) (Mark 14:40; Luke 22:45).

Asleep

"In this fearful hour of trial Christ's human nature longed even for the sympathy of His disciples. A second time He rose from the earth and went to them and found them sleeping. This was not a deep sleep. They were in a drowse. They had a limited sense of their Lord's suffering and anguish. In tenderness Jesus stood for a moment bending over them, and regarding them with mingled feelings of love and pity. **In these sleeping disciples He sees a representation of a sleeping church. When they should be watching, they are asleep**" (ST August 14, 1879, "The Sufferings of Christ").

The Actors of the Trial

The Trial of Jesus features an ironic twist: while Jesus is, in fact, put on trial, humanity is put on trial as well! One person after another gets a chance to deal with Jesus – moments of privileged interaction, missed opportunities. Watch each person closely as they interact with Jesus!

Judas: Betraying Jesus with a kiss . . .

"Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up *his* heel against me" (Ps 41:9).

"For *it* is not an enemy *who* reproaches me; Then I could bear *it*. Nor *is it* one *who* hates me who has exalted *himself* against me; Then I could hide from him. But *it was* you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, *And* walked to the house of God in the throng" (Ps 55:14).

30 pieces of silver: "If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned" (Ex 21:32).

`Cursed *is* the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'" (Deut 27:25).

Judas Details

- "repented" (only used in Mt 27:3): Peter was genuinely sorry for what he did; Judas was sorry he got caught, and that things didn't work out as he had planned

- irony: Judas is the only true witness (Mt 27:4)!

- Does Mt 27:9 mis-reference Jeremiah? The main quote appears to come from Zech 11:12-13, but pieces of Jeremiah are present in the quote as well, and it wouldn't be unusual to only reference the major prophet: Jer 19:1-3; 18:2-12; 32:6-9.

The Love of Money

“The love of money in the heart of Judas was growing with the exercise of his shrewd abilities. His practical financiering ability if exercised and enlightened and moulded by the Holy Spirit, would have been of great service to the little church, and by the sanctification of his spirit he would have had a clear insight, a correct discernment to appreciate heavenly things. But worldly policy plans were constantly cherished by Judas. There was no outbreking sin on his part, but his sharp scheming, the selfish, parsimonious [frugal, stingy] spirit that took possession of him, finally led him to sell his Lord for a small sum of money” (Ms 28, 1897).

Divine & Human | Inside & Outside

“There are two kinds of experience—the outside showing and the inward working. The divine and human were at work in the character of Judas. Satan was working the human, Christ the divine. The Lord Jesus longed to see Judas rise to his appointed privileges. But the human side of Judas’ character was confused with his religious sentiments, and treated by him as essential attributes. By taking this view of things, he left an open door for Satan to enter and take possession of the entire man. If Judas had practiced the lessons of Christ, he would have surrendered to Christ, he would have consecrated his heart fully to God; but his confused experience was misleading him” (Ms 28, 1897).

The Case of Judas

“The case of Judas has been presented to me as a lesson for all. Judas was with Christ through the entire period of the Saviour’s public ministry. He had all that Christ could give him. Had he used his capabilities with earnest diligence, he could have accumulated talents. Had he sought to be a blessing, instead of a questioning, criticizing, selfish man, the Lord would have used him to advance His kingdom. But Judas was a speculator. He thought that he could manage the finances of the church, and by his sharpness in business get gain. He was divided in heart. He loved the praise of the world. He refused to give up the world for Christ. He never committed his eternal interests to Christ. He had a superficial religion, and therefore he speculated upon his Master and betrayed Him to the priests, being fully persuaded that Christ would not allow Himself to be taken. Judas was a religious fraud. He held up a high standard for others, but he himself utterly failed to reach the Bible standard. He did not bring the religion of Christ into his life. How many today are, like Judas, betraying their Lord? Those who follow dishonest practices in business, sacrifice Christ for gain and reveal a wisdom that is after Satan’s order. Speculation for selfish gain will not be brought into the life of the man who has that faith which works by love and purifies the soul” (Letter 40, 1901).(5BC 1102.1) (Mark 3:19.)

How Jesus Dealt With Judas

Christ knew, when He permitted Judas to connect with Him as one of the twelve, that Judas was possessed of the demon of selfishness. He knew that this professed disciple would betray Him, and yet He did not separate him from the other disciples, and send him away. He was preparing the minds of these men for His death and ascension, and He foresaw that should He dismiss Judas, Satan would use him to spread reports that would be difficult to meet and explain. The leaders of the Jewish nation were watching and searching for something that they could use to make of no effect the words of Christ. The Saviour knew that Judas, if dismissed, could so misconstrue and mystify His statements that the Jews would accept a false version of His words, using this version to bring terrible harm to the disciples, and to leave on the minds of Christ’s enemies the impression that the Jews were justified in taking the attitude that they did toward Jesus and His disciples” (5BC 1102.3).

Christ did not, therefore, send Judas from His presence, but kept him by His side, where He could counteract the influence that he might exert against His work (RH May 12, 1903).

“Still, as of old, man by himself is priced; for thirty pieces, Judas sold himself, not Christ” (Wright?).

Sanhedrin: 71 members (24 chief priests, 46 elders, 1 high priest), modeled after Numbers 11:16:

“So the LORD said to Moses: “Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you” (Num 11:16).

Violations: It’s debated whether these violations were actually in place in AD 31, but here is a customary list:

- no defense
- no presentation of evidence

- false witnesses (irony: Lk 22:65)
- no fasting between sentence and execution
- charges by council members
- high priest's clothes torn (contra Lev 21:10)
- guilty until proven innocent
- convened at night
- cruelty

Annas

- high priest for almost 20 years
- 5 of his sons were high priests
- Caiaphas was his son-in-law
- money-changers
- animal sacrifice pre-certification
- no charges (Jn 18:23-24)
- not the last confrontation: Acts 4:6 (Peter)

Caiaphas

"Caiaphas was the one who was to be in office when type met antitype, when the true High Priest came into office. Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil. In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But they are not forced to take this course of action. They need not become instruments of unrighteousness, any more than Cain needed to" (RH June 12, 1900; 5BC 1104.3).

"This is one of the times when Christ publicly confessed His claim to be the Messiah, the One for whom the Jews had long looked. Weighted with such great results, it was to Christ one of the most wonderful moments of His life. He realized that all disguise must be swept away. The declaration that He was one with God must be openly made. His judges looked upon Him as only a man, and they thought Him guilty of blasphemous presumption. But He proclaimed Himself as the Son of God. He fully asserted His divine character before the dignitaries who had arraigned Him before their earthly tribunal. His words, spoken calmly, yet with conscious power, showed that He claimed for Himself the prerogatives of the Son of God" (Ms 111, 1897; 5BC 1104.4).

"The pattern of the priestly robes was made known to Moses in the mount. Every article the high priest was to wear, and the way it should be made, were specified. These garments were consecrated to a most solemn purpose. By them was represented the character of the great antitype, Jesus Christ. They covered the priest with glory and beauty, and made the dignity of his office to appear. When clothed with them, the priest presented himself as a representative of Israel, showing by his garments the glory that Israel should reveal to the world as the chosen people of God. Nothing but perfection, in dress and attitude, in spirit and word, would be acceptable to God. He is holy; and His glory and perfection must be represented in the earthly service. Nothing but perfection could properly represent the sacredness of the heavenly service. Finite man might rend his own heart by showing a contrite and humble spirit; but no rent must be made in the priestly robes (YI June 7, 1900).

"How different was the true High Priest from the false and corrupted Caiaphas. **Christ stood before the false high priest, pure and undefiled, without a taint of sin**" (5BC 1105.1).

A Rent Soul

"Christ mourned for the transgression of every human being. He bore even the guiltiness of Caiaphas, knowing the hypocrisy that dwelt in his soul, while for pretense he rent his robe. Christ did not rend His robe, but His soul was rent. His garment of human flesh was rent as He hung on the cross, the sin-bearer of the race. By His suffering and death a new and living way was opened" (RH June 12, 1900).

"It was the general custom for the garments to be rent at the death of friends. The only exception to this was in the case of the high priest. Even Aaron, when he lost his two sons because they did not glorify God as had been specified, was

forbidden to show sorrow and mourning by rending his garments. The prohibition was positive" [Leviticus 10:6 quoted] (Ms 102, 1897).

"For thus rending his garment in pretended zeal, the high priest might have been arraigned before the Sanhedrin. He had done the very thing that the Lord had commanded should not be done. Standing under the condemnation of God, he pronounced sentence on Christ as a blasphemer. He performed all his actions toward Christ as a priestly judge, as an officiating high priest, but he was not this by the appointment of God. The priestly robe he rent in order to impress the people with his horror of the sin of blasphemy covered a heart full of wickedness. He was acting under the inspiration of Satan. Under a gorgeous priestly dress, he was fulfilling the work of the enemy of God. This has been done again and again by priests and rulers. The rent garment ended Caiaphas' priesthood. By his own action he disqualified himself for the priestly office. After the condemnation of Christ he was unable to act without showing the most unreasonable passion. His tortured conscience scourged him, but he did not feel that sorrow that leads to repentance. The religion of those that crucified Christ was a pretense. The supposed holy vestments of the priests covered hearts that were full of corruption, malignity, and crime. They interpreted gain to be godliness. The priests were appointed, not by God, but by an unbelieving government. The position of priest was bought and sold like goods of merchandise. Thus it was that Caiaphas obtained the office. He was not a priest after the order of Melchisedec, by God's appointment. He was bought and sold to work wickedness. He never knew what it was to be obedient to God. He had the form of godliness, and this gave him the power to oppress" (Ms 102, 1897).

Peter

- boasted too loudly . . . prayed too little . . . slept too much . . . acted too fast . . . followed from too far away (adapted from a sermon by Rex Edwards).

Power-less

"Many today stand where Peter stood when in self-confidence he declared that he would not deny his Lord. And because of their self-sufficiency, they fall an easy prey to Satan's devices. **Those who realize their weakness trust in a power higher than self. And while they look to God, Satan has no power against them.** But those who trust in self are easily defeated. Let us remember that if we do not heed the cautions that God gives us, a fall is before us. Christ will not save from wounds the one who places himself unbidden on the enemy's ground. He lets the self-sufficient one, who acts as if he knew more than his Lord, go on in his supposed strength. Then comes suffering and a crippled life, or perhaps defeat and death" (Ms 115, 1902).

Barabbas

Satan or Christ

"The scene in the judgment hall in Jerusalem is a symbol of what will take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history. The world will accept Christ, the Truth, or they will accept Satan, the first great rebel, a robber, apostate, and murderer. They will either reject the message of mercy in regard to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, or they will accept the truth as it is in Jesus. If they accept Satan and his falsehoods, they identify themselves with the chief of all liars, and with all who are disloyal, while they turn from no less a personage than the Son of the infinite God" (RH January 30, 1900; 5BC 1105.7).

Intensification

"When Jesus was on earth, Satan led the people to reject the Son of God, and to choose Barabbas, who in character represented Satan, the God of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ came to dispute the usurpation of Satan in the kingdoms of the world. The conflict is not yet ended; and as we draw near the close of time, the battle waxes more intense. As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world that has rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. He will exercise his power, and work upon the human imagination. He will corrupt both the minds and the bodies of men, and will work through the children of disobedience, fascinating and charming, as does a serpent. What a spectacle will the world be for heavenly intelligences! What a spectacle for God, the Creator of the world, to behold!" (5BC 1105.8).

Deception

“The form Satan assumed in Eden when leading our first parents to transgress, was of a character to bewilder and confuse the mind. He will work in as subtle a manner as we near the end of earth’s history. All his deceiving power will be brought to bear upon human subjects, to complete the work of deluding the human family. So deceptive will be his working, that men will do as they did in the days of Christ; and when asked, Whom shall I release unto you, Christ or Barabbas? the almost universal cry will be, Barabbas, Barabbas! And when the question is asked, “What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?” the cry again will be, “Crucify him!” (5BC 1106.1).

“Christ will be represented in the person of those who accept the truth, and who identify their interest with that of their Lord. The world will be enraged at them in the same way that they were enraged at Christ, and the disciples of Christ will know that they are to be treated no better than was their Lord. But Christ will surely identify His interest with that of those who accept Him as their personal Saviour. Every insult, every reproach, every false accusation made against them by those who have turned their ears away from the truth and are turned unto fables, will be charged upon the guilty ones as done to Christ in the person of His saints (RH April 14, 1896; 5BC 1106.2).

Christ or Barabbas

“When Christ was upon this earth, the world preferred Barabbas. And today the world and the churches are making the same choice. The scenes of the betrayal, the rejection, and the crucifixion of Christ have been re-enacted, and will again be re-enacted on an immense scale. People will be filled with the attributes of the enemy, and with them his delusions will have great power. Just to that degree that light is refused will there be misconception and misunderstanding. Those who reject Christ and choose Barabbas work under a ruinous deception. Misrepresentation and false witness will grow to open rebellion. The eye being evil, the whole body will be full of darkness. Those who give their affections to any leader but Christ will find themselves under the control, body, soul, and spirit, of an infatuation that is so entrancing that under its power souls turn away from hearing the truth to believe a lie. They are ensnared and taken, and by their every action they cry, Release unto us Barabbas, but crucify Christ” (5BC 1106.3).

“Even now this decision is being made. The scenes enacted at the cross are being re-enacted. In the churches that have departed from truth and righteousness it is being revealed what human nature can do and will do when the love of God is not an abiding principle in the soul. We need not be surprised at anything that may take place now. We need not marvel at any developments of horror. Those who trample under their unholy feet the law of God have the same spirit as had the men who insulted and betrayed Jesus. Without any compunction of conscience, they will do the deeds of their father, the devil. They will ask the question that came from the traitorous lips of Judas, What will you give me if I betray unto you Jesus the Christ? Even now Christ is being betrayed in the person of His saints” (5BC 1106.4).

“In view of the history of the life and death of Christ, can we be surprised if the world is hollow and insincere? Can we in our day trust in man, or make flesh our arm? Shall we not choose Christ as our Leader? He alone can save us from sin” (5BC 1106.5).

What will you say? What will He say?!

“When the world is at last brought up for trial before the great white throne, to account for its rejection of Jesus Christ, God’s own messenger to our world, what a solemn scene it will be! What a reckoning will have to be made for nailing to the cross One who came to our world as a living epistle of the law. God will ask each one the question, What have you done with My only-begotten Son? What will those answer who have refused to accept the truth? They will be obliged to say, We hated Jesus, and cast Him out. We cried, Crucify Him, crucify Him. We chose Barabbas in His stead. If those to whom the light of Heaven is presented reject it, they reject Christ. They reject the only provision whereby they may be cleansed from pollution. They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. To them it will be said, “I never knew you: depart from me.” God will assuredly avenge the death of His Son” (RH January 30, 1900).

“On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out, the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our sovereign Ruler, received Him into the heavens. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns, God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? The death of Christ brings to the rejecter of His mercy the wrath and judgments of God, unmixed with mercy. This is the wrath of the Lamb. But the death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him” (Letter 31, 1898; 5BC 1107.2).

Satan's Black Banner

"Each son and daughter of Adam chooses either Christ or Barabbas as his general. And all who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are standing under Satan's black banner, and are charged with rejecting and despitefully using Christ. They are charged with deliberately crucifying the Lord of life and glory" (RH January 30, 1900).

Rejection

"The scene transacted in Jerusalem at the betrayal and rejection of Christ represents the scene which will take place in the future history of the world, when Christ is finally rejected. The religious world will take sides with the first great rebel, and will reject the message of mercy in regard to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Ms 40, 1897).

Joseph & Nicodemus

"Joseph and Nicodemus watched every development at the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ. Not an action escaped them. These men were diligent searchers of the Scriptures, and they were deeply indignant as they saw this man, whom the judges had pronounced to be entirely without fault, placed in the center of two thieves, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." This instruction had been given by the chief priests and rulers, that by his position all might judge that Christ was the most notorious of the three" (Ms 103, 1897).

Pontius Pilate

- lived in Caesarea, but was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover
- brought images into Jerusalem; 5-day revolt - herded Jews into amphitheater, then let them go
- used temple money to build aqueduct, dispersed protest with undercover soldiers (Lk 13:1?!)
- in a precarious dilemma; side with the obvious truth (Jesus), or "keep the peace" – but compromise never works out long-term

Pilate's 6 (Good and Reasonable) Questions

1. "Are you the King of the Jews?" (Jn 18:33)
2. "What have you done?" (Jn 18:35)
3. "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38)
4. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" (Jn 18:39)
5. "Jesus or Barabbas?" (Mt 27:17)
6. "What shall I do with Jesus?" (Mt 27:22)

Pilate's Dance of Indecision in the Gospel of John – He moves in and out of the palace several times:

Out	In
18:29	18:33
18:38	19:1
19:4	19:9
19:12	19:13
19:13	-
Indecision leads to the wrong decision!	

Pilate's Wife

"While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Mt 27:19).

The warning was so unusually, and so disruptive, Pilate should have taken note. *Unless it involves a fruit and a tree, you should listen to your wife!*

Herod

“Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other” (Lk 23:8-12).

Herod wanted some entertainment from Jesus, and then used Jesus for entertainment – and in the process lost eternity!

The Soldiers: Violations

The list of abuse and scorn is long:

- leather scourging - robe (Lk 23:11)
- naked - crown of thorns - reed (mock scepter)
- crowd-supported mockery - spitting
- striking with reed - striking with hands

“who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously” (1Pet 2:23).

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isa 53:7).

Simon the Cyrene

- from Cyrene or actually African

“The cross he [Simon] was forced to bear became the means of his conversion. His sympathies were deeply stirred in favor of Jesus; and the events of Calvary, and the words uttered by the Saviour, caused him to acknowledge that He was the Son of God” (Undated Manuscript 127).

The Women

“And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar” (Mt 27:55).

Pilate’s Inscription - Thought Inspiration

<p>Mt 27:37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.</p>	<p>Lk 23:38 An inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.</p>
<p>Mk 15:26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.</p>	<p>Jn 19:19 Pilate wrote a title and put <i>it</i> on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.</p>

“Look at the superscription written above the cross. The Lord arranged it. Written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it is a call for all, Jew and Gentile, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, hopeless, helpless, and perishing, to come. Christ has made of none effect the power of Satan. He laid hold of the pillars of Satan’s kingdom, and passed through the conflict, destroying him that had the power of death. A way was now opened whereby mercy and truth could meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other” (Ms 111, 1897).

**During Jesus’ trial, Jesus wasn’t on trial. The world was on trial = YOU!
IT’S NOT HIS TRIAL. IT’S MINE.**

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn 3:18-19).

Matthew 27

The Cross of Christ

“The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout all eternity” (GC 651).

“The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries” (GC 652).

Jesus announces the cross ahead of time. **Prediction = Preparation!** (Lk 24:13-35; Mt 16:21; 17:12, 22-23).

Historical, the Romans employed 4 types of executions:

- 1) Crematio: burning
- 2) Decollatio: decapitation (by sword?)
- 3) Damnatio ad bestias: surrendered to wild beasts
- 4) Crux: crucifixion - the worst death

1. The Cross in the Sanctuary: God would rather have your sins in His house than for you to keep them in your heart (Ex 30:10; b. Lev 6:26; 10:17-18; 16:21; Jer 17:1).

“The Priest flicks the animal blood from finger to ground before the veil. The red sin drops through the air as so many dark looks, black tongues, and murky deeds passing from sinner to Sanctuary; thus, carrying sin’s tarry prints from my temple only to begrime God’s. Sin stored in God’s closet; sin dried, cracked, caked and laminated in a stratum of fly-spots and healing scabs. The Sanctuary will be cleansed, but not before it gets dirty. Yet, (and here’s a strong irony) God’s Temple can only be washed clean with more blood—blood that flies from priestly fingers to splatter God’s Throne in spots of gore -life blood lost and then kept to save sinners. The ‘keeping’ presages a function and an end; the blood accumulates, as does the sin forgiven, until a certain time when sin and sinners will be no more. Meanwhile, God embraces his forgiven ones with their clean faces, teeth and hands-not minding that his own place reeks of what He cannot stand.” Karl Wilcox, Nov. 2013

2. Isaiah 53:1-6 Personal Pronouns = Substitutionary Atonement

➔ Highlight all personal pronouns: What do you notice?

“Who has believed **our** report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For **He** shall grow up before **Him** as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. **He** has no form or comeliness; And when **we** see **Him**, There is no beauty that **we** should desire **Him**. 3 **He** is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And **we** hid, as it were, our faces from **Him**; **He** was despised, and **we** did not esteem **Him**. 4 Surely **He** has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet **we** esteemed **Him** stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But **He** was wounded for **our** transgressions, **He** was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for **our** peace was upon **Him**, And by **His** stripes **we** are healed. 6 All **we** like sheep have gone astray; **We** have turned, every one, to **his** own way; And the LORD has laid on **Him** the iniquity of **us** all.”

(In)famous Last Words

“We are running north and south.” Amelia Earhart

“There is no end to sorrow.” Van Gogh

“The ladies have to go first.” John Jacob Astor IV, returning in a life boat to the Titanic

“Why wait?” George Eastman

“The scruples of a Christian have determined me to expose my own life to any extent, rather than subject myself to the guilt of taking the life of another . . . I should rather die innocently than live tuiilty. . . . Remember, my Eliza, you are a Christian.” Alexander Hamilton

“What matter how the head lie so the heart be right?” Sir Walter Raleigh

“. . . jam session, probably get busted at my own funeral.” Jimi Hendrix (you don’t know who that is?! God bless you!)

“It might be kind of a relief to be finished. It’s sort of like I don’t know what kind of a yard dash you’re running, but then you’re at the finish line and you sort of sigh - you’ve made it! But you never have - You have to start all over again” (Marilyn Monroe).

“Malaysia, Good Night” (Cockpit, Flight MA 370).

3. Jesus on the Cross: Others first, God center, Himself last

Others	1) Lk 23:34	Father, forgive them.
	2) Lk 23:43	Amen I say to you today: You will be with me in Paradise!
	3) Jn 19:25-26	Mother, behold your son.
God	4) Mt 27:46	My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Jesus	5) Jn 19:28	I thirst.
	6) Lk 23:46	Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.
	7) Jn 19:30	It is finished.

Father, forgive them: Isa 53:12 “and made intercession for the transgressors”
- thief (Lk 23:43); centurion (Lk 23:47); Pentecost (Acts 2); priests (Acts 6:7)

I promise you today, . . . The power of punctuation:

- “Woman, without her, man is nothing.” ↔ “Woman, without her man, is nothing.”
- Woman: Can I buy this dress? - No price to high or No, price too high?!
- Ice, cream, peaches - Ice-cream, peaches - I scream peaches!

Internal evidence: Jesus responds to the thief’s future request with immediate assurance

External evidence: John 20:17: Jesus had not ascended to the Father yet

Hebrew formula: Deut 30:18

Woman, behold your son: transfer of son-mother responsibility

My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me?! - My God 2x in God’s absence! Why = What for, not accusatory

I thirst: water in John! The water of life now runs out of water!

Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit: reversal of life to Adam. 3rd direct appeal to the Father!

It is finished: not I am finished but it = His purpose on earth.

tetelestai: perfect tense = event in the past with effect in the present

on taxation papryri: “paid in full”

4. The Cross Event: Creation Parallels as Neutralization of the Curse (Deut 21:23; Gal 5:11)

- 1) 2nd Adam (Rom 5:14)
- 2) naked = Adam
- 3) Friday
- 4) Garden
- 5) Tree
- 6) Thorns = Gen 3:18
- 7) Jesus takes care of His mother = male/female relationship secured
- 8) darkness = Gen 1:2
- 9) "Paradise" = Eden
- 10) "Why have you forsaken me?" = Gen 3 (loss of God's presence)
- 11) "Come down" = you don't have to die (original lie)
- 12) "It is finished" = creation (Gen 1:31-2:3)
- 13) breathed his last (Mk 15:37, 39; Lk 23:46) = reversion of Gen 2:7
- 14) earthquake
- 15) Sabbath rest in tomb
- 16) resurrection = Edenic restoration

"When Christ bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth. He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory. The enemy was overcome by Christ in His human nature. The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power. This is the privilege of all. In proportion to our faith will be our victory" (The Youth's Instructor, April 25, 1901).

Darkness

"The darkness upon the face of nature expressed her sympathy with Christ in His expiring agony. It evidenced to humanity that the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, was withdrawing His beams from the once favored city of Jerusalem, and from the world. It was a miraculous testimony given of God, that the faith of after generations might be confirmed" (The Spirit of Prophecy 3:167). (5BC 1108.2)

God and Angels Clothed in Darkness—The dark cloud of human transgression came between the Father and the Son. The interruption of the communion between God and His Son caused a condition of things in the heavenly courts which cannot be described by human language. Nature could not witness such a scene as Christ dying in agony while bearing the penalty of man's transgression. God and the angels clothed themselves with darkness, and hid the Saviour from the gaze of the curious multitude while He drank the last dregs of the cup of God's wrath (Letter 139, 1898). (5BC 1108.3)

5. Practical Theology: "impossible" (Mt 19:26)

The faith that saves is the faith that enables: Jesus is our substitute and our example.

"All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves" (COL 160).

6. Eschatological Element: Rev 12:11 - If you like Jesus you'll be like Jesus

7. Heb 9:12 - Holy Place, not Most Holy Place

"It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. Thither the faith of Christ's disciples followed Him as He ascended from their sight. Here their hopes centered, "which hope we have," said Paul, "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever." "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb 6:19, 20; 9:12 (GC 421).

8. Medical Aspects

“Clearly, the weight of the historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted. . . . Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge” (Dr. William D. Edwards, JAMA 1986).

“Jesus of Nazareth underwent Jewish and Roman trials, was flogged, and was sentenced to death by crucifixion. The scourging produced deep stripelike lacerations and appreciable blood loss, and it probably set the stage for hypovolemic shock, as evidenced by the fact that Jesus was too weakened to carry the crossbar (patibulum) to Golgotha. At the site of crucifixion, his wrists were nailed to the patibulum and, after the patibulum was lifted onto the upright post (stipes), his feet were nailed to the stipes. The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion was an interference with normal respirations. Accordingly death resulted primarily from hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia. Jesus' death was ensured by the thrust of a soldier's spear into his side. Modern medical interpretation of the historical evidence indicate that Jesus was dead when taken down from the cross.” “On the Physical Death of Jesus” (Edwards, Gabel, Hosner, JAMA March 21, 1986).

Mt 27:51 The Veil

“The same hand that traced on the wall the characters that recorded Belshazzar’s doom and the end of the Babylonian kingdom, rent the veil of the temple from top to bottom, opening a new and living way for all, high and low, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile. From henceforth people might come to God without priest or ruler” (Ms 101, 1897).

“By the rending of the veil of the temple, God said, I can no longer reveal My presence in the most holy place. A new and living Way, before which there hangs no veil, is offered to all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest” (YI, June 21, 1900).

“When Christ on the cross cried out, “It is finished,” the veil of the temple was rent in twain. This veil was significant to the Jewish nation. It was of most costly material, of purple and gold, and was of great length and breadth. At the moment when Christ breathed His last, there were witnesses in the temple who beheld the strong, heavy material rent by unseen hands from top to bottom. This act signified to the heavenly universe, and to a world corrupted by sin, that a new and living way had been opened to the fallen race, that all sacrificial offerings terminated in the one great offering of the Son of God. He who had hitherto dwelt in the temple made with hands, had gone forth never again to grace it with His presence” (ST December 8, 1898).

Mt 27:54 Silence

“But His silence was eloquence” (MS 115, 1897).

Hengel’s Summary: The Cross in Antiquity

Historical Aspects of Crucifixion: The Scandal of the Cross (*scandalon tou staurou* - Gal 5:11)

“His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God” (Deut 21:23).

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree” (Gal 3:13).

- widespread practice of political and military deterrent and punishment
- primitive lust for revenge and sadistic cruelty, including humility (naked, prominent public place)
- victims rarely buried
- little public/philosophical discussion (denial, avoidance)
- Christian kerygma: solidarity of God with the lowest (Rom 8:32)

“The theological reasoning of our time shows very clearly that the particular form of the death of Jesus, the man and the messiah, represents a scandal which people would like to blunt, remove or domesticate in any way possible. We shall

have to guarantee the truth of our theological thinking at this point. Reflection on the harsh reality of crucifixion in antiquity may help us to overcome the acute loss of reality which is to be found so often in present theology and preaching" (Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 90).

"There was a wise man who was called Jesus, a good man. . . . Pilate condemned him to be crucified" (*Ant.* 18.3.3).

"He was whipped until his bones showed" (*Wars* 6.5.3).

"Each criminal who goes to execution must carry his own cross on his back" (*Sera* 554).

"Sixteen men . . . were paraded out, chained together by the foot and neck, each carrying his own cross. The executioners added this grim public spectacle to the punishment as an extra deterrent to anyone thinking about committing the same crime" (Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 4.2.7).

"Some hang their victims upside down. Some impale them through the private parts. Others stretch out their arms onto forked poles" (Seneca, *To Marcia on Consolation* 20.3).

"Is there such a thing as a person who would actually prefer wasting away in pain on a cross-dying limb by limb one drop of blood at a time-rather than dying quickly? Would any human being willingly choose to be fastened to that cursed tree, especially after the beating that left him deathly weak, deformed, swelling with vicious welts on shoulders and chest, and struggling to draw every last, agonizing breath? Anyone facing such a death would plead to die rather than mount the cross" (Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 101.14).

Crematio - Decollatio (decapitation) - Damnatio ad bestias (damnation to beasts) - Crux (= cross; Julius Paulus' Sententiae, AD 200).

"They say that our madness consists in the fact that we put a crucified man in second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of the word" (Justin, *Apology* I, 13.4).

"I discovered nothing but a perverse and extravagant superstition" (Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 10.96.4-8).

"Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate" (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.3).

"To say that their ceremonies centre on a man put to death for his crime and on the fatal wood of the cross is to assign to these abandoned wretches sanctuaries which are appropriate to them and the kind of worship they deserve" (Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9.4).

"a criminal and his cross" (hominem noxium et crucem eius) (Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 29.2).

"Let her continue as she pleases, persisting in her vain delusions, and lamenting in song a god who died in delusions, who was condemned by judges whose verdict was just, and executed in the prime of life by the worst of deaths, a death bound with iron." Augustine: Apollo's Oracle by Porphyry, answering a man's question on how to dissuade his wife's Christian beliefs" (*Civitas Dei*, 19.23).

"Punished with limbs outstretched, they see the stake as their fate; they are fastened (and) nailed to it in the most bitter torment, evil food for birds of prey and grim pickings for dogs" (Pseudo-Manetho, *Apotelesmatica* 4.129ff.).

Psalm 22:16: "for dogs have surrounded me"

Christians are "poor devils" (kako daimone) "who deny the Greek gods and instead honor that crucified sophist and live according to his laws" (Hermes, *De morte Peregrini*, 13).

"I see crosses there, not just of one kind but made in many different ways: some have their victims with head down to the ground; some impale their private parts; others stretch out their arms on the gibbet" (Seneca, *Dialogue* 6).

"And additional derision accompanied their end: they were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses and, when daylight faded, were burned to serve as lamps by night" (Nero: Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44.4; disputed).

"But hanging is a lesser penalty than the cross. For the gallows kills the victim immediately, whereas the cross tortures for a long time those who are fixed to it" (Isidore of Seville, *Etymologia* 5.27.34).

Conclusion

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross" (DA 83).

Cross Quotes by Ellen White

"The Lord God is profuse in His gifts to our world. The question may be asked, Why does the Lord show such waste, such extravagance in the multitude of His gifts that cannot be enumerated? The Lord would be so bountiful toward His human family that it cannot be said of Him that He could do more. When He gave Jesus to our world, He gave all heaven. His love is without a parallel. It did not stop short of anything...(5BC 1101.3)

To human reasoning the whole plan of salvation is a waste of mercies and resources. They are provided to accomplish the restoration of the moral image of God in man. The atonement is abundantly able to secure to all who will receive it, mansions in heaven. The supposed prodigality of Mary is an illustration of the methods of God in the plan of salvation; for nature and grace, related to each other, manifest the ennobling fullness of the Source from which they flow" (Ms 28, 1897).(5BC 1101.4).

"The atoning sacrifice is full and sufficient. It is the new covenant, sealed with His blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. This Christ declared at the last supper. In this cup there is to those who drink in faith, peace-making, soul-cleansing efficacy. It is the balm of Gilead, which God has provided to restore health and soundness to the sin-stricken soul" (Letter 108, 1899).

"God Himself was crucified with Christ; for Christ was one with the Father" (BE Aug. 6, 1894).

Mary Who? – Sorting out the New Testament Marys

"Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons" (Mt 27:56). "Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb" (Mt 27:61).

Matthew: 11x (chs. 27, 1, 16, 28)	Mark: 8x (ch. 15)	Luke: 17x (ch. 1)	John: 15x (ch. 11)
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1. Mary the Mother of Jesus

- "Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).
- "But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart" (Lk 2:19).
- "His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*" (Jh 2:5).
- "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene" (Jh 19:25).
- of lineage of David (Ps 132:11; Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3); sister Elizabeth, of lineage of Aaron, tribe of Levi (Lk 1:36)

- only appears 4x in Christ's ministry: marriage of Cana (Jn 2); in Capernaum (Jn 2:12) and Nazareth (Mt 4:13; 13:54; Mk 6:1); at the cross (Jn 19:25-26); after the resurrection in the upper room (Acts 1:14).

The Catholic Perspective

200: Irenaeus: "causa salutis" (cause of salvation) - supported by Franciscans, opposed by Dominicans = priestess

"Therefore, one can say, she redeemed with Christ the human race" (Pope Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter *Inter solidalica*, AAS 1918, 181.) "As the Blessed Virgin Mary does not seem to participate in the public life of Jesus Christ, and then, suddenly appears at the stations of his cross, she is not there without divine intention. She suffers with her suffering and dying son, almost as if she would have died herself. For the salvation of mankind, she gave up her rights as the mother of her son" (Pope Benedict XV, Apostolic Letter *Inter solidalica*.)

"It was she, the second Eve, who, free from all sin, original or personal, and always more intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, sin-stained by his unhappy fall." (Pope Ven. Pius XII, encyclical *Mystici Corporis*.)

"Mary is the intermediary through whom is distributed unto us this immense treasure of mercies gathered by God, for mercy and truth were created by Jesus Christ. Thus as no man goeth to the Father but by the Son, so no man goeth to Christ but by His Mother." (Leo XIII, encyclical *Octobri Mense* 4.)

"from the conciliar and ecumenical point of view, it is certainly not opportune to proclaim this dogma at this time. The separated brethren, Protestants and Orthodox, reproach us for not consulting them in regard to the last dogmas on Mary. This is why I think that a dogma of this type would have to include their participation". (Therefore) "Pontiffs do not mention it precisely so as not to cause a misunderstanding with the Protestants". (Father Stefano de Fiores, member of the International Pontifical Marian Academy *Marianum*.)

John Paul II: "first among believers" (Father Salvatore Perrella, *The Message*, 1997-09-05, p.5), after petition.

Joseph Ratzinger: "the formula "Co-redemptrix" departs to too great an extent from the language of Scripture and of the Fathers and therefore gives rise to misunderstandings...Everything comes from Him [Christ], as the Letter to the Ephesians and the Letter to the Colossians, in particular, tell us; Mary, too, is everything she is through Him. The word "Co-redemptrix" would obscure this origin. A correct intention being expressed in the wrong way" (Peter Seewald, "God and the world: believing and living in our time," Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2000, p. 306).

→ Not divine qualification but devotional quality!

2. Mary Magdalene (= Mary the sister of Lazarus?)

- from Galilean town of Magdala (currently being excavated!)
- "and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities-- Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons" (Lk 8:2; cf. Mk 16:9).
- at the cross till the end (Jn 19:25; Mt 27:61; Mk 15:47; Lk 23:55)
- bought spices with Salome and Mary the mother of James (Mk 16:1)
- found empty tomb (Mt 28:5; Mk 16:5)
- Jesus appeared to her first after the resurrection (Jn 20:14-15)
- not a direct link to the Mary who anointed the feet of Jesus (Lk 7:36-50)
- not a direct link to her being the sister of Lazarus

3. Mary, the Sister of Lazarus (= Mary Magdalene?)

- host Jesus in their Bethany home in Judaea near Jerusalem (Lk 10:40)
- "And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil" (Lk 7:37) [?]
- "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Lk 10:42)
- complains to Jesus after Lazarus' death (Jn 11:32)

- anoints Jesus' feet in home of Simon (Bethany) (Jn 12:3)

Same person? different towns, but both had financial means

- <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/mary-magdalene-sister-martha>

The Desire of Ages on Mary

- "In His mercy, Jesus had pardoned her sins, He had called forth her beloved brother from the grave" (DA 559).

- "The fragrant gift which Mary had thought to lavish upon the dead body of the Saviour she poured upon His living form. At the burial its sweetness could only have pervaded the tomb; now it gladdened His heart with the assurance of her faith and love" (DA 560). "As the alabaster box was broken, and filled the whole house with its fragrance, so Christ was to die, His body was to be broken; but He was to rise from the tomb, and the fragrance of His life was to fill the earth. . . . Kingdoms would rise and fall; the names of monarchs and conquerors would be forgotten; but this woman's deed would be immortalized upon the pages of sacred history. Until time should be no more, that broken alabaster box would tell the story of the abundant love of God for a fallen race" (DA 563).

- "**The ointment was a symbol of the heart of the giver**" (DA 564).

- "Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin.

Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome. When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with Great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned from Him. . . . Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration" (DA 568).

4. Mary the Mother of Mark

- early disciple, sister of Barnabas (Col 4:10; Acts 4:36; 12:12); tradition: owner of the upper room

5. Mary, the wife of Clopas

(at cross: Jn 19:25; Mt 27:61; Mk 15:47); after resurrection (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1; Lk 23:56; 24:23); Sons: disciple James, Joses, Jude, disciple Simon; tradition: sister of Mary the mother of Jesus

6. Mary, a Roman Christian

- Rom 16:6, a hard worker for Paul

The Resurrection

Resurrection Evidence

1. Women

Jewish attitude: "Sooner let the words of the Law be burned than delivered to women!" "I thank thee that I am not a woman." Since a woman's word didn't count as much as a man's, the fact that the Gospels utilize women's testimonies in the resurrection stories speaks for the trustworthiness of those accounts.

2. The Empty Tomb

Mt 27:57-61: Jesus dead and buried

Mt 27:62-66: Setting of Guard

Mt 28:1-10: Empty Tomb and Risen Lord

Mt 28:11-15: Report of Guard

Mt 28:16-20: Jesus alive and sovereign

3. Personal Touch: Mk 16:7 “and Peter”

4. Fulfillment of Prophecy: “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk 24:27).

5. Unconcealed Doubt: Contrary to Ancient Near Eastern practice, the main characters are transparent to the point of admitting to doubt: “And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. . . . And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either” (Mk 16:11, 13).

6. Eyewitnesses

- Mary Magdalene and other women (Mt 28)- Peter and John
- Emmaus disciples (Cleopas)
- Eleven; eleven + Thomas
- 7 disciples by the Sea of Galilee
- 500, including James (change from John 7:5!)
- Ascension

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:1-3).

7. Burial Cloth

“the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself” (Jn 20:7).

8. Non-Mythological Reality Reporting

“When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (Jn 20:20).

“But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here? So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb” (Luk 24:41-42).

Not Docetism = mere appearances, as in the legendary account of Caesar’s death:

goddess Vesta carried off Caesar, her priest: “I myself carried the man away, and left nothing but his phantom behind. What fell by the sword was Caesar’s shade” (in Ovid’s *Fasti* 3.701ff.).

9. The Historicity of 1 Cor 15

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by **Cephas**, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”

“Cephas” is Peter’s (local?) Aramaic name = evidence of an early Christian Aramaic hymn/credal statement?

10. The Spread of Christianity

- James converted, after initial scepticism
- Paul: despite an impeccable pedigree within Judaism, the resurrection convinced him to convert!

Mt 28:1 Sabbath . . . “first of the sabbath” = first of the week = Sunday (subordinate to Sabbath!)

Mt 28:2 The Resurrection Earthquake

“Before anyone had reached the sepulcher, there was a great earthquake. The mightiest angel from heaven, he who held the position from which Satan fell, received his commission from the Father, and clothed with the panoply of heaven, he parted the darkness from his track. His face was like the lightning, and his garments white as snow. As soon as his feet touched the ground it quaked beneath his tread. The Roman guard were keeping their weary watch when this wonderful scene took place, and they were enabled to endure the sight, for they had a message to bear as witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. The angel approached the grave, rolled away the stone as though it had been a pebble, and sat upon it. The light of heaven encircled the tomb, and the whole heaven was lighted by the glory of the angels. Then his voice was heard, “Thy Father calls Thee; come forth” (Manuscript 115, 1897).

“In this scene of the resurrection of the Son of God is given a lively image of the glory that will be revealed at the general resurrection of the just at the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Then the dead that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth to life; and not only the earth, but the heavens themselves, shall be shaken. A few graves were opened at the resurrection of Christ; but at His second coming all the precious dead, from righteous Abel to the last saint that dies, shall awake to glorious, immortal life. If the soldiers at the sepulcher were so filled with terror at the appearance of one angel clothed with heavenly light and strength, that they fell as dead men to the ground, how will His enemies stand before the Son of God, when He comes in power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels from the courts of heaven? Then the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage. The elements shall be in flames, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll” (ST April 22, 1913).

Mt 28:17 Doubt

“But some doubted. So it will ever be. There are those who find it hard to exercise faith, and they place themselves on the doubting side. These lose much because of their unbelief. If they would control their feelings, and refuse to allow doubt to bring a shadow over their own minds and the minds of others, how much happier and more helpful they would be. They close the door to many blessings that they might enjoy if they would refuse to place themselves on the doubting side, and would, instead, talk hope and courage” (Letter 115, 1904).

Mt 28:19

“The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three holy dignitaries of heaven, have declared that they will strengthen men to overcome the powers of darkness. All the facilities of heaven are pledged to those who by their baptismal vows have entered into a covenant with God” (Ms 92, 1901).

Mt 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

baptizing them . . . antecedent: **disciples**

This justifies a measure of learning and lifestyle change before baptism. In the book of Acts people were baptized on the spot because no church structure was in place yet, and the full message was not yet articulated as the New Testament canon was not yet settled.

Mission Perspective

Language	Percentage of World Population	Number of Native Speakers
Mandarin Chinese	14.4%	955
Spanish	6.15%	407

English	5.43%	359
Hindi	4.7%	311
Arabic	4.43%	293
Portuguese	3.27%	216
Bengali	3.11%	206
Russian	2.33%	154
Japanese	1.9%	126
Punjabi	-	102
German	-	89

wikipedia

Example Japan

Population: 127 million

SDAs: 15,000

Ratio: 1:8,515 (US: 1:300; Germany: 1:3,000; Egypt: 1:90,000; Turkey: 1:1 million)

Churches: 115

Pastors: 60

Buddhists: 84%

Christians: .7%

What is Your Mission Field?

Mark's Special Features

- no genealogy, little prophecy, law, or Jewish customs; no sermon from the mount, no condemnation of Jewish sects
- Romans: highway, empires, bridges, monuments: Let's get things done.
- only 63 quotes from the Old Testament (Matthew: 128)
- interprets Aramaic words and uses Latin words instead of Greek equivalents (Mk 6:27)
- audience-sensitive = audience-specific
- crowd developments
- 3-party-triangles
- stories with interruptions: sandwich structures

Mk 1:9-11 Jesus' Baptism

"Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, talking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us" (DA 111).

Mk 1:15 explosive opening: "The time has come . . . the kingdom of God is near!"

Mk 1:16-17 radical discipleship: "Come, follow me. . . . At once they left their nets and followed Him!"

Mk 2:1-12 The Healing of the Paralytic

Capernaum as a center of Jesus' mission

"Capernaum itself was well adapted to be the center of the Saviour's work. Being on the highway from Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt, and to the Mediterranean Sea, it was a great thoroughfare of travel. People from many lands passed through the city, or tarried for rest in their journeyings to and fro. Here Jesus could meet all nations and all ranks, the rich and great as well as the poor and lowly, and His lessons would be carried to other countries and into many households. Investigation of the prophecies would thus be excited, attention would be directed to the Saviour, and His mission would be brought before the world" (DA 252).

The Ministry of Healing

"Oh, wondrous love of Christ, stooping to heal the guilty and the afflicted! Divinity sorrowing over and soothing the ills of suffering humanity! Oh, marvelous power thus displayed to the children of men! Who can doubt the message of salvation? Who can slight the mercies of a compassionate Redeemer?" (DA 269).

"It required nothing less than creative power to restore health to that decaying body. **The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth had spoken life to the dying paralytic.** And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the heart. He who at the creation "spake, and it was," who "commanded, and it stood fast," (Ps 33:9), had spoken life to the soul dead in trespasses and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart. Christ bade the paralytic arise and walk, "that ye may know," He said, "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (DA 269.5).

"The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. **The spiritual healing was followed by physical restoration.** This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, "Thy sins are forgiven." The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give, would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body. Jesus came to "destroy the works of the devil." "In Him was life," and He says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He is "a quickening spirit." 1 John 3:8; John 1:4; 10:10; 1 Corinthians 15:45. **And He still has the same life-giving power as when on earth He healed the sick, and spoke forgiveness to the sinner.** He "forgiveth all thine iniquities," He "healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:3. The effect produced upon the people by the healing of the paralytic was as if heaven had opened, and revealed the glories of the better world. As the man who had been cured

passed through the multitude, blessing God at every step, and bearing his burden as if it were a feather's weight, the people fell back to give him room, and with awe-stricken faces gazed upon him, whispering softly among themselves, "We have seen strange things today" (DA 270).

Sin-Sick

"Physical disease, however malignant and deep-seated, was healed by the power of Christ; but the disease of the soul took a firmer hold upon those who closed their eyes against the light. Leprosy and palsy were not so terrible as bigotry and unbelief" (DA 271).

The mission of every Christian: What are you doing to get the paralytic to Jesus?

Mk 3:14 the call of the disciples is preceded by nightlong prayer! (Lk 6:12)
see 1 Kgs 12:31; 13:33: appointment to the priesthood!

Read Ellen White on Mk 3:14 - "He Ordained the Twelve" (*Desire of Ages*, ch. 25)!

The Scriptures are for us

"Beside the throng on the shores of Gennesaret, Jesus in His sermon by the sea had other audiences before His mind. Looking down the ages, He saw His faithful ones in prison and judgment hall, in temptation and loneliness and affliction. Every scene of joy and conflict and perplexity was open before Him. In the words spoken to those gathered about Him, He was speaking also to these other souls the very words that would come to them as a message of hope in trial, of comfort in sorrow, and heavenly light in darkness. **Through the Holy Spirit, that voice which was speaking from the fisherman's boat on the Sea of Galilee, would be heard speaking peace to human hearts to the close of time**" (DA 245).

True Education

"They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them. The Saviour did not despise education; for when controlled by the love of God, and devoted to His service, intellectual culture is a blessing. But He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become colaborers with the Man of Nazareth. In their bigotry they scorned to be taught by Christ. The Lord Jesus seeks the co-operation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. **The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ. This is not to be gained through education in the most scientific schools.** It is the fruit of wisdom that is obtained from the divine Teacher alone" (DA 249).

"Jesus chose unlearned fishermen because they had not been schooled in the traditions and erroneous customs of their time. They were men of native ability, and they were humble and teachable,—men whom He could educate for His work. In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse those dormant faculties. It was such men that Jesus called to be His colaborers; and He gave them the advantage of association with Himself. Never had the world's great men such a teacher. When the disciples came forth from the Saviour's training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. **It is not the highest work of education to communicate knowledge merely, but to impart that vitalizing energy which is received through the contact of mind with mind, and soul with soul. It is only life that can beget life.** What privilege, then, was theirs who for three years were in daily contact with that divine life from which has flowed every life-giving impulse that has blessed the world!" (DA 250).

"In the apostles of our Lord there was nothing to bring glory to themselves. It was evident that the success of their labors was due only to God. The lives of these men, the characters they developed, and the mighty work that God wrought through them, are a testimony to what He will do for all who are teachable and obedient" (DA 250).

“He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal His grace. If His people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels. If men in humble life were encouraged to do all the good they could do, if restraining hands were not laid upon them to repress their zeal, there would be a hundred workers for Christ where now there is one. **God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God.** The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. Men of the highest education in the arts and sciences have learned precious lessons from Christians in humble life who were designated by the world as unlearned. But these obscure disciples had obtained an education in the highest of all schools. They had sat at the feet of Him who spoke as “never man spake” (DA 251).

“The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ’s departure was to be His representative on earth. No costly sanctuary was at their command, but the Saviour led His disciples to the retreat He loved, and in their minds the sacred experiences of that day were forever linked with the beauty of mountain and vale and sea. Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world. **As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stand as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles were to stand as representatives of the gospel church**” (DA 291).

Judas

“While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples. With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, “Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.” Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” Matthew 8:19, 20. Judas believed Jesus to be the Messiah; and by joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty (DA 293).

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly. The disciples had been much disappointed that Jesus had not tried to secure the co-operation of the leaders in Israel. They felt that it was a mistake not to strengthen His cause by securing the support of these influential men. If He had repulsed Judas, they would, in their own minds, have questioned the wisdom of their Master. The after history of Judas would show them the danger of allowing any worldly consideration to have weight in deciding the fitness of men for the work of God. The co-operation of such men as the disciples were anxious to secure would have betrayed the work into the hands of its worst enemies.

Yet when Judas joined the disciples, he was not insensible to the beauty of the character of Christ. He felt the influence of that divine power which was drawing souls to the Saviour. He who came not to break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax would not repulse this soul while even one desire was reaching toward the light. The Saviour read the heart of Judas; He knew the depths of iniquity to which, unless delivered by the grace of God, Judas would sink. In connecting this man with Himself, He placed him where he might, day by day, be brought in contact with the outflowing of His own unselfish love. If he would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God.

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image.

Judas had the same opportunities as had the other disciples. He listened to the same precious lessons. But the practice of the truth, which Christ required, was at variance with the desires and purposes of Judas, and he would not yield his ideas in order to receive wisdom from Heaven (DA 294).

How tenderly the Saviour dealt with him who was to be His betrayer! In His teaching, Jesus dwelt upon principles of benevolence that struck at the very root of covetousness. He presented before Judas the heinous character of greed, and many a time the disciple realized that his character had been portrayed, and his sin pointed out; but he would not confess and forsake his unrighteousness. He was self-sufficient, and instead of resisting temptation, he continued to follow his fraudulent practices. Christ was before him, a living example of what he must become if he reaped the benefit of the divine mediation and ministry; but lesson after lesson fell unheeded on the ears of Judas.

Jesus dealt him no sharp rebuke for his covetousness, but with divine patience bore with this erring man, even while giving him evidence that He read his heart as an open book. He presented before him the highest incentives for right doing; and in rejecting the light of Heaven, Judas would be without excuse (DA 295).

Instead of walking in the light, Judas chose to retain his defects. Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished, until Satan had full control of the man. Judas became a representative of the enemy of Christ. When he came into association with Jesus, he had some precious traits of character that might have been made a blessing to the church. If he had been willing to wear the yoke of Christ, he might have been among the chief of the apostles; but he hardened his heart when his defects were pointed out, and in pride and rebellion chose his own selfish ambitions, and thus unfitted himself for the work that God would have given him to do (DA 295).

The Disciples, B.C.

All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called "the sons of thunder." While they were with Jesus, any slight shown to Him aroused their indignation and combativeness. Evil temper, revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. He was proud, and ambitious to be first in the kingdom of God. But day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. He opened his heart to the divine influence, and became not only a hearer but a doer of the Saviour's words. Self was hid in Christ. He learned to wear the yoke of Christ and to bear His burden (DA 295).

Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and his brethren did not leave Him; they chose Jesus, notwithstanding the reproofs. **The Saviour did not withdraw from them because of their weakness and errors. They continued to the end to share His trials and to learn the lessons of His life. By beholding Christ, they became transformed in character** (DA 296).

Mk 4:30 "And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?"

"The government of the kingdom of Christ is like no earthly government. It is a representation of the characters of those who compose the kingdom. "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Christ asked, "or with what comparison shall we liken it?" He could find nothing on earth that would serve as a perfect comparison. His court is one where holy love presides, and whose offices and appointments are graced by the exercise of charity. He charges his servants to bring pity and loving-kindness, his own attributes, into all their office work, and to find their happiness and satisfaction in reflecting the love and tender compassion of the divine nature on all with whom they associate" (RH March 19, 1908).

Mk 5:25-34 The Healing of a Sick Woman

The Touch of Faith

"In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life, and instantly her pain and feebleness gave place to the vigor of perfect health. . . . The Saviour could distinguish the touch of faith from the casual contact of the careless throng" (DA 343).

True Faith

"It was not through the outward contact with Him, but through the faith which took hold on His divine power, that the cure was wrought. The wondering crowd that pressed close about Christ realized no accession of vital power. But when the suffering woman put forth her hand to touch Him, believing that she would be made whole, she felt the healing virtue. So in spiritual things. To talk of religion in a casual way, to pray without soul hunger and living faith, avails nothing. A nominal faith in Christ, which accepts Him merely as the Saviour of the world, can never bring healing to the soul. **The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith, cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe about Christ; we must believe in Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves.** Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power" (DA 347).

Mk 6:17-29 The Fate of John the Baptist

"To many minds a deep mystery surrounds the fate of John the Baptist. They question why he should have been left to languish and die in prison. The mystery of this dark providence our human vision cannot penetrate; but it can never shake our confidence in God when we remember that John was but a sharer in the sufferings of Christ. **All who follow Christ will wear the crown of sacrifice.** They will surely be misunderstood by selfish men, and will be made a mark for the fierce assaults of Satan. It is this principle of self-sacrifice that his kingdom is established to destroy, and he will war against it wherever manifested" (DA 223).

"The childhood, youth, and manhood of John had been characterized by firmness and moral power. When his voice was heard in the wilderness saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Matthew 3:3), Satan feared for the safety of his kingdom. The sinfulness of sin was revealed in such a manner that men trembled. Satan's power over many who had been under his control was broken. He had been unwearied in his efforts to draw away the Baptist from a life of unreserved surrender to God; but he had failed. And he had failed to overcome Jesus. In the temptation in the wilderness, Satan had been defeated, and his rage was great. Now he determined to bring sorrow upon Christ by striking John. The One whom he could not entice to sin he would cause to suffer" (DA 224).

"Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. Gladly would the Saviour have come to John, to brighten the dungeon gloom with His own presence. But He was not to place Himself in the hands of enemies and imperil His own mission. Gladly would He have delivered His faithful servant. But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom. As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience!" (DA 224).

"Satan was permitted to cut short the earthly life of God's messenger; but that life which "is hid with Christ in God," the destroyer could not reach. Col 3:3. He exulted that he had brought sorrow upon Christ, but he had failed of conquering John. Death itself only placed him forever beyond the power of temptation. In this warfare, Satan was revealing his own character. Before the witnessing universe he made manifest his enmity toward God and man. Though no miraculous deliverance was granted John, he was not forsaken. He had always the companionship of heavenly angels, who opened to him the prophecies concerning Christ, and the precious promises of Scripture. These were his stay, as they were to be the stay of God's people through the coming ages. **To John the Baptist, as to those that came after him, was given the assurance, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end."** Mt 28:20, R. V., margin. (DA 224).

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.

"Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Phil 1:29. **And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor**" (DA 225).

Mk 7: Unclean?!

"There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man." . . . "because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?" (Mk 7:15, 19).

Context: Human Tradition vs Divine Law - Issue not Levitical Regulations but Human Perceptions

"Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴ *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. ⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (Mk 7:2ff.)

The question still lingers . . . What comes out of my heart?!

Mk 8:33 Get Thee Behind Me, Satan!

"The words of Christ were spoken, not to Peter, but to the one who was trying to separate him from his Redeemer. "Get thee behind Me, Satan." No longer interpose between Me and My erring servant. Let Me come face to face with Peter, that I may reveal to him the mystery of My love. It was to Peter a bitter lesson, and one which he learned but slowly, that the path of Christ on earth lay through agony and humiliation. The disciple shrank from fellowship with his Lord in suffering. But in the heat of the furnace fire he was to learn its blessing. Long afterward, when his active form was bowed with the burden of years and labors, he wrote, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Pet 4:12, 13 (DA 416).

Mk 9:2-13 Transfiguration

"Before the crown must come the cross" (DA 422)

Mk 10:17-30 The Rich Young Ruler

"The character of God is expressed in His law; and in order for you to be in harmony with God, the principles of His law must be the spring of your every action. Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. The Lord expects no less of the soul now than He expected of man in Paradise, perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God's law, which is holy, just, and good" (COL 391).

"A rich man, as such, cannot enter heaven. His wealth gives him no title to the inheritance of the saints in light. **It is only through the unmerited grace of Christ that any man can find entrance into the city of God**" (COL 394).

"But Peter's question, "What shall we have therefore?" [Mt 19:27] had revealed a spirit that uncorrected would unfit the disciples to be messengers for Christ; for it was the spirit of a hireling. While they had been attracted by the love of Jesus, the disciples were not wholly free from Pharisaism. They still worked with the thought of meriting a reward in proportion to their labor. They cherished a spirit of self-exaltation and self-complacency, and made comparisons among themselves. When one of them failed in any particular, the others indulged feelings of superiority" (COL 396).

Mk 10:35-45: What happened to the Zebedee Brothers?

- James Zebedee: death by sword under Herod Agrippa (early 40s, Acts 12:1-3)
- John Zebedee (Acts 8:14, 25)
- 1 Cor 9: several apostles by name, not John
- Paul's persecution of Christians (Gal 1:13; 1 Tim 1:15; Acts 8:1-3 "except the apostles"; Acts 22:4; 26:10!)
- Papias fragment 10.17: John 1 martyr!

Mk 11:1-10 The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

"The blind whom He had restored to sight were leading the way. The dumb whose tongues He had loosed shouted the loudest hosannas. The cripples whom He had healed bounded with joy, and were the most active in breaking the palm branches and waving them before the Saviour. Widows and orphans were exalting the name of Jesus for His works of mercy to them. The lepers whom He had cleansed spread their untainted garments in His path, and hailed Him as the King of glory. Those whom His voice had awakened from the sleep of death were in that throng. Lazarus, whose body had seen corruption in the grave, but who now rejoiced in the strength of glorious manhood, led the beast on which the Saviour rode" (DA 572).

Mk 12:30 The Greatest Commandment

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mk 12:30).

A Christian Work Ethic

"The physical powers are to be brought into service from love to God. The Lord wants the physical strength, and you can reveal your love for Him by the right use of your physical powers, doing the very work which needs to be done. There is no respect of persons with God" (FE 314).

"When the tabernacle was built in the wilderness for the service of God, the work was done under divine direction. God was the designer, the workmen were educated by Him, and they put heart and soul and strength into the work. There was hard labor to be done, and the sturdy mechanic taxed muscle and sinew, manifesting his love to God in the toil for His honor. There is in the world a great deal of hard, taxing work to be done, and he who labors without exercising the God-given powers of mind and heart and soul, he who employs the physical strength alone, makes the work a wearisome tax and burden. There are men with mind, heart, and soul who regard work as a drudgery, and settle down to it with self-complacent ignorance, delving without thought, without taxing the mental capabilities in order to do the work better. **There is science in the humblest kind of work, and if all would thus regard it, they would see nobility in labor. Heart and soul are to be put into work of any kind; then there is cheerfulness and efficiency.** In agricultural or mechanical occupations men may give evidence to God that they appreciate His gift in the physical powers, and the mental faculties as well. Let the educated ability be employed in devising improved methods of work. This is what the Lord wants. There is honor in any class of work that is essential to be done. Let the law of God be made the standard of action, and it ennobles and sanctifies all labor. **Faithfulness in the discharge of every duty makes the work noble, and reveals a character that God can approve"** (FE 315).

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." God desires the love that is expressed in heart-service, in soul-service, in the service of the physical powers.

We are not to be dwarfed in any kind of service for God. Whatever He has lent us is to be used intelligently for Him.

The man who exercises his faculties will surely strengthen them, but he must seek to do his best. There is need of intelligence and educated ability to devise the best methods in farming, in building, and in every other department, that the worker may not labor in vain" (FE 315.4).

Work Ethics

"It is not a virtue for men or women to excuse slow bungling at work of any character. The slow habits must be overcome. The man who is slow, and does his work at a disadvantage, is an unprofitable workman. His slowness is a defect that needs to be seen and corrected. He needs to exercise his intellect in planning how to use his time so as to secure the best results. When one is forever at work, and the work is never done, it is because mind and heart are not put into the work. It takes some persons ten hours to do that which another accomplishes readily in five. Such workmen do not bring tact and method into their labor. There is something to be learned every day as to how to improve in the manner of labor so as to get through the work, and have time for something else. It is the duty of every worker not merely to give his strength but his mind and intellect to that which he undertakes to do. Some who are engaged in domestic labor are always at work; it is not because they have so much to do, but they do not plan in such a way as to have time. They should give themselves a certain time to accomplish their task, and make every move tell. Dullness and ignorance are no virtue. You can choose to become stereotyped in a wrong course of action because you have not the determination to take yourselves in hand and to reform, or you may cultivate your powers to do the very best kind of service, and then you will find yourselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. You will be appreciated for all that you are worth. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (FCE 314-316; MS 8, 1894).

Mark 13: The Signs of the End

From *The Desire of Ages*, ch. 69

"Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events. Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them He blended the description of the two great crises, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves. When He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, His prophetic words reached beyond that event to the final conflagration in that day when the Lord shall rise out of His place to punish the world for their iniquity, when the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. This entire discourse was given, not for the disciples only, but for those who should live in the last scenes of this earth's history" (DA 628).

"Turning to the disciples, Christ said, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Many false messiahs will appear, claiming to work miracles, and declaring that the time of the deliverance of the Jewish nation has come. These will mislead many. Christ's words were fulfilled. Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem many false messiahs appeared. But this warning was given also to those who live in this age of the world. The same deceptions practiced prior to the destruction of Jerusalem have been practiced through the ages, and will be practiced again" (DA 628).

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, men wrestled for the supremacy. Emperors were murdered. Those supposed to be standing next the throne were slain. There were wars and rumors of wars. "All these things must come to pass," said Christ, "but the end [of the Jewish nation as a nation] is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Christ said, As the rabbis see these signs, they will declare them to be God's judgments upon the nations for holding in bondage His chosen people. They will declare that these signs are the token of the advent of the Messiah. Be not deceived; they are the beginning of His judgments. The people have looked to themselves. They have not repented and been converted that I should heal them. The signs that they represent as tokens of their release from bondage are signs of their destruction" (DA 628).

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” All this the Christians suffered. Fathers and mothers betrayed their children. Children betrayed their parents. Friends delivered their friends up to the Sanhedrin. The persecutors wrought out their purpose by killing Stephen, James, and other Christians” (DA 629).

“Through His servants, God gave the Jewish people a last opportunity to repent. He manifested Himself through His witnesses in their arrest, in their trial, and in their imprisonment. Yet their judges pronounced on them the death sentence. They were men of whom the world was not worthy, and by killing them the Jews crucified afresh the Son of God. So it will be again. The authorities will make laws to restrict religious liberty. They will assume the right that is God’s alone. They will think they can force the conscience, which God alone should control. Even now they are making a beginning; this work they will continue to carry forward till they reach a boundary over which they cannot step. God will interpose in behalf of His loyal, commandment-keeping people” (DA 630).

“On every occasion when persecution takes place, those who witness it make decisions either for Christ or against Him. Those who manifest sympathy for the ones wrongly condemned show their attachment for Christ. Others are offended because the principles of truth cut directly across their practice. Many stumble and fall, apostatizing from the faith they once advocated. Those who apostatize in time of trial will, to secure their own safety, bear false witness, and betray their brethren. Christ has warned us of this, that we may not be surprised at the unnatural, cruel course of those who reject the light” (DA 630).

“Christ gave His disciples a sign of the ruin to come on Jerusalem, and He told them how to escape: “When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” This warning was given to be heeded forty years after, at the destruction of Jerusalem. The Christians obeyed the warning, and not a Christian perished in the fall of the city” (DA 630).

“Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter; neither on the Sabbath day,” Christ said. He who made the Sabbath did not abolish it, nailing it to His cross. The Sabbath was not rendered null and void by His death. Forty years after His crucifixion it was still to be held sacred. For forty years the disciples were to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day” (DA 630).

“From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth’s history,—the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ’s view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. Upon these scenes His disciples could not then endure to look, and Jesus passed them by with a brief mention. “Then shall be great tribulation,” He said, “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ’s followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God’s hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished. “But for the elect’s sake,” He said, “those days shall be shortened” (DA 630).

“Now, in unmistakable language, our Lord speaks of His second coming, and He gives warning of dangers to precede His advent to the world. “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” As one of the signs of Jerusalem’s destruction, Christ had said, “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” False prophets did rise, deceiving the people, and leading great numbers into the desert. Magicians and sorcerers, claiming miraculous power, drew the people after them into the mountain solitudes. But this prophecy was spoken also for the last days. This sign is given as a sign of the second advent. Even now false christs and false prophets are showing signs and wonders to seduce His disciples. Do we not hear

the cry, "Behold, He is in the desert"? Have not thousands gone forth into the desert, hoping to find Christ? And from thousands of gatherings where men profess to hold communion with departed spirits is not the call now heard, "Behold, He is in the secret chambers"? This is the very claim that spiritism puts forth. But what says Christ? "Believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (DA 631).

"The Saviour gives signs of His coming, and more than this, He fixes the time when the first of these signs shall appear: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. And He says, "Learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:32, 33, margin. (DA 632).

"Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," He says, "but My words shall not pass away" (DA 632).

"Christ is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to raise the dead, and to change the living saints from glory to glory. He will come to honor those who have loved Him, and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them nor His promise. There will be a relinking of the family chain. When we look upon our dead, we may think of the morning when the trump of God shall sound, when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:52. A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. A little longer, and He will present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 1:24. Wherefore, when He gave the signs of His coming He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (DA 632).

"But the day and the hour of His coming Christ has not revealed. He stated plainly to His disciples that He Himself could not make known the day or the hour of His second appearing. Had He been at liberty to reveal this, why need He have exhorted them to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy? There are those who claim to know the very day and hour of our Lord's appearing. Very earnest are they in mapping out the future. But the Lord has warned them off the ground they occupy. The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God's mystery. Christ continues, pointing out the condition of the world at His coming: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Christ does not here bring to view a temporal millennium, a thousand years in which all are to prepare for eternity. He tells us that as it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of man comes again. (DA 633) How was it in Noah's day? "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world turned from Jehovah, refusing to do His holy will. They followed their own unholy imagination and perverted ideas. It was because of their wickedness that they were destroyed; and today the world is following the same way. It presents no flattering signs of millennial glory. The transgressors of God's law are filling the earth with wickedness. Their betting, their horse racing, their gambling, their dissipation, their lustful practices, their untamable passions, are fast filling the world with violence" (DA 633).

"In the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction Christ said, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." This prophecy will again be fulfilled. The abounding iniquity of that day finds its counterpart in this generation. So with the prediction in regard to the preaching

of the gospel. Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declared that the gospel was preached to “every creature which is under heaven.” Colossians 1:23. So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Revelation 14:6, 14. God “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.” Acts 17:31. Christ tells us when that day shall be ushered in. He does not say that all the world will be converted, but that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory” (DA 633.3).

“After He had given the signs of His coming, Christ said, “When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” “Take ye heed, watch and pray.” God has always given men warning of coming judgments. Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me.” Noah obeyed and was saved. The message came to Lot, “Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.” Genesis 7:1;19:14. Lot placed himself under the guardianship of the heavenly messengers, and was saved. So Christ’s disciples were given warning of the destruction of Jerusalem. Those who watched for the sign of the coming ruin, and fled from the city, escaped the destruction. So now we are given warning of Christ’s second coming and of the destruction to fall upon the world. Those who heed the warning will be saved” (DA 634).

“Because we know not the exact time of His coming, we are commanded to watch. “Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.” Luke 12:37. Those who watch for the Lord’s coming are not waiting in idle expectancy. The expectation of Christ’s coming is to make men fear the Lord, and fear His judgments upon transgression. It is to awaken them to the great sin of rejecting His offers of mercy. Those who are watching for the Lord are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to co-operate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls. These are the faithful and wise servants who give to the Lord’s household “their portion of meat in due season.” Luke 12:42. They are declaring the truth that is now specially applicable. As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses each declared the truth for his time, so will Christ’s servants now give the special warning for their generation” (DA 634).

“But Christ brings to view another class: “If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him. The evil servant says in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming.” He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord’s coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind. The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare. “The lord of that servant shall come ... in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites”(DA 635).

“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Revelation 3:3. The advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers. They are saying, “Peace and safety.” Like the priests and teachers before the fall of Jerusalem, they look for the church to enjoy earthly prosperity and glory. The signs of the times they interpret as foreshadowing this. But what saith the word of Inspiration? “Sudden destruction cometh upon them.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth, upon all who make this world their home, the day of God will come as a snare. It comes to them as a prowling thief” (DA 635.2).

“The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, “All things continue as they were from the beginning.” “Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” 2 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 56:12. We will go deeper into

pleasure loving. But Christ says, "Behold, I come as a thief." Revelation 16:15. At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, "Where is the promise of His coming?" the signs are fulfilling. While they cry, "Peace and safety," sudden destruction is coming. When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief" (DA 635.3).

"Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Who can read the future? Where is security? There is assurance in nothing that is human or earthly. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win" (DA 636).

"The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to theaters, horse races, gambling halls. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut" (DA 636.2).

"Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (DA 637).

Mk 14:32-42 Gethsemane

"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done. Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen. Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him" (DA 690-693).

"By faith, Christ was victor" (DA 756).

The Nature of Christ in the Crucifixion

"Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No; the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person—the man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible. Christ, the sinless One, will save every son and daughter of Adam who accepts the salvation proffered them, consenting to become the children of God. The Saviour has purchased the fallen race with His own blood" (5BC 1113.2).

“This is a great mystery, a mystery that will not be fully, completely understood in all its greatness until the translation of the redeemed shall take place. Then the power and greatness and efficacy of the gift of God to man will be understood. But the enemy is determined that this gift shall be so mystified that it will become as nothingness (Letter 280, 1904). (5BC 1113.3) (Matthew 28:5, 6; Luke 24:5, 6; 2:19; John 10:17, 18; Acts 13:32, 33.) When the voice of the angel was heard saying, “Thy Father calls thee,” He who had said, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself. Deity did not die. Humanity died, but Christ now proclaims over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” In His divinity Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He had life in Himself to quicken whom He will” (5BC 1113.4).

“I am the resurrection, and the life.” This language can be used only by the Deity. All created things live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of the Son of God. However able and talented, however large their capabilities, they are replenished with life from the Source of all life. Only He who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, could say, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.” All the human beings in our world take their life from Him. He is the spring, the fountain of life (Ms 131, 1897).(5BC 1113.5) “I am the resurrection, and the life.” He who had said, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself. Humanity died: divinity did not die. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will.(5BC 1113.6) All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are recipients of the life of the Son of God. However able and talented, however large their capacities, they are replenished with life from the Source of all life. He is the spring, the fountain, of life. Only He who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, could say, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.” ...(5BC 1113.7) Christ was invested with the right to give immortality. The life which He had laid down in humanity, He again took up and gave to humanity. “I am come,” He says, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (YI, August 4, 1898). (5BC 1113.8).

The Short/Long Ending of Mark 16:9-20

Take a close look at Mark 16:8-9 (and any footnotes) in various Bibles. What do you notice? What do these Bibles say? What are the assumptions?

The ending of Mark based on many manuscripts reads as follows:

“So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (Mk 16:8).

Period. End of Gospel. That’s right. This is how the Gospel ends according to the claims of “the most reliable” or “most ancient” manuscripts. “They were afraid.” Is this really how Mark ended his Gospel? The NIV 2011 prints Mk 16:9-20 in italics, indicating that it might not be original to Mark. Curiously, the NASB could not make up its mind over the years: 1960 NASB: yes. 1972 NASB: no; NASB 1977: yes; NASB 1995: no!

Factors in favor of short ending:

- Jerome and Eusebius knew of no Greek MSS with the longer ending (but Jerome included the LE in the Vulgate!)
- several manuscripts comment on longer ending in the margin
- long ending different in style and vocab
- long ending has different versions (scribal efforts?)

Possibilities for short ending:

- authorial intent: I want someone to finish the women’s unfinished business!
- unfinished for unknown reasons
- lost ending
- ran out of papyrus

Factors in favor of the long ending (Mk 16:9-20 is original to Mark):

- "Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God; confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand, until I make Your foes Your footstool." (Against Heresies (Book III, Chapter 10:5) - 2nd century!

- Irenaeus' disciple Tatian included the Long Ending in the Diatessaron (comparison of 4 Gospels)

- Note the blank space in Vaticanus (4th c.): Mark 16:9-20 could easily fit in the space available. On the other hand, no such space is afforded to the transition from Luke to John. Ironically, Vaticanus also misses the end of Hebrews, the Pastoral Epistles, and Revelation.



Further factors supporting the trustworthiness of Mk 16:9-20:

- Deuteronomy 34:5-12 was not written by Moses, but nobody questions its canonicity
- Jeremiah did not write Jeremiah 52, but nobody questions its canonicity
- Jesus appearing in "another form" (Mk 16:12) is not heresy; this also happened in the transfiguration (Mk 9:2) and in Rev 1:14.
- Mk 16:16 does not teach "baptismal

Mark, with space for long ending (16:9-20)

Luke, with John immediately following

regeneration" since the absolute condition is believing

- "speaking in tongues" and "snake-proof Christians"? Jesus is dealing with His immediate audience and their unbelief (v14!)
- significantly, Mark 16:9-20 contains no aberrant theology as the elements of the disputed passage appear in the other Gospels.
- Alford, who rejects the longer ending, wrote in 1844: "The inference therefore seems to me to be, that it is an authentic fragment, placed as a completion of the Gospel in very early times: by whom written, must of course remain wholly uncertain; but coming to us with very weighty sanction, and having strong claims on our reception and reverence" (1:438).
- Sir Frederic Kenyon (who thought the LE was written by Jesus-disciple Aristion): "we can accept the passage as true and authentic narrative, though not an original portion of St. Mark's Gospel" (1951, p. 174).
- Kurt and Barbara Aland: the LE "was recognized as canonical" and that it "may well be from the beginning of the second century" (Aland and Aland, 1987, pp. 69, 227). "It is true that the longer ending of Mark 16:9-20 is found in 99 percent of the Greek manuscripts as well as the rest of the tradition, enjoying over a period of centuries practically an official ecclesiastical sanction as a genuine part of the gospel of Mark" (1987, p. 287)
- 3rd century witnesses that predate both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus: Tertullian († AD 220 or later), in his *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* (ch. 51; Roberts and Donaldson, 1973, 3:584), *Against Praxeas* (ch. 30; Roberts and Donaldson, 3:627), and *A Treatise on the Soul* (ch. 25; Roberts and Donaldson, 3:206). Cyprian († AD 258), alluded to verses 17-18 in his *The Seventh Council of Carthage* (Roberts and Donaldson, 1971, 5:569). In the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (apocryphal), verses 15-18 in Greek and verses 15-19 in Latin are quoted in Part I: *The Acts of Pilate* (ch. 14), and verse 16 in its Greek form is quoted in Part II: *The Descent of Christ into Hell* (ch. 2) (Roberts and Donaldson, 1970, 8:422,436,444-445). *De Rebaptismate* (AD 258).
- Vaticanus and Sinaiticus don't have LE, but Alexandrinus does!
- Sinaiticus inserted *The Shepherd of Hermas* and *The Epistle of Barnabas*, and Vaticanus inserted some OT Apocryphal books among the canonical books.

- inconsistencies between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do not speak in their favor. For example, Jesus' hematidrosis ("great drops of blood" - Lk 22:43-44) is included in S but not V or A. Luke 23:34 ("Father, forgive them") is included in A and S but not V. John 2:3 is unique in S. John 9:38 ("Lord, I believe!") is in A and V but not S.

In short, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are not consistent among each other and therefore cannot be the final authority in matters of textual determinations.

ORIGINAL NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS			
Century	Greek Manuscripts	Ancient Versions	Patristic Writers
2nd		Curetonian Syriac Sinaitic Syriac	Irenaeus Justin Martyr? Tatian/Diatessaron
3rd		Coptic-Sahidic	Tertullian Cyprian Gospel of Nicodemus De Rebaptismate
4th	Vaticanus Sinaiticus	Vulgate Coptic-Bohairic Coptic-Fayyumic Gothic Armenian	Aphraates Ambrose Didymus Apostolic Constitutions Asterius? Eusebius?
5th	Alexandrinus Ephraemi Rescriptus Washington	Palestinian Syriac Peshitta Syriac Old Latin-Bezae Old Latin-Corbeiensis II Old Latin-Sangallensis	Jerome Chrysostom Leo Severian Marcus-Eremita Nestorius Augustine
6th	Bezae Cantabrigiensis	Syriac Harclean	

Blue = Contains or quotes from Mark 16:9-20

Red = Does not contain Mark 16:9-20

[NOTE: Dates are taken from the UBS Greek text critical apparatus.]

(<http://www.apologeticpress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=704>)

Church Fathers: The following church fathers support the long ending's authenticity (adapted from <http://brandplucked.webs.com/mark16920.htm>):

1. Papias (about ad 100) refers to v. 18 (as stated by Eusebius, Hist. Ecc. iii. 39).
2. Justin Martyr (ad 151) quotes v. 20 (Apol. i. c. 45).
3. Irenaeus (ad 180) quotes and remarks on v. 19 (Adv. Hoer. lib. iii. c. x.).
4. Hippolytus (ad 190-227) quotes vv. 17-19 (Lagarde's ed., 1858, p. 74).
5. Vincentius (ad 256) quoted two verses at the seventh Council of Carthage, held under Cyprian.
6. The Acta Pilati (cent. 2) quotes vv. 15, 16, 17, 18 (Tischendorf's ed., 1852, pp. 243, 351).
7. The Apostolical Constitutions (cent. 3 or 4) quotes vv. 16, 17, 18.
8. Eusebius (ad 325) discusses these verses, as quoted by

Marinus from a lost part of his history.

9. Aphraartes (ad 337), a Syrian bishop, quoted vv. 16-18 in his first homily (Dr. Wright's ed., 1869, i. p. 21).
10. Ambrose (ad 374-97), Archbishop of Milan, quotes vv. 15 (4x), 16, 17, 18 (3x), and v. 20 (once).
11. Chrysostom (ad 400) refers to v. 9; and states that vv. 19, 20 are "the end of the gospel".
12. Jerome (b. 331, d. 420) includes these 12 verses in his Latin translation, besides quoting vv. 9 and 14 in his other writings.
13. Augustine (fl. ad 395-430) more than quotes them. he discusses them as being the work of the evangelist mark, and says that they were publicly read in the churches.
14. Nestorius (cent. 5) quotes v. 20
15. Cyril of Alexandria (ad 430) accepts the quotation.
16. Victor of Antioch (ad 425) confutes the opinion of Eusebius, by referring to very many mss. which he had seen, and so had satisfied himself that the last 12 verses were recorded in them.

The Internal Incongruence Argument:

- The long ending contains non-Markan vocabulary, and the transition from v8 to v9-20 "not natural"

Issue: Mary is identified in 16:9, although she had already been identified in 15:47 and 16:1

Response: Mark also fully identifies Mary in Mk 15:40 – only seven verses before verse 47 (which is in itself only 1 verse before 16:1!). Thus Mark identifying Mary in Mk 16:9 is no problem at all, esp. with the potentially confusing array of Marys in the Gospels.

Issue: the phrase anastas de ("but He arose") normally introduces a lengthy narrative.

Response: This is simply not true. We find it, for example, when Mary visits Elizabeth (Lk 1:39), a section that contains only 18 verses (1:39-56). The same phrase is used to introduce Jesus' visit to Simon (4:38-41) - 4 verses long. In places like Acts 5:17,34; 9:39; 11:28 the phrase shows that Mark's use of it is not unusual.

Issue: abrupt transition

Response: Mark's abrupt transition does not speak against his authorship of Mk 16:9-20. Other Gospels feature similar contrasts: Mt 28:11-15/16-20, and Luke 24:1-12/13ff.

Issue: Non-Markan Vocabulary

Response: This was refuted by A. Broadus in 1869. Mk 15:44-16:8 also contains 17-21 words that Mark uses nowhere else! But most significantly, Mark's unique terms are used elsewhere in the New Testament, especially in contexts where Mark would be influenced by Luke and Paul, Mark's travel companions.

Incidentally, Luke's ending also contains 9 words not used elsewhere by Luke, and 4 words not used anywhere else in the entire New Testament, yet the authenticity of Luke's ending is never questioned. Luke's introduction (Lk 1:1-10) contains some 20 terms not used elsewhere.

Conclusion

We can trust the canonical authenticity of Mk 16:9-20; the Holy Spirit has not misled the church for 2,000 years.

Mk 16:17 Speaking in Tongues, Handling Venomous Snakes?

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; **they will speak with new tongues**; ¹⁸ **they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover**" (Mk 16:17).

- speaking in new tongues = new (foreign) languages, previously unknown but learnable
- snakes: The context specifically targets unbelieving disciples at the moment: "Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; **and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe** those who had seen Him after He had risen" (Mk 16:14). So Jesus provides a) a solicitation of faith, b) a measure of missiological assurance

Preachers have died of snake-bite by misapplying the above verse (<http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/16/us/snake-salvation-pastor-bite/>).

Additional Resources on Mark 16:9-20:

<http://www.textexcavation.com/snapp/PDF/snappmark.pdf>: a 100-page analysis of the issue by James Edward Snapp, Jr.

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=13&article=704>

<http://brandplucked.webs.com/mark16920.htm>

Holland, Thomas. *Crowned With Glory*. Writers Club Press/iUniverse.com, 2000.

The Book of Luke

Background Check: Luke + Acts make up 25% of the New Testament!

Author: “beloved physician” (confirmed by Col 4:14; Phlm 1:24; 2 Tim 4:11)

Key Verse: “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10).

Luke has a unique focus on certain topics and areas of life:

Time: 1:1-2:52 - 30 years 3:1-9:50 - 3 years 9:51-19:27 - 3-4 months 19:28-24:53 - 8 days

“Day”	Matthew: 45x	Mark: 27x	Luke: 83x	John: 31x
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Medical Profile:

- Luke is the only one to mention the right ear of Malchus
- “klinidion” for bed (Lk 5:24), from which the English language gets the term “clinic”
- Luke features 6 unique miracles, 5 of them medical (4:38; 7:15; 8:55; 14:2; 18:15; 22:50)
- “traumatize” is found only in Luke’s writings (Lk 20:12; Acts 19:16)



Identity Check: “Who is this?” (Lk 7:49; 8:25; 9:9; 9:18)

Individuals: Zacchaeus, thief on the cross, prodigal son, tax-collector, good Samaritan, leper, etc.

Jesus pays attention to individuals – do you?

Prayer: 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28-29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:29-46; 23:34, 46

Five Hymns like 3 other infancy hymns: Miriam, Ex 15:21; Hannah, 1 Sam 2:1-10; Deborah, Judg 5

- Lk 1:28, 42 Ave Maria (Elisabeth)
- Lk 1:46-56 Magnificat (Mary)
- Lk 1:67-79 Benedictus (Zacharias)
- Lk 2:14 Gloria in Excelsis (Angels)
- Lk 2:28-32 Nunc Dimittis (Simeon)

The Holy Spirit: more references than Matthew + Mark; all chief actors are empowered by the Holy Spirit: John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon

Jesus and the Holy Spirit: conception, baptism, temptation, ministry, approval (10:21), continuation (24:49): The Holy Spirit + You!

Ladies First: Women in the Gospel of Luke

1; 2; 7:11-13; 8:1-3; 10:38-42; 21:1-4; 23:27-31, 49, with no record of female rejection/opposition!

Matthew: 30x	Mark : 19x	John: 19x	Luke: 43x
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Matthew 12:41-42	Luke 11:31-32 (Compare to Matthew; intentional?!)
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“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. **The queen of the South** will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.”

"The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”

Contrasts

doubting Zacharias	believing Mary
proud Pharisee	humble publican
prodigal son	older brother
9 unthankful lepers	1 thankful leper (Samaritan!)
old wineskins	new wineskins
rich man	Lazarus
Martha	Mary
priest, Levite	Samaritan
self-righteous Simon	self-sacrificing Mary Magdalene
Barabbas (son of the father)	Jesus (Son of the Father)
lost sheep	99
baby in manger	Savior!
poverty	wealth (1:52-53; 4:16-22; 6:20, 24-25; 12:13-21; 14:12-14; 16:19-31)

Angels	Matthew: 20x	Mark: 6x	John: 3x	Luke: 25x
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Luke's Hellenistic Style

- Classical Greek introduction (see comments on Lk 1:1-3)
- Rich vocabulary: 284 hapax legomena (words only used once; Matthew has 102; Mark has 77).
- Mark has 151 historical presents (“I am walking through the woods when all the sudden . . .”); Luke has only 1; more past oriented in the sense of a historical-factual report.

Elijah's Example: Prophetic Parallels/Comparisons

Prophetic Parallels

Elijah (1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 1-2)	Jesus
1 Kings 17:21-22	raising a widow's son (Lk 7:11-17)
1 Kings 17	multiplying food (Lk 9)
Prayer: 7x 1 Kings 18:46	Prayer: 3x (Lk 22:44 “more earnestly”)

1 Kings 18:38	fire coming from heaven to consume others (Rev 20:9)
1 Kings 19:8	fasting for 40 days (Lk 4:2)
1 Kings 20-22	ministry in Samaria (Lk 17:11)
2 Kings 2:1, 12	ascension into Heaven (Lk 9:30)
“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17).	“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Malachi 4:5).

Jn 1:25 “And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?”

Mt 27:45 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

The Elijah Message

[under construction]

Luke 1: Research Style

Luke 1:1-3	Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BC - 7 BC) <i>Greek historian and teacher of rhetoric</i>
Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus . . .	“Before beginning to write I gathered information, partly from the lips of the most learned men with whom I came in contact, and partly from histories written by Romans of whom they spoke with praise.”

Luke 2: Jesus’ Birth

The Greeks liked three main concepts: the True, the Good, the Beautiful - which show up in Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth:

Phase 1: True Decree, Caesar, Census, world, Quirinius, governor, everyone, city

Phase 2: Good Joseph, Galilee, Nazareth, Judea, City of David, Bethlehem, family of David

Phase 3: Beautiful Mary, child, firstborn son, manger, shepherds, angel of the Lord, Savior, Christ, Lord, baby

I remember the opening ceremonies of the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens featured a pregnant woman walking across the stage. I don’t know the choreography of the event, but this fits well with the idea of the beauty of new life.

Lk 2:10 tidings of joy

Luke 2:10 “Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ”	Augustus Inscription “But the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of tidings of joy on his account.”
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Lk 2:13 heavenly host: angels (DA)

- Haley's comet came 12/11 BC or 5 BC, but in antiquity comets forecast evil

- 7 BC: conjunction of Jupiter, Venus, Saturn in the constellation of Pisces (fish), which was a symbol of the early Christians. The Greek word for fish formed an acronym of faith: ἰχθύς ichthus = Jesus Christ, the son of God, Savior!

Ἰησοῦς	Jesus
Χριστός	Christ
θεός	God
υἱός	Son
σωτήρ	Savior

3 Reactions to Jesus' birth

Lk 2:17 external reaction: shepherds spread the word

Lk 2:18 public reaction: the public marvels

Lk 2:19 internal reaction: Mary "kept all these words and pondered them in her heart"

Parallels between the First Coming of Jesus and the Second Coming of Jesus

The First Coming of Jesus	The Second Coming of Jesus
outsiders (shepherds) report the arrival of Jesus	the Remnant preaches the Elijah message
Rome is involved in the birth of Jesus	Revelation 13: Rome involved in the end
death decree (Mt 2)	death decrees (Rev 12-13)
Joseph & Mary subject to legal decree	God's people subject to legal decree
angels announce the arrival (Lk 2:13-15)	angels announce the arrival (Revelation)
"Glory to God" (Lk 2:14)	"Glory to God" (Rev 14:6-7)
a song in the night (Lk 2:13-15)	a song in the night (Rev 15)

The Date of Jesus' Birth: "Christ had sojourned in the world for **thirty-three years . . .**" (DA 830).

Fall 4 BC - Spring AD 31 = 33 years

Ussher: 4,004 from creation of world = 4 BC; Death of Herod: April 4 BC (early Nisan)

	Fall				Spring								
Year	6BC	5BC	...	1BC	AD 1	AD 2	...	7	27	28	29	30	31
Age	Birth	1	2-4	5	6	7	...	12	29	30	31	32	33
	BC Phase				AD Phase			Temple Baptism				Cross	

Luke 4: The Temptation

Compare the temptation scenes between Matthew and Luke; how do you explain the difference?

Matthew

1. Bread
2. Temple
3. Worship

Luke

1. Bread
2. Worship
3. Temple

Luke 7: Finding Faith

“When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not **found** such great faith, not even in Israel!” 10 And those who were sent, returning to the house, **found** the servant well who had been sick” (Lk 7:9).

Pun on the word “found”:

Lk 7:9 εὑροῦν *heuron* aor ind 1st sg - Jesus finds the man

Lk 7:10 εὑροῦσιν *heuron* aor ind 3rd pl - The people find the man

Lk 10:1 - The 70: Only Luke has Jesus send out 70

Some manuscripts have 70, some 72, but numbering in Vaticanus is consistently unreliable: Acts 10:19: Vaticanus only has 2 men, when 3 makes more sense in context. Acts 27:37 - 276 almost drowned; Vaticanus has “about 76”.

70 has better Old Testament parallels (Deut 10:22; 32:8) and communicates completeness:

- Noah’s descendants (Gen 10)
- Jacob: 70 (75 - Ex 1:5 LXX; Acts 7:14)
- 70 elders Num 11:16, 24; Ex 24:1, 9 = representatives of all people
- Gideon’s 70 sons (Jdg 8:30); Ahab (2 Kgs 10:1)

Luke 10: The Good Samaritan

v33: felt compassion

v34: immediate care

v35: “whatever”

Jesus: The question is not, Who is your neighbor? but Are you a neighbor to your neighbor?

“a symbol of Jesus’ ministry” (DA [ref])

Luke 15: The Famous Parables

8x “Lostness”: Lk 15:4, 5, 8, 9 17, 24, 32

The Prodigal Son: Sick of Home – Home Sick

15:12 possessions: Greek *bios*

15:17 “he came to himself”

15:18 “I have sinned”

15:20: old men don’t run

The Older Brother

15:25 *symphonia + choreo(graphy)*

15:32 “was dead . . . but now he lives!”

If God loves X and I love God, then I need to learn to love X, too!

Luke 16: The Rich Man and Lazarus

Context: "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light" (Lk 16:8).

Negative example to solicit positive reaction!

- v20: problem not wrong-doing but neglect of right-doing
- v25: eternal destiny determined during lifetime
- v31: A decision for Jesus must be based on the Old Testament, no supernatural phenomena, because those do not convince: "But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death" (Jn 12:10).

Point: Decision is to be made during one's lifetime; your reward is received at the Second Coming!

(Mt 16:27; 25:31-41; 1 Cor 15:51-55; 1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 22:12)

"The general principle is maintained that bliss and misery after death are determined by conduct previous to death; but the details of the picture are taken from Jewish beliefs as to the condition of souls in Sheol [see Prov 15:11], and must not be understood as confirming those beliefs" (ICC s.v.).

Abraham's bosom: place of the blessed dead (Talmud *Kiddushim* 72a)

Abraham will be in the kingdom of heaven (Mt 8:11), not near hell!

Josephus on *Hades*:

"Hades is a subterraneous region where the light of this world does not shine. . . . This region is allowed as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary punishments, agreeable to every one's behavior and manners" (Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades; in *Josephus Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston [Grand Rapids, 1974], 637).

Angels bring the souls of the righteous dead to the "place we call The Bosom of Abraham . . ." but the unrighteous "into the neighborhood of hell itself." "A chaos deep and large is fixed between them; insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them, cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it." Ibid.

The Pope on Lazarus

"In the description of the next life that now follows in the parable, Jesus uses ideas that were current in the Judaism of his time. **Hence we must not force our interpretation of this part of the text. Jesus adopts existing images, without formally incorporating them into his teaching about the next life.** Nevertheless, he does unequivocally affirm the substance of the images. In this sense, it is important to note that Jesus invokes here the idea of the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, which by then had become part of the universal patrimony of Jewish faith. . . . Jesus says nothing about a 'resurrection in death' here" (J. Ratzinger, *Jesus*, 215).

Lk 22:44 "like great drops of blood" - Hematidrosis

Luke 24 The Emmaus Road: How Jesus restores Feelings through Facts

1. Feelings

v17: What are you talking about?

v19: What things?

v21: We had hoped (Greek: imperfect = we kept hoping)

Impression - Expression = Depression!

2. Facts - v25-27: Bible study on Christ in the Old Testament

1. Facts

“So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (Lk 24:33-34)

2. Feelings

“And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen” (Lk 24:52-53).

Appendix: The Ministry of Healing

“I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work” (CH 533 1901).
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“Light has been given me that in medical missionary work we have lost great advantages by failing to realize the need of a change in our plans in regard to the location of sanitariums. It is the Lord’s will that these institutions shall be established outside the city. They should be situated in the country, in the midst of surroundings as attractive as possible. In nature—the Lord’s garden—the sick will always find something to divert their attention from themselves and lift their thoughts to God” (7T 80).

“Nature is God’s physician. The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving—the elixir of life. Outdoor life is the only medicine that many invalids need. Its influence is powerful to heal sickness caused by fashionable life, a life that weakens and destroys the physical, mental, and spiritual powers” (7T 77).

“Why deprive patients of the health-restoring blessing to be found in outdoor life? I have been instructed that as the sick are encouraged to leave their rooms and spend time in the open air, cultivating flowers, or doing some other light, pleasant work, their minds will be called from self to something more health-giving. Exercise in the open air should be prescribed as a beneficial, life-giving necessity. The longer patients can be kept out of doors the less care will they require. The more cheerful their surroundings, the more hopeful will they be. Surround them with the beautiful things of nature; place them where they can see the flowers growing and hear the birds singing, and their hearts will break into song in harmony with the song of the birds” (7T 82).

“Let the leaders in our work instruct the people that sanitariums should be established in the midst of the most pleasant surroundings, in places not disturbed by the turmoil of the city, places where by wise instruction the thoughts of the patients can be bound up with the thoughts of God. Again and again I have described such places; but it seems that there has been no ear to hear. Recently in a most clear and convincing manner the advantage of establishing our institutions, especially our sanitariums and schools, outside the cities was presented to me” (7T 81).

The Book of John

Personal Introduction

“The very essence of the Gospel is restoration.” Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, 824



I first fell in love with the Gospel of John on a cold, rainy Sabbath morning in Jerusalem. In the Spring of 1995 a group of seminary students were gathered in the lobby of a study center as Andrews Seminary professor Dr. Jon Paulien expounded on the Gospel’s unique fingerprint and footage. It was then and there that I grasped the idea of a gospel to a second generation of believers who would no longer have eyewitnesses of their Lord among them, let alone the physical presence of the Savior. John’s implied maxim that “Jesus’ word is as good as His touch” still rings in my ears and has shaped much of my understanding and appreciation of the fourth Gospel. From this embryonic impetus developed a life-long personal and professional interest in the Gospel of John; a doctoral seminar with Dr. David Crutchley (at the time Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) only affirmed this kindred spirit.

In a world that is spiritually starved but not churched, highly materialistic and yet deeply impoverished, John’s message is as fresh as it is relevant: through the import of the Holy Spirit the life and teachings of Jesus are, to borrow John’s own inaugural terminology, the life and light of the world (cf. Jn 1:4). In this sense Jesus appears as de facto re-creator of the world. According to John, those who accept Jesus’ grand offer of life by believing receive a new identity – they in fact become “children of God” (Jn 1:12). In short, John portrays a Jesus who restores personally and holistically. With Paul we can indeed exclaim, “Look! A new creation” (2 Cor 5:17)!

In the pulpit and in the classroom I have witnessed the lasting impact of Jesus’ message through the witness of John. A 21st-century audience still longs for a rebirth through the Spirit like Jesus’ nightly visitor Nicodemus did 2,000 years ago; new generations still thirst for the water of life like the Samaritan woman did at Jacob’s well. The text of John’s Gospel has proven to retain its texture: Gospel – Good News! – does not lose its appeal over time; to the contrary, one may expect that the attraction will only increase in proximity to the world’s eschatological climax.

You might not find yourself in Jerusalem; but as Jesus manifests His glory anew through the Gospel of John (Jn 2:11), may you, the reader, believe. I pray that this companion commentary to the Gospel of John will draw you into God’s irresistible act of re-creation.

Background Check

Author: John the Son of Zebedee (from “sons of thunder” (Mk 3:17) to “the beloved” - younger than the others; teenager?!

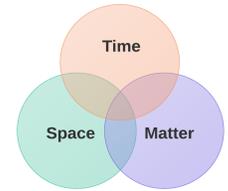
“These disciples had been for some time associated with Jesus in active labor. John and James, Andrew and Peter, with Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew, had been more closely connected with Him than the others, and had witnessed more of His miracles. Peter, James, and John stood in still nearer relationship to Him. They were almost constantly with Him, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His words. John pressed into still closer intimacy with Jesus, so that he is distinguished as the one whom Jesus loved. The Saviour loved them all, but John’s was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child’s confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Saviour’s deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to His people” (DA 292).

Eyewitness

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”. (Jn 1:14).

“And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe” (Jn 19:35).

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn 1:1).

**Major Themes**

- 1) Creation
- 2) Curse
- 3) Covenant
- 4) Christ
- 5) Community
- 6) Conduct
- 7) The Second Coming

Philosophical Trends

Docetism: “parallel universe”

Gnosticism: matter = evil

Arianism: “there was when He was not”

Chalcedonian Definition: “perfect in Godhead and perfect in Manhood, truly God and truly Man”

John Rylands Papyrus (P52) found in Egypt, dated 120-135:

Emphasis on Divinity of Jesus:

Omniscient: Jn 4: 6:6; 11:33; 13:28-29

Omnipresent (Jn 4: knows what disciples say)

Omnichronological (Jn 1:1; 7:39; 12:16)



The Purpose of John's Gospel

**2nd generation of believers: The Word is His Presence in His Absence.
because . . . Jesus' Word is as good as His touch!**

Characteristics**Divine/Human Contrasts:**

- “I and the Father are One” (Jn

- “My Lord and My God!” (Jn 20:28)

Human: tired, thirsty, frustrated, sad, troubled, loving

Son of God: 1:34; 1:49; 3:18; 5:25; 6:69; 10:36; 11:4; 19:7; 20:31

Son of Man: 1:51; 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23,34; 13:31 (from Dan 7:13!)

The Terminology of the Gospel of John

Term	John	Mt	Mk	Lk
Jesus (Ἰησοῦς Iēsous)	244	152	82	88
Father (πατήρ patēr)	136	63	18	56
Believe (πιστεύω pisteuō)	98	11	14	9
World (κόσμος kosmos)	78	9	3	3
Disciple (μαθητής mathētēs)	78	72	46	37
Jew/Jewish (Ἰουδαῖος Ioudaios)	70	5	7	5
Know (γινώσκω ginōskō)	57	20	12	28
Amen (ἀμήν amēn)	50	31	14	6
Word (λόγος logos)	40	33	24	34
Love-verb (ἀγαπάω agaraō)	37	8	5	13
Life (ζωή zōē)	36	7	4	5
Peter (Πέτρος Petros)	34	23	20	19
Witness (μαρτυρέω martureō)	33	1	0	1
Hour (ὥρα hōra)	26	21	12	17
Light (φῶς phōs)	23	7	1	7
Water (ὔδωρ hudōr)	21	7	5	6
Testimony (μαρτυρία marturia)	14	0	3	1
Flesh (σὰρξ sarx)	13	5	4	2
True (ἀληθινός alēthinos)	9	0	0	1
Darkness (σκοτία skotia)	8	1	0	1
Love-noun (ἀγάπη agapē)	7	1	0	1

Time and the Cross

- “the hour has come” (Jn 17:1)
- Jesus’ move from Caiaphas to the Praetorium: “early in the morning” (Jn 18:28)
- His death occurred on Preparation day before a high Sabbath (Jn 19:31)
- the women run to the tomb “early, while it was still dark” (Jn 20:1)
- Jesus rejoins his disciples on Sunday “at evening” (Jn 20:19)
- Jesus meets the disciples “when the morning had come” (Jn 21:4)

John’s Terminology of Time

Term	John (number of occurrences; references)	Mt	Mk	Lk
αἰώνιος (aiōnios) “eternal”	17: 3:15, 16, 3:36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 6:68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3	5	4	4
αἰών (aiōn) “forever”	12 4:14; 6:51, 58; 8:35, 51, 52; 9:32; 10:28; 11:26; 12:34; 13:8; 14:16	8	4	7

οὕν (oun) "then", "after"	194 absent only in ch. 17	56	6	33
νῦν (nun) "now"	28x: 2:8; 4:18, 23; 5:25; 6:42; 8:11, 40, 52; 9:21, 41; 11:8, 22; 12:27, 31; 13:31, 36; 14:29; 15:22, 24; 16:5, 22, 29, 30; 17:5, 7, 13; 18:36; 21:10	4	3	12
ώρα (hohra) "hour"	24x: 1:39; 2:4; 4:6, 21, 23, 52, 53; 5:25, 28, 35; 7:30; 8:20; 11:9; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1; 19:14, 27	20	10	16
Τῆ δὲ ἐπαύριον (epaurion) "the next day"	5x: 1:29, 35, 43; 6:22; 12:12	1	1	0

Sequential Time References in the Gospel of John

Reference	Time Reference
1:1, 2	In the beginning
1:29, 39	The next day
1:39	the tenth hour
1:43	the next day
2:1	on the third day
2:4	My time has not yet come
2:13	Passover (cf. 4:45)
2:19-20	temple: 3 days vs. 46 years
2:23	Passover
3:2	night
4:6	the sixth hour
4:21, 23, 25	a time is coming . . . a time is coming and has now come . . . when he comes
4:40, 43	he stayed two days
4:52	healing at the seventh hour
5:1	Passover (a feast of the Jews)
5:5	38 years
5:9-18	Sabbath
5:25, 28	a time is coming and has now come
6:4	Passover
6:16-17	evening, dark
6:22	the next day
6:39-44	at the last day

6:66	from this time . . . no longer
7:2	Passover
7:6, 8	not the right time yet
7:11, 14	fifth Passover
7:22, 23	Sabbath
7:31	when the Messiah comes
7:33	I am with you for only a short time, and then I go . . .
7:37	On the last and greatest day of the Feast
7:39	later . . . up to that time . . .
8:2	at dawn
8:20	because his time had not yet come
8:28	when you have lifted up the Son of Man, then . . .
8:42	now I am here
8:44	from the beginning
8:51, 52	never
8:57	you are not yet fifty years old
8:58	before Abraham was born, I am
9:4	as long as it is day
9:4	night is coming
9:14, 16	Sabbath
9:25, 37, 41	now
10:22	Feast of Dedication (winter)
10:40	in the early days
11:6	he stayed two more days
11:9	Are there not twelve hours of daylight?
11:10	It is when he walks by night that he stumbles
11:24	at the last day
11:26	never
11:39	Lazarus dead for four days
11:51	that year
11:53	from that day on
11:54	no longer
11:55, 56	Passover

12:1	six days before the Passover
12:7	the day of my burial
12:12	the next day
12:20	at the Feast
12:23	the hour has come
12:27	Father, save me from this hour?
12:31	the time for judgment
12:35-36	while . . . while . . . while
12:37	even after
12:42	yet at the same time
12:48	on the last day
13:1	It was just before the Passover Feast
13:1	Jesus knew that the time had come
13:2	The evening meal
13:5	after that
13:7	later
13:19	before . . . when
13:29	for the Feast
13:30	night
13:31	Now is the Son of Man glorified
13:33	little longer . . . now
13:38	before the rooster crows
14:7	From now on
14:9	such a long time?
14:29	now before . . . when
14:30	not . . . much longer
15:3	already
15:15	no longer
15:22, 24	now
15:26	When the Counselor comes
15:27	From the beginning
16:2	A time is coming
16:4	When the time comes

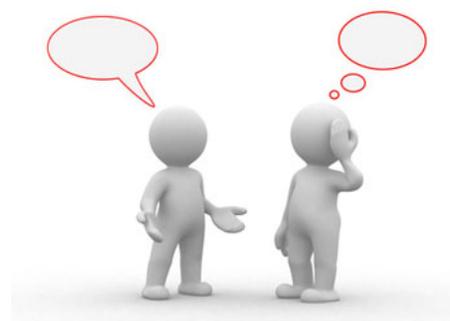
16:4	not . . . at first
16:5	Now I am going to him
16:8	When he comes
16:11	the prince of this world now stands condemned
16:12	more than you can bear now
16:13	But when he . . .
16:16-19	In a little while
16:21	because her time has come
16:22	Now is your time of grief
16:23	In that day you will no longer . . .
16:24	Until now
16:25	A time is coming
16:26	In that day
16:28	now I am leaving the world
16:29	Now we can see
16:31	You believe at last
16:32	But a time is coming
17:5	And now, Father, glorify me
17:7	Now they know
17:12	While I was with them
17:13	I am coming to you now
17:24	before the creation of the world
18:27	at that moment a rooster began to crow
18:28	by now it was early morning
19:12	From then on
19:14	It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour
19:31	day of Preparation, next day: Sabbath
19:31	During the Sabbath
19:38	Later
19:39	The man who earlier had visited Jesus at night
19:32	Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation
20:1	Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark
20:4, 8	first . . . Finally

20:17	I have not yet returned to the Father
20:19	On the evening of that first day of the week
20:26	A week later
21:1	Afterward
21:4	Early in the morning
21:18	when you were younger . . . but when you are old
21:22	“If I want him to remain alive until I come”

[Note: Table 3 is limited to certain direct references of time; John might have employed temporal conjunctions such as οὐν (oun) for mere narrative purposes, without explicit temporal intention. The temporal aspect of participial constructions is also neglected in this table.

Individual Interaction

John the Baptist (Jn 1; 10)
 Disciples appear one by one (Jn 1)
 Nathanael (Jn 1)
 Wedding participants, including Mary, appear one-by-one (Jn 2)
 Nicodemus (Jn 3; Jn 7:50-52)
 Samaritan woman (Jn 4)
 Paralytic (Jn 5)
 Discipleship (Jn 6)
 Woman caught in adultery (Jn 8)
 Blind man (Jn 9)
 Jesus and the Father (Jn 10:30)
 Mary (Jn 11)
 Martha (Jn 11)
 Lazarus (Jn 11)
 Mary Magdalene; Lazarus (Jn 12)
 Peter (Jn 13:6-10; 36-38)
 The Beloved (Jn 13:23-26)
 Judas (Jn 13:26-30)
 Increased focus on the Holy Spirit and the Father (Jn 14-16)
 The Father (Jn 17)
 Pilate (Jn 18-19)
 Thomas (Jn 20)
 John (Jn 21)



Relational

Jesus + Father + Holy Spirit	Humanity: Adoptive Re-Integration (Jn 1:12-13)
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Unique: John does not contain . . .

parables, birth, baptism, temptation, last supper, Gethsemane, ascension, demon-possession, “church”

Time Frame: 1,000 days of ministry (3½ years) - Gospel of John: 29 days!

“In the beginning” (1:1) - Passover (2) - feast of the Jews (5) - Passover (6) - Feast of Tabernacles (7) - Hanukkah (10) - Passover (12)

Water: “Never was Christ without water” (Tertullian, *De baptismo*, IX, 4)

- John’s baptism vs. Jesus’ baptism (Jn 1:26, 31, 33)
- Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:7, 9)
- Nicodemus (Jn 3:5)
- The Woman at the Well (Jn 4:7)
- The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:3-4, 7)
- Feast of Tabernacles (Jn 7:38)
- Washing for healing (Jn 9:7-15)
- Retreat to the Jordan (Jn 10:40)
- Foot Washing (Jn 13:5)
- “I thirst” (Jn 19:28)
- at Jesus’ death (Jn 19:34)
- Fishing in Galilee again (Jn 21:1-14)

Word Statistics: The Terminology of the Gospel of John

Term	John	Mt	Mk	Lk
Jesus (Ἰησοῦς <i>īēsous</i>)	244	152	82	88
Father (πατήρ <i>patēr</i>)	136	63	18	56
Believe (πιστεύω <i>risteuō</i>)	98	11	14	9
World (κόσμος <i>kosmos</i>)	78	9	3	3
Disciple (μαθητής <i>mathētēs</i>)	78	72	46	37
Jew/Jewish (Ἰουδαῖος <i>loudaios</i>)	70	5	7	5
Know (γινώσκω <i>ginōskō</i>)	57	20	12	28
Amen (ἀμήν <i>amēn</i>)	50	31	14	6
Word (λόγος <i>logos</i>)	40	33	24	34
Love-verb (ἀγαπάω <i>agapaō</i>)	37	8	5	13
Life (ζωή <i>zōē</i>)	36	7	4	5
Peter (Πέτρος <i>Petros</i>)	34	23	20	19
Witness (μαρτυρέω <i>martureō</i>)	33	1	0	1
Hour (ὥρα <i>hora</i>)	26	21	12	17
Light (φῶς <i>phōs</i>)	23	7	1	7
Water (ὔδωρ <i>hudōr</i>)	21	7	5	6
Testimony (μαρτυρία <i>marturia</i>)	14	0	3	1
Flesh (σὰρξ <i>sarx</i>)	13	5	4	2
True (ἀληθινός <i>alēthinos</i>)	9	0	0	1
Darkness (σκοτία <i>skotia</i>)	8	1	0	1
Love-noun (ἀγάπη <i>agapē</i>)	7	1	0	1

Miracles in the Gospel of John

Text	Miracle	Aspect	Outcome
John 2	Water to Wine	Jewish Cleansing	"His disciples believed in Him"
John 5	Healing of Nobleman's Son	Space	the father believed, "and his whole household"
John 5	Healing the Paralytic	Time	Conflict with Sabbath-keeping; healed man becomes witness to Jews
John 6	Feeding the 5,000	Quantity	"This is truly the Prophet who was to come into the world."
John 6	Jesus walks on water	Nature	from fear to acceptance
John 9	Healing the Blind Man	Chance	opposition from Pharisees to the point of excommunication (9:22, 34); man progresses from understanding Jesus as man (9:11) to prophet (9:17) to Son of God and Lord (9:35-38)
John 11	Raising of Lazarus	Death	1) "Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him" (11:45 NKJV) 2) "Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death" (11:53 NKJV)

Irony and Misunderstanding in the Gospel of John

Reference	Literal Level	Misunderstanding	Spiritual Level
2:19-21	temple	temple	Jesus' body
3:3-5	born again	a second human birth	born from above = spiritual birth
3:14 (cf. 12:32-33)	lifted up		crucifixion
4:10-15	water	water	eternal life
6:51-60	bread = my flesh	cannibalism	Jesus' body
7:37-39	water of life	water	Holy Spirit
8:21-22	"Where I go you cannot come"	suicide	cross & ascension
8:31-36	"The truth will set you free"	assumed slavery	salvation
8:37-47	the works of your father	fornication	evil works
9:40-41	physical blindness	physical blindness	spiritual blindness

10:1-6	shepherd	literal shepherd	spiritual shepherd
11	death/sleep	death	sleep (assuming and anticipating a condition from which to awake = resurrection)
11:49-52	“one man should die for the people”	political expedience	substitutionary atonement
12:27-36	voice out of Heaven	thunder/angel	the voice of the Father
12:32-33	lifted up		crucifixion
13	foot-washing	bath	baptism
13:27-29	“What you do, do quickly”	feast preparation/charity	betrayal
16:2		execution of disciples = doing God a favor	
18:31-32	illegal death penalty		crucifixion
18:36-37	king/kingdom	earthly king/kingdom	spiritual king/kingdom
18:39	king of the Jews	intended as irony/sarcasm	king of the Jews
20:15	Jesus	gardener	resurrected Jesus

The Structure of John

The Literary Structure of John 1: Intelligent Design

A	1,2	Word with God
B	3	Origin of the World
C	4,5	Gift of Life and Light
D	6-8	Witness of Baptist
E	9-10	Incarnation
F	11	Humanity
G	12a	Believing
H	12b	Children of God
G'	12c	Believing
F'	13	Humanity
E'	14	Incarnation
D'	15	Witness of Baptist
C'	16	Gift of Grace
B'	17	Origin of grace and truth
A'	18	Word with the Father

Previews and Parallels

Preview	Parallel
Jesus' mother (2:1)	Jesus' mother (19:25)
not yet Jesus' hour (2:4)	Jesus' hour arrives (13:1)
Cana wedding with disciples (2:1-2, 11)	last supper with disciples (13:5-6)
manifestation of Jesus' glory (2:11)	manifestation of Jesus' glory (12:23)
Passover (2:13)	third Passover (12:1)

Nicodemus (3:1)	third mention of Nicodemus (19:39)
“lifted up” (3:14).	third “lifted up” (12:34)

Judgment Scene Parallels

First Judgment Cycle (18:29-39)	Second Judgment Cycle (19:4-15)
Phase 1	Phase 4
Pilate comes out (29)	Pilate comes out (4)
Pilate to Jews: judge him (31a)	Pilate to Jews: crucify him (6)
Jews to Pilate: law forbids execution (31b)	Jews to Pilate: law demands execution (7)
Phase 2	Phase 5
Pilate goes in (33a)	Pilate goes in (9a)
Pilate to Jesus: question (33b)	Pilate to Jesus: question (9b)
Jesus to Pilate: re-question (34)	Jesus to Pilate: silence (9c)
Pilate to Jesus: rhetorical question (35a)	Pilate to Jesus: rhetorical question (10a)
Pilate to Jesus: content question (35b)	Pilate to Jesus: content question (10b)
Jesus to Pilate: Jesus’ kingdom not of this world (36)	Jesus to Pilate: Pilate’s authority not of this world (11)
Phase 3	Phase 6
Pilate comes out (38)	Pilate comes out (13)
Pilate tries to release Jesus (38-39)	Pilate tries to release Jesus (14)
Jews: Barabbas (40)	Jews: Caesar (15)
Interlude: Pilate hands Jesus over to soldiers (19:1-3)	Interlude: Pilate hands Jesus over to crucifixion (19:16)

Term	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Son of Man	32	14	25	12
Son of God	8	3	6	10

The I Am Statements

- “I am the bread of life” (Jn 6:35, 48), or “the bread which came down from heaven” (v41), or “the living bread” (v51)
- “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12; cf. 9:5)
- “I am one who bears witness concerning Himself” (Jn 8:18)
- “I am not of this world” (Jn 8:23)
- “. . . if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins” (Jn 8:24)[1]
- “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He]” (Jn 8:28)
- “Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn 8:58)
- “I am the door of the sheep” (Jn 10:7, 9)
- “I am the good shepherd” (Jn 10:11, 14)
- “. . . because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’” (Jn 10:36; *sans éγώ*)

- "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25)
- "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say that correctly, because that's who I am" (Jn 13:13)
- "... you may believe that I am [He]" (Jn 13:19)
- "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6)
- "I am in the Father" (Jn 14:10; *sans* εἶμι, but the converse phrase has εἶστιν; cf. 14:20)
- "I am the true vine" (Jn 15:1; cf. 15:5)
- "I am not of the world" (Jn 17:14, 16)
- "I am [He]" (Jn 18:5, 6, 8)
- "I am a king" (Jn 18:37, *sans* ἐγώ), a statement that receives attention from Pilate during the crucifixion: "Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write, 'The King of the Jews', but, 'He said, I am the King of the Jews'" (Jn 19:21; emphasis supplied. [1] The Greek has only ἐγώ εἶμι; for better sense, most translations add the third person personal pronoun as predicate nominative complement (here and Jn 8:28), but the force of the isolated ἐγώ εἶμι is thereby lost.

Creation Themes in the Gospel of John

Genesis	Creation Motif	John
1:2	darkness/light	18:3
1:3	light	18:3
1:30	plants	19:29
2:1	creation completion	19:30
2:8	garden scene	18:1; 19:41
2:24	parental relationships	19:25-26
3:18	thorns	19:2
3:19	thirst	19:28

Jesus as New Moses/Exodus 2.0

Exodus	John
Water to blood/stone jars = curse (Ex 7)	water to wine/stone jars = blessing (Jn 2)
domestic animals – sick to death (Ex 9)	son/servant – sick to death – alive (Jn 5)
sores = physical curse (Ex 9)	paralytic healed = physical healing (Jn 5)
hail (Ex 9)	storm calmed (Jn 6)
locusts eat up food supply (Ex 10)	5,000 fed with bread (Jn 6)
darkness/blindness (Ex 10)	blindness restored (Jn 9)
slaughter/death (Ex 11-12)	Lazarus (Jn 11)
Passover Lamb (Ex 12)	Passover Lamb (Jn 1:29; 19:36)

Ultimately, John's Gospel is analogous to musical sound: the physical waves dissipate; the melody remains in the acoustic memory of the hearer, continually reminding his readers of an eternity to come, and an eternal quality already present.[1] Where Jesus is present, eternity is present. [1] Boman, 138.

"To Know": 8:14, 19, 28, 32, 52, 55; 9:12, 20, 21, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (Jn 17:3)

Believe

John 88x (verb)	Matthew 30x	Mark 28x	Luke 43x
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John 1: Structural Design

A 1,2	Word with God		
B 3	Word's Role in Creation		
C 4,5	Gift of Life and Light		
D 6-8	Witness of John		
E 9-10	Incarnation		
F 11	Humanity		
G 12a	Believers		
H 12b		Children of God	
G' 12c	Believers		
F' 13	Humanity		
E' 14	Incarnation		
D' 15	Witness of John		
C' 16	Gift of Grace		
B' 17	Word's Role in Re-Creation		
A' 18	Word with the Father		

John 1: The Prologue

Anarthrous noun + articular predicate nominative (after equative verb) = Quality:
"what God was the Word was" + personal pros > meta or para

Trinity or Divinity? An Analysis of John 1:1

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

This is a very important text in the trinitarian debate and deserves careful attention. Read the text again:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."					
	A	A	B	A	B?

How can A be with B, and A = B?! Here is the solution: The Word (A) is God (B) by nature but not by person. Jesus "was made in the express image of his person" (RH 7/9/1895).

Annotated translation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God the Father, and the Word had the same divine nature as God the Father." Thus the Word was not God the Father, but had the same nature as the Father because He proceeded from the Father.

"He [Christ] has a twofold nature, at once human and divine. He is both God and man" (Ms76, 1903; SDABC 6:1074).

Notice that Ellen White is speaking of Christ's *nature* when she calls Jesus "God". Here statements are clear:

"The two natures were mysteriously blended in one Person—the Man Christ Jesus" (Letter 280, 1904; SDABC 5: 1113).

Oneness defined

“Christ **the Word**, the Only Begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father, **-one in nature**, in character, and in purpose, the only being in all the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God” (GC 493; PP 34).

This means there are two divine beings in the Godhead: God the Father, and His Son Jesus, who shared the divine nature of the Father by being “the only begotten of God”. The Holy Spirit is not a third being, but as the representative of the Father and the Son, the Spirit has personality can thus be called the third member of the Godhead.

Ellen White on John 1:1

From LHU 74ff. & Mar 302ff.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14 As one who understands his subject, John ascribes all power to Christ, and speaks of His greatness and majesty. He flashes forth divine rays of precious truth, as light from the sun. He presents Christ as the only Mediator between God and humanity.

The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.” It is the great and profound mystery of godliness. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Christ took upon Himself human nature, a nature inferior to His heavenly nature. Nothing so shows the wonderful condescension of God as this. He “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” John presents this wonderful subject with such simplicity that all may grasp the ideas set forth, and be enlightened.

Christ did not make-believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” He was the son of Mary; He was of the seed of David according to human descent. He is declared to be a man, even the Man Christ Jesus. “This man,” writes Paul, “was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house.”

But while God’s Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His preexistence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the One in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God....

God and Christ knew from the beginning of the apostasy of Satan and of the fall of Adam through the deceptive power of the apostate. The plan of salvation was designed to redeem the fallen race, to give them another trial. **Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety. Before the world was made, it was arranged that the divinity of Christ should be enshrouded in humanity.** “A body,” said Christ, “hast thou prepared me.” But He did not come in human form until the fullness of time had expired. Then He came to our world, a babe in Bethlehem (The Review and Herald, April 5, 1906). {LHU 74.6}

This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 1 John 5:11. (Mar 302.1) The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. He [the Christian] may die; but the life of Christ is in him, and at the resurrection of the just he will rise to newness of life.

“In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men.” **It is not physical life that is here specified, but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God. The Word, who was with God, and who was God, had this life. Physical life is something which each individual receives. It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself,” He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man. He can possess it only through Christ.** (Mar 302.4)

While bearing human nature, He [Christ] was dependent upon the Omnipotent for His life. In His humanity, He laid hold of the divinity of God; and this every member of the human family has the privilege of doing...

If we repent of our transgression, and receive Christ as the Life-giver, ... we become one with Him, and our will is brought into harmony with the divine will. We become partakers of the life of Christ, which is eternal. We derive immortality from God by receiving the life of Christ, for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This life is the mystical union and cooperation of the divine with the human.

Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal” (Mar. 302).

Now notice this quote:

“Satan in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, **next in honor to God’s dear Son**. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance, and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; yet **Jesus, God’s dear Son**, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Satan was envious of Christ, and in his ambition assumed command which devolved on Christ alone” (ST January 9, 1879, Art. B, par. 1).

Curiously, the Spirit is missing in this rank of honor. And: the Great Controversy centers precisely around the identity and status of Jesus the Son.

It is well worth to reproduce here large portions of an 1879 *Signs of the Times* article, since it so clearly delineates the relation of the Father to the Son, the identity of the one true God, and the core issue of the Great Controversy. **Listen carefully; this is the heart of the Great Controversy! In particular, notice the use of the word “God”, the identity of God and Christ, and the relation of God to Christ.**

The Heart of the Great Controversy

“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was he to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon it. His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father’s will would be fulfilled in him. **Satan was jealous and envious of Jesus Christ**. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge his supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, Satan bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into counsel with the Father in regard to his plans, while Satan was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. **But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, his power and authority to be the same as that of God himself**. Satan thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted; but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God himself. He gloried in his loftiness. He knew that he was honored by the angels. He had a special mission to execute. He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God, had shone especially upon him. Satan thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself?

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied, and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved he related the preference God had given to Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the precious liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor

upon himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey him. There was contention among the angels. Satan and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into his unsearchable wisdom and ascertain his purposes in exalting his Son Jesus, and endowing him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this first great rebel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Jesus Christ, and with forcible reasons sought to convince Satan that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which he had conferred upon his Son. They clearly set forth that Jesus was the Son of God, existing with him before the angels were created; and that he had ever stood at the right hand of God, and his mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that he had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They had urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that he had heretofore received. The angels wept, and anxiously sought to move Satan to renounce his wicked design and yield submission to their Creator. All had heretofore been peace and harmony, and what could occasion this dissenting, rebellious voice?

Satan refused to listen, and turned from the loyal angels, denouncing them as slaves. These angels, true to God, stood in amazement as they saw that Satan was successful in his effort to excite rebellion. He promised them a new and better government, in which all would be freedom. Great numbers signified their purpose to accept Satan as their leader and chief commander. As he saw his advances were met with success, he flattered himself that he should yet have all the angels on his side, and that he would be equal with God himself, and his voice of authority would be heard in commanding the entire host of heaven. Again the loyal angels warned Satan, and assured him what must be the consequences if he persisted; that he who could create the angels, could by his power overturn all their authority, and in some signal manner punish their audacity and terrible rebellion. To think that an angel should resist the law of God which was as sacred as himself; they warned the rebellious to close their ears to Satan's deceptive reasonings, and advised Satan, and all who had been affected by him, to go to God and confess their wrong for even admitting a thought of questioning his authority.

Many of Satan's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels, and repent of their dissatisfaction, and be again received to the confidence of the Father and his dear Son. The mighty revolter then declared that he was acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences; for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them.

The loyal angels hasten speedily to **the Son of God**, and acquaint him with what is taking place among the angels. They find **the Father in conference with his beloved Son**, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. **The great God** could at once have hurled this arch deceiver from heaven; but this was not his purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might **with his own Son** and his loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side, and his character and purposes would be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable. If God had exercised his power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence he took another course; for he would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host, his justice and his judgment.

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

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

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

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

Then there was war in heaven. **The Son of God**, the Prince of heaven, and his loyal angels, engaged in conflict with the arch rebel and those who united with him. **The Son of God** and true, loyal angels prevailed; and Satan and his sympathizers were expelled from heaven. All the heavenly host acknowledged and adored the God of justice. Not a taint of rebellion was left. All was again peaceful and harmonious as before.

The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. **The Father consulted Jesus** [SR 19: "His Son"] in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth. He would place man upon probation to test his loyalty, before he could be rendered eternally secure. If he endured the test wherewith God saw fit to prove him, he should eventually be equal with the angels. He was to have the favor of God, and he was to converse with angels, and they with him. He did not see fit to place them beyond the power of disobedience" (ST January 9, 1879, Art. B, par. 11).

Wow!

The being next to Jesus was originally Lucifer, then Gabriel:

"After the Fall, Gabriel took **Lucifer's position next to Jesus**: "It was Gabriel, the angel next in rank to the Son of God, who came with the divine message to Daniel. It was Gabriel, "His angel," whom Christ sent to open the future to the beloved John; and a blessing is pronounced on those who read and hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written therein. Revelation 1:3" (DA 234).

A similarly gripping account is found in *The Story of Redemption*:

Before Creation – from *The Story of Redemption*, Chapter 1

"Lucifer in heaven, before his rebellion, was a high and exalted angel, **next in honor to God's dear Son**. His countenance, like those of the other angels, was mild and expressive of happiness. His forehead was high and broad, showing a powerful intellect. His form was perfect; his bearing noble and majestic. A special light beamed in his countenance and shone around him brighter and more beautiful than around the other angels; **yet Christ, God's dear Son, had the pre-eminence over all the angelic host**. He was one with the Father before the angels were created. Lucifer was envious of Christ, and gradually assumed command which devolved on Christ alone (SR 13).

The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon His Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal with Himself; so that wherever was the presence of His Son, it was as His own presence. The word of the Son was to be

obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son He had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was His Son to work in union with Himself in the anticipated creation of the 14earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth. His Son would carry out His will and His purposes but would do nothing of Himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in Him.

Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to His plans, while Lucifer was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself. Lucifer thought that he was himself a favorite in heaven among the angels. He had been highly exalted, but this did not call forth from him gratitude and praise to his Creator. He aspired to the height of God Himself. He gloried in his loftiness. He knew that he was honored by the angels. He had a special mission to execute. He had been near the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glorious light enshrouding the eternal God had shone especially upon him. He thought how angels had obeyed his command with pleasurable alacrity. Were not his garments light and beautiful? Why should Christ thus be honored before himself?

He left the immediate presence of the Father, dissatisfied and filled with envy against Jesus Christ. Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved, he related the preference God had given Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the sweet liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end. For had not a ruler been appointed 15over them, to whom they from henceforth must yield servile honor? He stated to them that he had called them together to assure them that he no longer would submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs; that never would he again bow down to Christ; that he would take the honor upon himself which should have been conferred upon him, and would be the commander of all who would submit to follow him and obey his voice.

There was contention among the angels. Lucifer and his sympathizers were striving to reform the government of God. They were discontented and unhappy because they could not look into His unsearchable wisdom and ascertain His purposes in exalting His Son, and endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son.

Angels that were loyal and true sought to reconcile this mighty, rebellious angel to the will of his Creator. They justified the act of God in conferring honor upon Christ, and with forcible reasoning sought to convince Lucifer that no less honor was his now than before the Father had proclaimed the honor which He had conferred upon His Son. They clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created; and that He had ever stood at the right hand of God, and His mild, loving authority had not heretofore been questioned; and that He had given no commands but what it was joy for the heavenly host to execute. They urged that Christ's receiving special honor from the Father, in the presence of the angels, did not detract from the honor that Lucifer had heretofore received. The angels wept. They anxiously sought to move him to renounce his wicked design and yield submission to their Creator; for all had heretofore been peace and harmony, and what could occasion this dissenting, rebellious voice?

Lucifer refused to listen. And then he turned from the loyal and true angels, denouncing them as slaves. These angels, true to God, stood in amazement as they saw that Lucifer was successful in his effort to incite rebellion. He promised them a new and better government than they then had, in which all would be freedom. Great numbers signified their purpose to accept him as their leader and chief commander. As he saw his advances were met with success, he flattered himself that he should yet have all the angels on his side, and that he would be equal with God Himself, and his voice of authority would be heard in commanding the entire host of heaven. Again the loyal angels warned him, and assured him what must be the consequences if he persisted; that He who could create the angels could by His power overturn all their authority and in some signal manner punish their audacity and terrible rebellion. To think that an angel should resist the law of God which was as sacred as Himself! They warned the rebellious to close their ears to Lucifer's deceptive reasonings, and advised him and all who had been affected by him to go to God and confess their wrong for even admitting a thought of questioning His authority.

Many of Lucifer's sympathizers were inclined to heed the counsel of the loyal angels and repent of their dissatisfaction and be again received to the confidence of the Father and His dear Son. The mighty revolter then declared that he was

acquainted with God's law, and if he should submit to servile obedience, his honor would be taken from him. No more would he be intrusted with his exalted mission. He told them that 17himself and they also had now gone too far to go back, and he would brave the consequences, for to bow in servile worship to the Son of God he never would; that God would not forgive, and now they must assert their liberty and gain by force the position and authority which was not willingly accorded to them. [Thus it was that Lucifer, "the light-bearer," the sharer of God's glory, the attendant of his throne, by transgression became Satan, "the adversary." (PP 40; SR 16.2).

The loyal angels hastened speedily to the Son of God and acquainted Him with what was taking place among the angels. They found the Father in conference with His beloved Son, to determine the means by which, for the best good of the loyal angels, the assumed authority of Satan could be forever put down. The great God could at once have hurled this archdeceiver from heaven; but this was not His purpose. He would give the rebellious an equal chance to measure strength and might with His own Son and His loyal angels. In this battle every angel would choose his own side and be manifested to all. It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God, and this is incurable. If God had exercised His power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested; hence, God took another course, for He would manifest distinctly to all the heavenly host His justice and His judgment.

It was the highest crime to rebel against the government of God. All heaven seemed in commotion. The angels were marshaled in companies, each division with a higher commanding angel at its head. Satan 18was warring against the law of God, because ambitious to exalt himself and unwilling to submit to the authority of God's Son, heaven's great commander.

All the heavenly host were summoned to appear before the Father, to have each case determined. Satan unblushingly made known his dissatisfaction that Christ should be preferred before him. He stood up proudly and urged that he should be equal with God and should be taken into conference with the Father and understand His purposes. God informed Satan that to His Son alone He would reveal His secret purposes, and He required all the family in heaven, even Satan, to yield Him implicit, unquestioned obedience; but that he (Satan) had proved himself unworthy of a place in heaven. Then Satan exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, "These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?" He then declared that he was prepared to resist the authority of Christ and to defend his place in heaven by force of might, strength against strength."

"The Scriptures clearly indicate the relation between God and Christ, and they bring to view as clearly the personality and individuality of each. . .The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one" (MH 421).

"From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character" (YI December 16, 1897, par. 5).

In one sentence . . .

"By faith, patriarchs and prophets depended upon God, who was dealing with them through Christ" (ST 8/5/1889).

As I highlight this quote, do not miss the relation of God the Father to His Son, Christ:

"The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence . . . His was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host . . . endowing him with such unlimited power and command" (ST 1/9/1879).

Do not miss the fact that Christ's status was "ordained, invested, endowed" by God the Father.

Let us explore this reality a little deeper: often the Father and the Son *alone* are mentioned:

The Father and the Son

The Fall prompted a question of allegiance towards the Father and the Son. Ellen White's language is as clear as it is profound – notice again the use of the term "God":

"With what intense interest the whole universe watched the conflict that was to decide the position of Adam and Eve. How attentively the angels listened to the words of Satan. . . . They asked themselves, Will the holy pair transfer their faith and love from the Father and Son to Satan? Will they accept his falsehoods as truth?" (ST May 12, 1890 par. 2 p. 40).

"But in the transgression of man both the Father and the Son were dishonored" (ST Dec. 12, 1895 par. 7).

"The Father could not abolish nor change one precept of his law to meet man in his fallen condition. But the Son of God, who had in unison with the Father created man, could make an atonement for man acceptable to God, by giving his life a sacrifice, and bearing the wrath of his Father. Angels informed Adam that, as his transgression had brought death and wretchedness, life and immortality would be brought to light through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ" (1SP 50).

"The human family cost God and his Son Jesus Christ an infinite price" (Special Testimonies On Education, p. 21).

"No man, nor even the highest angel, can estimate the great cost; it is known only to the Father and the Son" (The Bible Echo, October 28, 1895 par. 4).

"Father and Son are pledged to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant" (June 14, 1900 par. 5).

"In the Bible every duty is made plain. Every lesson given is comprehensible. Every lesson reveals to us the Father and the Son. The word is able to make all wise unto salvation" (8T 157).

"The Father, the Son, and Lucifer have been revealed in their true relation to one another. God has given unmistakable evidence of His justice and His love" (ST August 27, 1902 par. 15). *Who is God in this quote?!*

"The Father and the Son alone are to be exalted" (YI July 7, 1898 par. 2).

"The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son" (GC 676).

"In your hands will be placed a golden harp, and touching its strings, you will join with the redeemed host in filling all heaven with songs of praise to God and His Son" (Australasian Union Conference Record, January 15, 1903 par. 14).

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ" (GC 678).

"Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ. The longer we are in the heaven of bliss, the more and still more of glory will be opened to us; and the more we know of God, the more intense will be our happiness" (DA 331).

"Nothing is said of what they have done or suffered; but the burden of every song, the keynote of every anthem, is, Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb" (4SP 480).

"All the redeemed saints will see and appreciate as never before the love of the Father and the Son, and songs of praise will burst forth from immortal tongues. He loved us, He gave His life for us. With glorified bodies, with enlarged capacities, with hearts made pure, with lips undefiled, we shall sing the riches of redeeming love" (TMKH 371).

"Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as "from one Sabbath to another" (Isa. 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb" (DA 770).

“The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, “There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death”” (CG 568).

The Eternity of Jesus

We shall now explore the eternal nature of Christ. Notice something intriguing about John 1:1 that few people realize:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

What is this beginning when “the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity” (RH 4/5, 1906)?

Let us study **Proverbs 8** to explore this question.

Proverbs 8:24 states: “When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth [חיל]; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water.”

The same verb *chul* appears in Ps 51:5 – it refers to a birth, not a poetic royal inauguration: “Behold, I was shapen [חיל] in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

David is clearly referring to his manner of *origin* (presumably an adulterous mother).

Here are a couple more examples of the same verb: “Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills” (Job 15:7)?

“Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve” (Job 39:1)?

Now listen to this – read it twice, three times:

“His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured in figures” (ST 5/3, 1899).

“And although we may try to reason in regard to our Creator, how long He has had existence, where evil first entered into our world, and all these things, we may reason about them until we fall down faint and exhausted with the research when there is yet an infinity beyond. We cannot grasp it . . .” (7BC 919.5).

Any Adventist should keep in mind that “forever” is a relative term (Jude 7) and can include a beginning.

It appears from Proverbs 8 and the above quotes that Christ had an origin “in eternity past”. To illustrate, we may chart Christ’s existence as follows, without the Arian notion of Christ being created; instead, He is the only begotten of God the Father:

∞ ← The Father in Eternity	Eternity	Creation	Eternity → ∞
	begetting of Christ	beginning of earthly time	Second Coming
	before creation	(days, weeks, months, years)	Millennium
	Genesis 1:1		
		John 1:1	

This allows for a beginning of Christ without denigrating His eternity:

- Christ was begotten “in eternity“, before creation, which means before the reckoning of time as we know it.
- There was “a time when Christ was not“, but . . .
- Christ is of the same nature as the Father, making Christ eternal.
- There never was a time when Christ was not with the Father.
- There never will be a time when Christ is not.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. This was no robbery of God. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,” he declares, “before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth” (RH April 5, 1906, par. 7).

Hebrew - Dabar Speech = Actualization Motion: forward, active	Greek - Logos Speech = Conceptualization, Thought, Reason Motion: gathering, ordering
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Staircase Structure

In the beginning was the **Word**,
 and the **Word** was with God
 and the **Word** was God
 The **Word** was with God
in the beginning.

In Him was **life**,
 And the **life** was the **light** of mankind.
 And the **light** shines on in
 but the **darkness**,
 the **darkness** has not overcome it.

A man came, sent from God, whose name was John.

The moment there was the Word, God needed a witness!

John 1: Discipleship

1. Jn 1:36-37
1. Jn 1:36-37 John → Jesus!
2. Jn 1:38 Jesus: “What do you seek?”
3. Jn 1:39 Jesus’ invitation: “**Come and see!**”
4. Jn 1:40-42 Chain-reaction
5. Jn 1:42 Jesus knows you!
6. Jn 1:43 Jesus will look for you!
7. Jn 1:45 Cycle repeated!
8. Jn 1: 46-49 Skepticism (obstacles) overcome: “**Come and see!**”
9. Jn 1: 51 Following Jesus will open up a vertical dimension to life that’s out of this world!

John 2: The Wedding

v1: Resurrection? (“3rd day” hint)

v2: Jesus was social: It’s good to invite Jesus to your wedding - He’ll show up!

v3: Human experience: We always lack something; we always run out of something . . .

v3: Help: Mary turns to Jesus

v4: Hesitation? Jesus defines the beginning of His ministry, not Mary

v5: Complete Trust: Life advice: “Whatever He says, do it!”

v6: Water Pots: >100 gallons!, Stone, 6!

v7: Quantity!

v8: Measurable Outcome

v9: Missing the Miracle?

v10: “until now” = new time zone: BC → AD

v11: “glory”

Did Jesus create alcohol?

Rabbi: The Jews do not, in their feasts for sacred purposes, including the marriage feast, ever use any kind of fermented drinks. In their oblations and libations, both private and public, they employ the fruit of the vine – that is, fresh grapes – unfermented grape-juice, and raisins, as the symbol of benediction. Fermentation is to them always a symbol of corruption.” - Bacchiocchi, *Wine in the Bible*, 42.

Arguments against Fermentation at the Wedding:

1) Bible

Leviticus 2:11 forbids fermenting leaven in grain offerings. Jesus’ miracle symbolizes Passover blood and would thus shy away from alcoholic connotations.

Lev 10:9 "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations."

Context: the deadly rebellion of Nadab and Abihu!

“Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, *When* it swirls around smoothly;³² At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper” (Prov 23:31-21).

2) **Language:** Jn 2:10 “good” and “well-drunk” stand in contrast!

3) **Social Sensitivity:** how much damage alcohol has done to humanity . . .

4) **Mission** to Muslims is ruined when you drink and can’t claim absolute abstinence

5) **Medical Misinformation:** alcohol is NOT good for your heart, and catalyzes cancer growth.

[insert scientific journals here]

John 3: Nicodemus

1. The Person: male, career, cash, connections!

2. The Problem: night!

3. The Process: re-birth, not just a new paint job

4. The Point: judgement!

OT Background: Numbers 21

The serpent, once deadly, now (as a bronze representation) becomes ridiculously harmless.
God neutralizes sin poison!

John 3:16

Connector	Subject	Action	Object
For	God	so loved that He gave	the world His only begotten Son
That	whosoever	believes shall not perish	in Him
But		have	eternal life.

Ellen White on Nicodemus and Salvation

Jesus bent His eyes upon the speaker, as if reading his very soul. In His infinite wisdom He saw before Him a seeker after truth. He knew the object of this visit, and with a desire to deepen the conviction already resting upon His listener's mind, He came directly to the point, saying solemnly, yet kindly, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3, margin.{DA 168.4}

Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.{DA 171.1}

Nicodemus knew that Christ here referred to water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God. He was convinced that he was in the presence of the One whom John the Baptist had foretold. {DA 171.5}

No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.{DA 172.1}

The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. **Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.**{DA 173.1}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages.{DA 173.2}

Not through controversy and discussion is the soul enlightened. We must look and live. Nicodemus received the lesson, and carried it with him. He searched the Scriptures in a new way, not for the discussion of a theory, but in order to receive life for the soul. He began to see the kingdom of heaven as he submitted himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit.{DA 175.2}

There are thousands today who need to learn the same truth that was taught to Nicodemus by the uplifted serpent. They depend on their obedience to the law of God to commend them to His favor. When they are bidden to look to Jesus, and believe that He saves them solely through His grace, they exclaim, "How can these things be?"{DA 175.3}

In the interview with Nicodemus, Jesus unfolded **the plan of salvation**, and His mission to the world. In none of His subsequent discourses did He explain so fully, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the hearts of all who would inherit the kingdom of heaven. At the very beginning of His ministry He opened the truth to a member of the Sanhedrin, to the mind that was most receptive, and to an appointed teacher of the people. But the leaders of Israel did not welcome the light. Nicodemus hid the truth in his heart, and for three years there was little apparent fruit.{DA 176.1}

After the Lord's ascension, when the disciples were scattered by persecution, Nicodemus came boldly to the front. He employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church that the Jews had expected to be blotted out at the death of Christ. In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel. He was scorned and persecuted by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world's goods; yet he faltered not in the faith which had its beginning in that night conference with Jesus.{DA 177.1}

Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and by his pen it was recorded for the instruction of millions. The truths there taught are as important today as they were on that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly Teacher of Galilee.{DA 177.2}

John 4: The Woman at the Well

The Progression of the Woman

Phase I: Introduction

v7: acts like an Atheist, as if Jesus doesn't exist: "I don't see you"

v9: Agnostic: "I don't understand"

vv11-12: Arrogance: "I don't need you."

v15: Agreement: "I need what you have."

Phase II: Interruption

v16: Access: "I need your heart" - You cannot drink living water while sipping on sin juice!

Hiding your past will hinder your future!

vv19-25: Avoidance: woman changes the subject to religion!

Phase III: Invitation

Phase IV: Implementation

an entire town gets converted on the woman's testimony!

Comparison of Nicodemus to the Woman at the Well

Characteristic	Nicodemus	Woman
Gender	Male	Female
Name	Nic	"woman"
Education	Pharisee	Drop-out

Class	Ruler	Outcast
Religion	Jewish	Samaritan
Time	Night	Noon
Economics	\$\$\$	No \$\$\$
Residence	Jerusalem	Sychar
Jesus	Came to Jesus	Jesus came to her
Conversion	Years	Same day
Status	Up + Out	Down + Out
Outcome	In	In

Are you more Nicodemus (religious but rotten)
or more like the woman (in sin but supremely salvageable)?

John 5

John 6

4x: "I am the Bread of Life!"

Reaction: Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (Jn 6:60) . . . From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. (Jn 6:66)

"The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring." DA 660

John 7

John 8: The Woman Caught in Adultery

Manuscript Issues:

- not in early manuscripts
- some manuscripts have it after 7:36; 21:25; 8:12; Lk 21:38; 24:53
- non-Johannine vocab/grammar (more like Luke)
- Old Testament background of Isa 9:1-2 matches with Jn 8:2 ("early dawn" and 8:12)?

Counter-View:

<http://textualcriticism.scienceontheweb.net/>
<http://brandplucked.webs.com/john753811.htm>

Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are often called the "earliest" and "best" or "most reliable manuscripts" do not have this story. But they are neither the earliest nor the most reliable manuscripts!

- the story appears in > 900 Greek manuscripts

[insert more counter-view]

“The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined” (Isa 9:2).

Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. (Joh 8:2) . . . Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (Jn 8:12)

John 9: The Pool of Siloam

John 10: Jesus the Shepherd

"There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes" (Gen 31:40).

I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” Isaiah 54:10.{DA 483.1}

However much a shepherd may love his sheep, he loves his sons and daughters more. Jesus is not only our shepherd; He is our “everlasting Father.” And He says, “I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.” John 10:14, 15, R. V. What a statement is this!—the only-begotten Son, He who is in the bosom of the Father, He whom God has declared to be “the Man that is My fellow” (Zechariah 13:7),—the communion between Him and the eternal God is taken to represent the communion between Christ and His children on the earth!{DA 483.2}

Because we are the gift of His Father, and the reward of His work, Jesus loves us. He loves us as His children. Reader, He loves you. Heaven itself can bestow nothing greater, nothing better. Therefore trust.{DA 483.3}

“Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings” (Joh 10:19).

John 11: Lazarus!

Why did Jesus weep?

1. Sympathy for Mary and Martha
2. Sadness over the reality of death
3. Sorrow over unsaved people in AD 70 (destruction of Jerusalem)
4. Sadness over people in grieving throng who wanted Him and Lazarus dead later on

“To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest.” DA 528

“They will look back with thankfulness upon the darkest part of their way. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly,” 2 Peter 2:9. From every temptation and every trial He will bring them forth with firmer faith and a richer experience.” {DA 528.3}

“In delaying to come to Lazarus, Christ had a purpose of mercy toward those who had not received Him. He tarried, that by raising Lazarus from the dead He might give to His stubborn, unbelieving people another evidence that He was indeed “the resurrection, and the life.” He was loath to give up all hope of the people, the poor, wandering sheep of the house of Israel. His heart was breaking because of their impenitence. In His mercy He purposed to give them one more evidence that He was the Restorer, the One who alone could bring life and immortality to light. This was to be an

evidence that the priests could not misinterpret. This was the reason of His delay in going to Bethany. This crowning miracle, the raising of Lazarus, was to set the seal of God on His work and on His claim to divinity." DA 529

John 13: Foot-Washing: Mini-Baptism

13:14: You too!

13:15: You too!

13:17: You too!

The Disciple whom Jesus loved

Jn 1:18

Jn 1:35

Jn 1:40

Jn 13:25

Jn 18:15-16

Jn 20:2-10

Jn 21: 7, 24

John 14

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also." Jn 14:1-3

In Greek, indicatives (You believe) and imperatives (Believe!) can look alike; so John 14:1 has 4 options!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) you believe in God | believe also in Me! | indicative + imperative |
| 2) you believe in God | you also believe in Me! | indicative + indicative |
| 3) believe in God! | believe in Me! | imperative + imperative |
| 4) believe in God! | you also believe in Me! | imperative + indicative |

John 15

"I am the vine"

Jn 15:15 friends or slaves?

John 16

The Holy Spirit: Evangelism, not Ecstasy

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (Jn 16:8-13)

The Function of the Holy Spirit: Reduplication of the Sanctuary Service in the Life of the Believer!

1. sin:

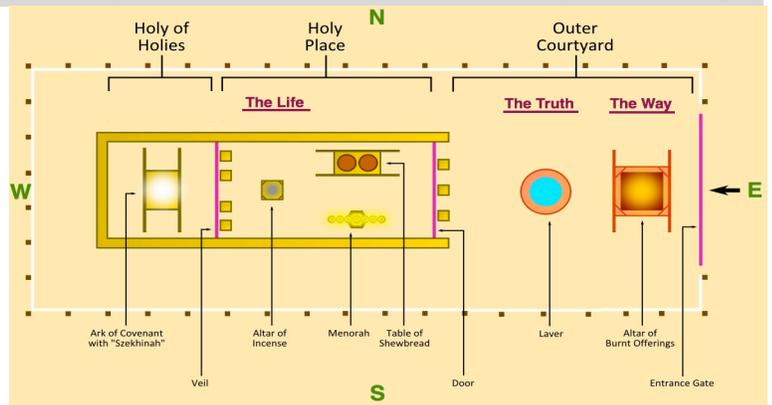
courtyard, altar of sacrifice

2. righteousness:

holy place

3. judgment:

most holy place

**John 17: The High Priestly Prayer for Himself, the Disciples, the World****John 18: Judgment****18:29-32**

- P out
- P–Jews: judge him
- Jews–P: law forbids execution
- P in
- P–Jesus: Question
- J–P: Re-Question
- P–J: Rhetorical Question
- P–J: Content Question
- J–P: Jesus' Kingdom not this world
- P out
- P tries to release Jesus
- Jews: Barabbas

19:4-15

- P out
- P–Jews: crucify him
- Jews–P: law demands execution
- P in
- P–Jesus: Question
- J–P: Silence
- P–J: Rhetorical Question
- P–J: Content Question
- J–P: P's authority not of this world
- P out
- P tries to release J
- Jews: Caesar

Interlude: 19:1-3 P hands J over to soldiers – Interlude: 19:16 P hands J over to crucifixion

John
19: The
Cross

“Creation seemed to be shivering to atoms.” DA 443, 756

“It is finished!”

- Greek: perfect tense = action in the past with result in the present!
- tax statement: paid in full

John 20

John 21

“Do you love me?” - Jesus restores Peter on the level of love (positive), not on the level of his mistake!

Jesus	Peter
agape	fileo
agape	fileo
fileo	fileo

Intentional word-play or mere stylistic variance?

! fileo is used by the Father towards Jesus (Jn 5:20)

If you could take only one Gospel onto an island (or to prison!), which one would it be? Why?

The Book of Acts

Let's Go!

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)

Geographical Progression

Acts 1-7	Jerusalem	2 years	Peter
Acts 8-12	Judea, Samaria	13 years	Philip
Acts 13-28	the world	14 years	Paul
"Acts 29"	your world	NOW!	YOU!

Language: 440 new Greek words (Acts hapax legomena)

Read Acts!

"The whole of the book of Acts should receive careful study. It is full of precious instruction; it records experiences in evangelistic work, the teachings of which we need in our work today. This is wonderful history; it deals with the highest education, which the students in our schools are to receive" (Letter 100, 1909).

The Credibility of Acts: Luke nails peculiar details with astounding accuracy. He properly identifies . . .

1. The river port, Perga, for a ship crossing from Cyprus (13:13).
2. The location of Lycaonia (14:6).
3. The unusual but correct declension of the name Lystra and the correct language spoken in Lystra. Correct identification of the two gods associated with the city, Zeus and Hermes (14:12).
4. The port of Attalia for returning travelers (14:25).
5. The route from the Cilician Gates (16:1).
6. The form of the name Troas (16:8).
7. The conspicuous sailor's landmark at Samothrace (16:11).
8. Philippi as a Roman colony.
9. The location for the river Gangites near Philippi (16:13).
10. Association of Thyatira with cloth dyeing (16:14).
11. The locations where travelers would spend successive nights on this journey (17:1).
12. Sea travel as the most convenient way to reach Athens in summer with favoring east winds (17:14).
13. Depiction of philosophical debate in the agora (17:17). The slang epithet for Paul (17:18-19), and the name for the court. Accurate description of Athenian character (17:21). Correct identification of altar to "an unknown god" (17:23).
14. The name Tyrannus, attested on the first-century inscription (19:9). The permanent stationing of a Roman cohort in the Fortress Antonia (21:31). The flight of steps used by the guards (21:31,35).
15. Note of the right of appeal by a Roman citizen (25:11).
16. The best shipping lanes of the time (27:4).
17. The commonly joined names of Cilicia and Pamphylia to describe the coast (27:4). Reference to the principal port at which to find a ship sailing to Italy (27:5). The typically slow passage to Cnidus in the face of northwest wind (27:7). Fair Havens and neighboring Lasea (27:8), and the description of Fair Havens as poorly sheltered for wintering (27:12).
18. Description of the tendency in these climes for a south wind to suddenly become a violent northeaster (27:13). The nature of a square-rigged ship to have no option but be driven before a gale (27:15).
19. Appropriate sailors' maneuvers at the time for a storm (27:16-19). The fourteenth night judged by experienced Mediterranean navigators, to be an appropriate time for this journey in a storm (27:27). The precise term, *bolisantes*, for taking soundings (adapted from *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*).

Purpose

- **History:** “Then what happened?”
- **Defense:** The church; theologically and practically in the context of Jewish and pagan religions, Roman government, and Hellenistic society/philosophies
- **Practice:** Early Christian mission life
- **Dramatic descriptions:** reader drawn into story
- **Podcasting and Blogs:** speeches, sermons
- **Miracles:** authenticating the messenger
- **Issues:** Gentiles, law, circumcision, clean/unclean
- “Christians” (Acts 11:26; 26:28) so called by outsiders! (lit. “belonging to the Lord”)
- Reality not a show: discontent, differences, and divisions are recorded (6:1; 15:2; 21:20-21)

The Holy Spirit in Acts

- 1:2 directs
- 1:5 baptizes
- 1:8 comes on disciples
- 1:16 prophecies through humans!
- 2:4 tells what to say
- 2:17 poured out
- 7:51 may be resisted
- 8:18 passed on to others
- 8:39 physically moves Philip
- 9:31 comforts
- 10:19 gives revelation through visions
- 11:15 commands Peter by speaking directly to him
- 11:28 warns of famine
- 13:52 grants joy
- 16:6 forbids speaking
- 19:6 comes to individuals for specific purpose
- 20:23 testifies to specific people
- 20:28 works through people

(see also 1:3; 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 4:33; 5:30; 9:40; 10:40; 13:30; 13:37; 17:3; 17:31→ 32; 23:6; 24:15; 26:8; 26:23)

Church Growth: Quality → Quantity

- 2:41 3,000 were added to their number that day”
 2:47 the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”
 4:4 many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand
 5:14 more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number
 6:7 so the word of God spread . . . The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith
 9:31 it grew in number
 12:24 but the word of God continued to increase and spread
 16:5 the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers
 19:20 in this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power

Compare the factors of church growth in Acts to our current church growth methods!

Christ	Church
Jesus conceived by Holy Spirit “All flesh shall see the salvation of God”	Church started with Holy Spirit “Men from every nation under heaven”
Climactic rejection by Jews	Climactic rejection by Jews

Miracles (authentication)	Miracles (authentication)
Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51)	Paul "set his face to go to Rome" (Acts 19:12)

Matthias

Casting lots: Ex 28:30; 9T 264, but note Ellen White's caution:

"I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties. . . . I would say to the members of the church in_____, "Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order. Let men of responsibility be called upon to select the officers of the church" (Letter 37, 1900; 2SM 328).

"This is the work in which we also are to be engaged. Instead of living in expectation of some special season of excitement, we are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth" (RH March 22, 1892).

Acts 2

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God." Ephesians 3:10 (AA 9).

Pentecost: 50th day after the Sabbath of the Passover (Lev 23:4-7, 15-16)

- "Feast of Weeks" (7 weeks after Passover, Deut 16:10)
- "Feast of Harvest" (Ex 23:16)
- "Feast of Firstfruits" (Num 28:26)
- Foreign languages as mission catalyst

"And how is it that we hear, each of us **in his own native language?**" . . . "we hear them telling **in our tongues** the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:8, 11).

Holy Spirit: Facts > Feelings

"And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, **whom God has given to those who obey him**" (Acts 5:32).

Is Acts 2:44 a form of Christian communism?

"And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributed the proceeds to all, any had need" (Acts 2:44).

"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that nay of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common" (4:32).

Key difference . . . Communism says: what's yours is mine (force); Christianity: what's mine is yours (free will)

Acts 4

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” 4:13

“And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.” 4:21

Acts 5: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God?

- Immediate Result of the Inevitable?
- Act of Mercy?
- “God’s strange act” (Isa 28:21)
- Keep your commitments
- **God: Don’t mess with my church!**

Does **Acts 5:3-4** prove that the Holy Spirit was God?

“Why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit?**” (5:3)



“You have not **lied to men but to God**” (5:4)

Notice that such parallel structures occur elsewhere in Scripture but do not mean an identity of being:

Mt 25:40 “As ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”. Brethren≠Jesus!

Acts 9:4 “Why persecutes thou me?” Christ≠Christians.

1 Cor 8:12 “When ye sin so against the brethren...ye sin against Christ.” Brethren≠Christ.

Acts 6: A Blueprint for Ministry (A MUST-READ for pastors and church members alike!)

“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, **“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.**”³ “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;⁴ **“but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”**⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.⁸ And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:2-8).

“I don’t have time for soul-winning; too many administrative responsibilities!” . . . verbatim quote of a pastor of a 500-member church!

How does the above Bible text address this common pastoral dilemma?

Are you doing ministry or are you just a pew-warmer?

Does your church allow your pastor to be a man of prayer and the Word?

Acts 7: Stephen - The First Martyr

Two types of responses to the Gospel appeal:

“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart” (2:37).



“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit” (7:51).

Just like Jesus

Jesus	Stephen
“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Lk 23:46)	“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (7:59)
“Jesus cried out with a loud voice” (Mt 26:46)	“he cried out with a loud voice” (7:60a)
“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Lk 23:34)	“Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (7:60b)
“And having said this, he breathed his last” (Lk 23:46)	“And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (7:60c)

The Prophetic Fulfillment

2,300 Years (evening-morning) Daniel 8:14									
70 weeks = 490 years (Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6)									
7 weeks 49 years	+62 week s 483 years	1 week				1,260 years Dark Ages: Counterfeit priesthood, corrupt penance, popery, persecution (GC 55)			
Fall 457 BC	40 8 BC	Fall 27	Spring 31	Fall 34	AD 70	508	538	1798	1844
Artaxerxes Decree to Restore Jerusalem		Baptism	Crucifixion	Stephen stoned; Paul converted; Gospel to Gentiles	Destruction of the Temple	Papacy Religions	Papacy Political	French Revolution	Heavenly Day of Atonement = Cleansing of Sanctuary
Ezra 7:11-13; 21-27; Neh 2:5, 17; Dn 9:24-27; Jer 25:11		Mk 1:15 Lk 3:1-3, 21 Gal 4:4	Nisan 15 “middle of the week” Dan 9:27 Age 33 (DA 830) 30 years ministry (ST Feb 15, 1899; 2SP 99-100)	Acts 7:53-11:18	Mt 24 Mk 13 Lk 21 Xyz Ed 226? Xyz	Clovis defeats Visigoths +1290 +1335 Dan 12:11-12	+1260 Decree of Justinian	Feb 15 1798: Pope Pius VI prisoner of General Berthier (“mortal wound”) Mt 24:22 Rev 11 GC 266	καθαρισθήσεται Dan 8:14 (Job 4:17; 15:14; 17:9; 25:4; Ps 18:20; 51:4)

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Acts 7:14 “And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all.”

Some manuscripts say 70, but there is no contradiction; Hebrew counts how many came into Egypt; Greek OT counts Joseph + descendants:

Gen 46:27 Hebrew: 70; Greek OT: 75

Ex 1:5 Hebrew Text: 70 + 2 sons of Ephraim + 2 grandsons (Ex 1:5 MT)

Ex 1:5 Greek OT: 75 (NET: *Grk* "souls", here an idiom for the whole person).

Acts 8: Road-Blocks are Stepping Stones . . .

Road-blocks: Geography - Religion - Economy - Culture - Language - Race - Sexuality - Politics - Eunuchs

“No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord” (Deut 23:1).

“Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, ‘The Lord will surely separate me from his people’; and let not the eunuch say, ‘Behold, I am a dry tree.’ For thus says the Lord: ‘To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant . . . I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. . . . My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa 56:3-7)

What road-blocks are you encountering right now?

Paul- The Man behind the Mission

Why did God not pick one of the disciples to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles? He picked Paul to demonstrate to the world what the grace of God can accomplish in the life of the worst sinner!

Are you diminishing your usefulness to God because of your past?

Paul the persecutor: Acts 8:1-3; 9:1; 26:11; Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:8-9 “miscarriage”

Paul’s Conversion

- Damascus: oldest continuously inhabited city in the world (Gen 14:15; 15:2)
- Hub of commercial network; caravan lines
- Muslim eschatological tradition: Jesus will descend to destroy Antichrist
- Testimony: Acts 9:1ff; 22:6-11; 26:12-18

Acts 9:4 Persecuting Christians = Persecuting Christ

but . . .

God can turn ANY person 180 degrees around!

“He saw himself a sinner, utterly lost, without the Saviour he had been persecuting. In the days and nights of his blindness he had time for reflection, and he cast himself all helpless and hopeless upon Christ, the only one who could pardon him and clothe him with righteousness” (MS 23, 1899).

What is the role of our testimony? What are its opportunities, its limitations?

Paul’s Background

- Not one of the disciples
- Jewish
- From Tarsus

- Roman citizen
- Tentmaker
- Phil. 3:6: tribe of Benjamin, like king Saul (a pun?!)
- Jerusalem
- his teacher: Gamaliel: most honored Rabbi of 1st c. of the moderate school of Hillel
- Pharisee (“separated ones”); key: 613 laws/10 Commandments + Temple, Torah, Tradition

But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people." (Acts 21:39)

"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. ⁴ "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women (Acts 22:3).

Tarsus: “University”: “no ordinary city” (Plato, Aristotle: Athens); Greek influence

Roman Citizenship

But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out" (Acts 16:37).

Privileges/Responsibilities

- Taxes
- Right to vote (based on class)
- Fair trial
- Protection from harsh punishment
- No execution without trial
- No crucifixion /emperor order
- Appeal to Caesar, trial in Rome

Origin

- Birth to Roman parent
- Retirement from Roman army
- Emperor grant
- Purchase

Paul the Tentmaker

- Self-supportive
- Cross-cultural (dead animal skins!)
- Credibility
- “not a burden” (2 Cor 11:9; 12:13-16 ;2 Thess 3:8; Acts 20:33-34)
- Should theo-majors double-major?

Paul’s Method: People, not Plans

1. Go
2. Meet People
3. Take care of the church
4. Move on when ready

Apostolic Agony

“Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- ²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Co 11:25).

Acts 9

- “if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean wild animal or a carcass of unclean livestock or a carcass of unclean swarming things, and it is hidden from him and he has become unclean, and he realizes his guilt . . .” (Lev 5:2).
- “And Peter stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner” (Acts 9:43).

Acts 10 - The Food Vision

Food Categories

Clean	Common	Unclean
Leviticus 11	Clean food that is in proximity to unclean foods, based on human tradition (see esp. Mark 7!)	Leviticus 11

“Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acst 10:28).

“During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets. . . . Thus Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God’s kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Saviour’s love” (AA 20).



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How does the church need to implement the thrust of the above quote? In what way can you be part of the solution?

Acts 13

“As they ministered to the Lord and **fasted**, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ . . . having **fasted and prayed**, and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1-3).

When is the last time you (as a church member) “fasted and prayed” for a missionary?

“Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God” (Acts 13:7). . . . “Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord” (Act 13:12).

Do we reach more educated or uneducated people with our current evangelistic methods?

Turning Point

“Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, **behold, we turn to the Gentiles**” (Act 13:46).

Are you intentionally reaching out to unbelievers? How?

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra

- Legend: only elderly couple (Philemon + Baucis) showed hospitality to Zeus + Hermes (disguised as men)
- Cottage changed to temple with golden roof, marble columns
- Other houses destroyed
- Example of well-meant but mis-guided sincerity

Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council

Context: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11).

Conduct: “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell” (Act 15:28).

Observations:

- the decision of the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council is congruent with Leviticus 17-18!
- the list includes 3 aspects dealing with food
- despite the apostles’ reminder that we are saved by grace, a change in behavior is required!

How would you define a Christian lifestyle? What would you tell a convert that s/he should/should not do?

Acts 16: The Macedonian Call

“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, **concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them**” (Acts 16:6).

What’s your call? Where? How?

Lydia, the first European convert

“And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. ¹⁴ Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul**” (Act 16:14).

Do you have a place “where prayer is customarily made”?

Acts 17:11 The Bereans

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Paul on Mars Hill

- Historical Context: local gods who have different needs
- “Unknown God” – meeting people where they are
- Paul introduces no new god but fills the “unknown” with meaning
- Paul’s God doesn’t need anything!
- Poets: Epimenides and Aratus
- 17:3: resurrection!
- 17:6 “these men have turned the world upside down”
- 17:17-18: synagogue, marketplace, library

Paul changes his mind in reaching philosophical minds!

“In preaching the gospel in Corinth, the apostle followed a course different from that which had marked his labors at Athens. While in the latter place, he had sought to adapt his style to the character of his audience; he had met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. As he thought of the time thus spent, and realized that his teaching in Athens had been productive of but little fruit, he decided to follow another plan of labor in Corinth in his efforts to arrest the attention of the careless and the indifferent. He determined to avoid elaborate arguments and discussions, and “not to know anything” among the Corinthians “save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” He would preach to them “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” 1 Corinthians 2:2, 4. (AA 244).

“Jesus, whom Paul was about to present before the Greeks in Corinth as the Christ, was a Jew of lowly origin, reared in a town proverbial for its wickedness. He had been rejected by His own nation and at last crucified as a malefactor. The Greeks believed that there was need of elevating the human race, but they regarded the study of philosophy and science as the only means of attaining to true elevation and honor. Could Paul lead them to believe that faith in the power of this obscure Jew would uplift and ennoble every power of the being” (AA 244)?

“To the minds of multitudes living at the present time, the cross of Calvary is surrounded by sacred memories. Hallowed associations are connected with the scenes of the crucifixion. But in Paul’s day the cross was regarded with feelings of repulsion and horror. To uphold as the Saviour of mankind one who had met death on the cross, would naturally call forth ridicule and opposition” (AA 245).

“Paul well knew how his message would be regarded by both the Jews and the Greeks of Corinth. “We preach Christ crucified,” he admitted, “unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” 1 Corinthians 1:23. Among his Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind (AA 245).

“But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. At that time there had been given him a revelation of the infinite love of God, as revealed in the death of Christ; and a marvelous transformation had been wrought in his life, bringing all his plans and purposes into harmony with heaven. From that hour he had been a new man in Christ. He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all” (AA 245).

Argument:

- Who? V24: Creator
- What does he do? V25: Care
- Relation to humans? V26: Close
- Immortality of soul, animated soul: Contrast
- Unknown god can be known: Connection
- Rejected offerings: gods don't need anything!
- OT background: Isa 45:15; 18-19 (hidden Creator, but revealed)

“At the close of his labors he looked for the results of his work. Out of the large assembly that had listened to his eloquent words, only three had been converted to the faith. **He then decided that from that time he would maintain the simplicity of the gospel. He was convinced that the learning of the world was powerless to move the hearts of men, but that the gospel was the power of God to salvation**” (RH Aug. 3, 1911).

Acts 18

“He greatly helped those who had believed through grace; ²⁸ **for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ**” (Act 18:27-28).

Can you “show from the Scriptures [the Old Testament] that Jesus is the Christ”?! What would it take to learn?

Acts 19

“And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19:19).

What do you need to burn?

Acts 20:7 Sunday School?

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight” (Act 20:7).

Option 1: first day of the week = Saturday night. Paul stayed on Sabbath and preached for Vespers (long sermon!).

Option 2: first day of the week = Sunday. Paul preached on Sunday because he was there on Sunday, and that's why they had a meeting on Sunday! He would have done the same had he been there on Monday, Tuesday, etc.

Acts 24: Drusilla

- Girl bride engaged to crown prince in Asia minor
- Married king of a state in Syria
- At 16 convinced by Felix through magician to be his 3rd wife

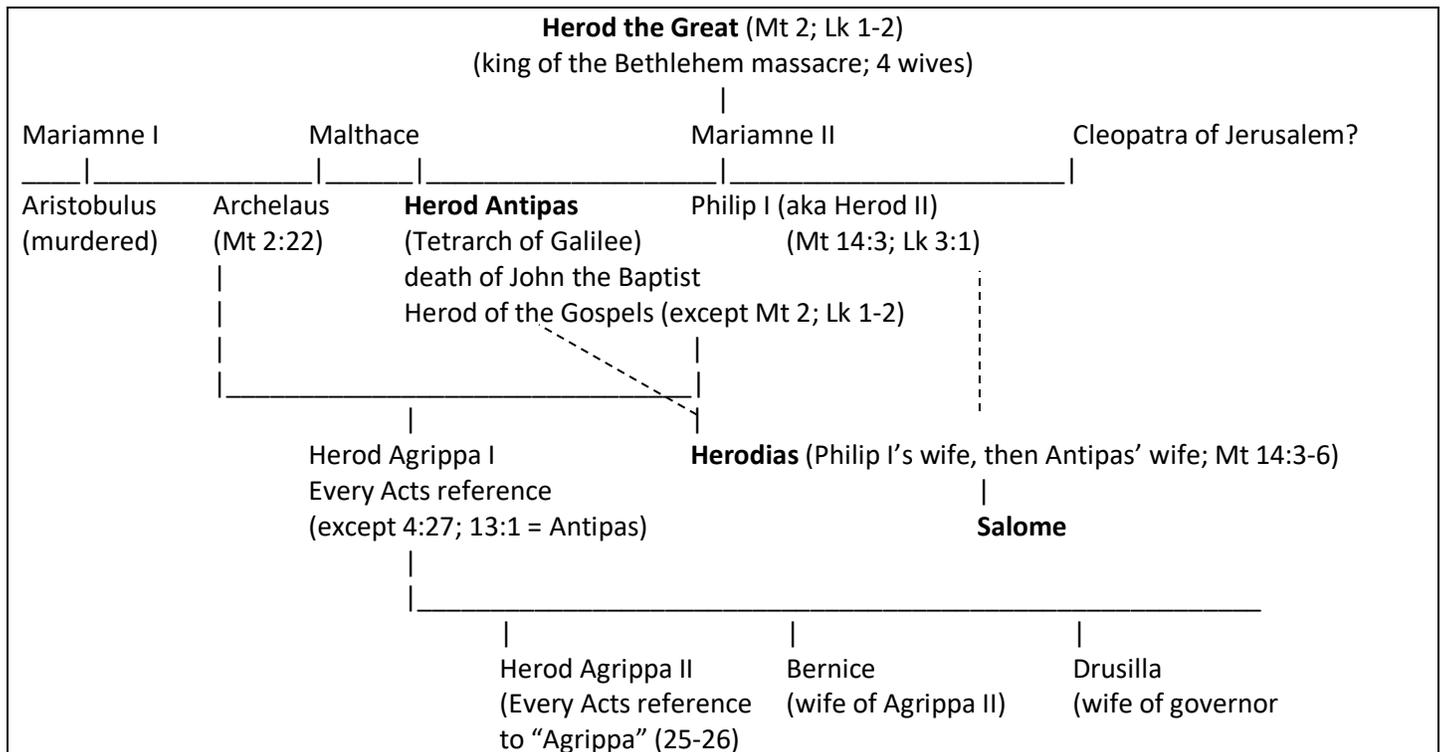
“And as he reasoned about **righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment**, Felix was alarmed and said, ‘Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.’ ²⁶ At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him” (Acts 24:25-26).

When is the last time you heard a sermon on “righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment”? How are you doing in relation to those 3 realities?

Herod Agrippa II

“Did the mind of Agrippa at these words revert to the past history of his family, and their fruitless efforts against Him whom Paul was preaching? Did he think of his great-grandfather Herod, and the massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem? Of his great-uncle Antipas, and the murder of John the Baptist? Of his own father, Agrippa I, and the martyrdom of the apostle James? Did he see in the disasters which speedily befell these kings an evidence of the displeasure of God in consequence of their crimes against His servants? Did the pomp and display of that day remind Agrippa of the time when his own father, a monarch more powerful than he, stood in that same city, attired in glittering robes, while the people shouted that he was a god? Had he forgotten how, even before the admiring shouts had died away, vengeance, swift and terrible, had befallen the vainglorious king? Something of all this flitted across Agrippa’s memory; but his vanity was flattered by the brilliant scene before him, and pride and self-importance banished all nobler thoughts” (LP 255, 256).

The House of Herod . . . It’s Complicated!



Josephus:

“Herodias, [...], was married to Herod, the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod, her husband's brother by the father's side, he was tetrarch of Galilee; but her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis; and as he died childless, Aristobulus, the son of Herod, the brother of Agrippa, married her; they had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus” (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Book 18, ch. 5, 4).

Study/Reflection Questions

- Have you met Jesus? What’s your Damascus Road experience?
- What aspect of your life requires a 180 degree turn-around?
- Trace the Great Controversy theme in Acts: what patterns do you notice between good news and bad news?

- What creates conflict in Acts? What solves conflict?

- Why/How did the Gospel spread with so few resources?

- What would it take for “Acts” to be repeated in your life? In the life of the church? What is (y)our biggest hindrance? Opportunity?

- Trace the main characters in the book of Acts and create a profile for each (Peter, Philip, Paul, etc.). What patterns do you detect?

Introduction to Paul's Letters

"For all things written previously were written for our learning, that we might have hope through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures" (Romans 15:4 iKJV).

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles" (MS 13, 1888).

Paul's Background

Life Purpose:

"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Rom 1:14 KJV).

"I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Rom 15:16 iKJV).

Spain (Rom 15:24). Paul's mindset was: God, what's your next country for me?!

Roman citizen: "But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out" (Acts 16:37 NKJV).

Benefits of Roman Citizenship:

- right to vote
- lower taxes
- fair trial
- protection from harsh punishment
- no execution without trial
- no crucifixion without emperor order
- may appeal to Caesar with trial in Rome

What does Phil 3:20 "conversation" / "citizenship" mean?

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:20).

πολίτευμα *politeuma*: commonwealth, citizenship, state; BDAG: denotes a colony of foreigners or relocated veterans

Paul's Past: the Persecutor

Acts 8:1-3; 9:1

Acts 26:11

Gal 1:13

1 Cor 15:8-9

Paul the Tentmaker

- self-supporting
- cross-cultural (he dealt with dead animal skin!)
- credibility

Paul's Conversion

- on road to Damascus, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world (Gen 14:15; 15:2)
- hub of commercial network; caravan lines
- Muslim eschatological tradition: Jesus will descend to destroy Antichrist
- reaction: Acts 9:23, 29 - now Jewish leaders persecute Saul
- Gal 1:20ff

Paul's Testimony: Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3-4; Phil 3:6

Personal . . .

What part of your testimony is good to share? What part of one's past should be left with God?

- How did you meet Jesus? Always a Christian, or a Damascus Road experience?
- Are you going down the wrong road in life, pursuing the wrong goals?
- Are you hurting people?

Introduction to the New Testament Letters

- the letters were written before the Gospels!
- Paul's first letter (1 Thessalonians?) was written when he had been a Christian for 15 years
- Paul's letters make up 1/3 of the New Testament, with 13 letters under his name
- NT letters are longer than the average letter in antiquity



<http://bible scripture.net/Journeys.jpeg>

Major Letters	Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians
Prison Letters	Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon
Personal (Pastoral) Letters	1,2 Timothy, Titus
General Letters	. . .

Historical Correlation

48	1st Mission Trip:	Galatians
49	Jerusalem Council	
50	2nd Mission Trip:	1,2 Thessalonians
53	3rd Mission Trip:	1,2 Corinthians, Galatians?, Romans
60	1st Roman Imprisonment	Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians
63	4th Mission Trip:	1 Timothy, Titus
67	2nd Roman Imprisonment	2 Timothy

Faith vs. Culture: Rejection, Tolerance, Acceptance?

3 Models:

- 1) Separation: Faith | Culture
- 2) Co-Existence: Faith - Culture
- 3) Incorporation: Faith + Culture

1) Separation:

- consulting the dead (Deut 18:8-12)
- child sacrifice (Lev 20:1)
- temple prostitution (with fertility rites; Hos 2:5, 8)
- dairy/meat (Ex 23:19)
- diet (Dan 1:8!)

- John the Baptist criticizes a head of state! (Mk 6:18)

- Paul ruins the local economy (Acts 19)

2) Co-Existence but not endorsement

Example kingship: "I gave you a king in My anger, And took *him* away in My wrath" (Hos 13:11). God allowed kingship, dealt with it, but it wasn't the original plan.

"The Lord had, through His prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king; **but it does not follow that this form of government was best for them or according to His will.** He permitted the people to follow their own choice, because they refused to be guided by His counsel. Hosea declares that God gave them a king in His anger. Hosea 13:11. When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, **or in opposition to His revealed will,** He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realize their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires **contrary to the will of God** will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing" (PP 605; emphasis supplied).

"There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a similar course. They would have no difficulty in understanding their duty if it were in harmony with their inclinations. It is plainly set before them in the Bible or is clearly indicated by circumstances and reason. But because these evidences are contrary to their desires and inclinations they frequently set them aside and presume to go to God to learn their duty. With great apparent conscientiousness they pray long and earnestly for light. But God will not be trifled with. He often permits such persons to follow their own desires and to suffer the result" (PP 440).

Ellen White echoes this sentiment: "Those who disregard the requirements of God in this life would not respect His authority were they in heaven" (4T 311).

"God can accept no partial obedience, no lax way of treating His commandments" (CC 176).

"His words are not permits, not suggestions, but the decisions of an infallible Judge. They are divine maxims, the very specified laws which will judge us in the last days. No man is excusable for acting as though he were at liberty to cancel the decisions of God, to disregard His directions and injunctions, to review them, criticize them, reverse them as he sees fit. The words of God are righteousness and truth, but they are strangely unheeded. If men cannot shape His sayings to their liking, they depart from His directions, and break His commandments. But thank God we have the living oracles, the lamp of life, and he only is wise who walks in the light. God cannot change the word that has gone out of His lips. Man cannot depart from God's plans, except at the peril of his soul. He cannot sit safely in judgment upon the word of God; for that word is to judge him when he shall stand before the great white throne. Let all bear in mind that the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every one shall be judged according to his works" (4MR 450).

"The religion of every man must be in harmony with the Bible. No man can disregard one word of God, or walk contrary to his expressed will, receiving or rejecting it as he pleases, and be guiltless in the judgment. He will be brought face to face with the record, and will have to answer to the charge against him" (Letter 24, 1890, pp. 7, 8; To "Dear Brother Saxby," Aug 13, 1890; 4MR 450.2).

The soul must fully own the power and authority of the word of God. Then, though we may make mistakes, we always have a touchstone by which to test our ways and a standard by which we may, by true service, recall the heart and conscience.--Letter 48, 1903, p. 5. (To Dr. and Mrs. D. H. Kress, April 1, 1903.)

- slavery and polygamy: man-made institutions, it was never original plan, but God dealt with it

3) Incorporation - but not wholesale endorsement:

- non-Israelite wisdom

- Paul quoting non-biblical writers (Act 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Tit 1:12; Phil 4:8)

- literary techniques/forms (suzerain covenants, chiasms, forensic rhetoric, epistolary greetings/closings)

Example: The Games – Paul uses them as an example in principle, not necessarily in application

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*.²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor 9:24 NKJV).

The Pax Romana

positive	negative
roads	fear and tension
commerce	taxes
relative safety	slavery
	military enforcement
	paganism
	prostitution
	syncretism

Philosophies

Cynics: simple self-sufficiency, ascetic

Stoics: wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, logic, equality of all humans; indifference

Epicurians: pleasure (Phil 3:19!)

“In preaching the gospel in Corinth, the apostle followed a course different from that which had marked his labors at Athens. While in the latter place, he had sought to adapt his style to the character of his audience; he had met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. As he thought of the time thus spent, and realized that his teaching in Athens had been productive of but little fruit, he decided to follow another plan of labor in Corinth in his efforts to arrest the attention of the careless and the indifferent. He determined to avoid elaborate arguments and discussions, and “not to know anything” among the Corinthians “save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” He would preach to them “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” (1 Cor 2:2) (AA 244).

“The Bible has been robbed of its power, and the results are seen in a lowering of the tone of spiritual life. In the sermons from many pulpits of today there is not that divine manifestation which awakens the conscience and brings life to the soul. The hearers can not say, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?” [Luke 24:32](#). There are many who are crying out for the living God, longing for the divine presence. Philosophical theories or literary essays, however brilliant, cannot satisfy the heart. The assertions and inventions of men are of no value. Let the word of God speak to the people. Let those who have heard only traditions and human theories and maxims hear the voice of Him whose word can renew the soul unto everlasting life” (COL 40).

“We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures, and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God, and a sincere desire to learn His will. We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth. Many a portion of Scripture which learned men pronounce a mystery, or pass over as unimportant, is full of comfort and instruction to him who has been taught in the school of Christ. One reason why many theologians have no clearer understanding of God’s word is, they close their eyes to truths which they do not wish to practice. An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness” (CSW 37-38).

How would Paul evaluate today's approach to life ("whatever", "whatever floats your boat", "YOLO", etc.?)

Reason for Paul's Letters

- present Jesus as *the* solution to life on earth and in eternity (1 Cor 2:2!)
- counter-culture: cultural compromise creeping into the early church
- be contextually sensitive

How to read a personal letter:

"You must search them to learn the mind of God, not to prove your theory. . . . The only true way to search the Scriptures is to lay down every prejudice, every preconceived opinion, at the very door of investigation, and then enter into the work with an eye single to the glory of God, with an understanding open to conviction, and a heart softened to believe what the Lord says to you" (2SM 82-84)

Prepare to read Paul's Letters with your head and with your heart!

The Book of Romans

- written from Corinth, giving Paul a first-hand look at the human depravity as exhibited in this dual-port city (references to Gaius; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14; and to Erastus; Rom 16:23; 2 Tim 4:20; and Phoebe of Cenchreae, the eastern seaport of Corinth; Rom 16:1)
- during 3rd mission journey (Acts 20:1-3)

“This epistle is the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel. . . . It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes” (Martin Luther source: xyz).

When John Wesley (founder of the Methodists) read Luther’s comments on Romans, his “heart was strangely warmed” (source: xyz).

“The most profound book in existence” (Samuel Taylor Coleridge).

“The cathedral of the Christian faith” (Godet).

The City of Rome

- city on 7 hills and capital of Roman Empire
- population > 1 million
- Caesar Augustus instituted professional firefighters and massive building programs: by 28 BC 82 temples restored
- “I found it brick and left it marble”
- > 400 pagan temples (a god for opening a door, a god for closing it)
- key word: sacrifice (oxen, cows, goats, lambs, horses, bulls, rams, dogs)
- Caligula’s coronation: 160,000 cows in 3 months!
- embodiment of wickedness (Rev 17; 1 Pet 5:13 Babylon = Rome)
- two socio-economic classes of women
- fathers decided their infants’ fate
- free admission to Roman games, cheap wine
- circus maximus: 300,000 spectators!

The Church in Rome

- started by a convert at Pentecost (Acts 2:10) or Aquila and Priscilla
- “And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, having come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and he came to them” (Acts 18:2 iKJV).

The Letter to the Romans

- written from the mission field, not an office (Corinth)
 - launch pad for world mission (Rom 15:24): Rome - Spain - northern Europe = the world reached for Jesus!
 - recorded by secretary (“amanuensis”) Tertius (Rom 16:22)
 - delivered by Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2)
 - authorship: written by Paul, not pseudonym (sometimes folk used popular pen-names by unknown authors to gain respect)
- “That you won’t be soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (2 Thess 2:2 iKJV).
- church fathers expressed no authorial doubt
 - congruent, credible historical references

Key Themes

- mission (Rom 15:24)
- theology (righteousness by faith)
- pastoral (deal with issues by re-centering focus on Christ, not problem)

- personal connection (Romans 16 contains 26 names!)

Style and Key Words

- diatribe: dialogue with an imaginary conversation partner
- reliance on Old Testament: $\frac{2}{3}$ of all OT quotes by Paul in Romans
- "all" >50x = universality
- "grace" 22x; "law"; "spirit"; "faith"
- "law", "spirit", "faith"
- "justification" (forensic & practical): Ex 23:7; Deut 25:1; Isa 5:23; Rom 4:5
- righteousness: forensic = court language
- redemption: business; slavery (Hosea!)
- atonement: relational restoration through divine substitution
- reconciliation: political diplomacy
- salvation: re-creation process and effect
- therefore: classic reasoning (what is the therefore there for?!)

OT Illustration Figures

- Abraham (ch. 4)
- David (4:6-8)
- Adam (5:12-21)
- Sarah (9:9)
- Rebekah (9:10)
- Jacob and Esau (9:10-13)
- Pharaoh (9:17)

A Logical Outline of Romans: Greeting – Problem – Solution – Example – Greeting

I. Introduction

II. Problem: Sin (1-3)

- A. Gentiles
- B. Jews
- C. Humanity

III. Solution: Salvation (3-5)

- A. Introduction through Jesus
- B. Illustration through Abraham
- C. Implication: Benefits
- D. Illustration: Contrast: Adam/Christ

IV. So What?!: Sanctification (6-8)

- A. Principle: Victory over Sin
- B. Practice: Victory over Law
- C. Power: Victory over Death

V. A (failed) Example: Israel (9-11)

- A. Israel's Past
- B. Israel's Present
- C. Israel's Future

VI. Now What?!: Practical Service (12-15)

- A. Church
- B. World
- C. Church

VII. Conclusion: Social Network (16)

Romans Chapter 1

Paul's introduction is densely detailed, and highly instructive:

v1: Who – servant/slave

Explore the word “slave” in this precise context. What does it mean to be a slave of Jesus Christ? Is servant a better translation? Why? Why not?

What: apostle (sent and set apart)

"Paul regarded the occasion of his formal ordination as marking the beginning of a new and important epoch in his lifework. It was from the time of this solemn ceremony, when, just before he was to depart on his first missionary journey, he was 'separated unto the gospel of God,' that he afterward dated the beginning of his apostleship in the Christian church" (RH May 11, 1911).

v2: Why - promise

v3:

v4:

v5: We - grace

World - apostleship

v6: You

v7: Saints

v8: Thank You

v9

v10:

v11:

v12:

v13

v14-15: Task: debtors

Special Focus: Romans 1:16-17 (Righteousness by Faith)

OT Background: Hab 2:4

- the time before Nebuchadnezzar raids Israel (605-597 B.C.)

- Roman context: expulsion of Jews from Rome 49/50 AD under Claudius

Watch Paul's usage of the phrase. This will be detailed, but it's fascinating. Follow me along!

Hab 2:4: "the righteous will live by his faith"

Hebrew: "the righteous by his faith will live"

LXX: "the righteous by my faith will live"

Rom 1:17 Greek: "the righteous by faith will live"

English: "the righteous shall live by faith"

So . . . Paul takes the Greek translation of the Hebrew Hab 2:4, drops the personal pronoun, and leaves us with the famous “the just shall live by faith” – a phrase that no less sparked the Gospel in Martin Luther's heart, and thereby the Reformation!

Now consider this detail:

Option 1: the righteous are righteous by faith, and will therefore live

Option 2: the righteous will live by faith = faith enables those who are righteous to live

Ellen White: "What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus. The only safety for the Israelites was blood upon the doorposts.

"There is salvation for the sinner in the blood of Jesus Christ alone, which cleanseth us from all sin. The man with a cultivated intellect may have vast stores of knowledge, he may engage in theological speculations, he may be great and honored of men and be considered the repository of knowledge, but unless he has a saving knowledge of Christ crucified for him, and by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he is lost. Christ "was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ," will be our only hope for time and our song throughout eternity" (3SM 172).

"By a recent decretal an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees "Pilate's staircase," said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment hall and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him: "The just shall live by faith." **Romans 1:17**. He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed, to the delusions of the papacy. When he turned his face from Rome he had turned away also in heart, and from that time the separation grew wider, until he severed all connection with the papal church" (GC 125).

Faith Texts

"Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Lk 7:50).

"Your faith has healed you" (Mt 9:22).

"According to your faith let it be done to you" (Mt 9:29).

"For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God . . ." (Eph 2:9)

"But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:7).

"Saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. . . . Faith is a mightier conqueror than death. If the sick can be led to fix their eyes in faith upon the Mighty Healer, we shall see wonderful results. It will bring life to the body and to the soul" (MH 62).

Target Audience: "All" – watch for the word "ALL" while reading Romans. Hint: it's used 54 times!

Notice how Paul's theology moves from one aspect of humanity to another:

vv18-20: Intelligence

vv21-23: Ignorance

vv24-27: Indulgence

vv 28-32: Immorality

Rom 1:20 "The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn is his own inefficiency in depending upon human wisdom, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly" (RH Nov. 8, 1898).

Rom 1:24 1st occurrence of the term "Therefore"

Vocabulary: uncleanness, lusts, dishonor

Rom 1:26 2nd "Therefore"

Vocabulary: vile passions, against nature

Rom 1:27

Vocabulary: shameful

Rom 1:28 3rd "Therefore"

Excursion: Romans 1 and Homosexuality

Personal story: Growing up, my uncle always had a roommate. It wasn't until my teenage years that I figured out that my uncle had a "roommate"!

As a teenager, I consciously walked away from a direct homosexual opportunity. It happened when I was may be 15 years old. Saturday night, downtown Stuttgart. I watched a fight between some men till the police came and broke it up. A "nice" guy next to me elbowed me and offered to buy me a coke. Such a nice guy! After a coke he suggested we'd take a walk in the park. Sitting down on a park bench in the Schloßgarten, he put his arm behind me and offered me a rather large sum of money if I'd . . . behind the bushes. I had 3 seconds to think. My mind was racing. I was totally unprepared for that. By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit (which I didn't know at the time), I simply got up from the bench and walked off. Thank God!

But that's not all. Working on my green belt in Judo, I noticed that my Judo partner liked certain moves and positions that exceeded the athletic requirements of the sport! Talk about "awkward". . . I quit Judo over the issue - and God saved my life.

Pro-homosexual Interpretations:

- Paul's counsel is against temple prostitution (idolatry)
- Paul's counsel is against lust
- Homosexuality is on par with other sins - why single out this over other behaviors?
- Homosexuality is not a sin, a struggle, something to "overcome" – it's like your skin. It's who you are. We wouldn't want a black person to change their skin, would we?

However . . .

- Romans 1:29-32 is the longest ethical list in the NT
- all references to homosexuality are worded as an activity to be avoided
- conversely, there is no positive instruction on how to be a Christian homosexual (in contrast to other negative but regulated realities, i.e., slavery, single-believers, pagan cults, etc.)
- Paul argues universally
- In Paul's articulation, homosexuality is used as paradigm for human depravity (though, of course, the list of contra-Christian behaviors is long and includes many other aspects of human life).
- assumption: natural = male/female; male/male or female/female = unnatural by divine default, regardless of human disposition, opinion, feeling, or experience!
- OT background: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination" (Lev 18:22).
- "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev 20:13).

People of all backgrounds are welcome in church; but notice what Paul says about people's past life:

- "Do you not know not that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you:** but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:9-10 iKJV).

"I was referred to Romans 1:18-32, as a true description of the world previous to the second appearing of Christ" (*Appeal to Mothers*, 27).

Current culture is bombarding the world with a pro-homosexual agenda that does not stop at the gates of the church. In recent years the decision by the Boy Scouts to allow openly gay boy scouts in their club as catalyzed the debate and conflict.

The "Seventh-gay Adventist" movie (www.sgamovie.com):

"Caught in the collision of two worlds, three gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists wrestle with how to reconcile their faith, identity, and sexuality. One young man spent five years in "ex-gay" therapy trying to become straight, but now he's falling in love with another man and wondering if that can be okay. Another was an Adventist pastor in Brazil who was fired for being gay. Can he find his calling again? And a lesbian mom from the midwest wants her daughters to grow up with her faith and beliefs, even though she knows her church might not accept their family. Growing up Adventist means knowing you belong. And being Adventist is about much more than a set of beliefs--it's a close-knit community not easily left. Discovering you are gay in this community often means loss and exile from all that has been home. This feature-length documentary follows their raw and moving journeys as they wrestle with deep questions and struggle to find a place where they can integrate identity, love, and belief."

"You are invited to a screening of the new documentary film, *Seventh-Gay Adventists: A film about faith on the margins*. This film follows the stories of three gay and lesbian Adventists as they wrestle with being both deeply Adventist and gay. The film is set in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but the film's themes of belonging, identity, and wrestling to know who you are and how you relate to your faith has been resonating with viewers around the country who can't tell their Adventists from their Mormons. The film has been screening to sold out crowds at film festival's (we just returned from a fantastic screening at the Melbourne Queer Film Festival) as well as large church crowds, and this diverse range of audience members has shown us that the film encourages engagement in this important conversation from a variety of perspectives. As we like to say in our introduction, this is a listening space. It's not about a theological debate, but it is about listening to the stories of those often talked *at* or *about* in most churches but seldom *with*. This is just a chance to listen. Although this is a topic that is often highly charged in the church (any church), this film's approach to simply share stories is being affirmed by a range of thought leaders. Here are a few (admittedly, puzzling) endorsements:

- "This film is--hands down--the best bridge-building film in the genre that I've ever seen." - Andrew Marin, author of *Love is an Orientation*
- "Whatever one's position regarding homosexuals and the church may be, this film is worth seeing because it candidly probes issues with real human faces and stories." - Dr. Roy Gane, professor, Andrews Seminary
- "Although it's set in the context of Adventism, anyone who has felt their faith and sexuality to be in conflict will instantly get this film." Dr. Sharon Groves, faith and religion program director, Human Rights Campaign
- "The film is superb--a poignant and profound experience beyond any I've seen on the subject." - Chris Blake, author and professor, Union College
- "The movie, which simply tells stories rather than taking an advocacy stance, is powerful. It can, I believe, do much to make Adventists more compassionate in this controversial area of lifestyle." - Dr. William Johnsson, retired editor *The Adventist Review*

Observation: From watching the trailer, the film is anything but neutral or "simply telling a story". It follows a typical pattern of portraying the gay community as victims.

Romans Chapter 2

Find contrasts (esp. vv. 5, 8, 10!)

Identify compelling rhetoric

Note Adventist themes: judgment, creation, glory of God, fear of God, obedience

2:4-5 First Contrast. Note the contrast between v4 and v5; which reality will you pursue?

2:6 God is not arbitrary; it's up to us.

2:7-10 Second Contrast

2:8 obey the truth . . . truth is something to be obeyed; it is not an abstract theory to just believe.

the goodness of God leads you to repentance: "Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life. . . . He teaches us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is the highest science that any man can reach" (MS 28, 1905).

Romans 3

Rom 3:20 "Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement. This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (MS 50, 1900).

Rom 3:24 "The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace. There is nothing in faith that makes it our saviour. Faith cannot remove our guilt. Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. The justification comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has paid the price for the sinner's redemption. Yet it is only through faith in His blood that Jesus can justify the believer." . . . Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him" (ST May 19, 1898).

"The change from earth to heaven will not change men's characters; the happiness of the redeemed in heaven results from the characters formed in this life, after the image of Christ. **The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth**" (Letter 1f, 1890).

Rom 3:25 What does "propitiation" actually mean?

1 Jn 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."
1 Jn 4:10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."

Compare translations (NIV: "sacrifice of atonement")!

Define "propitiation": _____

Rom 3:31 The Law and the Gospel

"The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. But those who have trampled on the holy law will have no right to claim that righteousness" (RH Sept. 21, 1886).

"God requires at this time just what He required of the holy pair in Eden, perfect obedience to His requirements. His law remains the same in all ages. The great standard of righteousness presented in the Old Testament is not lowered in the

New. It is not the work of the gospel to weaken the claims of God's holy law, but to bring men up where they can keep its precepts" (RH Oct. 5, 1886).

"The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. 'Believe, believe,' is their cry; 'only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.' While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar'" (RH Oct. 5, 1886).

"The enemy has ever labored to disconnect the law and the gospel. They go hand in hand" (MS 11, 1893).

Romans 4

Abraham: "Abram believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen 15:6).
 "believe": Hebr. "to say 'Amen!'"

Rom 4:3 "counted"= credited - a banking term used 11x in ch. 4!

"I will not justify the wicked" (Ex 23:7). But now with Jesus . . .

Rom 4:9-17: justified by grace, not the law (circumcision 14 years after Gen 15)

Rom 4:18-28: justified by resurrection power, not personal effort: Abraham was 99, Sarah 89!

Romans 5

Rom 5:1 "As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith."
 "Justification is the opposite of condemnation" (MS 21, 1891).

"Faith and feeling are as distinct as the east is from the west. Faith is not dependent on feeling. We must earnestly cry to God in faith, feeling or no feeling, and then live our prayers. Our assurance and evidence is God's word, and after we have asked we must believe without doubting" (Letter 7, 1892).

The Benefits of Faith: "not only . . . but much more": 6x: vv 3, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17

Rom 5:1 peace

Rom 5:2 hope

Rom 5:3 perspective on suffering

Rom 5:5 vertically induced love

Rom 5:6 "at the right time"

Rom 5:8 timing: "while we were still sinners"

Rom 5:9 salvation

Rom 5:11: reconciliation

"Faith is simple in its operation and powerful in its results. Many professed Christians, who have a knowledge of the sacred Word, and believe its truth, fail in the childlike trust that is essential to the religion of Jesus. They do not reach out with that peculiar touch that brings the virtue of healing to the soul" (Redemption: The Miracles of Christ, 97).

Adam: Death . . . 2nd Adam: Life

Rom 5:12 "Think of what Christ's obedience means to us! It means that in His strength we too may obey. Christ was a human being. He served His heavenly Father with all the strength of His human nature. He has a twofold nature, at once human and divine. He is both God and man" (MS 76, 1903).

"Yet in the minds of sinners He resisted every temptation to sin, and maintained His innocency. He was ever sinless" (SW Sept. 29, 1903).

Romans 6

The physical sign and participation in Jesus' death and resurrection is baptism by immersion, not Sunday worship!

Appeal to the mind: "know" (6:1, 6, 9)

Appeal to the mind: "consider"

Appeal to the will: "surrender"

"Therefore" (Rom 6:11): 1) count 2) reign 3) offer 4) offer

"In baptism we are given to the Lord as a vessel to be used. Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Self is by profession dead to a life of sin. The waters cover the candidate, and in the presence of the whole heavenly universe the mutual pledge is made. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, man is laid in his watery grave, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised from the water to live the new life of loyalty to God. The three great powers in heaven are witnesses; they are invisible but present" (MS 57, 1900).

"Faithfulness to our baptismal vows gives the heart preparation needful for saving souls" (RH May 26, 1904).

"Christ made baptism the entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism thereby make a public declaration that they have renounced the world, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King" (MS 27a, 1900).

"The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ" (MS 148, 1897).

Romans 7

Classic Question: Is this Paul pre- or post-conversion? Answer: Romans 7 is the pre-conversion religious Paul, trying to be "good" in his own strength. Granted, converted Christians struggle – but a dead man doesn't struggle but is surrendered.

The law is mentioned 23x!

Rom 7:24: wretched ταλαίπωρος: "exhausted from battle" (Ps 137:8; Isa 33:1 LXX)

Ellen White has a good take on this:

"Sin then appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone. He became humble. He no longer ascribed goodness and merit to himself. He ceased to think more highly of himself than he ought, and he ascribed all the glory to God. He was no longer ambitious for greatness. He ceased to want to avenge himself, and was no longer sensitive to reproach, neglect, or contempt. He no longer sought earthly alliance, station, or honor. He did not pull others down to uplift himself. He became gentle, condescending, meek and lowly of heart, because he had learned his lesson in the school of Christ. He talked of Jesus and his matchless love, and grew more and more into his image. He bent his whole energy to win souls to Christ. When trial came upon him because of his unselfish labor for souls, he bowed in prayer, and his love for them increased. His life was hid with Christ in God, and he loved Jesus with all the ardor of his nature. Every church was dear to him; every church-member was a person of interest to him; for he looked upon every soul as the purchase of the blood of Christ" (RH July 22, 1890, par. 17).

"This should be the experience of every member of our churches. We are to bear the precious fruits of the Spirit of God to his glory, even rich clusters of good fruit that will make us more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. Brethren, you need to humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and he will lift you up. If a fountain that has been rank

and bitter loses its corrupt qualities, those who drink of it, will recognize the change. The water will be pure and sweet, and the streams that flow from it wholesome and refreshing" (RH July 22, 1890, par. 18).

Romans 8

In direct contrast to Romans 7 ("law" 23x) "Spirit" is mentioned 22x in Romans 8.

Rom 5:18 "condemnation for all → Rom 8:1 "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"

D. L. Moody: "I was in a new world. The next morning the sun shone brighter and the birds sang sweeter . . . The old elms waved their branches for joy, and all nature was at peace."

Notice some progressions in Romans:

- 8:5-8: "You have not the Spirit" → 8:9-11: "You have the Spirit" → 8:12-17: "The Spirit has you"
- "groaning": Creation (18-22) → Christians (23-25) → Holy Spirit (25-30)

Rom 8:31-39

- v31: God is for us
- v32: Christ died for us
- v33: God justified us
- v34: Christ intercedes for us
- v35-39: Christ loves us

Christ-based Ethics: I do based on what He did for/to me!

Romans 9: Predestination?

Calvin: "We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined within himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others" (Calvin, *Institutes* 3.21.5).

Ellen White:

"The predestination, or election, of which God speaks, includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God's commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God from among men. All who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world. "To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on him" (GH, June 11, 1902 par. 3).

"Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God's commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of his requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory" (CE 118.1).

"There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. . . . Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The provisions of redemption are free to all; the results of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions" (CC 71.4).

“Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God's law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown” (CE 118.1).

“There is an election of individuals and a people, the only election found in the word of God, where man is elected to be saved. Many have looked at the end, thinking they were surely elected to have heavenly bliss; but this is not the election the Bible reveals” (TM 453.5).

“But God will not force anyone to keep the commandments, because **every soul is elected to be saved if they will obey the light** that falls upon their pathway” (1SAT 236.2).

Rom 9:3 Paul's Attitude

Rom 9:13 arbitrary?

Romans 9-11 and Israel

Jewish roots: "salvation is from the Jews" (Jn 4:22).

Romans 10

Romans 11

Rom 11:17: Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree

Rom 11:26: "And **so** all Israel will be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob"

3 Interpretations

- Replacement Theology (Catholic, Holocaust rationale): Israel → Church
- Dispensationalism: 144,000 Jews convert "all" Israel (focus on geographic Israel)
church raptured before 7-year tribulation; temple rebuilt in Jerusalem; Jesus' earthly millennial reign
- Merger Theory: Israel "of the flesh" becomes through faith Israel of God in Christ

The Christ-Centered Structure of Daniel 9: (adapted from Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 156)

Dan 9:24 70 weeks are determined for the people and Jerusalem

A1 Coming of the Messiah: at end of 7+62 weeks (v25a)

B1 Construction of the City

A2 Death of the Messiah: after the 62 weeks (v26a)

B2 Destruction of the City

A3 Covenant of the Messiah: middle of the week (v27a)

B3 Destruction of the Destroyer

Dispensationalism

7 years: post-rapture pre-2nd Coming Tribulation

Adventism (premillennial)

7 years: Jesus' ministry - Stephen's martyrdom

The 1844 Study Bible	[Type here]	[section range]
Millennium: Jesus on earth		Millennium: Jesus with saved in Heaven
144,000 literal Jews		144,000: symbolic
Israel: geo-political force		Israel: spiritual church
Armageddon: Middle East		Armageddon: battle over church

2 Israels:

- a) according to the flesh: 1 Cor 10:18; Rom 9:3-8; parental-cultural, secular
- b) "of God in Christ": Gal 3:28-29; 6:14-16; Eph 2:14-17; 3:3-6

Problem: a 2nd chance after rapture is a fatal illusion = too late! not 2nd chance . . . 2nd death!

Romans 12

"A study of the twelfth chapter of Romans would be of profit to us. It is a sermon by the apostle Paul, written for our instruction" (MS 50, 1903).

"Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can 'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.' How does he prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in? 'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.' A real work is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen."

"Just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord's garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. The tendencies which have been biased in a wrong direction are turned in a right direction. Wrong dispositions and feelings are changed, new principles of action supplied, and there is a new standard of character. Holy tempers and sanctified emotions are now the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. An entire transformation has taken place. This is the work to be wrought."

"We see by experience that in our own human strength, resolutions and purposes are of no avail. Must we, then, give up our determined efforts? No; although our experience testifies that we cannot possibly do this work ourselves, help has been laid upon One who is mighty to do it for us. But the only way we can secure the help of God is to put ourselves wholly in His hands, and trust Him to work for us. As we lay hold of Him by faith, He does the work. The believer can only trust. As God works, we can work, trusting in Him and doing His will" (MS 1a, 1890).

Rom 12:1 Therefore: transition to ethical imperative

Jesus is my sacrifice - now I become His sacrifice - ALIVE!

[xyz]

Romans 13

The Christian and Governmental Authority: Was Hitler sent from God?!

Martin Luther: "A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none."
 "A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all."

Bonhoeffer: xyz

Romans 14: Veggie Tales - Are Vegetarians Wimps?

Illustration for out-of-context statements: "wine is good for your heart" - but it's not the wine!
 "Smoking 10 cigarettes a day is good for your lungs" - if you've been smoking 20!

Transition time: circumcision yes: Acts 16:3; no: 1 Cor 7:19

Food: issue in 1 Cor 10:31, not an issue in Rom 14:17

Greek has 3 categories: unclean (Leviticus), clean, and "common". "Common" is a clean meat that is somewhat defiled, as through association with unclean meat.

Here in Romans 14 the word for "unclean" is κοινός *koinos* = common, – not unclean *akathartos* as in Lev 11.

In Peter's vision (Acts 10), Peter sees *koinos* and *akathartos* animals: common and unclean.

Interpretations:

- context: temple idolatry – some Christians shied away from "common" meats – foods that are technically clean but defiled by sacrifices to Greco-Roman gods.
- kosher/unkosher
- ascetic philosophies (denial of pleasure, transmigration of souls)
- Jewish sectarianism

Remember that Romans 14 is about religious perceptions, not pro/con health – and: you can be wrong while being right

Rom 14:5: "sacred" is an NIV addition

- establish standard for self, not others
- not "keeping" = this is about fast days, not feast days

Romans 15

What is Paul's ministry philosophy and practice? (See esp. Rom 15:14-33)

Note Paul's progression:

- 15:9 Jews glorify God among Gentiles (Ps 18:49)
- 15:10 Gentiles rejoice with the Jews (Deut 32:43)
- 15:11 Jews and Gentiles praise God together (Ps 117:1)
- 15:12 Christ shall reign over Jews and Gentiles (Isa 11:10)

Rom 15:24 Paul wants to go to Spain - what is your new frontier?!

Romans 16

26 names listed – do you have that many friends to greet in a church?

Romans 16:1-2 Was Phoebe a deaconess?

Historically, the ordination of deaconesses was not common. Here are two examples:

1. Ashley Church (Sydney, Australia), Church minutes for August 10, 1895: "Pastors Corliss and McCullagh of the Australian conference set apart the elder [sic], deacons, deaconesses by prayer and the laying on of hands."

Ashfield Church, January 6, 1900, with W. C. White. The church minutes from Jan. 7, 1900 read: "The previous Sabbath officers had been nominated and accepted for the current year, and today Elder [W. C.] White ordained and laid hands on the elders, deacons, and deaconesses."

Paul uses the term *deacon* for Phoebe, a woman. But the term *deacon* (diakonos) in Greek can simply mean servant. Specifically, the following entities were called “servant”: master/servant (Mt 20:26; 22:13; 23:11; Mk 9:35; 10:43; Jn 2:5, 9; 12:26); government (Rom 13:4); Jesus (Rom 15:8; cf. Gal 2:17); Covenantal (2 Cor 3:6); God (2 Cor 6:4); Satan's servants (2 Cor 11:15); Pseudo-apostles (2 Cor 11:23); Paul (Eph 3:7; Col 1:34, 25); individuals (Tychicus: Eph 6:21; Col 4:7); Timothy (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 4:6); Epaphras (Col 1:7).

In any case, Greek did not have a word for deaconess, so Paul would have used the term *deacon* for Phoebe even if she was a deaconess. In other words, Paul's use of the term *deacon* does not ascribe a male office to a female.

Rom 16:5 the church that is in their house: Is “house church” a prescriptive or descriptive model? Is it circumstantial, or an actual method/model to be emulated even today?

Romans 16:7 Wasn't Junia an apostle?

No. We don't even know for sure if Junia was a man or a woman. The text says that she was “well-known *among* the apostles”. This doesn't make her an apostle. Several constructions like this one show that subject A is separate from subject B:

- For we are to God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish (2 Cor 2:15)
- To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen (Gal 1:16)
- communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles (Gal 2:2; cf. Col 1:27)
- When he shall come to be glorified in his saints (2Thess 1:10)

Incidentally, Andronicus wasn't an apostle either as far as we know. If they were so well known, how come they are not mentioned in the book of Acts? Only the Twelve are listed in the New Testament before Paul and Barnabas went on their first mission trip (Acts 13:1-2). And apostleship is never linked to females. Interestingly, Paul could have spoken of “well-known apostles” (a similar construction is found in Mt 27:16), but he distinguishes two separate groups.

Rom 16:8-10: slave names!

Rom 16:13: Rufus: possibly Simon the Cyrene's son (Mk 15:21)

Rom 16:14: 5 unknown people

Rom 16:23: Erastus: *oikonomos*; director of public works

The Erastus Inscription: ERASVS PRO AEDILIT E S P STRAVIT

"Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [this pavement] at his own expense"

The Book of 1 Corinthians

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles" (MS 13, 1888).

Introduction: How would you start a church in a city of ½ million people . . .

- city of \$\$\$, sports, and sex
- alone, may be 2-3 helpers (who would you take along for a mission like this?!)
- no Christian infrastructure
- a church within 18 months

The City of Corinth: "Corinth had everything: pushers, pranksters, prostitutes, politicians. Everything but a preacher!"



<http://www.thekingsbible.com/BibleAtlas.aspx#>

- connection between eastern and western Mediterranean (dangerous southern trip; ships dragged across land)
- refounded in 44 B.C. by Julius Caesar
- Roman, not Greek architecture (cf. Rom 16:23)
- commerce: two harbors
- entertainment: outdoor theater
- population: diverse (Greeks, Romans, Jews, slaves, travelers, traders, orientals)
- religion: temple of Aphrodite:
- lifestyle: *korinthiazomai* - to act like a Corinthian, to practice fornication
- archaeology: drinking vessels and liquor taverns
- Romans was written from Corinth! Theology developed not in an office but in the trenches of reality!

Paul in Corinth

- 18 months during governorship of Allia, Achaia, AD 51/52
- from synagogue to house of Titus Justus (2nd mission journey)
- worked with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3)
- 1 Cor = really 2 Cor! (1 Cor 5:9); 1st and 2nd Corinthians *extant*; the real 1 Corinthians has not been found
- answers to questions posed by the Corinthians (i.e., 1 Cor 7:1)
- written from Ephesus (implications for speaking in tongues)
- style: logic, sarcasm, entreaty, scolding, poetry, narration, exposition
- problem church - possibly 4 letters total!

Ellen White on Corinth (AA 244-248)

"In preaching the gospel in Corinth, the apostle followed a course different from that which had marked his labors at Athens. While in the latter place, he had sought to adapt his style to the character of his audience; he had met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. As he thought of the time thus spent, and realized that his

teaching in Athens had been productive of but little fruit, he decided to follow another plan of labor in Corinth in his efforts to arrest the attention of the careless and the indifferent. He determined to avoid elaborate arguments and discussions, and “not to know anything” among the Corinthians “save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” He would preach to them “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” 1 Cor. 2:2, 4.

Jesus, whom Paul was about to present before the Greeks in Corinth as the Christ, was a Jew of lowly origin, reared in a town proverbial for its wickedness. He had been rejected by His own nation and at last crucified as a malefactor. The Greeks believed that there was need of elevating the human race, but they regarded the study of philosophy and science as the only means of attaining to true elevation and honor. Could Paul lead them to believe that faith in the power of this obscure Jew would uplift and ennoble every power of the being?

To the minds of multitudes living at the present time, the cross of Calvary is surrounded by sacred memories. Hallowed associations are connected with the scenes of the crucifixion. But in Paul’s day the cross was regarded with feelings of repulsion and horror. To uphold as the Saviour of mankind one who had met death on the cross, would naturally call forth ridicule and opposition.

Paul well knew how his message would be regarded by both the Jews and the Greeks of Corinth. “We preach Christ crucified,” he admitted, “unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” 1 Corinthians 1:23. Among his Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind.

But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. At that time there had been given him a revelation of the infinite love of God, as revealed in the death of Christ; and a marvelous transformation had been wrought in his life, bringing all his plans and purposes into harmony with heaven. From that hour he had been a new man in Christ. He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all.

At the time of his conversion, Paul was inspired with a longing desire to help his fellow men to behold Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of the living God, mighty to transform and to save. Henceforth his life was wholly devoted to an effort to portray the love and power of the Crucified One. His great heart of sympathy took in all classes. “I am debtor,” he declared, “both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” Romans 1:14. Love for the Lord of glory, whom he had so relentlessly persecuted in the person of His saints, was the actuating principle of his conduct, his motive power. If ever his ardor in the path of duty flagged, one glance at the cross and the amazing love there revealed, was enough to cause him to gird up the loins of his mind and press forward in the path of self-denial.

Behold the apostle preaching in the synagogue at Corinth, reasoning from the writings of Moses and the prophets, and bringing his hearers down to the advent of the promised Messiah. Listen as he makes plain the work of the Redeemer as the great high priest of mankind—the One who through the sacrifice of His own life was to make atonement for sin once for all, and was then to take up His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Paul’s hearers were made to understand that the Messiah for whose advent they had been longing, had already come; that His death was the antitype of all the sacrificial offerings, and that His ministry in the sanctuary in heaven was the great object that cast its shadow backward and made clear the ministry of the Jewish priesthood.

Paul “testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.” From the Old Testament Scriptures he showed that according to the prophecies and the universal expectation of the Jews, the Messiah would be of the lineage of Abraham and of David; then he traced the descent of Jesus from the patriarch Abraham through the royal psalmist. He read the testimony of the prophets regarding the character and work of the promised Messiah, and His reception and treatment on the earth; then he showed that all these predictions had been fulfilled in the life, ministry, and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul showed that Christ had come to offer salvation first of all to the nation that was looking for the Messiah’s coming as the consummation and glory of their national existence. But that nation had rejected Him who would have given them

life, and had chosen another leader, whose reign would end in death. He endeavored to bring home to his hearers the fact that repentance alone could save the Jewish nation from impending ruin. He revealed their ignorance concerning the meaning of those Scriptures which it was their chief boast and glory that they fully understood. He rebuked their worldliness, their love of station, titles, and display, and their inordinate selfishness.

In the power of the Spirit, Paul related the story of his own miraculous conversion and of his confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures, which had been so completely fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His words were spoken with solemn earnestness, and his hearers could not but discern that he loved with all his heart the crucified and risen Saviour. They saw that his mind was centered in Christ, that his whole life was bound up with his Lord. So impressive were his words, that only those who were filled with the bitterest hatred against the Christian religion could stand unmoved by them. But the Jews of Corinth closed their eyes to the evidence so clearly presented by the apostle, and refused to listen to his appeals. The same spirit that had led them to reject Christ, filled them with wrath and fury against His servant; and had not God especially protected him, that he might continue to bear the gospel message to the Gentiles, they would have put an end to his life."

Outline of 1 Corinthians

I. Care: Introduction (1)

II. Concern: Division in the Church (1-4)

A. Causes: Misunderstanding the Cross and the Spirit

B. Consequences: Loss of Spirituality

III. Condemnation (5-6) - *Public Life*

A. Sexual Immorality (5): Problem and Punishment

B. Legal Issues (6)

IV. Counsel (7-10) - *Personal Life*

A. Marriage

1. Celibacy

2. Divorce

3. Service

4. Remarriage

B. Food offered to Idols: Rights vs. Restrictions

V. Context (11-14): Worship

A. Clothing

B. Communion

C. Spiritual Gifts

D. Love

E. Spiritual Gifts

VI. Content: The Resurrection (15)

VII. Conclusion: Practical and Personal Matters (16)

Overview of 1 Corinthians

Problem	Solution
Division	Spiritual Maturity
Fornication	Redemptive Discipline ("Tough Love")

Litigation	Internal Arbitration
Mixed Marriages (spiritual)	Salvation Outreach
Unmarried Virgins	Self-control or Marriage

Progression of the Problem:

1. Loss of the Cross (1:18) 2. Loss of the Spirit (2:12-14) 3. Loss of Growth (3:3) 4. Loss of Eternal Life! (3:16-18)

1 Corinthians 1

Ideal: 1 Cor 1:10 - "agreement"

Reality: 1 Cor 1:11-17 "division"

1 Cor 4:9 "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle [θέατρον *theatron*] unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

1 Cor 5: Dare 2 Discipline?

Problem: step-son having immoral relations with his new step-mother

Today's excuses to dismiss sin:

- "nobody's perfect"
- "none of my business"
- "Who am I do judge?"
- "I thought the church was there to love people, not judge them!"
- "the church is a hospital for sinners"
- "Why did they kick him out?"

- Deut 27:20 "Cursed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen."

Paul's redemptive procedure: Removal from the fellowship of the church to warn against potential removal from the kingdom.

- 2 Cor 2:6-8 - did he come back?

1 Corinthians 6**1 Cor 6:9-11: BC/AD!**

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**"

1 Cor 10:7-8: "Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. ⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

παίζω *paizo* = dance, play, leading to immorality as demonstrated in Ex 32:6: "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

Immorality is not just wrong; it kills.

Dance Lessons in Germany

When I grew up in Germany, all the teenagers took dance lessons in 10th grade. I remember sitting in Math class one morning, overhearing a conversation among the "cute girls" in the back. One asked the other, "So, what did you do with your boyfriend after dancing last night?" "Oh, what we usually do, play sandwich." . . .

"The waltz, originating in Germany, changed all that. As mentioned before, it had long been a pastime for artisans in their guilds and when transplanted brought with it the traditional tune of 'Ach, du lieber Augustin.' What words and music did was to break up forever the elegant dance of groups into couples and to turn the diffident romp into a whirl. The shock of seeing (and being) the sexes paired in a close clutch and moving in $\frac{3}{4}$ time at a dizzy speed was severe and prolonged. Resignation to the indecency . . . took over a decade" (Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, 500).

Law Suits in the Church

- trivial cases
- you yourselves cheat = both parties wrong
- in front of unbelievers

1 Cor 7

7:10, 12: not a direct teaching from Jesus, but not necessarily a lesser authority

Abstinence or the Altar?

- specific Corinthian counsel?
- asceticism vs. anything goes in the church
- "It is good for a man not to marry" \neq "It is not good for a man to marry"
- eschatological urgency: "the present crisis" (7:26); "the time is short" (7:29)
- assumption: "those who marry will face many troubles in this life" (7:28)
- 9:5 wives traveling with apostles
- assumption: 7:33-34

1 Cor 8 You can be wrong while being right

1 Cor 11: Universal Principle & Local Application

Long hair: seductive, prominent in pagan rituals? (see Lk 7; Jn 12)

v10: Ps 138:1; 1 Cor 4:9; 1 Tim 5:21

v13: cultural difference?

Examples

- beards in the 1960s
- right earring in males

The Lord's Supper: 4-dimensional:

- 23-26a: looking back
- 26b: looking forward
- 27-28, 31-32: looking inward
- 33-34: looking around

1 Cor 12: Spiritual Gifts

antiquity: human body - societal structures

1 Cor 13

- tongues of angels: quality, not nature
- noisy going, tinkling cymbal: life without love reverts the Christian to pagan worship!
- 15 verbs of description: love is specific, not abstract
- logizomai:
- v10: perfection based on love (horizontal)

1 Cor 14: Speaking in Tongues

- 40 mill. Catholics speak in tongues: "more faithful to Mary and RCC"
- Buddhist-Shintuist sect in Japan
- spectrograph: identical patterns, no parallels to human language
- 60s: 2nd wave of the Holy Spirit
- Kansas City (Jan. 1, 1901) to Azusa St. in LA
- pre-1900 commentaries on 1 Cor 14: foreign languages
- 2nd Blessing: Toronto, 3rd Wave
- 3 types of Greek lit: 1) physiology (tongue), 2) musical instrument, 3) language

Acts 2: Pentecost

- intelligible languages for evangelistic purpose (15+ countries present)
- conversion at point of Peter's intelligent, OT sermon; normal language
- only 4 texts of speaking in tongues
- Acts 10:46; 19:6 (in Ephesus, from which Corinthian was written!)
- koine Greek sufficient to carry Gospel (TM 424, AA 39-40; 5T391)
- "one language was widely spoken" (DA 32)
- Acts 4:25 "you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David . . ."
- Acts 4:31

The Oracle of Delphi

[picture]

Speaking in Tongues

- Delphi: worshipers called "enthusiasmos"
- "personality was temporarily expelled and his body taken over by the god who spoke through him" (Richardson, 93)
- speaking in tongues: emotive, contextual expression of praise particular to Corinth
- Strabo (64 B.C. - AD 25): "They say the seat of the oracle is a cavern hollowed deep down in the earth, with a rather narrow mouth, from which rises a pneuma [gas, vapor, breath, spirit] that produces divine possession. A tripod is set above this cleft, mounting which, the pythia inhales the vapor and prophecies."
- Corinthians: pagan emulation?

[picture]

interesting: singular vs. plural:

- singular: vv 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27
- plural: vv 6, 18, 22, 23, 29 (except vv 27-28, single person with real language)
- "unknown" a KJV addition
- v2: to God: criticism, not commendation!
- v6-11: inferiority of tongues
- vv7-8: flawed transmitters, not flawed receivers
- vv10-11: foreign languages should make sense
- v 12: edification of the church
- v 13:

- v 14
- v18-19: Paul has the gift; nowhere mentioned in NT though!
- vv22-23: tongues a sign to unbelievers
- Acts 2: successful to unbelievers
- v23: Corinthian imitation = unsuccessful to unbelievers

OT Background

Assyrian king Sennacherib sent military officer Rabshakeh to threaten King Hezekiah with invasion. Warning sign from God ignored - gibberish (but "normal" language nonetheless!) is a sign to the unbelieving not to believe! (see Isa 28:11):

כִּי צוֹ לְצוֹ צוֹ לְצוֹ קוֹ לְקוֹ קוֹ לְקוֹ שָׁם זְעִיר שָׁם זְעִיר שָׁם

- 24-25: in favor of prophecy
- 27-28: regulate, but don't restrict (v39)
- 29-30: not all have the gift!

Rules:

1. edification (v26)
2. 1-3 may speak (27a)
3. one at a time (27b)
4. interpreter (27, 28)
5. women? (34)
6. in order (40)

Cessation Theory

- 12 Pauline letters (or 13); none mention tongues
- nor do Peter, James, John, Jude
- absent in apostolic fathers

Chrysostom (4th c.): "The obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place" ("Homilies in First Corinthians," Philip Schaff, ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Vol. 12 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 168.

1 Cor 13:8 - tongues will stop!

Letter to John McArthur (in *Charismatic Chaos*, 25):

"You resort to Greek translations and fancy words to explain away what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church today. Let me give you a piece of advice that might just save you from the wrath of almighty God: *put away your Bible* and your *books* and *stop studying*. Ask the Holy Ghost to come upon you and give you the gift of tongues. You have no right to question something you have never experienced."

Personal Perspective

Eph 5:18: "filled with the spirit" is in contrast to uncontrolled behavior

When I was at the Seminary in Michigan, I had a Bible Study with a Pentecostal family every Tuesday afternoon. We studied Daniel, Revelation, the Gospel of Mark, Amazing Facts Study Guides. Two ladies came to accept the Sabbath as the biblical day of rest and worship. When I invited them to church the next Sabbath they didn't want to come. Upon further inquiry they told me, "The Holy Spirit hasn't told us." The Holy Spirit vs. The Holy Scriptures! Then I made deal: I'd visit their church if they visited mine. Deal.

Their church progressed normally, with a lady preaching a good sermon on the tears of Jesus (Heb 5:7). After a while the drums starting coming in, and the atmosphere changed. The preacher started speaking in tongues. People were jumping around in the pews, those who came forward were "slain in the spirit", with deacons catching those who fell over. It was chaos! There was a satanic electricity in the air, and we left soon thereafter - but before we did a lady tapped us on the shoulder and whispered, "This is real". We had no doubt it was!

A friend of mine simply said Good morning in Japanese to a person in a church in Japan. The person said, You've got the gift!

Gibberish is not the genuine manifestation of the Spirit, but a counterfeit. Stay away from it!

Ellen White on the Holy Spirit

It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love. (AA 51.2)

It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father." It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, "He shall not speak of Himself." John 15:26; 16:13. (AA 51.3)

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

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

To the repentant sinner, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the Holy Spirit reveals the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you," Christ said. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 16:14; 14:26. (AA 52.3)

The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures. (AA 52.4)

Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein. (AA 52.5)

From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His "good Spirit to instruct them." Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples. (AA 53.1)

And today God is still using His church to make known His purpose in the earth. Today the heralds of the cross are going from city to city, and from land to land, preparing the way for the second advent of Christ. The standard of God's law is being exalted. The Spirit of the Almighty is moving upon men's hearts, and those who respond to its influence become witnesses for God and His truth. In many places consecrated men and women may be seen communicating to others the light that has made plain to them the way of salvation through Christ. And as they continue to let their light shine, as did those who were baptized with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they receive more and still more of the Spirit's power. Thus the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. (AA 53.2)

On the other hand, there are some who, instead of wisely improving present opportunities, are idly waiting for some special season of spiritual refreshing by which their ability to enlighten others will be greatly increased. They neglect present duties and privileges, and allow their light to burn dim, while they look forward to a time when, without any effort on their part, they will be made the recipients of special blessing, by which they will be transformed and fitted for service. (AA 54.1)

It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church. (AA 54.2)

But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest "in the time of the latter rain." In response, "the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain." "He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain," Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23. (AA 55.1)

But unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need. (AA 55.2)

Those only who are constantly receiving fresh supplies of grace, will have power proportionate to their daily need and their ability to use that power. Instead of looking forward to some future time when, through a special endowment of spiritual power, they will receive a miraculous fitting up for soul winning, they are yielding themselves daily to God, that He may make them vessels meet for His use. Daily they are improving the opportunities for service that lie within their reach. Daily they are witnessing for the Master wherever they may be, whether in some humble sphere of labor in the home, or in a public field of usefulness. (AA 55.3)

1 Cor 14:34 "Women should remain silent in the churches"

- issue: not preaching or teaching but behavior in worship setting
- Paul affirms a woman's right to learn
- not categorical absolute: women were allowed to speak/prophecy/pray in 11:5, 13
- 14:28, 30: men are told to be silent as well!
- synagogue context: architectural gender separation

[picture]

1 Cor 15: Anastasia's Anthem

1 Cor 15:29 Baptism for the Dead?

"for":

- for the benefit of (Mormon interpretation)
 - on account of (grandma's faithfulness inspired me)
 - Rabbinic: If . . . how much more . . .
- Negative examples as positive examples: emulate principle, not detail (Lk 16:1-12 "shrewd manager")
- Brooks/Vinbery: xyz

1 Cor 16

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ² Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Not evidence of a Sunday morning public offering! $\pi\alpha\rho' \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\tilde{\omega}$ = by himself = taking care of finances by yourself – evidence against public offering!

Strangely, most translation miss translating this key prepositional phrase!

Maranatha: not a curse, but a plea for the Lord to come
Marana tha, not anathema!

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2nd Chance.

Introduction

"2 Corinthians is like a river which sometimes flows in a gentle stream, sometimes rushes down as a torrent bearing all before it, sometimes spreading out like placid sometimes losing itself, as it were, in the sand, and breaking out in its fullness in some unexpected place" (Erasmus).

Sequence

- 2nd mission journey
- church started (Acts 18:1-17; 1 Cor 3:6, 10)
- lost letter (1 Cor 5:9)
- 1 Corinthians
- "painful visit"
- lost letter
- 2 Corinthians

Attitude

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you" (2 Cor 2:4).

Overview

- author: Paul (2 Cor 1:1; 10:1)
- ~AD 55/56
- 1 Cor from Ephesus before Pentecost (late spring)
- 2 Cor from Macedonia (2 Cor 2:13; 7:5) before winter
- 2 Cor 10-13: "severe letter" (2:4)

Tone: affliction, anguish, beaten, beatings, conflicts, danger, hunger, persecutions, punished, sorrow, suffered, sufferings, tears, tumults, weak, weakness

Terminology: "comfort, comforted" > other letters

Accusations

- 3:1 no credentials
- 8:20-23 financial irresponsibility
- 10:2 walking according to the flesh
- 10:8, 15 boastful
- 10:10 bark greater than his bite
- 11:7 works without pay (must not be worth much)
- 11:5; 12:11-12 not one of the original apostles = not qualified to teach
- 12:16 deceitful

Outline of 2 Corinthians

I. Explaining His Ministry to Former Opponents: Paul's Character

- A. Confidence
- B. commendation
- C. Covenant
- D. Character

- E. Circumstances
- F. Compulsion
- G. Conduct

II. Encouraging Their Generosity: Paul's Call for Cash

- A. Principles
- B. Purposes
- C. Policies
- D. Promises

Man > Method

III. Emphasizing His Authority to Present Opponents: Paul's Credentials

- A. Conduct
- B. Suffering
- C. Vision
- D. Unselfishness

Key Texts

1:10 Delivery Confirmation

- has delivered us
- will deliver us
- will continue to deliver us

ὅς ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ ρύ[σ]εται, εἰς ὃν ἠλπίζαμεν [ὅτι] καὶ ἔτι ρύσεται,

Past

Present

Future

(Rom 11:26 "The Deliverer")

2 Cor 2:14-16

2 Cor 3: The Ministry of the Law

Letter	Spirit
Outward fading glory = fading Mosaic system (Ex 34:29-35) type ceremonial-sacrificial rites = pattern ministry of death because of subjects, not objects veil prospective: don't see Christ forbids to do wrong	Inward lasting glory antitype Jesus Christ = reality magnified law without abolishing the letter veil torn frees to do right

EGW: "There is no discord between the Old Testament and the New. In the Old Testament we find the gospel of a coming Saviour; in the New Testament we have the gospel of a Saviour revealed as the prophecies had foretold. While the Old Testament is constantly pointing forward to the true offering, the New Testament shows that the Saviour prefigured by the typical offerings has come. The dim glory of the Jewish age has been succeeded by the brighter, clearer glory of the Christian age. But not once has Christ stated, that his coming destroyed the claims of God's law. On the contrary, in the very last message to his church, by way of Patmos, he pronounces a benediction upon those who keep his Father's law: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (ST July 29, 1886, par. 9).

“The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ. He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, at the death of Christ, type met antitype. He saw that only through Christ can man keep the moral law. By transgression of this law man brought sin into the world, and with sin came death. Christ became the propitiation for man’s sin. He proffered his perfection of character in the place of man’s sinfulness. He took upon himself the curse of disobedience. The sacrifices and offerings pointed forward to the sacrifice he was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world” (RH April 22, 1902, Art. A, par. 6).

“It was seeing the object of that which was to be done away, seeing Christ as revealed in the law, that illumined the face of Moses. The ministration of the law, written and engraved in stone, was a ministration of death. Without Christ, the transgressor was left under its curse, with no hope of pardon. The ministration had of itself no glory, but the promised Saviour, revealed in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, made the moral law glorious” (RH April 22, 1902, Art. A, par. 7).

"Look to Christ, behold the attractive loveliness of His character, and by beholding you will become changed into His likeness. The mist that intervenes between Christ and the soul will be rolled back as we by faith look past the hellish shadow of Satan and see God's glory in His law, and the righteousness of Christ" (MS 16, 1890).

2 Cor 3:18 "metamorphosis"

katoptrizomai: hapax legomenon = unique reflection

“Many in the Christian world also have a veil before their eyes and heart. They do not see to the end of that which was done away. They do not see that it was only the ceremonial law which was abrogated at the death of Christ. They claim that the moral law was nailed to the cross. Heavy is the veil that darkens their understanding. The hearts of many are at war with God. They are not subject to his law. Only as they shall come into harmony with the rule of his government, can Christ be of any avail to them. They may talk of Christ as their Saviour; but he will finally say to them, I know you not. You have not exercised genuine repentance toward God for the transgression of his holy law, and you cannot have genuine faith in me, for it was my mission to exalt God’s law” (RH April 22, 1902, Art. A, par. 15).

Re-Creation

"It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord" (MS 16, 1890).

"When men will consent to submit to Christ's will, to be partakers of the divine nature, their crooked, human peculiarities will disappear" (MS 102, 1903).

Scofield Study Bible III

"God's moral law proceeds from the righteousness of God and can never be abolished. The Mosaic law, as an expression of this moral law is 'passing away' in that it has been superseded by another law, that is, the standards of grace revealed in the NT. The believer is now under law to Christ (1 Cor. 9:21 . . . Compare Rom. 8:2-4).

Although the Christian is not under the Mosaic law as a rule of life, some of the law of Moses is restated in the NT, that is, nine of the Ten Commandments are included. The Mosaic law still constitutes a revelation of the righteousness of God and remains as a part of Scripture which 'is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Tim 3:16-17; compare Rom. 15:4). Scofield Study System (2002), NKJFV, p. 1599.

2 Cor 4:7-10 - Greco-Roman Rhetoric

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. ⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;¹⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast

down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

2 Cor 4:16-18 - Future Focus - Present Perspective

2 Cor 5:8 - "At home with the Lord"?

Context: v4

Core: vv8-9

"away from the body": ἐκ τοῦ σώματος

1 Cor 6:18: "outside the body": ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος

Not dualism as a surface reading of most translations suggests, but the abandonment of an earthly = sinful, decaying body.

Note Col 2:5: "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."

Paul does not speak of two existences or realities here. Absent in the flesh and present in the spirit is not Greek dualism.

2 Cor 5:17 New Creation

"The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again" (RH April 12, 1892).

2 Cor 8-9 Money Matters

8:5 they first gave themselves to the Lord

8:8 basis of giving not command, but Christ

8:12 attitude > amount

9:7 "God loves a cheerful giver"

9:15 "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

2 Cor 12:1-5 - The 3rd Heaven

see Heb 4:14; 7:26; Eph 4:10; Rev 2:7

Jewish: 7 heavens

Mormons: "the celestial, the highest; the terrestrial, the next below it; and the telestial, the third." (B. Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. by J. Widstoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1941, p. 391).

Celestial: presence of Godhead (Father)

Terrestrial: Ministration of Jesus Christ

Telestial: companionship of Holy Spirit

2 Cor 12:2 Paul's "Rapture"

- whole man was involved, not dualism

- "outside the body": 1 Cor 6:18!
- Acts 8:39 - physical rapture
- Ezek 8:3 = vision (Ezek 11:24)

2 Cor 12 Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

Options: epilepsy, stammering, malaria, leprosy, migraines, depression, blindness, false teachers

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand" (Gal 6:11).

"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal 4:15).

EGW: eyesight (Letter 207, 1899)

2 Cor 13:14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen."

A beautiful ending – a doxology – though not Trinitarian as often claimed.

The Book of Galatians

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles" (MS 13, 1888).

Introduction

Outline

I. Personal Authentication: the Gospel from the Lord (1-2)

- A. Declaration: The Message
- B. Demonstration: The Man
- C. Defense: The Ministry

II. Doctrinal Argument: The Gospel and the Law (3-4)

- A. Personal
- B. Scriptural
- C. Logical
- D. Historical
- E. Sentimental
- F. Allegorical

III. Practical Application: The Gospel and Life (5-6)

- A. Liberty vs. Bondage
- B. Spirit vs. Flesh
- C. Others vs. Self
- D. God's glory vs. People's praise

Dating and Geography

Northern Theory: 2nd/3rd journey = late

Southern Theory: 1st journey = early (before Jerusalem Counsel, AD 49)

Background

- not encyclopedic entry of "law" but an emotional confrontation with people who misused the law
- forensic rhetoric: tactics of courtroom persuasion (Gal 2:11)
- no customary thanks or commendation in greeting (Gal 4:15-20)
- but: Gal 4:19-20!

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, ²⁰ I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

- 3 days: blindness
- 3 years: Arabia and Damascus
- 15 days: Jerusalem, Cephas, James, then in Syria and Cilicia
- 14 years later: Jerusalem, Barnabas, Titus (no circumcision!, 2:3)

Paul's Calling

Jeremiah	Paul
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"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jer 1:5

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, ¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" Gal 1:15-16

Issue with the law:

- 2:4-5
- 2:12
- 4:10
- 5:12-13

"The two chief characteristics of the false teachers are that they were troubling the church and changing the gospel. These two go together. To tamper with the gospel is always to trouble the church. You cannot touch the gospel and leave the church untouched, because the church is created and lives by the gospel. Indeed, the church's greatest troublemakers (now as then) are not those outside who oppose, ridicule and persecute it, but those inside who try to change the gospel" (Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 23).

What is the Law?

- Torah (Gen - Deut)
- 10 Commandments
- Torah + 10 Commandments
- Civil Law
- Ceremonial Law

The Law is Good: Rom 2:20; 7:14 ↔ The Law is Bad: 1 Cor 15:56

Gal 3:24: paidagogos tutor (a slave who escorted a child 6-16 to/from school, protected, disciplined, and helped with homework)

New motivation: not new code, but Christ!

Gal 3:25: "I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments" (Ms 87, 1900).

"When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? the transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man and thus present men to His Father in His righteous character" (MS 50, 1900).

"Now genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the nonperformance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hardhearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn" (2SM 20).

"The labor of love springs from the work of faith. Bible religion means constant work. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. We are to be zealous of good works, be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says: "I know thy works"

(Revelation 2:2). While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity" (2SM 20).

Galatians 4: Isaac or Ishmael?

"The religion of Ishmael is a religion of nature, of what man can do by himself without any special intervention of god. But the religion of Isaac is a religion of grace, of what God has done and does, a religion of divine initiative and divine intervention, for Isaac was born supernaturally through a divine promise. And this is what Christianity is, not 'natural' religion but 'supernatural'. The Ishmaels of this world trust in themselves that they are righteous, the Isaacs trust only in God through Jesus Christ. The Ishmaels are in bondage, because this is what self-reliance always leads to; the Isaacs enjoy freedom, because it is through faith in Christ that men are set free" (Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 128-129).

Galatians 5: The Fruit of Faith

I have a confession to make: I used to think the fruit of the Spirit is just some Vacation Bible School material. Fruit. Cute. Kind of like Veggie Tales. Child stuff. Cartoon characters. Bill the banana. Sandra strawberry. Gretel the grape. And Tom the tomato. (Tomato is a fruit, you know?)

And isn't fruit just a side dish that you have, well, on the side?

I took another look at Paul's collage of fruit, and I was stunned. Right *before* the list of fruit he lines up some other works of the flesh that will actually keep you out of the kingdom of God! The fruit of the Spirit is not simply comparing apples to oranges, it's serious business with eternal consequences.

Let me advance 5 proposals on the fruit of faith to you.

1. Fruit is either fresh or rotten.

In fact, it's either fruit or flesh. Smoking or non-smoking.

Galatians 5:19-21	Galatians 5:22-23
19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith(fulness), 23 gentleness, self-control.

2. Fruit must be washed.

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals¹, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:9-11).

"according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of . . . the Holy Spirit" (Tit 3:5).

3. Fruit must be peeled. And when peeled, the inside becomes public.

While faith is a personal matter, it cannot remain private. Faith as fruit is public, not private. Let me give you an example:

Mark 2:5 - "When Jesus saw their faith" . . . Sometimes faith is *not* a matter of the heart but a ministry of your hands. Sometimes faith means sweat on your forehead and dirt underneath your fingernails! Moving 2x4s and breaking through sheet rock. The end result is that a paralyzed rotten fruit ends up in the presence of Jesus and when you end up in the presence of Jesus He turns you from wilted garbage to a mouth-watering fruit salad, with a cherry on top! "The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (RH Oct 26, 1897 par 15).

"As you receive the Spirit of Christ - the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others - you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely" (COL 68).

"Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23. They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober, and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the "outward adorning," but "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." 1 Peter 3:3, 4. (SC 58).

"There is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation" (SC 58).

4. Fruit has to be harvested.

The existence of fruit means that there must have been a harvest. And with that . . . Fruit means, at some point God will esteem you ripe for the picking - specifically in regards to your faith!

Fruit means that God can stick His fork in you and declare you done. Let's pick you off the vine and put you in the basket and take you home!

5. Fruit must be kept fresh, or it spoils.

Because of this harvest at the end, fruit has to be kept fresh until the end: "Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12).

"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Lk 18:8) - He's looking for faith in you right before the Second Coming! Incidentally, He asked that question the first time He came: Remember, disciples on the lake, storm . . . "Where is your faith" (Lk 8:25)?

Which list in Galatians would you like to be found in? The flesh pots of Egypt or the fruit basket of the Spirit?

What's in your smoothie?

"If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has passed from death unto life" (SC 59).

. . .

"The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. "We love, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around" (SC 59).

"There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they

can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy" (SC 59).

"The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption. But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience."

"We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:5, 6. Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." 1 John 3:7. Righteousness is defined by the standard of God's holy law, as expressed in the ten precepts given on Sinai" (SC 61).

"That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption. "By grace are ye saved through faith." But "faith, if it hath not works, is dead." Ephesians 2:8; James 2:17. Jesus said of Himself before He came to earth, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. And just before He ascended again to heaven He declared, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10. The Scripture says, "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.... He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." 1 John 2:3-6. "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." 1 Peter 2:21. (SC 61).

"The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized" (SC 62).

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned" (SC 62).

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "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. So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience" (SC 62).

“So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us” (SC 63).

“When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that “the devils also believe, and tremble;” but this is not faith. James 2:19. Where there is not only a belief in God’s word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, “O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” Psalm 119:97. And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1” (SC 63).

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, “These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1. And do not forget the words of Christ, “The Father Himself loveth you.” John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance” (SC 64).

“The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan’s delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you” (SC 64).

“No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ (SC 65).

“The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image” (SC 65).

Galatians 6

Gal 6:1 "restore": setting bones, mending nets

6:2 carry each other's burdens ↔ 6:5 for each of you should carry your own load

"stigmatize"

Excursion: 1888 and the Book of Galatians – The Mess or Message of Minneapolis?

"We are in for it" (EGW to MW, Oct. 9, 1888).

Issue: the 10 commandments/schoolmaster law leads people "unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (EJW, *Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, 45).

"I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law as the doctor has placed it before us. . . . [It] harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience" (EGW, MS 15, 1888).

"Neither have all the light upon the law; neither position is perfect" (EGW to GIB, Oct. 14, 1888).

Historical Context: Sunday Laws - Legalism

- 1880s: Sunday laws in California
- 500,000 copies of the *Sabbath Sentinel*
- 1885-87: 21 cases in Arkansas
- 1888: Tennessee - larger number of SDAs arrested
- May 21, 1888: H. W. Blair bill promoted observance of "the Lord's day" to U.S. Senate

"The Main Point": "to lead souls to Christ through obedience to this closing testing truth. This was the one objective point of all their efforts; and the end sought was not considered gained unless souls were converted to God, and led to seek through an enlightened obedience to all his commandments, a preparation for the Lord from heaven" (U. Smith, Jan. 3 1888).

E. J. Waggoner + A. T. Jones: "The Gospel in the Book of Galatians"

G.I. Butler + Uriah Smith: "The Law in the Book of Galatians"

Personality Conflict

Butler: "too much iron in my nature"

Smith: "Having by long study, and years of observation in the work, become settled on certain principles, I am not prepared to flop over at the suggestion of every novice" (US to ATUJ, Spet. 12, 1892).

EGW on Waggoner and Jones: ". . . has loved discussions and contention. . . . We need now good humble religion. E. J. W. needs humility, meekness, and Brother Jones can be a power for good if he will constantly cultivate practical godliness" (Feb. 18, 1887, to ATJ and EJW).

AT Jones: army sergeant 1870s: 1901 delegates challenged candidacy for CA Conf. Pres.: "directness and plainness of speech . . . hurt folks".

Waggoner: Healdsburg, CA, Oct. 1882 Campmeeting experience: "Suddenly a light shone round me, and the tent was, for me, far more brilliantly lighted than if the noon-day sun had been shining, and I saw Christ hanging on the cross, crucified for me. In that moment I had my first positive knowledge, which came like an overwhelming flood, that God loved me, and that Christ died for me."

EGW: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure" (TM 91).

Unless he makes it his life business to behold the uplifted Saviour, and by faith to accept the merits which it is his privilege to claim, the sinner can no more be saved than Peter could walk upon the water unless he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon Jesus. Now, it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave

to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines" (TM 93).

EGW corrects Jones and Waggoner

- derived origin of Christ? EGW: "in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" (DA 530)
- Christ could not sin? "capable of yielding to temptation" (MS 57, 1890)
- must work on Sunday?
- organizational structure?
- "no conditions to salvation"? EGW: "the Bible is full of conditions" to ATJ, Apr 9, 1893
- Anna Rice as new prophet; EGW: "not the least confidence"
- Christ's human nature: "In his human nature there is not a particle of difference between him and you" (Jones, 1895 GCB 231, 233).

EGW: "He is a brother in our infirmities but not in possessing like passions" (2T 202).

"Be exceedingly careful how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. . . . Not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. . . . Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ" (EGW to Brother and Sister Baker, Feb. 9, 1896).

"Mother tells me that some of our people are making a mistake in planning institutes for the benefit of ministers and laborers. . . . She says that after the Minneapolis conference there was much need of ministerial institutes, but now that the light has been presented and accepted, that it is the duty of those workers to gather about them younger laborers and lay helpers, and to go into the mission fields working, and teaching as they work. We are near the end; time is short, and every effort must now be made to carry the message in the shortest time to the largest number of people" (WCW to DAR, Sept. 10, 1895).

After 1888

- 1892: Steps to Christ
- 1896: Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing
- 1898: The Desire of Ages
- 1900: Christ's Object Lessons
- 1905: The Ministry of Healing

Waggoner: pantheistic sentiments (1897 GC studies on Hebrews) "a man may get righteousness in bathing, when he knows where the water comes from" (1899)

"spiritual affinity" - adultery here, marriage there

Jones: attacked SDA church and EGW; holy flesh movement; lost credentials in 1907, church membership in 1909

The 1888 Message Study Committee

- "a group of loyal ministers and laymen of the Seventh-day Adventist church who share a common conviction"
- "When the church body 'is all of one accord' on the essentials of this 'most precious message,' [1888] the resulting work of repentance as we see our sin in contrast to the righteousness of Christ will remove the 100-year, unconscious barrier to the fullness of the latter rain God longs to give us" (Christ Ezell, March-April *Newsletter*, 1990).

Christ: fallen human nature with a self-centered bent to sin

Sanctuary: teaches end-time sinless living

SDA church: never fully accepted the 1888 message - therefore need for corporate repentance for latter rain to be poured out

- "daily" in Dan 8:14: paganism

Perspective

- sincere, but publish outside church umbrella without accountability
- controversial views on nature of Christ, nature of sin, nature of end-time victory
- militantly orthodox on Waggoner and Jones
- EGW never called for corporate repentance in relation to 1888
- church did accept 1888 message

roots: 1950s - Wieland and Short

Jack Sequeira: "Federal Theology" - God deals with mankind in the persons of the first and second Adam - in Adam all died, in Christ all receive salvation (universalism)

"I believe the Bible teaches that God actually and unconditionally saved all humanity at the cross so that we are justified and reconciled to God by this act (see Romans 5:10, 18; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19). I believe that the only reason anyone will be lost is because he or she will fully and persistently rejects God's gift of salvation in Christ (see John 3:18, 36)" (Sequeira, *Beyond*, 7-8).

You're only lost if you reject salvation!

However, Cross provides provisional salvation, based on faith acceptance.

EGW: "The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized" (SC 62).

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned" (SC 62).

"Behold in the cross of Christ the only sure guarantee for individual excellence and success. And the more the heart is wrapped up in Christ, the more secure is the treasure in the eternal world" (Letter 129, 1897).

"We behold in the cross of Christ our efficiency, our inexhaustible source of power" (Letter 129, 1898).

"Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men's minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God. They thus receive their lesson. Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. He whose eyes are fixed on Jesus will leave all. He will die to selfishness. He will believe in all the Word of God, which is so gloriously and wonderfully exalted in Christ" (21MR 37).

"As the sinner sees Jesus as He is, an all compassionate Saviour, hope and assurance take possession of his soul. The helpless soul is cast without any reservation upon Jesus. None can bear away from the vision of Christ Jesus crucified a lingering doubt. Unbelief is gone" (21MR 37).

"The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror. Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen (LHU 230).

"Christ declares, "I, if I be lifted up ..., will draw all men unto me." If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world" (LHU 230).

MS 56, 1899 ? xyz

"The gospel dispensation is the last period of probation that will ever be granted to men. Those who live under this dispensation of test and trial and yet are not led to repent and obey will perish with the disloyal. There is no second trial. The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life. Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him" (Ms 40, 1900). (7BC 971.9)

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen, unless you are ready to be a learner, unless you are ready to listen to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from the living oracles" (Ms 13, 1888).

The Book of Ephesians

Introduction

The City of Ephesus

- Paul's 3rd mission trip: Ephesus
- Paul stayed 2 years! (Acts 19:10; 20:31)
- written from prison in Rome
- inscription: "a most illustrious city"
- Strabo: "the greatest emporium in Asia"
- circular letter: The word "Ephesus" is missing in most manuscripts (Eph 1:1)
- 1 Cor 15:32 "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."
- 78 of 155 verses of Ephesians are found in Colossians
- "church" is mentioned 9x!

History of the City

- 11th c. BC: Ionian
- 6th c. BC: Lydian king Croesus ("rich as Croesus")
- 3rd c. BC: Alexander the Great
- Seleucids
- 190 BC: Antiochus the Great
- Romans
- Kingdom of Pergamum
- 133 BC: Attalus III
- AD 29: earthquake, rebuilt under Tiberius
- 3rd c AD: invasion of Goths
- AD 431: 3rd general church council: Mary = "Mother of God"

Key term: "in Christ" > 35x

The Temple of Artemis

Acts 19:27 "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Nike - Goddess of Victory

(ex-)Benefactors [picture of head chopped off]

Amphitheater

City Clerk Inscription:

Acts 19:9 "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

Temple of Domitian (81-96): 165x330 ft

Cult statue: 16-23 ft, 6ft arms

Outline of Ephesus

I. Doctrine: Our Riches in Christ (1-3)

A. Our Spiritual Possessions in Christ

1. From the Father (1:4-6)
2. From the Son (1:7-12)
3. From the Spirit (1:13-14)

First Prayer: For Enlightenment

B. Our Spiritual Possessions in Christ

1. Reconciliation to Himself
2. Reconciliation to Each Other

Second Prayer: For Enablement

II. Duty: Our Responsibility in Christ (4-6)

A. Walk in Unity

B. Walk in Purity

C. Walk in Harmony

1. Husbands and Wives
2. Parents and Children
3. Masters and Servants

D. Walk in Victory

Our Spiritual Protection in Christ

Chapters 1-3: Cause: Belief - no Imperatives

Chapters 1-4: Effect: Behavior - 35 imperatives!

Ephesians 1:3-14: longest sentence in the NT (202 words)

Eph 1:7-8 Love Letter

Eph 2:4-7 On Cloud 9

Eph 2:8-10 Saved to Serve

A New World Order: Eph 2:14-18

Temple Inscription [picture]

"The outsider shall not enter the protective enclosure around the sanctuary. And whoever is caught will only have himself to blame for the ensuing death." (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 15.11.5.417)

Eph 2 Trophimus: Acts 21:27-30

Ephesians 4: Church Model - Model Church?

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, **for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** ¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴ That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:" (Eph 4:11-15).

According to Eph 4, local church ministry is performed by the people, not the pastor – and only under this model will the church reach maturity! Read it for yourself again! This is huge, as it would really change how we do ministry, and the role of church members. We have known this for years; implementing it is much more difficult since we have operated under a non-biblical model for so long. The apostles got it right from the start:

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

Every church board needs to consider Eph 4 + Acts 6:4, along with the quotes below:

EGW: "The work of God in earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers" (GW 351-352).

"If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively engaged at work, they would accomplish more good, have more time for study and religious visiting, and also avoid many causes of friction" (GW 197-198).

"God has not given his ministers the work of setting the churches right. No sooner is this work done apparently, than it has to be done over again. Church members that are thus looked after and labored for become religious weaklings. If nine tenths of the effort that has been put forth for those who know the truth had been put forth for those who have never heard the truth, how much greater would have been the advancement made!" (7T 18).

"The ministers are hovering over churches, which know the truth, while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. . . . They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again" (GC Bulletin, April 12, 1901, p. 204).

"Sermons have been in great demand in our churches. The members have depended upon pulpit declamations instead of on the Holy Spirit. Uncalled for and unused, the spiritual gifts bestowed on them have dwindled into feebleness" (1 SM 127).

"The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers" (7T 19).

"God's servants are to preach His word to the people. Under the Holy Spirit's working they will come into order as stars in the hand of Christ, to shine forth with His brightness. Let those who claim to be Christ's ministers arise and shine; for their light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon them. Let them understand that Christ expects them to do the same work as He has done. Let them leave the churches that know the truth, and go forth to establish new churches, to present the word of truth to those who are in ignorance of God's warning message" (6T 414).

Case Study: Yoido Full Gospel Church, Paul (David) Yonggi-Cho, 1 million+ members: small groups – even recommended Ellen White, *Gospel Workers* and *Evangelism* to SDA Pastor Craig Dossman

Eph 4:26 Anger?

Eph 4:29 Wash your mouth with soap! (cf. Mt 13:48)

Eph 5: Wives, Submit?! Yes – to a man who acts like Jesus Christ! It is not submission to a male, but submission to a Christian man!

Eph 6: Parenting Skills . . . the Bible promotes a harmony between Love + Law: Love without law causes lawlessness; law without love promotes rebellion . . .

Love + Law	Love
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Law

Love + Law

Eph 6 - The Armor of God

- Which items are offensive, which are defensive?
- 4x pray!

Jesus to Ephesus: Rev 2:1-7

Sample mission territory: Turkey – ratio SDA/nonSDA: 1 million . . .

The Book of Philippians

Paul's Thank you Letter: "I have you in my heart"

Background Check

- Acts 16:12 "a city of the first district of Macedonia"
- named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, who took over the town in 356 B.C.
- Romans captured it in 168 B.C.
- Roman colony on main highway from east to Rome (Via Egnatia)
- Medical Center (possibly Luke's hometown), but otherwise military city, not commerce
- first visit: AD 51, with Silas, Timothy, and Luke; first European church
- written during first Roman imprisonment (Phil 1:13; 4:22), over 10 years after first preaching in Philippi
- During 2nd Mission Trip: Macedonian Call: "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. ¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:9-10).
- revisited Philippi on 3rd mission trip (Acts 20:1, 6)
- 1 Thess 2:2: Paul was mistreated in Philippi - no ill-feelings though!
- No OT quotations, only allusions
- minor strife among two women (4:2)
- no doctrinal error or moral corruption (contra Corinthians)
- persecution arising (1:29)?
- "in Christ" 8x: 1:1, 13; 2:1, 5; 3:3, 9, 14; 4:21
- "Joy" 8x: 1:4, 18, 25; 2:17, 18, 29; 3:1; 4:4 = 8x
- archaeology: 5th cent. basilica

Theme: "Joy in Jail because I live and die in Christ"

Key Texts: Phil 1:6-7; 2:5ff; 2:12; 3:10; 4:6-7, 8; 13; 19

"In Christ all fullness dwells. He teaches us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is the highest science that any man can reach. It is the sum of all true science. 'This is life eternal,' Christ declared, 'that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent' (MS 125, 1907).

Outline of Philippians

I. The Suffering Minister (1)

- A. Fellowship
- B. Future
- C. Faith

II. The Submissive Mind (2)

- A. Christ
- B. Paul
- C. Timothy
- D. Epaphroditus

III. The Spiritual Mind (3)

- A. Paul's Past (accountant: "I count")

- B. Paul's Present (athlete: "I press")
- C. Paul's Future (alien: "I look")

IV. The Secure Mind (4)

- A. God's Peace
- B. God's Power
- C. God's Provision

adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1997).

Philippians 1

1:6 "He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully" (SC 64).

1:7 "I have you in my heart"

1:21 "For to me to live is Christ." "This is the most perfect interpretation in a few words, in all the Scriptures, of what it means to be a Christian. This is the whole truth of the gospel" (RH Oct. 19, 1897).

Phil 1:21-23: The State of the Living

Perspective: "For to me" = from the viewpoint of Paul

single-article double infinitive: "to depart and be with Christ" = one action?

Phil 3:10-11: attaining the resurrection = future event

Since life is hard = I want to depart → and be with Christ (via resurrection)

1:30 agony!

Philippians 2: The Mind of Christ

2:1 fellowship of the Spirit

6a: pre-incarnation

KJV: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"

"God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ **has been given** an exalted position. **He has been made equal** with the Father" (8T 268).

6-8: humiliation

9-11: exaltation

"every knee will bow" = Isa 45:23 YHWH! Since the Father's name is in the Son (Ex 23:21), worshiping Yahweh in the OT can be claimed by Jesus in the NT

Jesus: curse reversal (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13)

The Mind of Christ

"If you strive in all humility to understand what is the mind of Christ, you will not be left in darkness. Jesus says, 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'" (YI Oct. 13, 1892).

“Before Christ left Heaven and came into the world to die, he was taller than any of the angels. He was majestic and lovely. But when his ministry commenced, he was but little taller than the common size of men then living upon the earth. Had he come among men with his noble, heavenly form, his outward appearance would have attracted the minds of the people to himself, and he would have been received without the exercise of faith. It was in the order of God that Christ should take upon himself the form and nature of fallen man, that he might be made perfect through suffering, and himself endure the strength of Satan’s fierce temptations, that he might understand how to succor those who should be tempted. The faith of men in Christ as the Messiah was not to rest on the evidences of sight, and they believe on him because of his personal attractions, but because of the excellence of character found in him, which never had been found, neither could be, in another. All who loved virtue, purity, and holiness, would be drawn to Christ, and would see sufficient evidence of his being the Messiah foretold by prophecy that should come. Those who thus trusted in the word of God, would receive the benefits of the teachings of Christ, and finally of his atonement” (2SP 39).

“As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed. They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints” (Revelation 15:3); and, falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life” (GC 668).

"The limited capacity of man cannot define this wonderful mystery-the blending of the two natures, the divine and the human. It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery" (Letter 5, 1889).

"When we approach the subject of Christ divinity, clothed with the garb of humanity, we may appropriately heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” We must come to the study of this subject with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, and will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth” (Manuscript 67, 1898).

Phil 2:12 Work out your own salvation?!

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness. God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and faculties given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God; but if we are “willing to be made willing,” the Saviour will accomplish this for us, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” [2 Corinthians 10:5](#). He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, he who would be a well-balanced Christian, must give all and do all for Christ; for the Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the word of God, learning its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the standard of Christian excellence. Day by day God works with him, perfecting the character that is to stand in the time of final test. And day by day the believer is working out before men and angels a sublime experiment, showing what the gospel can do for fallen human beings” (AA 483).

“Genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the non-performance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hardhearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn” (6BC 1111).

“The labor of love springs from the work of faith. Bible religion means constant work. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” We are to be zealous of good works; be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says, “I know thy works” (6BC 1111).

“While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity” (Ms 16, 1890).

Phil 2:13

“Herein is revealed the outworking of the divine principle of co-operation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God’s grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort” (PK 486, 487).

Phil 3:14

“He who would build up a strong, symmetrical character, he who would be a well-balanced Christian, must give all and do all for Christ; for the Redeemer will not accept divided service. Daily he must learn the meaning of self-surrender. He must study the word of God, learning its meaning and obeying its precepts. Thus he may reach the standard of Christian excellence” (AA 483).

Phil 4:4

“While the Christian’s life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness” (GC 477).

Phil 4:8

“Thus he introduces six adjectives picturing Christian ideals, old-fashioned and familiar words not necessarily from any philosophic list of moral excellencies, Stoic or otherwise. Without these no ideals can exist. They are pertinent now when so much filth is flaunted before the world in books, magazines, and moving-pictures under the name of realism (the slime of the gutter and the cess-pool)” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, s.v. – 1863-1934!).

Phil 4:13

“Whenever man accomplishes anything, whether in spiritual or in temporal lines, he should bear in mind that he does it through co-operation with his Maker. There is great necessity for us to realize our dependence on God” (COL 82).

Phil 4:18 Offering Appeal

“From every Christian home a holy light should shine forth. Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy. There are homes where this principle is carried out—homes where God is worshiped and truest love reigns. From these homes morning and evening prayer ascends to God as sweet incense, and His mercies and blessings descend upon the suppliants like the morning dew” (AH 37).

Results of Family Unity—“The first work of Christians is to be united in the family. Then the work is to extend to their neighbors nigh and afar off. Those who have received light are to let the light shine forth in clear rays. Their words, fragrant with the love of Christ, are to be a savor of life unto life. The more closely the members of a family are united in their work in the home, the more uplifting and helpful will be the influence that father and mother and sons and daughters will exert outside the home” (AH 37).

Good Men Needed More Than Great Minds—“The happiness of families and churches depends upon home influences. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds as of good men who will be a blessing in their homes” (AH 37).

Avoid Mistakes That May Close Doors—“When religion is manifested in the home, its influence will be felt in the church and in the neighborhood. But some who profess to be Christians talk with their neighbors concerning their home difficulties. They relate their grievances in such a way as to call forth sympathy for themselves; but it is a great mistake to pour our trouble into the ears of others, especially when many of our grievances are manufactured and exist because of our irreligious life and defective character. Those who go forth to lay their private grievances before others might better remain at home to pray, to surrender their perverse will to God, to fall on the Rock and be broken, to die to self that Jesus may make them vessels unto honor” (AH 38).

“The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary; but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor who is at God’s right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ’s propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable.... (TMK 75.4)
O, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat” (TMK 75).

"It is the privilege of every worker first to talk with God in the secret place of prayer and then to talk with the people as God's mouthpiece. Men and women who commune with God, who have an abiding Christ, make the very atmosphere holy, because they are co-operating with holy angels" (6T 52).

"The influence of these workers goes up to God as a sweet aroma. The true worker for God wrestles with God in prayer, and puts intense earnestness into the work of saving lost souls. He does not seek to exalt self by word or deed, but simply seeks to win souls" (RH, June 30, 1896).

Phil 4:19

"Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us" (COL 149).

“Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. The life of Christ has shown what humanity can do by being partaker of the divine nature. All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised” (COL 149).

Phil 4:22 – Caesar’s household: Christians in high places

The Book of Colossians

Outline of Colossians

I. Doctrine: Christ is #1 - Declaration (1)

1. In the Gospel (1-12)
2. In Redemption (13-14)
3. In Creation (15-17)
4. In the Church (18-23)
5. In Paul's Ministry (24-29)

II. Danger: If Christ is not #1 - Defense (2)

1. Philosophies (1-10)
2. Legalism (11-17)
3. Mystical Teachings (18-19)
4. Asceticism (20-23)

III. Duty: Christ is #1 - Demonstration (3-4)

1. In Purity (1-12)
2. In Fellowship (12-17)
3. At Home (18-21)
4. At Work (22-4:1)
5. In the Neighborhood (4:2-6)
6. In Ministry (4:7-18)

Col 1: - Firstborn

- resurrections before Jesus: Lazarus, jairus' daughter, son of the widow of Nain, boy from Zarephath, Shanties' son, man who fell into Elisha's tomb
- Chronology: Jacob - Esau; Reuben - Juda, Levi, Joseph
- Ps 89:27: David appointed firstborn!
- Status, not sequence: Jesus won birthright back (1 Cor 15:16ff)
- Heb 12:23: church of the firstborn

Col 2:5 "Absent from the body"

1 Cor 6:18; 2 Cor 5:8 corporeal

Col 2:14 Was the Sabbath nailed to the Cross?

- cheirographon = hapax legomenon
- "hand-writing"
- NIV: written code
- NET: certificate of indebtedness
- legal business term: bond signed by debtor (cf. Phlm 19)
- ἐξαλείφω: wipe out a writing

2:15 military language

2:16: food or drink offerings

the pig is not a shadow of Christ! (PP 308; 2T 70)

“sabbaths”: LXX 5x: 2 Chron 2:4; 31:3; eNh 10:33; Ezek 45:17; Hos 2:11

sequence: yearly - monthly - weekly

shadow: Heb 8:5; 10:1

= ceremonial-sacrificial Jewishness of Sabbath is gone.

Albert Barnes (Presbyterian):

“There is no evidence from this passage that he [Paul] would teach that there was no obligation to observe *any* holy time, for there is not the slightest reason to believe that he meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind. . . . He had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as a part of their ceremonial and typical law, and not the *moral* law, or the ten commandments. No part of the moral law - no one of the ten commandments could be spoken of as ‘*a shadow* of good things to come.’ These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal application” (in SDABC 7:206).

Colossians 2:16-17

¹⁶ So let no one judge you **in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths**, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει ἢ ἐν πόσει, ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων· ἃ ἔστι σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ

Offerings – Festival – New Moon - Sabbaths

Possible Old Testament Parallels

2 Chron 2:4: “Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to him, *and* to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and **for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God.** This *is an ordinance* for ever to Israel.”

Offerings – Sabbaths - New Moons - Feasts

2 Chron 8:12-13: “Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch, ¹³ Even after a certain rate every day, **offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts**, three times in the year, *even* in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.”

Offering – Sabbaths – New Moons - Feasts

Neh 10:32-33: “Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; ³³ For the shewbread, **and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts**, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and *for* all the work of the house of our God.”

Offering – Sabbaths – New Moons - Feasts

Ezek 45:17: “And it shall be the prince's part *to give* **burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths**, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.”

Offerings – Feasts – New Moons – Sabbaths

Old Testament Parallels – Linguistic Details of

Text	Greek (LXX)	Article	sg/pl	Reference
2 Chron 2:4	ἐν τοῖς σαββάτοις	x	pl	

2 Chron 8:12-13	ἐν τοῖς σαββάτοις	x	pl	
Neh 10:32-33	τῶν σαββάτων	x	pl	
Ezek 45:17	ἐν τοῖς σαββάτοις	x	pl	

Ex 23:14-17

Ex 34:18-23

Deut 16

The use of *sabbat in the New Testament

Text	Greek	Article	Singular /Plural	a specific Sabbath day or Sabbath in general?
Mt 12:1	τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mt 12:2	ἐν σαββάτῳ		S	on the Sabbath
Mt 12:5	τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mt 12:5	τὸ σάββατον	x	S	the Sabbath
Mt 12:8	τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	of the Sabbath
Mt 12:10	τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mt 12:11	τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mt 12:12	τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mt 24:20	ἐν σαββάτῳ		S	on the Sabbath
Mt 28:1	Ἄψὲ δὲ σαββάτων		P	long after the Sabbath
Mt 28:1	τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων		P	at the dawn of the first of the Sabbath
Mk 1:21	τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mk 2:23	ἐν τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mk 2:24	ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mk 2:27	Τὸ σάββατον	x	S	the Sabbath
Mk 2:27	διὰ τὸ σάββατον	x	S	the Sabbath
Mk 2:28	τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	of the Sabbath
Mk 3:2	τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	on the Sabbath
Mk 3:4	τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	on the Sabbath (days)
Mk 6:2	σαββάτου		S	specific
Mk 16:1	τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	specific
Mk 16:2	λίαν πρωτὶ τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων		P	specific
Mk 16:9	πρωτὶ πρώτῃ σαββάτου		S	specific
Lk 4:16	ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων	x	P	specific
Lk 4:31	ἐν τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	generic
Lk 6:1	ἐν σαββάτῳ		S	specific
Lk 6:2	ἐν τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	generic
Lk 6:5	τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	generic
Lk 6:6	ἐν ἐτέρῳ σαββάτῳ		S	specific
Lk 6:7	ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ	x	S	specific/generic
Lk 6:9	τοῖς σάββασιν	x	P	generic
Lk 13:10	ἐν τοῖς σάββασι	x	P	specific
Lk 13:14	τῷ σαββάτῳ	x	S	specific/generic
Lk 13:14	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	generic

Lk 13:15	τῷ σαββάτῳ	x	S	generic
Lk 13:16	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου	x	S	generic
Lk 14:1	σαββάτῳ		S	specific
Lk 14:3	τῷ σαββάτῳ	x	S	specific
Lk 14:5	ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ σαββάτου	x	s	generic
Lk 18:12	τοῦ σαββάτου	x	s	“week”
Lk 23:54	σάββατον		s	specific
Lk 23:56	τὸ μὲν σάββατον	x	s	specific
Lk 24:1	τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	specific (or “week”)
Jn 5:9	σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ		s	specific
Jn 5:10	Σάββατόν		s	specific
Jn 5:16	ἐν σαββάτῳ		s	specific
Jn 5:18	τὸ σάββατον	x	s	generic (also specific: <i>that</i> Sabbath)
Jn 7:22	ἐν σαββάτῳ		s	generic
Jn 7:23	ἐν σαββάτῳ		s	generic
Jn 7:23	ἐν σαββάτῳ		s	generic (but specific case)
Jn 9:14	σάββατον		s	specific
Jn 9:16	τὸ σάββατον	x	s	specific
Jn 19:31	ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ	x	s	specific (but also generic principle)
Jn 19:31	ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου	x	s	specific
Jn 20:1	τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	“week”; in relation to specific Sabbath
Jn 20:19	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	“week”; in relation to specific Sabbath
Acts 1:12	σαββάτου		s	generic (“a Sabbath day’s journey”)
Acts 13:14	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	specific
Acts 13:27	κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον		s	generic (but referring to specific Sabbath days)
Acts 13:42	εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ σάββατον	x	s	specific
Acts 13:44	Τῷ δὲ ἐρχομένῳ σαββάτῳ	x	s	specific
Acts 15:21	κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον		s	generic (but referring to specific Sabbath days)
Acts 16:13	τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	specific
Acts 17:2	ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία		p	specific (3 Sabbath days)
Acts 18:4	κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον		s	generic (but referring to specific Sabbath days)
Acts 20:7	Ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων	x	p	specific (“on the first of the Sabbath” = Sunday)
1Cor 16:2	κατὰ μίαν σαββάτων (CT σαββάτου)		p (s)	generic (on the first of the Sabbath/week)
Col 2:16	σαββάτων		p	generic
Heb 4:9	σαββατισμὸς		s	generic

New Testament Summary:

	Specific	Generic
Article + Singular		
Article + Plural		
No Article + Singular		
No Article + Plural		

Conclusion: The root *σαββάτ refers to the seventh-day Sabbath, regardless of a) the presence or absence of the article, and regardless of its singular or plural form.

OT Summary: 113 hits for * σαββάτ: xyz

Col 3:23-24 Work Ethics: “And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col 3:23).

I once walked into a classroom, where a student worker was pushing around a vacuum cleaner with noticeably zero enthusiasm. I unplugged the machine and pointed her to Col 3:23. Needless to say, she resumed her vacuum chore with a smile!

1 Thessalonians: Rest in Peace

Background Check

- Thessalonica: capital of Roman province Macedonia (~200,000 people)
- named after sister of Alexander the Great
- important archaeology: “politarch” (Acts 17:6)
- Paul’s earliest letter (or Galatians)
- Cabers Cult: “the Cabers figure worshiped in Thessalonica was a martyred hero, murdered by his brothers, buried with symbols of royal power and expected to return again” (E. Randolph Richards).
- every chapter ends on 2nd Coming: 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11!

Outline of 1 Thessalonians

I. Looking Back - Personal Experience - Treatment of the Church

1. Birth
2. Nurture
3. Growth

II. Looking Back - Personal Experience: Teachings for Christians

1. Decency
2. Death
3. Day of the Lord
4. Duties

1 Thess 2:7-9 The Heart of Paul

“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”

1 Thess 4:13-18 The State of the Dead

- “not uninformed” appeal to knowledge (1:4, 8; 2:1, 2, 5, 10; 3:4; 4:2, 5, 9)
- asleep: coma - koma - cemetery!
- Gen 2:7
- Gen 1:30! animals too!
- “If-Clause Options”: 1) 50/50 2) 0/100 3) 100% 4) I wished!
- assumption: “assuming we believe that Jesus died and rose again”
- = so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him
- As Christ, so the Christians
- “Based on the Word of the Lord”
- Mt 24:30f; Jn 6:39
- agraphon (not recorded in the canon)
- special revelation (Gal 1-2!)
- generic essence of Gospel teaching

“who are left”

“will not precede”: they haven’t preceded us!

2 Cor 4:14: “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.”

Special Effects: loud command - voice of archangel - trumpet call of God

- sea captain; horse racing; military
- trumpet: 1 Cor 15:51-54
- Joshua 6:20!
- “caught up”: Acts 8:39; 23:10; 2 Cor 12; Rev 12:5
- Plutarch: “snatched away from opportunity for education, marriage, citizenship, and so on”
- “meet the Lord in the air”: ironically the very place Satan thinks he’s in charge of (Eph 2:2!)
- “and so” = methodological or consequential?
- Paul: “Therefore encourage one another with these words”
- “Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good comfort. I am as sorry and weep over the departed one as I wept for Diadems. And all things, whatsoever were befitting, I have done,, and all mine, Ephaphroditus and Thermuthion a dn. Philion and Apollonius and Plantas. But, nevertheless, against such things one can do nothing. **Therefore comfort one another**” (Oxyrhynchus Papyrus, Egypt).
- Dualistic Model: Death - Body in Grave + Soul with Christ in Heaven - Parousia = Resurrection = Reunion of live soul + dead body = resurrection of a body only
- Holistic Model: Death - Body in Grave, no soul! - Parousia = Resurrection = actual reanimation of dead body

1 Thess 5: Aphorism Alley

v19: quenching the Spirit

v 22: avoid the appearance of evil

v23: pneuma, psyche, soma: life!

v27: read Bible out loud!

2 Thessalonians: Wake Up!

Outline of 2 Thessalonians

I. Encouragement for discouraged believers

1. Praise
2. Promise
3. Prayer

II. Explanation for disturbed believers

1. Prophecy: Man of sin appears
2. Prophecy: Son of God appears
3. Position
4. Practice

III. Exhortation for disobedient believers

1. Confidence
2. Command
3. Conclusion

2 Thess 1:7 relief (anesin!)

2 Thessalonians 2

“It is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it . . . We must conclude that a third Temple will be rebuilt upon its ancient site in old Jerusalem” (Hal Lindsay, *Late Great Planet*, 45-46)

Context

v1: parousia = 2nd Coming of JEsus

v2: Mt 24

v3: “son of destruction/perdition”: Christian insider like Judas!

2 Thess 2:3:

John 17:2

Xyz2 [1 Timothy – Jude under construction]

The Book of Hebrews

Hebrews 1:1-5

Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ Θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις,

Heb. 1:2 ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ, ὃν ἔθηκε κληρονόμον πάντων, δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν,

Heb. 1:3 ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, δι' ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμόν ποιησάμενος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς,

Heb. 1:4 τοσοῦτῳ κρείττων γενόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων, ὅσῳ διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα.

Heb. 1:5 τίνι γὰρ εἶπέ ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε; καὶ πάλιν, Ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν;

Translation & Thought Outline

1:1 In the past, God has spoken to our forefathers many times and in many ways through prophets.

1:2 In these last days He has spoken to us through a Son,

whom He has appointed heir over all things,
through whom He also made the worlds

1:3 - He is the brightness of His [the Father's] glory and the imprint of His person.
He upholds all things by the word of His power.
Having accomplished the purification of our sins,
He sat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

1:4

1:5

xxx

The Book of Revelation

Vertical Reality Check

Personal Introduction

My First Encounter with the Book of Revelation

I came to the Book of Revelation for the first time as a teenager. John Carter was having the 7 am meetings at the Keene camp meeting in 1986. I really had no clue what he was talking about, but I could tell this business of beasts and the Bible, the rise and fall of nations, the combination of Daniel and Revelation was something that deserved my attention. So much so that I'd get up at 6 to listen to him morning after morning (his Australian accent helped too).

Lutheran Seminary

I also took a class on Revelation at a Lutheran Seminary in Germany. There I experienced the opposite. It was Revelation with some good insights here and there, but really zero understanding of the Great Controversy theme. Just academic information, somewhat a stabbing in the dark.

My Doctorate

Then for my doctorate I wanted to write on several topics that didn't work out. I wanted to write on the dating of the Cross (AD 31). Didn't fly. They discouraged me from writing on the state of the dead. I also wanted to analyze literary parallels and structures in language, and attach meaning to structure. That was a no-go. At the Baptist Seminary I couldn't use Ellen White, of course, and I couldn't fully pursue my thoughts, and then 3 of my New Testament professors left during a time of political turmoil in the middle of the school year! (You think we have politics in the Adventist church? They had police escort professors to their offices, load up their stuff, and escort them back out!).

Revelation

Then what I really wanted to do with Revelation was build a model of relationships: who relates how to whom throughout the entire book. God – Angels – Jesus – Holy Spirit - Satan – Demons – and somewhere in between those entities . . . humans, who will have to choose on which side of the Great Controversy they want to be found. In short, how does every being in Revelation – divine and created – relate to one another. That model of Revelation – which I really think would be fascinating – didn't get off the ground either. An entire year had gone by now, and I was getting desperate.

I produced my own translation of Revelation. I started memorizing the book, and hope to do so again in the future after I get down some other core texts down pat. But for some reason Revelation never fully clicked. I prayed, I wrestled with God, I wrote, I researched, I wept, but never achieved a breakthrough. A Wow-moment. God threw me some nuggets here and there, but I didn't find a gold mine. Very discouraging.

In the end, I wrote on the 7 spirits in the book of Revelation. I'm sure I will share some insights from that in the future. So I started to write my first chapter for my dissertation – but it took 1 year for the Seminary to comment on it. It was a dark time in my life. I just couldn't gain any traction. My tires were spinning, but my progress was slow.

But am thankful for the Book of Revelation. And I am thankful for Revelation Seminars. Nancy's parents attended one in the Cleburne church long before I showed up on the scene. Had they not attended, we might have never met.

What we do not have as a church is a systematic, chapter-by-chapter study through Revelation for lay people, including people from the trailer park by 174. Oh yes, we have commentaries, and seminars, and seminaries, and symposiums,

etc. Easy to understand, from a variety of speakers. Now listen to Revelation 1:1-3, and catch something very important right in the beginning:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants-- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. ³ Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.”

- to show *His servants* – not is scholars, Ph.D.s, professors . . . *His servants*? Are you a servant?
- *and keep those things which are written in it* – the Book of Revelation is not only to be understood, but there are things in it that ought to be kept. The Book of Revelation has a hugely practical application. It’s a manual for life!

My New Testament students (this semester!) have to read through the Bible from Romans – Revelation. And without fail I get the following comment: a few, not many, just a few complain that Paul is difficult to understand. But they only say that this or that verse doesn’t make sense, and what did Paul mean by that. But when it comes to Revelation a large number mention that they can’t understand the book. It’s sealed, closed, and incomprehensible.

Someone once quipped that it’s not the Bible passage that we can’t understand that should trouble us, but the Bible texts that we do understand that should stir us up!

Vertical Reality Check

So, what I would like to do is preach through the book of Revelation. Chapter by chapter. We just finished Rev. 14. Let me start in chapter 1. And I want to do it not academically, and deep, and technical, and complicated, but devotionally. Simple. Practical. Spiritual. Beasts, yes, and Jesus. A mess in the world, but also the Messiah. 7 churches. Blessings. Thunders. Great Controversy. If we’re in the middle of a Great Controversy at the edge of eternity, we want to be in the middle of Revelation. I call it *Vertical Reality Check*.

And I don’t just want to dig through Revelation. I want to keep our neighbors at 174 in mind, our children, young and old, single and married, new Adventists, visitors, old saints, 4th generation SDAs. No, I can’t be all things to all people.

But I am convinced that Revelation has to be the book that has a message for all before it’s all over.

“And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand” (Rev 22:10).

Let me back this up with just a few quotes from the pen of Ellen White. We need the writings of Ellen White now; she was sent by God to prepare us for tomorrow. She is deeply spiritual, highly practical, has a broad appeal, and more trustworthy than any commentary on a Seminary book shelf. And – personal insight – under the direct influence of inspiration, Ellen White had the rare ability to both calm people down and counter agitation *and* stir us up when we need to be stirred up. So, let me set the stage!

Ellen White on the Study of Revelation: It is time to understand the book of Revelation!

“The book of Revelation must be opened to the people...The truth it contains must be proclaimed, that people may have an opportunity to prepare for the events which are so soon to transpire.” Letter 87, 1896. (Ev 195.4)

“Those who become confused in their understanding of the Word, who fail to see the meaning of antichrist, will surely place themselves on the side of antichrist. There is no time now for us to assimilate with the world. Daniel is standing in his lot and in his place. **The prophecies of Daniel and of John are to be understood. They interpret each other. They give to the world truths which every one should understand. These prophecies are to be witnesses in the world. By their fulfillment in these last days they will explain themselves”** (7BC 949.6).

“The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.” Revelation 1:1. None should become discouraged in the study of the Revelation because of its apparently mystical symbols. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” James 1:5. (Ed 191)

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” Revelation 1:3. (Ed 191)

“Prophecy has been fulfilling, line upon line. The more firmly we stand under the banner of the third angel’s message, the more clearly shall we understand the prophecy of Daniel; for the Revelation is the supplement of Daniel. The more fully we accept the light presented by the Holy Spirit through the consecrated servants of God, the deeper and surer, even as the eternal throne, will appear the truths of ancient prophecy; we shall be assured that men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. **Men must themselves be under the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Spirit’s utterances through the prophets. These messages were given, not for those that uttered the prophecies, but for us who are living amid the scenes of their fulfillment”** (2SM 114).

“There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy, but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy, and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted” (Letter 57, 1896; CW 65).

“The third angel’s message, the great testing truth for this time, is to be taught in all our institutions. God designs that through them this special warning shall be given, and bright beams of light shall shine to the world. Time is short. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and pray, and study and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and the Revelation” (6T 128).

“When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart” (TM 114). . . . **“The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation.** This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those “that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein” (TM 114).

Children!

“Those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God will bring from the books of Daniel and Revelation truth that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. They will start into action forces that cannot be repressed. The lips of children will be opened to proclaim the mysteries that have been hidden from the minds of men.(TM 116.1) We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God’s people on every side. Intensity is taking hold of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. . . .” (TM 116).

“Study Revelation in connection with Daniel, for history will be repeated.... We, with all our religious advantages, ought to know far more today than we do know” (TM 116).

“Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give” (TM 116).

“As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant

John has here declared what shall be in the last days; and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (TM 116).

Global Distribution

"The books of Daniel and the Revelation should be bound together and published. A few explanations of certain portions might be added, but I am not sure that these would be needed" (TM 117).

"It was my idea to have the two books bound together, Revelation following Daniel, as giving fuller light on the subjects dealt with in Daniel. The object is to bring these books together, showing that they both relate to the same subjects" (TM 117).

"A message that will arouse the churches is to be proclaimed. Every effort is to be made to give the light, not only to our people, but to the world. I have been instructed that the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be printed in small books, with the necessary explanations, and should be sent all over the world. Our own people need to have the light placed before them in clearer lines" (TM 117).

"The vision that Christ presented to John, presenting the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is to be definitely proclaimed to all nations, people, and tongues. The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. To John this persecuting power is represented as having horns like a lamb, but as speaking like a dragon" (TM 117).

"As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled. By a variety of images the Lord Jesus represented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of God's people. All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this earth's history.... In the very time in which we live, the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made the Sunday law a distinctive power, who has thought to change times and laws, and to oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord" (TM 117).

"The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in the clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways. But be not too ready to take a controversial attitude. There will be times when we must stand still and see the salvation of God. Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, "the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star" (TM 118).

Comments on Revelation 1:1-3

How does Revelation start?

1) Origin: By telling us that it comes from God, and from Jesus, and therefore the message is urgent, important, and absolutely trustworthy. Paul is great, so is Peter. I love Matthew, and Mark. Luke is very special. The Gospel of John is magnificent.

But this message of Revelation comes from the mind and hand of God, delivered from Jesus through the pen of John. It's like God saying, I need to tell you one more thing before I take you home. Something special, urgent, compelling, gripping, frightening, comforting. It's the final message.

2) Recipient: I must repeat: the message is not sent to the professor in the university, it's not sent to the scholar in the Seminary, it's sent to the churches, to God's servants.

Take a look at the sequence in verse 1: God → Jesus → Angel → John → Servants/Angels of the 7 Churches → 7 Churches → church members. That's where the book is meant to end up. In the hand of church members. You and me.

3) Message: What is Revelation all about?

- 1) v1: the things that must soon take place
- 2) v2: all the things that he saw
- 3) v3: the things written in the prophecy
- 4) v19: the things that you have seen, the things that are, the things that must take place

Blood-stained, battle-scarred, tear-soaked – but victorious. Revelation tells us the last chapter. We might appear to be left in the dark, but the light shines bright at the end of the tunnel.

One more thing: I think I can promise you one thing about this series. Beyond popes and Sunday laws and beasts and evil forces vying for the souls of men, I think I can promise you one thing: It's called the Revelation of Jesus. Not the Revelation of God, even, though it comes most directly from the Father Himself. Not the Revelation of future events. Not the Revelation of Rome. The Revelation of Jesus. Next week we will talk about this word of – it means something different than most preachers say, I think. But it's the Revelation of Jesus nonetheless.

In the end, when you have been soaked with the prophetic word, and chewed on every chapter, and pondered every point, in the end you will yearn so much for Jesus that you can't wait for the Second Coming any longer!

Revelation 1:1

Ἀποκάλυψις - Revealing, Unveiling of something hidden

1 Cor 1:7: the revelation of Jesus = the coming of Jesus (KJV!)

So, you're living your little life here on earth, some easy, some hard, some hardships, some joys, some trials, some triumphs . . . Psalm 90:10 tells us "The days of our lives *are* seventy years; And if by reason of strength *they are* eighty years, Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Revelation is a book. But what Paul is telling us is that the Revelation of Jesus is also an event at the Second Coming, and you don't want to miss that event. In fact, you will want to "wait eagerly" for that event!

2 Cor 12:1: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord = from the Lord

Gal 1:12: revelation by/from Jesus, not of Jesus

2 Thess 1:7: Jesus will be revealed at His Second Coming

δείκνυμι - to show

Lord, open our eyes that we might see what You have shown us.

his servants

Don't miss this critical point: Revelation is for servants. It is not sent to the curious, the professors of this world, to speculators, to politicians or pranksters. It's sent to servants. Are you a servant?

the things that must soon take place

This is what Revelation is all about: things that must soon take place. It is indeed a prophecy; it predicts the future, at least as relevant for the behavior of God's people (v3).

What is the meaning of the phrase "must take place"? Are there things that don't just take place, but that must take place?

The Old Testament helps us; "must take place" occurs three times in the book of Daniel:

Dan 2:28, 29, 45 Nebuchadnezzar was shown "the things that must take place in the latter days"

Clearly this phrase would trigger an end-time reference in a reader already familiar with the book of Daniel.

Even more specifically, however, stands out the idea that things “must” take place - there is a sequence in the unfolding of human history that is inevitable - for God’s purposes. The phrase carries a certainty with it. The future, as uncertain and disconnected as it may seem, will unfold according to a divinely orchestrated plan. No, not that all is God’s will. Much of Revelation’s future is evil. But it will happen. And the future marches relentlessly towards a God-given goal, a solution, in fact, a resolution.

Mt 26:54 - at Jesus’ arrest we also find this “must happen” view of history:

"How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

In other words, if the Bible predicted His arrest (Isa 50:6!), then His arrest must happen. There is an element of inevitability here. Things will happen that must happen.

Mark utilizes this phrase “must happen” even more directly in view of endtime events:

"But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things **must happen**, but the end is not yet. (Mark 13:7)

Revelation itself follows up with 4:1:

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you **things which must take place after this.**" (Rev 4:1)

Incidentally, many interpreters see in this verse an indicator that the events of Rev 4:1 take place after the church age. Rev 2-3 = 7 churches, then Rev 4:1 post-church events. But . . .

xyz

“Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.” (Rev 22:6)

This is not strict chronology - not too many events take place after 22:6; rather, the angel just reminds John what must take place *after the present time of John*.

soon/shortly - ἐν τάχει (from noun τάχος *tacho* = speed!)

Reference	Biblical Term (LXX/TR: ἐν τάχει)	Translations speed vs proximity
Deut. 11:17	it doesn't take much to kindle his anger (מִעֵט)	quickly, easily, soon
Deut. 28:20	and until thou perish quickly (מהר)	soon, quickly
Jos. 8:18-19	the ambush arose quickly (מהר)	quickly
Ps. 2:12	it doesn't take much to kindle his anger (מִעֵט)	quickly, easily, soon
Lk. 18:8	he will avenge them speedily	quickly, without delay
Acts 12:7	Arise quickly!	quickly
Acts 22:18	get out of Jerusalem quickly	quickly

Acts 25:4	he would go there shortly	soon
Rom. 16:20	the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly	soon, certainly
1 Tim. 3:14	I hope to come to you shortly	soon
Rev. 1:1	what must soon/quickly take place	soon/quickly
Rev. 22:6	what must soon/quickly take place	soon/quickly

The term soon/shortly can refer to proximity or rapidity, but in context with verse 3 - "the time is near" - it appears to indicate how soon events will unfold. This is not from the time frame of John writing in the 1st century; though the data was given to John, it is intended *for* Jesus' servants.

In any case, at some point in human history the events of Revelation will take place, and it sounds like they will unfold in rapid succession, and with divinely predicted certainty.

"Said the angel, "Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died." I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it" (EW 64).

σημαίνω - signify, indicate, predict

So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther **informed** the king in Mordecai's name. (Est 2:22 NKJ)

he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch **made the decision known** to Daniel. (Dan 2:15 NKJ)

Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and **showed** [KJV: signified] by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. (Act 11:28 NKJ)

Greek uses the noun form of this verb for our word "sign". The point, however, is not that Revelation is put into signs and symbols, but that as a prophecy the entire book of Revelation is a prediction of what will happen in the future, esp. as relevant to God's people.

Specifically, the direct object (assumed in Greek) of "showing" is the first word of the book: Apocalypsis. That is what is being shown, revealed. God makes the Revelation known by sending it through Jesus, the angel, and John, in sequence.

John
Call
Connection
Change
Confirmation:
[DA Quote]

Excursion: The Ministry of Angels

It is interesting to note that angels are so involved in the book of Revelation, including in the initial transmission of its content. The following presents a brief overview of the ministry of angels on behalf of human beings.

The Great Controversy began with an angel.

Isa 14

Ezek 28

Gen: cherubim

Sanctuary

Revelation 1:2

bore witness: Revelation is reliable.

the word of God: origin: the word the comes from God and belongs to God

the testimony of Jesus: the testimony that comes from Jesus and belongs to Jesus. It can technically also be the testimony about Jesus, but the primary meaning is xyz because xyz

all things that he saw

Another indicator that the book of Revelation is about events, in the plural. Many events. And John testifies that he saw them and is recording them as accurately as he could.

Revelation 1:3

Blessed

who reads

Interesting that John got to see the future; we only get to read about it and hear it spoken about. The imagery of Revelation turned into text must be adequate to "show" His servants what must soon take place.

who hear

God finds listening sufficient to understand Revelation! In the 21st century we rely heavily on reading, watching, technological props, digital reconstructions, etc.

the words of this prophecy

Here Prophecy = Prediction. We tend to minimize this futuristic factor by pointing to other purposes of prophecy, but clearly this book is indeed about future developments.

keep what is written in it

The 3rd verb, creating an ethical appeal. Revelation is not just about knowing what is happening down the road, but changing your behavior accordingly. We must act! Revelation is not only road map; it's a spiritual action plan.

for the time is near - the meaning of ἐγγύς: chronological proximity

"So you also, when you see all these things, know that it¹ is near-- at the doors! (Mt 24:33)

The 30 occurrences of "near" in the New Testament communicate exactly that: nearness. Close proximity.

Mt 24:32-33; 26:18; Mk 13:28-29; Lk 19:11; 21:30-31; Jn 2:13; 3:23; 6:4, 19, 23; 7:2; 11:18, 54-55
 Jn 19:20, 42; Acts 1:12; 9:38; 27:8; Rom 10:8; 13:11; Eph 2:13, 17; Phil 4:5; Heb 6:8; 8:13; Rev 1:3; 22:10).

Ellen White on Rev 1:1-3

Revelation 1:4

1:4 John, to the seven churches in Asia

Curiously, Revelation is given to show “His servants the things that must soon take place”, but John actually sends it seven prominent churches in Asia (Minor). Why not to Rome, Corinth, Jerusalem? Why these seven?

The seven churches of Revelation were, of course, real churches in Asia Minor, and conveniently close to Patmos for distribution. But as the chapters 2-3 show, these seven churches typified in the 1st century the historical progression of the church throughout the history of Christianity, culminating in the church of Laodicea. They are prototypes.



<http://www.jeffangiegh.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/SevenChurches.jpeg>

Here are the key reasons why the seven churches are not just 1st century local churches:

1. the number seven is the number of completeness.
2. The phrase “ “ occurs in the Greek Septuagint some 320 times, always having Yahweh as the subject. “ “ is a prophetic formula.

3. Though Jesus sends the message to the local church, the Spirit expands these local messages geographically: “ “

4. Ellen White confirms this theory of historicity:

quote AA

grace to you and peace: A typical greeting, which we also find in Paul’s letters:

The Triune Greeting

God the Father:	Time & Space
7 Spirits:	Space (in relation to the Father)
Jesus Christ:	faithful witness (in relation to the Father)
	firstborn from the dead (in relation to all humanity)
	ruler over the kings of the earth (in relation to earthly rulers)

from the one who is, who was, and who is to come

God identifies Himself as present in the present, the past, and the future. What is interesting to note is that His presence in the future is not a philosophical presence but a dynamic one - He is the One who is coming. That is all we need to know about the existence of God in the future - it is communicated in direct relation to our future.

and from the seven spirits who are before His throne

Who are these seven spirits? Commentators propose the following theories:

1) Babylonian Astral-Mythology

- 2) literally 7 spirits
- 3) Godhead: the Holy Spirit

This study assumes the 3rd interpretation, based on the later occurrence in Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:4.

Symbolism always communicates a key function without locking the subject into all aspects of the symbolism. For example (based on Rev 5:5-6), Jesus can be lion (king), lamb (sacrifice), and root (heritage).

The Holy Spirit depicted as seven spirits communicates the totality of the Holy Spirit in His capacity to be present globally (unlike Jesus in His incarnation, who was limited to the land of Israel at the time).

We have an example of this in the book of Acts, in which the Spirit appeared as tongues of fire on multiple people. In other words, the Holy Spirit can pluralize Himself across time and space.

1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth

A concise summary of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished and is accomplishing:

- trustworthy communication
- victory over death
- rulership over rules

The first one can be assumed; we can trust Jesus in what He says.

The second one is the Gospel accomplishment - the two key events in the universe to deal with the sin problem: the Cross and Resurrection

The third one is a curious one - ruler over the kings of the earth?

In what sense does Jesus direct the affairs of kings and statesmen, queens and rulers? Does Jesus influence politics? How does He set up presidents and take them down?

“And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding” (Dan 2:21).

“Do not lift up your horn on high; Do not speak with a stiff neck.” 6 For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another” (Psa 75:5-7).

Ellen White on God’s Rulership on Earth

“Let those who feel that their work is not appreciated, and who crave a position of greater responsibility, consider that “promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.” [Psalm 75:6, 7](#). Every man has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Whether we fill that place depends upon our own faithfulness in co-operating with God” (MH 476).

To understand these things,—to understand that “righteousness exalteth a nation;” that “the throne is established by righteousness” and “upholden by mercy” ([Proverbs 14:34](#); [16:12](#); [Proverbs 20:28](#)); to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” ([Daniel 2:21](#)),—this is to understand the philosophy of history. [{Ed 175.1}](#)

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God’s purpose.

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of “the Watcher and the Holy One.” Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another. [{Ed 176.7}](#)

While the nations rejected God's principles, and in this rejection wrought their own ruin, it was still manifest that the divine, overruling purpose was working through all their movements.{Ed 177.1}

This lesson is taught in a wonderful symbolic representation given to the prophet Ezekiel during his exile in the land of the Chaldeans. The vision was given at a time when Ezekiel was weighed down with sorrowful memories and troubled forebodings. The land of his fathers was desolate. Jerusalem was depopulated. The prophet himself was a stranger in a land where ambition and cruelty reigned supreme. As on every hand he beheld tyranny and wrong, his soul was distressed, and he mourned day and night. But the symbols presented to him revealed a power above that of earthly rulers.{Ed 177.2}

Upon the banks of the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind seeming to come from the north, "a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber." A number of wheels, intersecting one another, were moved by four living beings. High above all these "was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." "And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings." *Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8.* The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; but they moved in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, were impelling these wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy. {Ed 177.3}

As the wheel like complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of the earth.{Ed 178.1}The history of nations that one after another have occupied their allotted time and place, unconsciously witnessing to the truth of which they themselves knew not the meaning, speaks to us. To every nation and to every individual of today God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being measured by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.{Ed 178.2}

The history which the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tells us where we are today in the procession of the ages, and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.{Ed 178.3}

The final overthrow of all earthly dominions is plainly foretold in the word of truth. In the prophecy uttered when sentence from God was pronounced upon the last king of Israel is given the message:{Ed 179.1}

"Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: ... exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." *Ezekiel 21:26, 27.*{Ed 179.2}

The crown removed from Israel passed successively to the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God says, "It shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." {Ed 179.3}

That time is at hand. Today the signs of the times declare that we are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Everything in our world is in agitation. Before our eyes is fulfilling the Saviour's prophecy of the events to precede His coming: "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.... Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." *Matthew 24:6, 7.*{Ed 179.4}The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.{Ed 179.5}

Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture. {Ed 179.6}

The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear.{Ed 180.1}

“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... They have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate.... The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth.” [Isaiah 24:1-18](#).{Ed 180.2}

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.... The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.” “The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.” [Joel 1:15-18, 12](#).{Ed 180.3}

“I am pained at my very heart; ... I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled.” {Ed 180.4}

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down.” [Jeremiah 4:19, 20, 23-26](#).{Ed 181.1}

“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](#).{Ed 181.2}

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” [Isaiah 26:20](#).{Ed 181.3}

“Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge,
Even the Most High, thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”{Ed 181.4}
Psalm 91:9, 10.

“The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken,
And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the
going down thereof.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.
Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.”
“He shall call to the heavens above,
And to the earth, that He may judge His people....
And the heavens shall declare His righteousness;
For God is judge Himself.”{Ed 181.5}

[Psalm 50:1-3; 50:4-6](#), R.V.

“O daughter of Zion, ... the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel.” “Because they call thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after,” “I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.” “I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places.” [Micah 4:10-12; Jeremiah 30:17, 18](#). {Ed 181.6}

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God;
We have waited for Him, and He will save us:
This is the Lord; we have waited for Him,
We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”{Ed 182.1}

“He will swallow up death in victory; ... and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.”{Ed 182.2}

[Isaiah 25:9, 8](#).

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down.... For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king.” [Isaiah 33:20-22](#).{Ed 182.3}

“With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.” *Isaiah 11:4*.{Ed 182.4}

Then will the purpose of God be fulfilled; the principles of His kingdom will be honored by all beneath the sun.{Ed 182.5}

“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Wasting nor destruction within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
And thy gates Praise.”{Ed 182.6}

“In righteousness shalt thou be established:
Thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not
fear:
And from terror; for it shall not come near thee.”{Ed 182.7}
Isaiah 60:18; 54:14.

The prophets to whom these great scenes were revealed longed to understand their import. They “inquired and searched diligently: ... searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.... Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you; ... which things the angels desire to look into.” *1 Peter 1:10-12*.{Ed 183.1}

To us who are standing on the very verge of their fulfillment, of what deep moment, what living interest, are these delineations of the things to come—events for which, since our first parents turned their steps from Eden, God’s children have watched and waited, longed and prayed!{Ed 183.2}

At this time, before the great final crisis, as before the world’s first destruction, men are absorbed in the pleasures and the pursuits of sense. Engrossed with the seen and transitory, they have lost sight of the unseen and eternal. For the things that perish with the using, they are sacrificing imperishable riches. Their minds need to be uplifted, their views of life to be broadened. They need to be aroused from the lethargy of worldly dreaming.{Ed 183.3}

From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the pages of Holy Writ, they need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and its magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld,—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring,—how completely has it passed away! As “the flower of the grass” it has perished. So perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose and expresses His character can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.{Ed 183.4}

It is these great truths that old and young need to learn. We need to study the working out of God’s purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, that we may estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen; that we may learn what is the true aim of life; that, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may put them to their truest and noblest use. Thus, learning here the principles of His kingdom and becoming its subjects and citizens, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.{Ed 184.1}

The day is at hand. For the lessons to be learned, the work to be done, the transformation of character to be effected, the time remaining is but too brief a span.{Ed 184.2}

“Behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; There shall none of My words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God.” *Ezekiel 12:27, 28*.{Ed 184.3}

In other words, amidst the confusion and strife and conflagration of nations, Jesus is control - and will bring the chaos to a determined end. Jesus is in control!

1:5b To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins

What a simple statement . . . He loved us. Everything, His entire ministry, everything He did, every healing, every touch, every eye contact, every word spoken, every interaction, every intervention, everything was motivated and actuated and driven by love. This, again, simple statement must be in conjunction with the following praise: “and has freed us from our sins.”

We tend to excuse, minimize, sanitize sin nowadays. Sin has lost its venomous bite in our eyes. But it's something we had to be freed from.

Are you free from sin? Has Jesus freed you from your sin?

Question: Did John say "freed" or "washed"?

Some translations say - "freed" (KJV/NKJV), most modern ones say "washed"? Why the difference - and which one is right?

TR: λούσαντι - from λούω, to wash
P 1006 1841 1854 2053 2062 M^k lat bo

UBS: λύσαντι - from λύω, to loose, to free
P¹⁸ κ A C 1611 2050 2329 2351 M^A sy

Suggestions by textual critics:

- scribal error (you notice how close λούω and λύω are - a scribe could have accidentally dropped or added an omikron). More likely to drop an o then add one.
- ἐν (*en*) + the dative to mean "at the price of" (from Hebrew preposition אַ). Pure speculation.
- Assimilation from Rev 7:14: "washed". Speculation. At least 7:14 shows that wash + sin is a reasonable combination.

1:6 And He made us kings and priests to God and His Father. To Him be glory and strength forever and ever!

Different kings than the ones mentioned in v5 - true kings!

In what sense are we kings and priests?

First: Who crowns someone king? Only someone higher than the king . . . the King of kings!

But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast. (Isa 61:6 NKJ)

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Exo 19:5 NKJ)

"For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. (Deu 7:6 NKJ)

Purpose 1: you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** (1Pe 2:5 NKJ)

Purpose 2: But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**
(1Pe 2:9 NKJ)

to God and His Father:

The explicit separation of Jesus from God the Father is a frequent feature in the New Testament. Most of Paul's letters distinguish between Jesus and God (see)

1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Behold = look! Pay attention!

Our reaction should be this:

"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luk 21:28 NKJ)

Mourning at the Second Coming is caused by misbehavior in relation to the first coming!

He is coming with clouds:

This is the event that should put everything else on earth into perspective. One day it's over.

If one day nothing else but this event will matter, than this event should matter like nothing else!

Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him:

And all the tribes will mourn because of Him. Amen!

1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*¹," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End:

who is and who was and who is to come:

the Almighty:

1:9

The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus will cause persecution in your life!

They can lock you up but they cannot shut you up if God wants you to speak His message!

1:10 I was in the Spirit on the day of the Lord

Jesus granted John a vision of the final restoration on the very day that is all about completion and restoration: Sabbath.

Do we have evidence that this was actually Sabbath? We do.

God just identified Himself as "Lord" two verses earlier: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord . . ." (Rev 1:8). Now notice something very important: He specifically uses the term arche - beginning. Where in the Bible do you find this term? Exactly! Gen 1:1 and John 1:1. This is the beginning of creation! He is creator! He is the beginning of the 7-day creation week!

Both Gen 2:1 and v2 use the verb form of the noun "end". This is a direct hint that the Lord's day is none other than the 7th day Sabbath.

It also makes sense to understand Lord's Day as Sabbath since John provides us with 3 key pieces of information:

- where he was (island of Patmos)
- why he was where he was (Word of God, testimony of Jesus)

- when he was in the Spirit (Sabbath)

Church History

In church history, Lord's day did not become Sunday until

- not the day of the Second Coming (Joel 2:11, 31; Zeph 1:14; Mal 4:5; Acts 2:20)
- Greek *hemera tou kuriou/hemera kuriou* = Second Coming (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10) - but Rev 1:10 is *en te kuriake hemera*
- Lord's day = Sunday not until *Gospel According to Peter* (9, 12; ANF, vol. 9, p. 8)
- Sunday is nowhere in Scripture associated with the Lord; Sabbath is (Isa 58:13; Ex 20:11; Mk 2:28)
- Roman emperors had special days, but not associated with the term 'Lord'
- Jews refused to call the emperor 'Lord': Josephus *War* vii. 10. 1; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8

John might have actually provided us with a subtle hint that the Sabbath belongs to the Lord, especially when you are a Christian under persecution!

"The persecution of John became a means of grace. Patmos was made resplendent with the glory of a risen Saviour. John had seen Christ in human form, with the marks of the nails, which will ever be His glory, in His hands and His feet. Now he was permitted again to behold his risen Lord, clothed with as much glory as a human being could behold, and live. **What a Sabbath was that to the lonely exile, always precious in the sight of Christ, but now more than ever exalted! Never had he learned so much of Jesus. Never had he heard such exalted truth**" (The Youth's Instructor, April 5, 1900).{7BC 955.9}

Lord's Day = Sunday?

To my surprise, Paige Patterson addressed this issue in his commentary on Revelation. Listen to a couple of paragraphs of modern scholarship:

"The author suggests that he became 'in the Spirit' on the Lord's Day (v. 10). Some interpreters suggest that the Lord's Day is synonymous with the Day of the Lord, to which John is escorted in the Spirit. More likely this literary phrase, which became common parlance among believers in the second century, is first used here. Because of the Lord's resurrection on the first day of the week, the church hallowed that day, designating it as the Lord's Day and thereafter assembling together as a congregation regularly on that day. Though separated from his congregation at Ephesus by 40 miles of Aegean water, John apparently sought the Lord on the Lord's Day."

This thinking is problematic on several counts, but we will summarize the lack of logic after the next paragraph:

"Adventism has insisted that worship should be held on the Sabbath in keeping with the fourth commandment. While this is not the place to dwell at length on the arguments for the church's observance of the Sabbath, two observations can be safely ventured. First, there can be little doubt that John's reference to 'the Lord's Day' is a reference to the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Jesus. By the same token, John felt the urge for special worship on that day, presumably a habit in the churches. Second, the early churches apparently often gathered more often than one day per week, suggesting that corporate worship is appropriate on any day. This is perhaps the intention of the exhortation of Heb 10:25 to assemble 'all the more' as the day of Christ approached." Paige Patterson, *Revelation* (The New American Commentary, 2012), 66.

Several observations are in order:

- notice the writer's tentative language of "most likely", "apparently", "presumably", "apparently", "perhaps"
- John didn't seek the Lord - the Lord sought him!
- no evidence is provided why 'the Lord's Day' "is a reference to the first day of the week"
- of course worship "is appropriate on any day". Our worship doesn't make the Sabbath holy; it is holy by divine designation from creation, but by human activity. We simply recognize this holiness through our worship of God that day. Both Creation and the Law separate the seventh day as special to God - not all days are equal.

All the more reason to study the Bible for yourself and not trust the commentaries and scholars!

Sabbath

Ellen White confirms in simple terms that the Lord's Day in Rev 1:10 is indeed Sabbath:

"It was on the Sabbath that the Lord of glory appeared to the exiled apostle. The Sabbath was as sacredly observed by John on Patmos as when he was preaching to the people in the towns and cities of Judea. He claimed as his own the precious promises that had been given regarding that day. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," John writes, "and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of man." Revelation 1:10-13" (AA 581-582).

"The Lord's day is the seventh day, the Sabbath of creation. On the day that God sanctified and blessed, Christ signified 'by His angel unto His servant John' things which must come to pass before the close of the world's history, and He means that we should become intelligent with regard to them" (6T 128).

"The Sabbath, which God had instituted in Eden, was as precious to John on the lonely isle as when he was with his companions in the cities and towns. The precious promises that Christ had given regarding this day he repeated and claimed as his own. It was the sign to him that God was his.... On the Sabbath day the risen Saviour made His presence known to John. [Revelation 1:10-13, 17, 18 quoted.]

behind John: a loud voice, like a trumpet

His voice to us is like a whisper, quiet, often unnoticed. But John has the privilege of hearing it in unmistakable clarity and volume. 1) Who Jesus is, 2) What Jesus wants him to do.

Oh that would could hear Him speak this loudly in our lives!

"To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (Joh 10:3 NKJ)

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. (Joh 10:16 NKJ)

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (Joh 10:27 NKJ)

Let Me hear Your voice, Lord, and follow none other than yours!

The Alpha and the Omega: More About Jesus

More about Jesus would I know,
 More of His grace to others show;
 More of His saving fullness see,
 More of His love Who died for me. *Refrain*

*More, more about Jesus,
 More, more about Jesus;
 More of His saving fullness see,
 More of His love Who died for me.*

More about Jesus let me learn,
 More of His holy will discern;
 Spirit of God, my teacher be,
 Showing the things of Christ to me. *Refrain*

More about Jesus; in His Word,
 Holding communion with my Lord;
 Hearing His voice in every line,
 Making each faithful saying mine. *Refrain*

More about Jesus; on His throne,
 Riches in glory all His own;
 More of His kingdom's sure increase;
 More of His coming, Prince of Peace. *Refrain* Words: Eliza Hewitt, 1887; Music: John R. Sweney

Introductions: Highlighting Jesus

v1-2: Jesus Christ, God, servants, angel, God, Jesus Christ

v3: reader, listeners

v4: John – 7 churches

The Identity of the Father: 1:4 “who is and who was and who is to come” = the Father

The 7 Spirits

Jesus: v5, v6, v7

v8: Jesus or the Father? "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

1:9 Interruption: The Identity of John – patience of Jesus and testimony of Jesus!

1:10 the Lord's Day

v11: The Identity of Jesus: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last”

1:17 Jesus: “I am the First and the Last”

2:8 Jesus: “the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life”

22:13 Jesus: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last”

Everything hinges on Jesus Christ.

Old Testament Links:

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God" (Isa 44:6).

"Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last" (Isa 48:12).

“Christ Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Genesis of the Old Testament, and the Revelation of the New. Both meet together in Christ.” MS 33, 1897

“Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him” (Ex 23:21).

Ellen White:

“We have a Bible full of the most precious truth. It contains the alpha and omega of knowledge.” 8T 299

“Many of the books piled up in the great libraries of earth confuse the mind more than they aid the understanding. Yet men spend large sums of money in the purchase of such books and years in their study, when they have within their reach a Book containing the words of Him who is the Alpha and Omega of wisdom.” CH 369-370?

“In the plan of redemption Christ is the Alpha and the Omega – the First and the Last.” PP 367

“Unless we accept divine aid we cannot take the first step toward the Saviour. He says, ‘I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end’ (Rev. 21:6) in the salvation of every soul.” 1 SM 381

Conclusion: You need Jesus to understand the beginning of life, you need Jesus at the end of your life, and you need Jesus in the center of your life. If it matters in your life, Jesus needs to be included. You need Jesus for everything!

The Identity of the Seven Churches: What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches

Revelation was sent to the 7 churches – only 1st century, Asia Minor?

Key: Alpha & Omega = Symbol: real letters of the alphabet, but they stand for something bigger!
First & Last = what the symbols mean: the larger reality

Example: red light: symbol: means stop!

So: 7 churches: real churches in Turkey (small space), in 1st century (small time period) = real church periods in the history and future of the church across the entire Christian era

If the message of Revelation spans across the Christian era, then there must be a message in here for us today – from God! And sure enough, Ellen White confirms:

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

Something interesting about these 7 churches: They don’t exist anymore. 6/7 started, but didn’t make it to the Second Coming. I have pictures of church ruins, including the area of the 7 churches of Revelation (modern day Turkey). Crumbled rocks of days gone by. Basilikas from a long time ago. Churches that are museums. Churches that don’t allow you to take pictures (I got escorted out of one in Paris, France, in 2008).

Asia Minor: SDA 1:1 million

Question: Will there be churches that exist right now but that won’t make it to the Second Coming? Slowly and quietly drifting away? And the Devil huffed, and he puffed, and he blew the church away. Your church?

The Identity of Jesus: 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me

Why was Jesus behind John, and not in front of him? I’m wondering about something here: did Jesus make John turn around on purpose? John already knew Jesus – but here in Revelation John gets to know a side of Jesus He didn’t know – after 3 ½ of years in His physical presence on earth!

We must beware – lest we think we have Jesus figured out. After all, we got John 3:16 memorized, right? Could there be an aspect to Jesus that you didn’t know? John provides us with the top ten characteristics of Jesus – we’ll focus on only one aspect right now:

And when I turned around, I saw seven gold lampstands . . .

Why did John first see seven lamps, and not Jesus? According to Rev 1:20, the 7 lampstands are the 7 churches of Revelation.

Ex 25:31-40: like a tree, pure gold, pure gold, pure gold!

Zech 4:1-6!

The features of the lampstand (symbol) define the function of the church (larger reality)!

“There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there. Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, pouring forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. So it is with the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin, and sorrow, and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God’s love. From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven’s throne to be excluded. The message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God’s strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace. No longer are the heathen to be wrapped in midnight darkness. The gloom is to disappear before the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The power of hell has been overcome. But no man can impart that which he himself has not received. In the work of God, humanity can originate nothing. No man can by his own effort make himself a light bearer for God. It was the golden oil emptied by the heavenly messengers into the golden tubes, to be conducted from the golden bowl into the lamps of the sanctuary, that produced a continuous bright and shining light. It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven’s resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.” {COL 418-419}

The church draws its power from the Holy Spirit and then lights up the world!

Lev 24:2-4 it takes work to keep the lights on!

A couple of thoughts about this lampstand: What is the function of a lampstand? To shine light in darkness. Where is the lampstand originally located? In the Holy Place of the Temple.

As the church, we are a holy item, of pure gold, taken out of the Holy Place, and meant to shine God’s light in a dark world, to the darkest corners of the earth.

Question: Are you light, or are you darkness? How bright are you? How many spiritual lumens does it read on your light socket? Are you an LED – Light expelling darkness?

and in the midst of the seven gold lampstands one like the son of man:

The first characteristic about Jesus is the fact that He is present in the midst of His church!

ID #1, as the prophetic camera lense is now solely focused on Jesus, is not who He is, but where He is!

I cannot repeat this enough and I cannot dwell on this moment in Revelation long enough: Jesus is in the middle of His churches. Now picture this: What does a menorah look like? – A tree! You have, in a sense, Jesus walking in the middle of a garden – does that sound/look familiar?

It's like God saying, remember the Garden of Eden – I’m back! And not only that . . . it sounds to me like that Jesus is saying, I’m back, in your midst, because I want you back too! I want to restore what we lost 6,000 years ago. I’m walking in your midst because I want to walk with you again - Will you walk with me?

But who He is in the midst of the churches is equally important: “one like the Son of Man”. There is only one reference in the entire Old Testament like this:

Dn 7:13: “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.”

This, incidentally, is not speaking of the Second Coming of Christ. This is a description of Jesus entering the Most Holy Place in October of 1844.

“The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits” (GC 479).

Actual description of the event:

“I saw the Father rise from the throne, [see page 92.] and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, “Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself.” Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, “My Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.{EW 55.1}

Origin and Maintenance of the Church

“Often men are tempted to falter before the perplexities and obstacles that confront them. But if they will hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, God will make the way clear. Success will come to them as they struggle against difficulties. Before the intrepid spirit and unwavering faith of a Zerubbabel, great mountains of difficulty will become a plain; and he whose hands have laid the foundation, even “his hands shall also finish it.” “He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” Zechariah 4:9, 7. {PK 595.2}

“Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it. Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18. The presence of God gives stability to His cause. “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man,” is the word that comes to us. Psalm 146:3. “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” Isaiah 30:15. God’s glorious work, founded on the eternal principles of right, will never come to nought. It will go on from strength to strength, “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6. {PK 595.3}

The Church has One Foundation

Meeting Jesus: Woe or Wow?!

[240, 245]

Have you ever seen a loved one after a long time of separation? I have.

Nancy and I met for the first time on April 7, 1986. We then developed a long distance relationship that spanned almost 7 years. We didn't see each other for two years – just writing letters. (By the way, for you youngons, that's a piece of paper written with a pen, containing mushy stuff. Two years. Then we didn't see each other for one year.

Seeing each other after such long periods of separation was extra special. I remember it like it was yesterday. I remember sitting in the airplane (usually AA 70 or 71), and an hour before landing I'd freshen up. A little cologne on my chin. Hair brushed (teeth too!). Shaved. And I'd have on a white shirt, which, in my mind, was the epitome of being dressed to impress (you notice what I'm wearing today, right?!). I was not just getting off the airplane; I was going to meet "her"!

John

Now think about John - He was the beloved disciple. John enjoyed a special connection and closeness with Jesus. Jesus didn't play favorites, but John certainly responded the most to Jesus' ministry.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23).

John 21:7 – Wow! Jaw-dropping discovery: It's Jesus!

Now John is on the island of Patmos. Alone. And he makes another jaw-dropping discovery. He meets Jesus again. Now don't you think a reasonable reaction would be, John running, and giving Jesus a big hug! They hadn't seen each other in some 60 years (ascension in AD 31, Revelation written in the late 90s during the emperor Domitian's reign).

Let me read to you the description of Jesus, as described by a riveted John, and then his reaction: Revelation 1:12-17: "And when I saw him, I feel at his feet as dead."

Meeting Jesus: Woe or Wow?! Why? The presence of the heavenly Jesus – not the earthly Jesus – prompts a surprise reaction: the Wow is mingled with a Woe . . . Encouraging: Jesus encourages John.

10 Characteristics of Christ as High Priest

v13: "clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band."

It is a curious fact that Jesus is first introduced via His clothing.

Ex 28:4: "And these *are* the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest."

Zech 3:1-4!

Dan 10:1-5! "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz."

"No less a personage than the Son of God appeared to Daniel. This description is similar to that given by John when Christ was revealed to him upon the Isle of Patmos. **Our Lord now comes with another heavenly messenger to teach Daniel what would take place in the latter days. This knowledge was given to Daniel and recorded by inspiration for us upon whom the ends of the world are come.** The great truths revealed by the world's Redeemer are for those who search for truth as for hid treasures. Daniel was an aged man. His life had been passed amid the fascinations of a heathen court, his mind cumbered with the affairs of a great empire; yet he turns aside from all these to afflict his soul

before God, and seek a knowledge of the purposes of the Most High. **And in response to his supplications, light from the heavenly courts was communicated for those who should live in the latter days. With what earnestness, then, should we seek God, that he may open our understanding to comprehend the truths brought to us from Heaven.**" {RH February 8, 1881, par. 28}

The description of Jesus is a message for the last days.

Case Studies:

- 1) Mark 5:1-15!
- 2) Mark 5:27-34!
- 3) Mark 6:56!
- 4) John 13:3-5: "And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."

He takes His clothes and uses them for our cleansing!

Next step: The clothes He wears He would like to put on us!

Our Dress

Jesus is well-dressed. You can be well-dressed, too. And if you think that I'm going to quote to you dress reform quotes, you're wrong. For now. But listen to this – Mt 22:1-14!

"In the parable of [Matthew 22](#) the same figure of the marriage is introduced, and the investigative judgment is clearly represented as taking place before the marriage. Previous to the wedding the king comes in to see the guests, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. [Matthew 22:11](#); [Revelation 7:14](#). He who is found wanting is cast out, but all who upon examination are seen to have the wedding garment on are accepted of God and accounted worthy of a share in His kingdom and a seat upon His throne. This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing of work in the sanctuary above." GC 428

Woe?!

"**The parable of the wedding garment opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence.** By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding." {COL 307.1}

Woe?!

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." [Revelation 19:8](#); [Ephesians 5:27](#). The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." [Revelation 19:8](#). It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour." COL 310

Woe? Wow!

"The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But

when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.”

Woe!

“This is what the transgressors of God’s law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God. But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.”
COL 310-311

“Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. “I counsel thee,” He says, “to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” [Revelation 3:18](#).

Wow!

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. “All our righteousness are as filthy rags.” [Isaiah 64:6](#). Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God “was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.” Sin is defined to be “the transgression of the law.” [1 John 3:5, 4](#). But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” [Psalm 40:8](#). When on earth, He said to His disciples, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” [John 15:10](#). By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.”

Wow!

“If you are to sit at Christ’s table, and feast on the provisions he has furnished at the marriage supper of the Lamb, you must have a special garment, called the wedding garment, which is the white robe of Christ’s righteousness. Every one who has on this robe is entitled to enter the city of God; and if Jesus had not been very desirous you should have a place in the mansions he has gone to prepare for those who love him, he would not, at so great an expense to himself, have made all these arrangements that you might be happy and sit at his table and enjoy the home he has gone to prepare for his redeemed family. Your own garments are unclean and your own spirit and habits are earthly and defiled. Jesus proposes that you lay these off, and put on the garments clean and white which he has prepared for you. Will you lay off your self-righteous garments and accept of Jesus Christ as your Saviour? In doing this, you accept the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and despising your own garments of sin and uncleanness, put on the garments of Christ’s righteousness.” {[YI August 11, 1886, par. 5](#)}

“The church is the bride of Christ, and her members are to yoke up with their Leader. God warns us not to defile our garments” (Letter 123 ½, 1898).

Woe! Wow!

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev 19:8).

After all, who would want to attend a wedding naked?!

I look at my wardrobe, even my white shirt (it's the best one I got), and I say Woe.

I want to say Wow!

I have to bow with John before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and say, "More About Jesus."

1:14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow . . .

The color white and flames of fire: Absolute Purity and Inescapable Penetration

gray hair = the wisdom of old age (Job 15:10; Prov 16:31; 20:29) – but His hair is white. His entire head is white!

We normally speak of a clean heart. Jesus has a clean head.

Heads in Heaven

"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment *was* white as snow, And the hair of His head *was* like pure wool. His throne *was* a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire" (Dn 7:9).

Interestingly, there are hints that though the scars remain, His head would change:

Resurrection angel: "His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow" (Mt 28:3).

Transfiguration: "His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them" (Mk 9:3).

In Revelation: descriptive symbols = function of a greater reality. Symbols stand for something. Sum total: white = purity.

Heads on Earth

Interestingly, before, His head looked quite different:

Isa 52:14: "Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men."

Isa 53:1-5 "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is* no beauty that we should desire Him. ³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."

"Oh sacred head, now wounded"

Now the head of Jesus is portrayed as white, absolutely pure, undefiled, uncorrupted.

V17: reaction: "as dead"

Just like Jesus

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps 51:7).

“He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes” (Ps 147:5).

You

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18).

Eye-Contact: “It’s good to see you!” - “and His eyes like a flame of fire”

Some luxury vehicles (including Mercedes and Jaguar F-types) have facial recognition software that detects if a driver is too tired to be behind the wheel.

So does Apple Photos. Tag a picture, and it will find all the pictures with those facial features.

Washington Dulles airport has tried it to catch impostors by matching passport pictures with your actual persona. So also Fresno Yosemite airport, and Sochi Winter Olympics.

But it gets even better – or worse: A Russian developer has recently released an App called FindFace that lets you take a picture of a person on the street and then finds that person in the Russian equivalent of Facebook. Your face is big data now.

Advertisers can use this technology to target your web searches: if you went to a car dealer, for example, and looked at a Chevy Silverado Z71, they can take your picture, find you on Facebook, and send ads directly to your social media. It’s the digitization of human life.

But there’s somebody else who recognizes your face. Jesus.
You can run, but you can’t hide: Rev 1:14. “and His eyes are like a flame of fire”.

Penetrating, inescapable. Everything, and I mean everything, will come to light in His sight. No hiding. These are x-Ray eyes! Nothing new: Daniel 10:6!

Making eye-contact is at the core of human communication. Eyes are the centerpiece. Parents, you for sure remember when your baby looked at you and smiled. I also remember when I’ve looked at babies and they burst into tears . . . And parents tell their children, “Look at me, Look at me!”

When I think of the eyes of Jesus, I mostly see love, compassion, tender-loving care. Think of this:

- Mk 2:5 “when Jesus saw their faith”
- Mt 9:2 “when Jesus saw her faith”
- Mk 6:34 “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”
- Mk 10:14 Jesus saw the disciples preventing little children from coming to Him
- Lk 13:12 “When Jesus saw her”
- Lk 22:61 Jesus – Peter . . . !
- John 1:47 Nathanael: Jesus not only recognizes our faces, He sees what’s in us! He is a master cardiologist and knows our heart’s condition without open-heart surgery!
- John 5:6 “When Jesus saw him lie”
- John 11:33 “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping”

God sees. And when He sees, He takes notes.

Gen 16:1-14!

Rev 1:14 – eyes like flame of fire – why?

Soon, really soon, you will see me face to face, and I want to see you and smile, not frown. Remove anything and everything that shouldn't be in your life. Actions, attitudes, alcohol, adultery, A-rated movies (A for abomination), arrogance, anger, everything. Remove it. Have Him remove it.

When you can't hide means, you don't have to hide any longer. Surrender! Let His blood wash your sins away, let His broken body break you and re-make you, and promise you the resurrection!

Jesus, with fiery eyes. That's who we will see. One day. Soon.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8).

So let me ask you a totally not dumb question: Would you like to see God one day?

And when He sees you, Would you like for Him to say, Well done, thou good and faithful servant?

Would you like for God to wipe away every tear from your eyes? (Rev 21:4)

1 Cor 13:12 states, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Communion: He sees you as a sinner, but wants to see you saved.

Ellen White's description of the Second Coming

"Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, **till it was a great white cloud**. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. **His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders**; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth" (EW 15-16).

Are You on Fire?!

518 Standing on the Promises, 522 My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

1:15 "His feet were like burnished bronze, burning in a furnace, and His voice like the voice of much water."

The Feet of Jesus

If you were tested by fire, would you be able to stand – or would you get cold feet?!

Feet are interesting – in English, for sure, because your nose runs and your feet smell. When our boys were little we could get them to giggle so hard they could barely breathe when we told them, "Uuh, stinky feet . . .".

We have quite a few "footsy" expression in our English language:

- Dragging your feet
- Walking on hot coals (coals conduct heat poorly – it's not a matter of mindset but of properly arranging the coals – but if you want to test this theory, count me out)
- People have swollen feet
- "I've been on my feet all day"
- "My feet are tired"

- Emperors were often portrayed bare-footed. But we have to answer the question, Why are Jesus' feet "burnished bronze, burning in a furnace"?
- And, the newest craze . . . counting your steps. It's a good thing, don't get me wrong, but we need to not just count our steps but watch them, too, and you will understand why in just a minute. It's got to do with our Rev 1:15 text.
- Holding one's feet to the fire – ah, this one is close to our Rev 1:15!

The Bible presents fire as the symbol of two main ideas: judgment and cleansing. In other words, revealing and destroying evil.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: ¹² Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mt 3:10-12).

Bible backgrounds: Dan 10:5-6; Mal 3:2; 1 Cor 15:27/Heb 2:8; Rev 2:18 (Thyatira); Rev 3:18 (Laodicea).
Are you getting the picture with feet and fire?

Here's the point: What happens when Jesus puts down His feet? Everything unholy underneath the burning feet of Jesus will burn to a pile of ashes!

Can you stand the fire?! Without the grace of God we stand no chance to stand in His presence.

Let me give you a real example, with actual flames, smoke, and fire: In the history of our movement, the Adventist church has experienced such cleansing fire.

Remember 1902? Let me share some Adventist history 101 with you:

- Feb. 18, 1902 Battle Creek Sanitarium
- Dec. 30, 1902 Four-story, 80,000 R&H reduced to a heap of ashes, never to be rebuilt in Battle Creek

"At the General Conference, held in Battle Creek in 1901, the Lord gave His people evidence that He was calling for reformation. Minds were convicted, and hearts were touched; but thorough work was not done. If stubborn hearts had then broken in penitence before God, there would have been seen one of the greatest manifestations of the power of God that has ever been seen. But God was not honored. The testimonies of His Spirit were not heeded. Men did not separate from the practices that were in decided opposition to the principles of truth and righteousness, which should ever be maintained in the Lord's work. . . .

Men may erect the most carefully constructed, fireproof buildings, but one touch of God's hand, one spark from heaven, will sweep away every refuge. It has been asked if I have any advice to give. I have already given the advice that God has given me, hoping to prevent the falling of the fiery sword that was hanging over Battle Creek. Now that which I dreaded has come—the news of the burning of the Review and Herald building. When this news came, I felt no surprise, and I had no words to speak. What I have had to say from time to time in warnings has had no effect except to harden those who heard, and now I can only say: I am so sorry, so very sorry, that it was necessary for this stroke to come. Light enough has been given. If it were acted upon, further light would not be needed. To our people, ministers and lay members, I am instructed to say: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord,"—for many ministers and people are walking in strange paths,—“and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6, 7 (8T 99).

Notice that she starts with God as a consuming fire and ends with a God who pardons abundantly pardons.

So what if Jesus were to put His foot down on you?

Let me tell you a secret . . . You won't get burned if you're already on fire for Jesus!

Don't believe me? Daniel 3, 3 friends in the fiery furnace . . . There's proof that you can be fire-proof!
How?

Burn now for Jesus so you don't burn later.

Proof of fire will make you fire proof!

Are you on fire?!

The Voice of Jesus

If His voice is so strong, what's my excuse for not hearing it?

"But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:2-4).

Interestingly, I have 1253 pages of Ellen White quotes on the book of Revelation – verse-by-verse – and 1:15 has none! The Scripture Index on www.egwwritings.org only lists one: PP 708, which does not deal with the voice of Jesus but the crowds responding to the question from Ps 24: "Who is this King of glory?" The multitude's response: "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!" (Ps 24:10).

"In all who are under the training of God is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. Here alone can true rest be found. And this is the effectual preparation for all who labor for God. Amid the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, the soul that is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. The life will breathe out fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts" (DA 363).

1:16 And in His right hand He had seven stars. And out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. And His face - it shines like the sun in its strength.

John is drawn to Jesus' face again and again. The sequence reveals:

Garment - Chest - Head - Eyes - Feet - Voice - Hand - Mouth - Face

In His hand - the Church.

The mouth: we speak with our mouth. We eat. We breathe. We kiss. His mouth - His Word divides truth from error.

1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He put His right hand on me and said to me, "Don't be afraid! I am the first and the last,

Why this reaction? Isn't Jesus our "buddy"? Our best friend? Doesn't Jesus "love jeans"? Didn't John walk, eat, work, talk with Jesus for 3+ years?

This godly fear in the presence of Jesus is foreign to us.
It shouldn't.

Have we become too casual in the presence of God?

Is our worshiped marked with respect and a sense of awe: In this casual church culture, Do we still realize that He is God, we are sinners?

Do we realize that the Jesus who walked on water is also the Son of Man who can walk through fire?

That the Jesus who is full of compassion has eyes of flaming fire?

That the face that spelled mercy and encouraged the woman caught in adultery also judges adultery?

John fell down at His feet as dead.

When is the last time you actually worshiped Jesus, at His feet?

**1:18 and the one who is alive! I was dead, and look - I am alive forever and ever! Amen!
And I have the keys to Hades and to Death.**

The ultimate issue after sin from Adam's fall in Eden was death. Death - the anti-life. Jesus conquered the result of sin and is willing to pass the victory on to us.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:4 NKJV).

1:19 Write what you saw, what is, and what is about to happen after these things.

This verse could say: Write what you saw: the present, and the future.

Or: Write what you saw (the past), what is (the present), and what is about to happen (the future).

Revelation spans the time spectrum of John's 1st century environment, present circumstances for the church, and the future, from immediate to distant - till the end.

"Vertical Reality"

1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

We just sang this famous song "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" . . .



A picture captured the attention of spectators around the world during the 2016 Olympics in Brazil. Two swimmers, Le Clos in the green cap, and Michael Phelps in the black one. Take a close look at Lo Cloos, up top. Instead of looking forward and focusing on his own race, Le Clos turned sideways to antagonize and irritate Phelps.

Le Clos lost a shot at a medal and placed 4th.

Take your eyes off the prize, and lose big time. For the whole world to see. Ouch.

What if this happened to you in the Great Controversy . . . You take your eyes off of Jesus, and the whole universe sees you place 4th. Which, in the kingdom of God, is outside. You're in, or you're out.

It's happening right now.

People all around the world are asking themselves, What in the world is going on? And instead of going to God for the answer, they get bogged down in the cares of this world:

- Strange politics. Granted, political races always turn muddy. But this presidential race – isn't it bizarre?
- Huge immigration movements across Europe
- Viruses, anti-biotic resistant bacteria
- Geo-political turmoil, with China and Russia and the Ukraine rattling their sabers

But something else distracting has arisen on the horizon of human experience: electronics. Don't get me wrong, electronics are great. We can email, txt, twitter, type. And we can be entertained. Entertainment that could come at the expense of eternity.

Pokemon Go, for example, has really taken off, and don't write me off as – here we go again, preacher speaking against video games. No, there is more behind it. Consider this:

- Pokemon Go – in a matter of weeks, since June 6, to be precise – has become the top app on iTunes
- More users than Twitter
- Estimates: 10% of all smartphone users worldwide: 1-2 hours/day hunting pocket monsters
- Forbes: 46% of US players between 18-29; 45% > \$50,000/year, 63% female

Hal Mayer: "The game is, in a way, a religion, specifically, Japanese animism."

- gods of nature, feed them, offer incense
- ignore them: vindictive, run away, resist capture
- little monsters very similar to gods of Japanese mythology: techno-animism
- communication and interaction with devils
- a whole generation (Harry Potter, anyone?) in the 90s is already desensitized towards occult themed entertainment

Why so popular? Hal Mayer again: "It offers an escape, or 'palliative diversion,' from the continual and depressing cycle of murder, mayhem and political trash talk that drives the news, and gives disillusioned millennials a sense of power in a world where they often feel powerless."

Same with the Olympics, or all sports, incidentally: an uninvolved spectator experiences a vicarious, substitutionary victory (or defeat). Identification with the life experience of someone else, though utterly unrelated. What does my life have to do with any athlete or team?!

Pokemon Go takes this one step further: with augmented reality you can live in two worlds, an artificial digital reality, and actual reality, the great outdoors. A spiritual world, and a technological world. You can have your cake and eat it too with Pokemon Go.

The fake and the real gets blurred. Satan must love it.

Here is a dire warning from Jesus in relation to power over demons – vertical reality!

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. ¹⁸ And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. ²⁰ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:17-20).

Here is another warning from Luke:

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly” (Lk 21:34).

Or, in the words of John:

“Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

COL speaks of “foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (COL 56).

Students – school is starting soon. . . If you want your homework done, study, or get any work done, Pokemon must go! Bye bye Pokemon. It’s not Pokemon Go, it’s Go Pokemon! Make your life a Pokemon-free zone! I’m serious! Today! Walk out of this church today, wash your hands, and don’t touch it again. Freedom in Christ!

But that’s not really my sermon . . .

This fascination with a false reality is nothing new. Eve fell for the promise of a false reality.

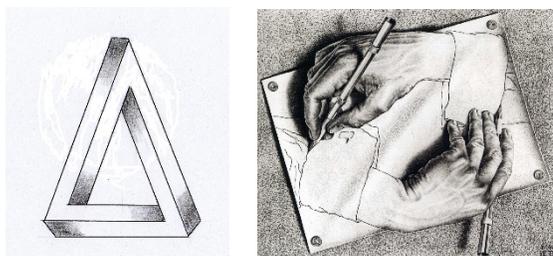
Even before then, Satan couldn’t deal with the reality God created. God the Father elevated the Son, gave Him special privileges, and all authority. Satan didn’t like it, rebelled against it, and the rest is history to point where one day Satan will be history and won’t have a future!

Reality-perception disorder is common to the human lot. How many times have you thought, “What planet did he come from?”

“Who does she think she is?”

People say, Perception is Reality.

Optical Illusions



Revelation 1:20 introduces a real reality. Vertical Reality. And it’s not just about the future, and prophecy, and predicting Sunday laws and marks of the beast. The vertical reality of Revelation introduces us to what Jesus finds important, what/who is dear to Him. What really matters in life. Not fake, not plastic. Real.

"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

Now watch this link between stars and angels. Watch what stars do:

Matthew 2:2 – the star/angels lead people from far away to Jesus! You can be far away and end up at His feet!

Matthew 2:7 – an enemy wants to use the guidance of the stars/angels for the wrong reason!

Matthew 2:9 – the star/angels leads people directly to Jesus!

Matthew 2:10-11 – finding Jesus leads to joy. Only finding Jesus leads to true joy!

Now that's reality. That's real!

Those wise men found Jesus without Augmented Reality, without iPhone, without Google maps – they found Jesus because they wanted to find Jesus and angels led them to Jesus!

Ok, Christmas in August, fine. We know that story . . .

The word Angel can be used for humans:

- Mt 11:10/Mk 1:2/Lk 7:27: John the Baptist
- Lk 7:24: messengers of John the Baptist
- Lk 9:52: disciples
- 2 Cor 12:7: "messenger of Satan"

Rev 2-3: angels of the 7 churches = messengers?!

Ellen White on the 7 Angels

AA 586: "In every period of this earth's history, God has had His men of opportunity, to whom He has said, "Ye are My witnesses." In every age there have been devout men, who gathered up the rays of light as they flashed upon their pathway, and who spoke to the people the words of God. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Daniel, and the long roll of patriarchs and prophets,—these were ministers of righteousness. They were not infallible; they were weak, erring men; but the Lord wrought through them as they gave themselves to His service. Since His ascension, Christ the great Head of the church, has carried forward His work in the world by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men, and ministers to their needs. The position of those who have been called of God to labor in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church, is one of grave responsibility. In Christ's stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God; and they can fulfil their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above. **God's ministers are symbolized by the seven stars, which He who is the first and the last has under His special care and protection. The sweet influences that are to be abundant in the church are bound up with these ministers of God, who are to represent the love of Christ. The stars of heaven are under God's control. He fills them with light. He guides and directs their movements. If He did not, they would become fallen stars. So with His ministers. They are but instruments in His hands, and all the good they accomplish is done through His power. It is to the honor of Christ that He makes His ministers a greater blessing to the church, through the working of the Holy Spirit, than are the stars to the world.** The Saviour is to be their efficiency. If they will look to Him as He looked to His Father, they will do His works. As they make God their dependence, He will give them His brightness to reflect to the world" (GW 13-14).

"Christ's ministers are the spiritual guardians of the people entrusted to their care. Their work has been likened to that of watchmen. In ancient times, sentinels were often stationed on the walls of cities, where, from points of vantage, they could overlook important points to be guarded, and give warning of the approach of an enemy. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within. At stated intervals they were required to call to one another, to make sure that all were awake, and that no harm had befallen any. The cry of good cheer or of warning was borne from one to another, each repeating the call till it echoed round the city. To every minister the Lord declares: "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, ...thou hast delivered thy soul." [Ezekiel 33:7-9] These words of the prophet declare the solemn responsibility resting upon those who are appointed as guardians of the church, stewards of the mysteries of God. They are to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. If for any reason their spiritual senses become so benumbed that they are unable to discern danger, and through their failure to give warning the people perish, God will require at their hands the blood of those who are lost.

It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell sinners of their peril, and point them to the place of safety. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction. Faithfully are they to warn their fellow-men of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interest of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never should they sound one wavering, uncertain note. Not for wages are they to labor, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel. GW 15

The minister who is a co-worker with Christ will have a deep sense of the sacredness of his work, and of the toil and sacrifice required to perform it successfully. He does not study his own ease or convenience. He is forgetful of self. In his search for the lost sheep, he does not realize that he himself is weary, cold, and hungry. He has but one object in view,—the saving of the lost.” GW 16

“Here the ministers of righteousness are symbolized by the seven stars, which the First and the Last has under his special care and protection. The Lord Jesus Christ is acquainted with the number of the stars. He calls them by their names, binds the sweet influence of Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion. The ministers of the gospel of Christ are greater blessings to the church than are the stars to our world. All are in God’s hand. He directs their motions. He disposes of them in their different orbs in their positions. He fills them with light and influence. He supports them, else they would soon be falling stars. They are instruments in his hands, and all the good they do is done by his hand and by his Spirit’s power.” {RH May 31, 1887, par. 4}

“The work of the minister represented by the seven stars is a high and sacred work. When he entertains the idea that his work is comprehended in sermonizing, he overlooks, and is sure to neglect, the work devolving upon a shepherd of the flock. It is his work to have care, to oversee the flock, to so arrange the elements of the church that each may have something to do” {RH May 31, 1887, par. 8}.

But it’s not about the messenger. I die daily. It’s about the message.

God has a direct message for His churches – prepare your hearts for it.

Watch Ye Saints! #598

Revelation Chapter 2**The Seven Churches**

The Church

The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world. {AA 585.3}

“Christ is spoken of as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Thus is symbolized His relation to the churches. He is in constant communication with His people. He knows their true state. He observes their order, their piety, their devotion. Although He is high priest and mediator in the sanctuary above, yet He is represented as walking up and down in the midst of His churches on the earth. With untiring wakefulness and unremitting vigilance, He watches to see whether the light of any of His sentinels is burning dim or going out. If the candlesticks were left to mere human care, the flickering flame would languish and die; but He is the true watchman in the Lord’s house, the true warden of the temple courts. His continued care and sustaining grace are the source of life and light” (AA 586).

“The church cannot measure herself by the world nor by the opinion of men nor by what she once was. Her faith and her position in the world as they now are must be compared with what they would have been if her course had been continually onward and upward. The church will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. If her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon her, she will be found wanting. The light has been shining clear and definite upon her pathway, and the light of 1882 calls her to an account. If her talents are unimproved, if her fruit is not perfect before God, if her light has become darkness, she is indeed found wanting. The knowledge of our state as God views it, seems to be hidden from us. We see, but perceive not; we hear, but do not understand; and we rest as unconcerned as if the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, rested upon our sanctuary. We profess to know God, and to believe the truth, but in works deny Him. Our deeds are directly adverse to the principles of truth and righteousness, by which we profess to be governed” (5T 83).

Jesus knows His church down to the smallest detail. Its troubles, its triumphs, its people.

What would Jesus write to the church today? This church?

Notice something: Churches are identified by specific location.

Rev 2:1-7 The Letter to the Church in Ephesus: P. S. I Love You

#327 I'd Rather Have Jesus

#321 My Jesus, I Love Thee

Ephesus:

Rev 2:1 “who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands”

2 actions: holding His leaders, and walking among His churches

We need to let this sink in for a moment: Although Christ has selected human messengers to communicate His message to the churches, the church is also under divine guidance by His presence.

The church is not an institution, a factory, an office, the church is not a religious country club, were like-minded people get together and share some common values and interests. The church is the object of Christ's supreme interest. He Himself makes His rounds.

Striking parallel: “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen 3:8).

Question: If He is present, are you? If you are a Christian just by yourself, without church, might you not miss Christ Himself? Listen to this doxology from the letter to the Ephesians:

“Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph 3:21).

And listen to this echo from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, I know thy works.” The words fall from the lips of One who cannot lie. The picture reveals eternal vigilance. Christ is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, walking from church to church, from congregation to congregation, from heart to heart. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. **If the candlesticks were left to the care of human agents, how often the light would flicker and go out. But God has not given His church into the hands of men. Christ, the One who gave His life for the world, that all who believe in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life, is the true Watchman of the house.** He is the Warder, faithful and true, of the temple-courts of the Lord. **We have reason to thank God that we are not dependent on the presence of earthly priest or minister. We are kept by the power of God. The presence and grace of Christ is the secret of all life and light”** (Ms99-1902 (July 12, 1902) par. 5).

“Christ walks in the midst of his churches through the length and breadth of the earth. He looks with intense interest to see whether his people are in such a condition spiritually that they can advance his kingdom. **He is present in every assembly of the church.** He knows those whose hearts he can fill with the holy oil, that they may impart it to others. Those who faithfully carry forward the work of Christ, representing in word and deed the character of God, fulfill the Lord's purpose for them, and Christ takes pleasure in them” (RH May 26, 1903).

You can't lead from an armchair or the couch. Jesus knows His churches because He is present among them, walking in between them. What would He tell the church today? What would He put in His letter? What would He commend us for, what would He criticize?

Here is one more:

“In the message to the church at Ephesus, Christ is represented as holding the seven stars in His hand and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is represented as “walking” among them, thus illustrating His constant diligence in behalf of His church. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Nor does He become indifferent. These figures are to be carefully studied by the undershepherds, and faithfully applied to their own experience, that they may not lose sight of their great privilege of securing light from the Source of all light and giving it in turn to those for whom they labor” (Letter 4, 1904).

At first sight the church in Ephesus is doing quite well. They could be proud of themselves! Listen to the long list of commendations – seven to be precise:

Group 1: “I know”

- 1) “I know your works”:
- 2) “and your effort”:
- 3) “and your perseverance”:
- 4) “and that you cannot tolerate those who are evil”:
- 5) “and have checked up on those who claim to be apostles and aren’t, but have found them to be liars”:

Note how . . .

1) Right from the start, the church had to deal with something profoundly sad and damaging: hypocrites. False apostles. People who made false claims. No wonder God says I need to investigate my church and its members, and see who is genuine and who is not.

In the end, He will have to sort out the wheat from the chaff, the good ones from the bad ones, the genuine from the fake. Gold from plastic. Not everything that shines is real.

2) There are people in every church sent by Satan to mess up the church!

Quote: xyz

6) “and you have endured and you have perseverance”:

7) “and you have labored for my name’s sake and not grown weary”:

The Greek has a nice alliteration here: κεκοπίακας καὶ οὐ κέκμηκας, with 7 kappas in a row.

It is astonishing how intimately Jesus is acquainted with the details of every church. He knows His churches, and He knows everything about them, and He knows everything about everybody who is part of those churches, good and bad.

Jesus knows!

Just like in the Garden of Eden. Because Jesus knows, there is no reason to hide. There is no use to hide!

Now by this time, if you were an Ephesian, you’d be tempted to nod your head a little and think, We are doing pretty good! We are faithful Christians. We know the truth, we live the truth, we walk in his ways – when others don’t, we have even endured some persecution . . . We are A OK! Really, what more could you ask of a church?

But after such a complete list of commendations, Jesus’ rebuke comes as a stunning – and stinging – surprise. 4 punctuating words: “But I have this against you”.

If this wasn’t Jesus, I’d be tempted to think, You’ve got to be kidding. I’m doing so good, and now this?

Were those 7 plus-points just buttering us up for the scolding?

Do those 7 plus-points not matter?

Don’t they outweigh the minus? 7 pluses vs one little minus?!

This criticism shows something very important and intriguing, too, and it’s something we shy away from because it’s so misunderstood, has so much baggage, and easily leaves a false impression: Jesus expects perfection from us. A ratio of

7:1 is still not good enough. Jesus wants a 10 out of 10 from us. Now before you give up in utter despair and say, I'll never measure up! I can't reach that! I'm just not good enough . . . Listen to what Jesus actually wants from you.

Before you get discouraged . . . notice that Jesus is asking you for something that you have already had in your Christian faith and practice. When Jesus says, "I have this against you", the missing link is not something you have never done before, something that seems impossible, a bar that is set so high that it appears unattainable. "First love" is doable because "first love" is something you have done before. Jesus is not looking for a new thing, he's looking for a relationship you once had with Him!

"First Love" sounds like infatuation. Jesus doesn't say, "First crush", or "First lust", or "First feelings". He says, "First Love".

When I was 13, may be, there was this girl at my swim team that I thought was cute. I was really too shy to talk to her. She rarely talked to me. But when she did, I would later measure with my stop watch how long she had talked to me. 13 seconds – wow! New record!

Even if it was infatuation, Jesus could only wish that we paid that kind of attention to Him talking to us . . .

This phrase "But I have this against you" tells us something important about Jesus: Jesus cannot be fooled. He knows every detail, including the details that are a major item. The good aspects don't fool Jesus. He doesn't excuse a little evil for a lot of good. He doesn't cover up evil with good. Evil has to be addressed, dealt with, eliminated.

And evil doesn't even have to be all evil. Evil can simply be the absence of good. The absence of putting your heart into your religion.

So, if Jesus had one thing – just one thing – to say to you, allow me, to say against you, what would it be?

Criticism

I'm going to share a paragraph with you now that is very difficult to share. I'm walking on egg shells now, but it's worth the risk.

Be careful now, and take a deep breath, because I have noticed something frightening, and something that has deeply saddened me in my own life, and in the life of the church.

"This message [to the Ephesians] is an example of the way in which the ministers of God are to give reproof today" (MS 136, 1902).

Growing up I was "little Ingo", in the shadow of my bigger brother who was a) bigger, b) taller and stronger, and c) often better in many things, including in math.

Practicing the piano for 30 minutes as a boy, I was proud of my progress, and sometimes all I heard was, "You gonna have to practice that some more."

My family in Germany still reminds me that I was bad in math.

But at least I'm in good company. We all have a very difficult time to accept criticism. Correction. Well-meant counsel. I have noticed the moment I disagree with people from the pulpit, add some words of caution or even – rarely – words of correction, people back off, resign, drop out, quit coming to church. I preached on health at Shady Lakes one time – one visitor never returned.

A while back I only suggested – I didn't announce – I suggested that I should preach on the topic of dress. Literally hell broke loose and I decided to back off.

I explained one time at Lebanon that we need to handle membership transfers and additions differently than most churches. We need to be more proactive, see how – not if – a person would fit into our Country Life philosophy of ministry. Oh no! It seemed I didn't step on toes but trampled on some hearts!

We are such a sensitive culture – and church culture – that criticism is immediately misinterpreted and people run the opposite direction.

I wonder how Ephesus took it. From the mouth of the king of kings and the Lord of Lords come these words: "I have this against you."

Don't you want to hear what needs to change in your life?

What is missing, How can I improve?

Instead, our reaction is, "Well then I go somewhere else." "Jesus, I don't want to hear it." "If you can't accept me the way I am, then I'm not playing anymore."

Dangerous!

Because I think God put church together so we can be each other's sand paper sometimes, polishing us to a silver shine for the wedding banquet.

Instead we think the other person is irritating at best and impossible to get along with at worst.

So church, we must – WE MUST – accept criticism, constructive criticism.

Because here is the ultimate irony: "I have this against you" from Jesus is not because He is against us, but because He is for us!

One more thing! He has to be against us during our lifetime because He doesn't want to be against us in the judgment!

So, next time you perceive that someone is criticizing you, and you think that they think you are doing it all wrong, step back, be kind, keep your Christian courtesy, and ask yourself – Do they have a point? Do I need to change something about myself? Thank you is the better reaction than thunder!

Ellen White on leaving your first love:

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Thine is a decay, a declension in holy zeal,—not forsaken is the object of it, but lost is the fervor. The first affection of the convert to Christ is deep, full, and ardent. It is not necessary that this love should become less as knowledge increases, as the more and increased light shines upon him. That love should become more fervent as he becomes better acquainted with his Lord. God sees that there is not heart service, a love for Jesus, an earnest zeal in his work. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 2}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 3

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." How much need there is for the people of God at this time to consider the words of the Majesty of heaven, and carefully review the ground over which they have traveled, and see and understand where the very first step was taken in the wrong path! Absence of zeal and devotion, of earnest willing service in the cause of God, shows how indolent many professed followers of Christ are, how destitute of earnest, heart felt effort. They might have been going on from strength to strength, from light to still greater light. They might have become strong in faith had they walked on from step to step, thinking more of Christ than of themselves. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 3}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 4

The Lord has a right to expect more of his believing children than they give him. Every individual Christian is indeed the light of the world. Christians connect with Christ. They reflect the character of Christ. They have been intrusted with

great treasures of light; the oracles of God have been given to them, and in these they have been thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Every provision has been made, and why have the individual members of the church wearied of their Lord? Why does he who professes to love God refuse to obtain from the Source of light and power the oil of grace that he may be a bright and shining light? The church has had great opportunities, great privileges, and why is the light growing dim? Why does it not shine to the world? His church whose individual members are advancing, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is the elected means of the Redeemer's system for enlightening and saving the world. Christ lived and suffered and died to establish a church capable of doing this noble work. He bought her, he cleansed her with his own blood, and clothed her with the garments of his salvation. He laid the corner-stone upon the blood-stained rock of Calvary. He made his church the depository of his precious law, and transferred into her hands in a high and holy sense the work of carrying out his holy designs; that the church should take the work when he left it, and carry it forward to its consummation. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 4}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 5

The Lord of righteousness is walking amid the golden candlesticks. And he watches every dim burning lamp of his individual believers, and says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Could mortals find language more impressive, more to the point, than these words of Christ,—words of Him who says, "I know thy works"? He presents the necessity of obtaining all the zeal and earnestness and energy that has ever glowed in the soul. And those who have cast off responsibility, and are content to have their light flickering and dim, Jesus would arouse to a sense of their obligation to let their light shine. He tells them that if they do not repent of their falling away from their first love, he will come suddenly, and remove their candlestick out of its place. As in the case of the unfruitful tree, the command will be given, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 5}

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God will accept nothing less than the whole heart. Happy are they who from the commencement of their religious life have been true to their first love, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sure result of their intercourse and fellowship with their beloved Lord, will be to increase their piety, their purity, their fervor. They are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of fervor, of diligence and zeal. They have that faith constantly becoming stronger which works by love and purifies the soul. Theirs is a child-like devotion, developing itself into activities of holiness, giving proof by the most expressive outward act of their inward gratitude, the heart-felt joy and devoted attachment to Jesus their Redeemer, the divine Restorer. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 6}

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Those who have been growing in harmony with the world in custom, in practice, in thoughts, are not growing in grace. Their prayers become less and less fervent and intelligent. They seem lifeless, and cold, and dead. They must repent. They are called upon to be inwardly grieved and ashamed and confused before the Lord for their want of love. They should blame themselves, and humbly confess before God, and condemn themselves. They must come back, retrace their steps, and do the first works; take hold again firmly in faith where they let go, recover their first zeal, their conscientious, tender love for God and his precious truth. They must pray as earnestly, and watch as diligently, as when the light of Christ's forgiving, pardoning love first fell upon their souls. A severe threatening from God follows if this work is not done. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." {RH June 7, 1887, par. 7}

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If we, like Chorazin and Bethsaida, are exalted to heaven in point of privilege, and, notwithstanding the abundant mercy and loving, tender compassion of God, indifferently regard his great privileges and are not responding to the light and opportunities bestowed, he will come in judgments for impenitence of his churches, and remove the light, and let darkness take its place. Those who are connected with Christ, bearing the yoke of Christ, and lifting his burdens, will be constantly self-denying partakers with Christ of his sufferings. They will be one with Christ, in deep sympathy with Him who loved us and gave himself for us, that he might bring us to his side in heaven. This is the religion that is earnest, deep, firm, and far reaching, and insures rest, and peace, fullness of joy" (RH June 7, 1887, par. 8).

"In this Scripture are outlined the conditions of acceptance with God. The first experience of the Ephesus church led to good works. God took delight in the fact that His church reflected the light of heaven by revealing the Spirit of Christ in tenderness and compassion. The love that dwelt in the heart of Christ; the love that caused him to give Himself a sacrifice for humanity, and to suffer with forbearance the reproach of men, even to the extent of being called a devil; the love that prompted Him to perform mighty works of healing during His ministry—this was the love that was to be

revealed in the lives of His disciples. But they neglected to cherish Christ's compassion and tenderness. Self, as manifested in hereditary traits of character, spoiled the principles of the grand, good works that identified the members of the Ephesus church as Christians. The Lord Jesus must needs show them that they had lost that which was everything to them. The love that constrained the Saviour to die for us was not revealed in its fulness in their lives; and hence they were unable to bring honor to the name of the Redeemer. And as they lost their first love, they increased in a knowledge of scientific theories originated by the father of lies" (MS 11, 1906).

Ellen White on making one mistake:

"No truth does the Bible set forth in clearer light than the peril of even one departure from the right—peril both to the wrongdoer and to all whom his influence shall reach. Example has wonderful power; and when cast on the side of the evil tendencies of our nature, it becomes well-nigh irresistible. The strongest bulwark of vice in our world is not the iniquitous life of the abandoned sinner or the degraded outcast; it is that life which otherwise appears virtuous, honorable, and noble, but in which one sin is fostered, one vice indulged. To the soul that is struggling in secret against some giant temptation, trembling upon the very verge of the precipice, such an example is one of the most powerful enticements to sin. He who, endowed with high conceptions of life and truth and honor, does yet willfully transgress one precept of God's holy law, has perverted his noble gifts into a lure to sin. Genius, talent, sympathy, even generous and kindly deeds, may thus become decoys of Satan to entice souls over the precipice of ruin. This is why God has given so many examples showing the results of even one wrong act. From the sad story of that one sin which "brought death into the world and all our woe, with loss of Eden," to the record of him who for thirty pieces of silver sold the Lord of glory, Bible biography abounds in these examples, set up as beacons of warning at the byways leading from the path of life. There is warning also in noting the results that have followed upon even once yielding to human weakness and error, the fruit of the letting go of faith" (Ed 150).

Now I want you to do something. I want you to make a list. The church is made up of church members. The church in Ephesus received a long list of pluses, and a short but serious list of minuses. Constructive, saving criticism. Life-saving criticism, urgent criticism. Criticism to the rescue. Few of us like to be criticized. We all get defensive. But if Jesus is doing the criticism, wouldn't you listen? Wouldn't you want to change your life?

What part of your first love is gone?

Illustration: I will never forget a couple in my home many years ago (social committee, actually). We were all planning a picnic, when one of the ladies announced (her husband sitting across from her), "Well, we won't be at that picnic." Husband: "Why not?" Wife: "We are getting a divorce, paperwork is already filed." Got a little quiet around our kitchen table . . . We finished the meeting and I met with the couple in my driveway. What's going on, I asked. I will never forget what the wife said: "the fizz is gone".

First love, poof, gone!

But remember how Jesus worded this first love thing in His letter to the Ephesians? "You have left your first love". Good News: You left – you can return! If you have loved God in the past, you can love Him in the future! If you had a connection before, you can have a connection again!

How?

1. Remember
2. Repent
3. Return to the original

There is some even better news: For many human relationships, when the first love is gone the relationship is over. Not for Jesus. When love grows cold, He doesn't turn out the lights. He wants to rekindle a fire that once burned.

When you walk away from Jesus, He doesn't walk out on you!

Rev 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen . . .

Losing our first love we describe as cooling off, drifting may be, growing apart, phrases like that. Jesus calls it something different, something much more drastic: Jesus calls it a fall! You fall, you crash!

“The losing of the first love is specified as a moral fall. The loss of this love is represented as something that will affect the entire religious life” (MS 1, 1906).

“In view of the many virtues enumerated, how striking is the charge brought against the church at Ephesus: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love!” This church had been highly favored. It was planted by the apostle Paul. In the same city was the temple of Diana, which, in point of grandeur, was one of the marvels of the world. The Ephesian church met with great opposition, and some of the early Christians suffered persecution; and yet some of these very ones turned from the truths that had united them with Christ’s followers and adopted, in their stead, the specious errors devised by Satan. This change is represented as a spiritual fall. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works”—as outlined in the preceding verses. They believers did not sense their spiritual fall. They knew not that a change had taken place in their hearts, and that they would have to repent because of the noncontinuance of their first works. But God in His mercy called for repentance, for a return to their first love and to the works that are always the result of true, Christlike love” (Ms11-1906.16).

Ellen White: “Losing our First Love”

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The only way to grow in grace is to be interestedly doing the very work Christ has enjoined upon us to do,—interestedly engaged to the very extent of our ability to be helping and blessing those who need the help we can give them. This is the only way we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christians who are constantly growing in earnestness, in zeal, in fervor, in love,—such Christians never backslide. They are becoming more closely identified with the Saviour in all his plans. They are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Their wisdom is increasing, their ability how to work. They seem to comprehend the largest plans. They are ready to engage in the most stirring enterprises, and they have no room for slothfulness; they cannot find a place for stagnation. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 9}

Those who are ever pressing a little closer to the world, and becoming more like them in feelings, in plans, in ideas, have left a space between them and the Saviour, and Satan has pressed his way into this space, and low, worldly-tainted, selfish plans become interwoven with their experience. God's voice is addressing this class, which are not few: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It is of consequence that you hear attentively and obey. Come into close relationship with Christ. Keep your souls in constant contact with the world, and its customs will become your customs, its practices will become your practices, if you place yourselves where you will see and hear and feel and act as they do. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 10}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 11

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." Turn quickly to Jesus Christ. Yield your pride, your self love, your selfish aspirations, your love of the world, which are death to spirituality. Repent quickly. Delay not in deciding, lest you be too late. Elevate your soul's aspirations to higher spheres of action in Christian activities. Those who do this are the only class in our churches that will grow. They will speedily attain the highest moral efficiency and the clearest spiritual perceptions. They will have unusual vigor and steadiness of faith. They will know how to pray and be persevering and earnest in prayer. And all those who are deeply and interestedly engaged in the salvation of others, are the more surely working out their own souls' salvation with fear and trembling. The piety that does not reveal itself in working interestedly for others, will become a form, strengthened, bigoted, self-conceited. Coming in contact with souls for whom Christ has died, seeking to bring them to repentance, and evidencing a love for their souls, will call them out of themselves, so that they will not be exclusively engaged for their own selfish interests,

either in temporal pursuits or in spiritual things. God has shown it to be our duty not to live for ourselves. Christ pleased not himself. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 11}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 12

The times of ignorance God winked at, but now, with the blazing light of truth shining all around us, with warnings, with reproofs, with increasing light if we will but open our eyes to see it, there is no excuse of any, even the weakest child of God, that they should not disperse light to the world. The four angels are holding the four winds that a special work may be accomplished: the saints of God are to be sealed in their foreheads. Brethren, how long before you will be ready for the seal of God? Every step you advance upon the path which God forbids, toward your own pleasure and in sin, is a step nearer your destruction. Every act of disobedience to the word of the Lord is exposing you to irreparable loss. Every moment of ease, of self-indulgence, secured by you in neglecting the divine admonitions and call to duty in earnest work for the Master, is placing you under the power and control of the prince of darkness. Your candlestick may at any moment be moved out of its place. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 12}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 13

Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing, by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. Get ready, get ready, I beseech you, get ready before it shall be forever too late! The ministers of vengeance will pour all the terrible judgments upon a God-forsaken people. The way of obedience is the only path of life. May the Lord help you to see it in time to open your ears, that you may hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 13}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 14

What is my duty? What shall I do to save my children and to save many souls from the coming tempest of wrath unmixed with mercy? God claims every power, every capability of action to be invested in the doing of his work. Talents, possessions, everything that is great and noble in man he calls to be exercised in his work. Duty admits no rival, enters into no compromise with any opposing powers. The most precious friends and relatives must not step in between your duty and your God. The voice of duty is the voice of God in our souls. Obedience to its claims brings us into living personal agreement with the highest law in the universe—brings man into alliance with God. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 14}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 15

Let the churches be aroused. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This message concerns all our churches. You can never employ your faculty of hearing better than in hearkening to hear what the voice of God speaks to you in his word. There is a rich and abundant promise to those who overcome. It is not enough to enter upon this warfare, we must pursue it to the end. We must know nothing of yielding. We must fight the good fight of faith to the very end. To the overcomer is promised the triumphal victory. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Whatever was lost in the fall of Adam is more than restored in redemption. He that sitteth on the throne saith, "Behold, I make all things new." Let us look closely and critically to ourselves. Are not the vows we entered into at our baptism violated? Are we dead to the world and alive unto Christ? Are we seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? Is the cable cut which anchored us to the eternal Rock? Are we drifting with the current to perdition? Shall we make no effort to press and urge our passage up stream? Let us not hesitate longer, but vigorously apply the oars; and let us do our first works ere we make hopeless shipwreck. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 15}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 16

It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love. Is it worldliness? Is it selfishness? Is it the love of self-esteem? Is it striving to be first? Is it the sin of sensuality that is intensely active? Is it the sin of the Nicolaitans, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness? Is it the misuse and abuse of great light and opportunities and privileges, making boasted claims to wisdom and religious knowledge, while the life and character are inconsistent and immoral? Whatever it is that has been petted and cultivated until it has become strong and overmastering, make determined efforts to overcome, else you will be lost. It is these cherished sins, abhorrent to God, that make enfeebled moral courage, and leave you to choose to walk apart from God, while you retain a miserable, heartless, outward form. Once the soul was all aglow with love for Jesus; but all this is changed. The great Head who moves in the midst of his candlesticks will never be without a church. There will be faithless ones who will go out from us because they were not of us. There will be apostasies. But "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." There will be those who are evil, who hold the

truth in unrighteousness, who are sensual, who are controlled by the master-worker in all evil, who will have to be separated from the church. {RH June 7, 1887, par. 16}

The Review and Herald June 7, 1887 paragraph 17

“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” This labor of purifying the church is a painful work, but one that must not be neglected, if the church would have the commendation of God. But repent, because thou hast left thy first love. Here is plainly presented before us our work as members of the church of Christ. If we are faithless, we shall lose the crown of life and another will take it; for in the dropping out of the faithless the places are supplied by the faithful. If we refuse to let our light shine for the Master, if we do not do the works of God, others will do that very work which we might have done and could have done, but refused to do. When we cease to fulfill our mission, when the candlestick refuses to reflect light, and the great truths committed to us individually in trust for the world, are not given to them, then the candlestick will be removed. “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” Another will be placed in his stead and will shine. Let prayer be ascending now without delay to Him who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Take not thy Holy Spirit from us. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways: and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” {RH June 7, 1887, par. 17}

Basel, Switzerland.

Verse 6: “you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans”

Hate is such a strong word. I *hate* that. We have hate crimes. Our language can be hurtful because it’s hateful. Some people are *haters*. I’ve heard pastors say, “Now that the haters are gone . . .” I know of a pastor who wisely told his kids: the only thing we hate is *sin*. Not bad parenting.

But really “You hate” is *not* the language of the 21st century! It’s not the picture we have of Jesus – because Jesus, in our church culture, is never about hate, only about love. In our uber-tolerant culture we have ended up embracing the Nicolaitans without discernment; and we have ended up in loving what Jesus hates.

Ironically, we bend over backwards to avoid leaning any direction. “It’s all good”. But that’s not good at all because all is not good.

“You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans”. Yes, there are things that Jesus hates. Strong language.

Ultimate irony: The church gets criticized for not loving like it used to, but it gets commended for hating like it should!

Let me suggest this paradox to you: **Jesus hates because He loves.**

So what does Jesus hate?! Because we better not love what Jesus hates, and we better not hate what Jesus loves, and so we better hate what Jesus hates and love what Jesus loves!

Let’s explore this Nicolaitan thing a little more. Theologians get lost in speculation who these Nicolaitans were. Interesting theories – but in the end, just theories. Nicolaitans are often linked with the heretic Nicolas, who happened to be one of the seven deacons from Acts 6:5. Some have also pointed out that the word Nicolaos is a compound of the Greek “winning” and “people”, meaning “winning over the people” or “winning the people over”.

But as is often the case, the Bible itself has the answer: There is an interesting shift from Rev 2:6 to Rev 2:15: from the church hating the deeds to the church tolerating the doctrine of the Nicolaitans! Specifically, In Rev 2:14-15 the Nicolaitans follow the doctrine of Balaam, who enticed the Israelites to idolatry and fornication (Num 25:1-6) – in plain English – breaking the law.

There is nothing new under the sun. Whether method or mission, Satan’s goal is exactly that: breaking the law. After all, he is “a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn 8:44).

In one sentence, Ellen White confirms this treacherous theology that had crept into the early church: “Is it the sin of the Nicolaitans, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness?” (RH June 7, 1887).

Here is another description of the problem – you will recognize that this 2,000-year old message is as relevant as can be: “From the pulpits of today the words are uttered: “Believe, only believe. Have faith in Christ; you have nothing to do with the old law, only trust in Christ.” How different is this from the words of the apostle who declares that faith without works is dead. He says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). We must have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Many seek to substitute a superficial faith for uprightness of life and think through this to obtain salvation” (FW 89).

This false teaching is eroding our educational system, and it’s paralyzing our health care system as well. Just visited a patient in an ex-Adventist hospital yesterday; after requesting a vegetarian meal, he got fried chicken, scrambled eggs, and french fries.

Notice something interesting: Jesus hates their works, not the Nicolaitans themselves.

Notice also this is Phase 1 of Christianity. People have come into the church that shouldn't have come in. There shouldn't be Nicolaitans in the church, but there are. And it's not just Nicolaos. It's an entire, organized group within the church! They're doing what they shouldn't be doing, and they're teaching what they shouldn't be teaching!

It's a sad thing. You have something, a product, a craft, a relationship – that is so beautiful in the beginning. And now it's at the risk of being ruined, from the inside. Just like Judas and the disciples. Just like Adam and Eve. Just like Lucifer in Heaven. The Great Controversy becomes an insider job.

Paul warned us of this, a warning for the early church – the exact time period of Ephesus: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

Moses foresaw the same problem; every generation has to deal with decay, and the poisoning of pioneer purity: “For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *yourselves*, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands” (Deut. 31:29).

Not surprisingly, in the history (or future) of the Adventist church, Ellen White feared the same:

“I tell you now, that when I am laid to rest, great changes will take place” (Msl-1915).

“We are warned that heresy of every kind will be brought in among the people of God in these last days” (MS 75, 1905).

For example: “Finally my son said to me, “Mother, you ought to read at least some parts of the book, that you may see whether they are in harmony with the light that God has given you.” He sat down beside me, and together we read the preface, and most of the first chapter, and also paragraphs in other chapters. As we read, I recognized the very sentiments against which I had been bidden to speak in warning during the early days of my public labors. When I first left the State of Maine, it was to go through Vermont and Massachusetts, to bear a testimony against these sentiments. Living Temple contains the alpha of these theories. I knew that the omega would follow in a little while; and I trembled for our people. I knew that I must warn our brethren and sisters not to enter into controversy over the presence and personality of God. The statements made in Living Temple in regard to this point are incorrect. The scripture used to substantiate the doctrine there set forth, is scripture misapplied” (1SM 203).

“After returning from the Conference, a great uncertainty came upon me in relation to the prosperity of the cause of God. Doubts existed in my mind where none had been six months before. I viewed God's people as partaking of the spirit of the world, imitating its fashions, and getting above the simplicity of our faith. It seemed that the church at Battle Creek were backsliding from God, and it was impossible to arouse their sensibilities. The testimonies given me of God had the least influence and were the least heeded in Battle Creek of any part of the field. I trembled for the cause of God. I knew that the Lord had not forsaken His people, but that their sins and iniquities had separated them from God. At Battle Creek is the great heart of the work. Every pulsation is felt by the members of the body all over the field. If this great heart is in health, a vital circulation will be felt all through the body of Sabbathkeepers. If the heart is diseased, the languishing condition of every branch of the work will attest the fact” (1T 596).

**Pointed testimony comes not from pride and prejudice
but from the acute pain of not being heard at the point of no return!**

She directly addresses the doctrine of the Nicolaitans:

“But the doctrine is now largely taught that the Gospel of Christ has made the Law of God of no effect; that by “believing” we are released from the necessity of being doers of the word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned. . . . Those who are teaching this doctrine today have much to say in regard to faith and the righteousness of Christ; but they pervert the truth, and make it serve the cause of error. They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient; that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfils the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that he has saved them. “I am saved,” they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah?—No; for the garments of Christ's

righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception, and Christ becomes to these persons a stumbling-block as he did to the Jews,—to the Jews because they would not receive him as their personal Saviour; to these professed believers in Christ, because they separate Christ and the Law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience. They separate the Father and the Son, the Saviour of the world. Virtually they teach, both by precept and example, that Christ, by his death, saves men in their transgressions” (ST February 25, 1897, par. 7).

Mt 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins”.

Dissertation Idea: Group Dynamics in the entire Book of Revelation of Who relates to whom how?

It’s a strange thing indeed: a group called the church, and Satan joins! With suit and tie, Bible tucked underneath his arm. How is God going to deal with this? How will this end?

John 13:30: “He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.”

Amos 9:9: “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”

That’s Old Testament . . . Jesus came to preach love! “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: ¹² Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Mt 3:11-12).

Ellen White again: “Divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest. There will be a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. It is the very time when the genuine will be the strongest. The history of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram is being repeated, and will be repeated till the close of time. Who will be on the Lord’s side? Who will be deceived, and in their turn become deceivers? The Lord is soon to come. There must be a refining, winnowing process in every church, for there are among us wicked men who do not love the truth or honor God. We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands” (*Last Day Events*, p. 172f.). That’s Nicolaitans.

But you don’t become a hater of people – you wrestle with people, plead with them, work with them, and try to win them. A pioneer example, and truly and example of how it should be done – listen:

“Our labors in Maine commenced with the conference at Norridgewock, the first of November. The meeting was large. As usual, my husband and myself bore a plain and pointed testimony in favor of truth and proper church discipline, and against the different forms of error, confusion, fanaticism, and disorder naturally growing out of a want of such discipline. This testimony was especially applicable to the condition of things in Maine. Disorderly spirits who professed to observe the Sabbath, were in rebellion, and labored to diffuse the disaffection through the conference.

In consequence of this spirit of rebellion, our work in Maine required seven weeks of the most trying, laborious, and disagreeable toil. But as we left that State, we were comforted with the fact that all had confessed their rebellion, and that a few had been led to seek the Lord and embrace the truth” (*Life Sketches* p. 178).

Our culture wants to be inclusive, not exclusive. The Bible teaches a different philosophy: Psalm 1:1: “Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

2 Thess 3:6: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

We cringe at this; it doesn't make sense to us. That doesn't seem right to our relational sensitivity. But there it is. On the pages of Holy Writ.

But let me turn your attention to the end of the letter – a glorious ending, with an exceedingly attractive appeal:

Verse 7: the Promise of Paradise

“he who has ears to hear” . . . Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:15, 16, 43 = He who has an ear is the voice of judgment! Listen now before it's too late! Listen now before you lose the kingdom!

Ellen White on Hearing . . . “Let the churches be aroused. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” This message concerns all our churches. You can never employ your faculty of hearing better than in hearkening to hear what the voice of God speaks to you in his word. There is a rich and abundant promise to those who overcome. It is not enough to enter upon this warfare, we must pursue it to the end. We must know nothing of yielding. We must fight the good fight of faith to the very end. To the overcomer is promised the triumphal victory. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Whatever was lost in the fall of Adam is more than restored in redemption. He that sitteth on the throne saith, “Behold, I make all things new.” Let us look closely and critically to ourselves. Are not the vows we entered into at our baptism violated? Are we dead to the world and alive unto Christ? Are we seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? Is the cable cut which anchored us to the eternal Rock? Are we drifting with the current to perdition? Shall we make no effort to press and urge our passage up stream? Let us not hesitate longer, but vigorously apply the oars; and let us do our first works ere we make hopeless shipwreck” (RH June 7, 1887, par. 15).

Paradise: in the Old Testament (LXX): Garden of Eden (Gen 2-3 13x!); only 3 times in the New Testament (Lk 23:43; 2) 2 Cor 12:4; 3) Rev 2:7).

Luke 23:43 – it's not about a comma; it's about the exclamation mark at the end of the sentence!

You are receiving the same promise as the thief on the cross – he did not have much time to choose, neither do we! Therefore, overcome now.

Overcoming or Overcome?**Introduction: The Individuality of Churches**

Every church I have been a member of, every church I been involved in, has been unique. They all have their own flavor. The Lutheran church I was confirmed in (1982!) is so different from the Keene church. The Keene church so different from my church in downtown Stuttgart, Germany, and that church so different from the 30-member church in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen (home of the Porsche!). And Keene is different from Burleson, which is different from Joshua, which is different from Cleburne, which, I'm sure, is different from Arlington, which is different from Ardmore (polar opposites), let alone the cultural diversity of churches around the world. Just like families.

Unity

There is much talk about unity in the church these days – what really unites us? And to be honest, it's hard to wrap your mind around the catch phrase "Unity in Diversity". What does that actually mean? How does that work? I know we are united "in Christ" – but what does that mean when there is still so much remaining disagreement?

Amos 3:3 comes to mind: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

And of course Jesus Himself prayed for unity among the disciples: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (Jn 17:22).

Ellen White defines this oneness well: "The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 17:20, 21 The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one" (MH 421).

So . . . where am I going with this?

The 7 Churches of Revelation

As I pondered the 7 churches, I noticed that every church in Revelation is unique. They all have their own issues, trials, problems, challenges, opportunities. Even Jesus introduces Himself differently to each church.

But there's something that all churches have in common. Or, to be more precise, there is something common to all humans in these 7 churches. It's a phrase that recurs with surgical precision and predictable reliability:

Let's read it with our own eyes – got your Bibles open, ready to soak in and soak up the Word of God? Mind you, this is read ink. It's the voice of Jesus. It's the one counsel He gives to every person in those 7 churches, regardless of circumstances, condition, situation, experience. It won't take you long to figure out what it is (looking at the sermon title is cheating!).

[Rev 2-3 reading]

"He who has an ear" doesn't count, because everyone – all things considered, and all things being equal – has an ear or two. Of course this is an appeal to actually listen – which is rare. Do you listen to the Bible? Do you?

By now you must have caught on that the one phrase that is common to all churches is "He who overcomes". Overcoming is the common call to believers before the end – and before it's too late. Right at the end, overcoming is what we must do, overcoming is what we can do.

His promises are greater than our problems. Overcoming is what you just before the promise!

Church Context

Interestingly, though it's worded as a call to each individual, overcoming is placed within a church context.

Yes, we overcome as individuals – you are responsible for your overcoming, I am responsible for mine. But we don't do it alone. We overcome together. The church should help to overcome, not hinder. The church should catalyze, energize, motivate, inspire. Overcoming is about eternity! Everything is at stake – so we better take a closer look.

Overcoming

Overcoming is mentioned 28x in the NT; 17x in Revelation = > half of all overcoming is in Revelation. The book of the end is a book of eternal victory. There might be much defeat along the way, with wounded warriors and even victims along life's narrow way, but Revelation speaks of personal victory in the greatest battle ever fought: victory over self.

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness" (SC 43).

So we overcome as individuals in a church family, and we overcome because Jesus is our example:

- John 16:33 "I have overcome the world"
- Romans 12:21 "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
- 1 John 2:13 "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one."
- 1 John 5:4 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."
- 1 John 5:5 "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"
- Rev 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Not by will power, by mere grit, but in the strength of Jesus.

How to Overcome

I can only suggest to you what happens at the precise point of overcoming, based on actual examples – and failures – in the Bible.

It appears to me that overcoming is arriving at this fork in the road and then deciding which way to go. It's right at that point where you have to decide and act right, following in the huge footprints of Jesus Christ.

Examples

Adam & Eve: apple in hand. The moment to decide. Will God's counsel and law rule, or self? Me? I? So pause right here with me. It really helps to decide ahead of time to obey God, though the heavens fall.

"Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ" (SC 70).

Overcoming is really God putting you back in the Garden by the Tree and you get a chance to say No to that dumb apple!

Cain: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him*" (Gen 4:7).

Daniel 1:8: **Every opportunity to choose right is an obligation to do good.**

Jesus' temptation scene – watch Him flee into the Word of God, take refuge in the simple counsel of the Almighty. Garden of Gethsemane: Jesus (He's the best example, after all). Fork in the road. The ultimate point of decision, not for Himself alone, but for the world. He almost falters – can you imagine? The Son of God, wrestling with Himself and the eternal destiny of humanity at stake . . . and He chooses to turn to the Father and surrender His will to God's.

Why does God give us this choice? Because every choice is a chance to overcome! Choose or loose!

“While Satan is constantly seeking to blind their minds to the fact, let Christians never forget that they “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.” Ephesians 6:12, margin. The inspired warning is sounding down the centuries to our time: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8. “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11 From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan. All who are actively engaged in the cause of God, seeking to unveil the deceptions of the evil one and to present Christ before the people, will be able to join in the testimony of Paul, in which he speaks of serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations. Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan” (GC 510).

Note from a Chaplain

“God, with all power and described as "love" has not given me the ability to relieve suffering. My acts of love and prayer are of no real significance. I must struggle in my futile nearly useless efforts for those in my prayers.

I believe and so I keep pleading for heaven to tip the scales as I give my last bit of strength for innocent creatures that suffer relentless excruciating agony.

I gotta withdraw tonight and pray as Jesus; when I have no answers I have to yield; come apart and have my battle wounds treated and submit to His operating room team. The bright blinding lights stab my dilating eyes. As they blur and drugs put my body to sleep I take courage that those blinding lights are not in the eyes of the surgical team. Those lights help them do better work that may save me. The overcoming stupor is my friend and makes God's Work possible and successful. Such is prayer.”

Such surrender is full of irony. The irony that you have to surrender to win. The irony that you have to die to live.

John the Baptist got it right: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Notice, Jesus first. Self last.

Paul got it right, too (with battle scars to prove it): “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9).

I used to jog. And swim. And jump and run and climb and throw and bounce and lift and stretch and dive and then some. And I noticed early on that your body at some point hits a wall. Every runner knows that wall. You don't want to run anymore. But if you overcome, you can run forever.

In German we have a descript phrase for it: overcoming the pigdog. The pigdog has to be overcome. You want to hear pigdog in German? Schweinehund. SCHWEINEHUND! Sounds bad, doesn't it? Schweinehund tells you to quit. Schweinehund tells you you can't do it. Schweinehund preaches – loser, loser. You gave in before, why do think you can conquer now, eh? Pigdog is the voice of evil. Pigdog wants to cloud your mind, blind you from the sight of Jesus, pigdog wants to silence the whisper (or is it a shout) of God in your ear. Overcome! Be an overcomer!

We have to overcome because what you don't overcome, will overcome you. You either overcome, or you are overcome. Interesting how in the English language the same word can be past tense – you're overcome – or an imperative, a command, an appeal by Jesus. Overcome!

“In childhood and youth the character is most impressible. The power of self-control should then be acquired. By the fireside and at the family board influences are exerted whose results are as enduring as eternity. More than any natural endowment, the habits established in early years decide whether a man will be victorious or vanquished in the battle of life. Youth is the sowing time. It determines the character of the harvest, for this life and for the life to come” (DA 101).

There’s a final call towards the end of Revelation. It’s strategically placed after the introduction of the New Jerusalem. Which makes sense, because in the end, that’s where we’re headed. One more invitation. One more appeal. Your eyes not on your problem, but on the city of the Prince of Peace. The gold of the foundation already glimmering in your eye. That’s what you’re overcoming for. The door’s still open. Decide. Now. Pigdog, or Prince of Peace? Schweinehund – or Savior? Eternal loss – or eternal gain?

Rev 21:7 “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

Faith is the Victory

Tree of Life: From Gen 3:22-24 = return man to the moment before sin. The promise to Ephesus, the first church, is incredible: 2nd chance for eternity. The promise is really disproportionate to their current standing.

„Obedience through Jesus Christ gives to man perfection of character and a right to that tree of life. The conditions of again partaking of the fruit of the tree are plainly stated in the testimony of Jesus Christ to John: ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and many enter in through the gates into the city’ (MS 72, 1901).

How to be victorious in this battle?

“Must we wait until we are translated before we eat of the leaves of the tree of life? He who receives into his heart the words of Christ knows that it means to eat the leaves of the tree of life. Christ declared, “The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, ever more give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, shall have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give him is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. ... It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” When the believer, in the fellowship of the Spirit, can lay his hand upon truth itself, and appropriate it, he eats the bread that comes down from heaven. He enters into the life of Christ and appreciates the great sacrifice made in behalf of the sinful race. {Ms103-1902.3}

The knowledge that comes from God is the bread of life. It is the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations. The current of spiritual life thrills the soul as the words of Christ are believed and practiced. Thus it is that we are made one with Christ. The experience that was weak and feeble becomes strong. It is eternal life to us if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end. All truth is to be received as the life of Jesus. Truth cleanses us from all impurity and prepares the soul for Christ’s presence. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory” (MS 103, 1902).

The Letter to Smyrna

#137 We Three Kings: Did you notice the words we just sang, in the 4th stanza? (Were you tempted to think – Why are we singing all 5 stanzas?!)

“Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume | Breathes a life of gathering gloom” (words by John H. Hopkins, 1857). Merry Christmas. “Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume | Breathes a life of gathering gloom.”

Ouch. Let me waste no time telling you what we have known all along . . . He was born to die.

The song – mind you, A Christmas song! – continues . . .

“Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding – bleeding! – dying, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.”

Born to die. The angels must have wondered. The Father in Heaven, was that a tear of joy or a tear of pain, or can tears contain both?! At the same time?

I’m not philosophizing about Christmas, and Bethlehem, and trying to squeeze one more deep thought out of Christmas. I’m introducing you to Revelation 2:8 – my next sermon in 2017. Smyrna. Listen to Jesus’ introduction: “And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; . . .”

Now did you hear what I just read? Did you hear the name of the church? Let me say it again: Smyrna.

Let me say it in Greek: Smyrna.

Did you hear it? *Did you smell it?!* Smyrna – Myrrh! The city of bitterness. Christmas is, after all, bittersweet.

Myrrh. Latin name: *Balsamodendron myrrha*. Or named after an Anatolian goddess Samorna. But if you look at the entire letter, it’s bitter.

Jesus encountered myrrh from the cradle to the cross: John 19:39! So also Mk 15:23. On the Cross Jesus made a profound statement: “I’m not drinking their wine because I’m soaking up their sin!”

And of course Mt 2:11. That’s the only 3 times that myrrh is mentioned in the New Testament.

But Myrrh is no stranger to the Old Testament:

- Gen 37:25: Joseph got sold to Ishmeelites, on their way to Egypt, with camels bearing 3 gifts: spices, balm, and myrrh! Joseph foreshadowed Jesus! Betrayed by his own, left for dead . . .
- Gen 43:12: Jacob
- Ex 15:23: bitter water = Marah
- Exodus 30:23: a key ingredient to anointing oil. And it’s called holy anointing oil.
- Esther 2:12: Esther’s beauty treatment included myrrh
- Job: 4x: 3:20; 7:11; 10:1; 21:25 = bitterness (of soul)
- Psalm 45:8: myrrh is no cheap stuff! It exudes quality, class, royalty.
- Prov 7:17: negative context, but myrrh, though bitter, is an attractive scent, not repulsive, esp. in combination with aloe and cinnamon.

While we might be tempted to skip over this, we can learn something important here: What might appear sweet can turn bitter in the end. Like wrong choices. And what appears bitter will turn sweet in the end. Classic example for Seventh-day Adventists: Revelation 10. I have to read the whole chapter (it’s short) because you

have to notice something bittersweet at the end (v11): the responsibility and experience of John will have to be replicated before the end.

Trial and tribulation? Carbon-copy that! Bittersweet? Repeat, please.

- Sol 1:13: Positive counterpart to Prov 7:17 . . . I won't read that in public!
- Sol 3:6: Real men wear myrrh.
- Sol 4:6: whole mountain full of myrrh
- Sol 4:15: the substance not just of suffering, but also of love. Bittersweet, so to speak.
- Sol 5:1: read that one on your own, ok. . . . 5:5, 13: Myrrh is the substance of passionate love. Real story. Real message: I love you.
- Zeph 1:14: the day of the Lord – a bitter cry? Or beginning of the sweet, by and by? If you don't love, what could be sweet, will be bitter.

Conclusion

That song we sang in the beginning, "We Three Kings" ends this way: "O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright, Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to Thy perfect light."

I pray this might still be the case, 2021 years later (yup, Jesus was born 4 B.C.).

But for our closing hymn, we'll sing #141; its words are good too – listen before you sing:

"So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh" – That's right. Myrrh, the scent of bitterness, the scent of death, can come from us. Our bitter gift to sweet Jesus. Bittersweet, isn't it?!

God would have it no other way.

Smyrna: "God's Grammar: Future Present"

304 Faith of Our Fathers

602 O Brother, Be Faithful

Introduction

I admit I was tempted to do two things this Sabbath for the sermon: a) microwave my GYC seminar from a couple of weeks ago, b) preach on Psalm 91 – highly relevant for our lives, very applicable, and deeply inspirational. But I felt deeply impressed to continue with the churches! Specifically, to stay with Smyrna. So, Smyrna it is.

Last time we talked about Smyrna was before Christmas, and we discovered that the term Smyrna could come from the word Myrrh, which means bitterness. Bad news: Before things get better, they will turn from bitter to really really bad.

God's Grammar: Future Present or: From Smyrna, with love – and tears

3 guys went into a bar . . .

A couple of nights 3 guys went into a bar – Jess, Kollin, and I. Actually it was a liquor store. What sounds like the beginning of a bad joke is actually the truth. The three of us went into a liquor store here in Rio Vista – to invite people to the Best Weigh program. Jess (knowing no strangers) asked one lady, So, do you go to church? Her response was a true classic: "I don't believe in organized religion. Been hurt too much by too many churches. I can worship God on my

own.” Interestingly, when Jess asked her if she knew why we had church on Saturday, her response pleasantly surprised us: “Because it’s the Bible Sabbath”.

Sabbath truth at the liquor store! But “been hurt too much by the church” – that stung. Haven’t we all heard – or dare I say, experienced – this very thing? A church that does not reflect Christ? Hurt in the very place that’s supposed to heal? Wounded in the house of God . . .

The Country Song says it too, “I’m not religious; I just love the Lord”.

When we read Jesus’ letter to Smyrna, we will make an astonishing discovery. It’s a short letter. 476 characters = 3.4 Twitter tweets long (or short). [Rev 2:8-11]

Jesus Introduces Himself – and His Church

It’s a familiar pattern, and a very important pattern to keep in mind: The way He introduces Himself has a direct bearing on the situation and character of the church. To Smyrna, Jesus is “the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.” Simply put, cross and resurrection. What does that have to do with Smyrna? A lot. In fact, everything.

Look at Jesus – and then look at this church. In Smyrna you will see strikingly similar images! Smyrna is the true Church of Christ!

Smyrna

- no condemnation. There is nothing bad about Smyrna. No scolding, no criticism, no correction necessary.
- but noticeable: nothing good is reported; no good works. Jesus just comments, like He does for every church, that He knows their works, but no details are given. We don’t know what Smyrna did as a church. Was it active? We don’t know. Smyrna is, well, just there.

Just like Jesus. Let me explain.

Jesus is described as the one who was dead, and is alive. As the one whose works were finished, and He was nailed to the cross. His hands wouldn’t even move. His feet, too, were nailed, and He could no longer walk. Smyrna finds herself in a similar situation.

Listen very carefully to the situation of the church. The letter is neatly organized, easy to manage because it’s only 3 verses: Verse 9 is current condition, verse 10 is future condition, verse 11 is ultimate promise.

Verse 9: Look Alikes!

The condition of Smyrna reminds me of none other than Jesus Himself: troubled, poor, blasphemed by the Jews – the very people who should have accepted Him, the subject of Satanic attacks. It’s not just individuals tormenting Him, it’s a whole institution. For Smyrna: the synagogue of Satan – evil institutionalized.

Reminds me of Romans 8:36: “As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

Reminds me of Isa 53:7: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

This church is the mirror of the Messiah in His final misery! Smyrna looks like the Savior! The face of Jesus is not imprinted on a fake shroud, not reflected in the random outline of a Windex-induced Madonna or virgin Mary, but a church into whose profile is carved the suffering of Christ. Jesus and the church look alike! The double of Jesus is not some long-lost twin brother from 2,000 years ago but the combined church members who are Just like Jesus.

They say when you are married long enough you start looking like each other? (I'm sorry Nancy!). Smyrna. Been with Jesus so long the church takes on His character.

And so, it's now to be expected: what happened to Jesus happens to the church. For example:

Blasphemy

"And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? ⁶⁵ And many other things blasphemously spake they against him" (Lk 22:64-65).

In the hour – minutes – of supreme suffering, Jesus was blasphemed: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Lk 23:39).

Same with the church. The church looks like Jesus. As Christ, so the Christians.

Hard question: Do you look like Jesus, sound like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and – suffer like Jesus?

Are you real? You see, in Smyrna there were Jews who – I'm quoting – "say they are Jews, and are not". They might walk like a duck, they might talk like a duck, but when the moment of truth came, they turned chicken! They duck their heads and chickened out. Hypocrites. False ID.

"Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good, and to remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrong-doing, but will expel it from the heart and life" (RH December 4, 1900, par. 6).

Russian Soldiers: "Get up, Get out!"

In Communist Russia a group of believers secretly gathered in a small house outside of town for an illegal worship service. Huddled together, they would share Scripture, quietly sing hymns, and just encourage one another. All of a sudden, two soldiers stormed the building and yelled, "Every Christian get up and get out, Christians, get up and out!" It sounded like one of those much feared round-ups, after which families would never see their husbands and fathers again. Men would return home beaten, bruised, broken. [Happened to my own grandpa, whom I never got to meet, in Germany]. A few Christians got up and fearfully made their way out of the house. Most stayed on their knees, and continued to pray. The soldiers waited . . . And then took of their guns, caps, and uniform coats off and declared, "We are Christians, too! We just wanted to make sure no hypocrites or government spies were with you. Let us worship with you."

Verse 10: Church and State

Speaking of government . . . there is a progression of intensity from verse 9 to verse 10: Smyrna is ridiculed from within in verse 9. Peer pressure. Hypocrites. Fake church members.

In verse 10 pressure from the inside turns into oppression from the outside. To be more precise: church and state get together and now cause imprisonment. This is an unfortunately predictable pattern in the history of Christianity.

The same thing – the precisely exactly same thing - happened to Jesus. His own people rejected Him, and then the government turned on Him. Judas, then Rome. His own people + Rome vs the Righteous one.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again" (Mt 20:19).

The purpose of prison: 2 options: for God to make you, or for Satan to break you. But in any case, here again, no surprise, *just like Jesus*:

“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb 2:18).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

Jesus has traveled the road the church has to travel. But He has traveled before us! This needs to be put into perspective, however.

Contrast: 10 days vs eternity: “Be thou faithful unto death”.

We don’t like those words. That doesn’t sound good. Suffering for Jesus, yes. Dying for Jesus? That sounds so extreme, so fanatical. Dying for your faith sounds so terrorist-like. Isn’t that what suicide bombers do?

But may I remind you that suffering unto death is already the lot of Christians around the world, from China to Cambodia, from Africa to Afghanistan. We were all horrified by images of Christians in the Middle East, doused with gas and locked in a cage. Orange-clad Christians kneeling on a beach, with their masked tormenters and machetes behind them. No Powerpoint today.

Such persecution has not arisen in the US. Yet. You might experience it on a small scale, but it’s not systemic. Yet. Suffering might seem to last an eternity, but for Smyrna, Jesus announces that this ultimate suffering is limited to 10 days. (Prophetic aspect: next week). Job can attest to this. Suffering might last some 40 chapters. But in the end, there’s chapter 42.

Assurance from Jesus: It will get bad, but the suffering might be long but it is limited, and it will have an end.

Crowned – like Jesus

The letter closes on a practical note. A recipe not for disaster but in disaster. When I read this letter over and over this week, I noticed how exactly Jesus comforts the Christians in Smyrna. It’s an intriguing and highly practical way of dealing with life, esp. when you are dealing with the worst possible scenario.

Right as Jesus asks for the ultimate sacrifice, “Be though faithful unto death”, Jesus offers a solution: “I will give thee a crown of life.” He, too, wore a crown, remember? Twice: on the cross, and now in glory. Smyrna will too! Smyrna looked like Jesus on earth – they will look like Jesus in Heaven!

Notice Jesus’ long-term logic: You might suffer death, but “I will give thee a crown of life.”

Verse 11: God’s Grammar: Future Present

Jesus suggests that instead of defining your life by your past, or by your current situation, make your life and eternal decisions based on the future He promises. Do not base your life on the present or immediate future. God’s grammar is – by His grace – Past Perfect and Future Present! What defines your future is God, governments or guillotines! **The future defined by God will help you through a present defined by evil.**

It’s about eternity, not 10 days! I want to suggest this is only possible for a church and church members who have died to self.

Message from Smyrna: You can’t die for Him until you live for Him. You can’t live for Him until you have died to self. If you’re just like Jesus, the world will treat you just like Jesus.

Conclusion

At the recent GYC Youth Conference several appeals were made. Appeals for baptism of course, for giving your life to Christ, for service, for mission, and for . . . death. That's right. I have never heard a call to martyrdom before. Appeal songs usually center around *It is well with my soul. When peace like a river*. Etc.

Not death.

But a renewed emphasis is mission service in the Middle East. And with that came a call – two weeks ago, in Houston, Tx - to possible martyrdom.

People – young people – came forward.

I'm too afraid to make this call right now. I have too little faith. What if no one comes forward? What if Country Life is not as ready as GYC? What if this radical call becomes reality? What if things turn around in the US just like *The Great Controversy* outlines, describes, depicts, and predicts?

What if we all end up *Just like Jesus*?!

Instead of an appeal, just a couple of quotes. They might not get you out of your chair. But may they sink into our hearts:

“Time is almost finished. Do you reflect the lovely image of Jesus as you should?’ Then I was pointed to the earth and saw that there would have to be a getting ready among those who have of late embraced the third angel’s message. Said the angel, ‘Get ready, get ready, get ready. **Ye will have to die a greater death to the world than ye have ever yet died.**’ I saw that there was a great work to do for them and but little time in which to do it” (EW 64, “in a view given June 27, 1850”).

“Let us, then, cheerfully suffer something for Jesus’ sake, crucify self daily, and be partakers of Christ’s sufferings here, that we may be made partakers with Him of His glory, and be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life” (EW 114).

Pergamos: One on One

Adam & Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David
Ruth, Esther
Job, Psalm 1, Proverbs
Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar
Jonah

Matthew – Genealogies – Sermon from the Mount – Mt 25!

Mark – Peter!

Luke – Parables! Example: Lk 10 Good Samaritan; Lk 15 coin, sheep, son – v17!

John – chapter by chapter, including closing scene!

Acts – closing verse!

Paul

Pergamos: Rev 2:13 “I know thy works” = singular

Antipas – Balaam – Balak – v16-17: singular

Be that one person to another person. One. One on one. “I wished the church” . . . Replace your name with the word church, and go from there. 3 cars!

“The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul. If you are in communion with Christ, you will place His estimate upon every human being. You will feel for others the same deep love that Christ has felt for you. Then you will be able to win, not drive, to attract, not repulse, those for whom He died. None would ever have been brought back to God if Christ had not made a personal effort for them; and it is by this personal work that we can rescue souls. When you see those who are going down to death, you will not rest in quiet indifference and ease. The greater their sin and the deeper their misery, the more earnest and tender will be your efforts for their recovery. You will discern the need of those who are suffering, who have been sinning against God, and who are oppressed with a burden of guilt. Your heart will go out in sympathy for them, and you will reach out to them a helping hand. In the arms of your faith and love you will bring them to Christ. You will watch over and encourage them, and your sympathy and confidence will make it hard for them to fall from their steadfastness. In this work all the angels of heaven are ready to co-operate. All the resources of heaven are at the command of those who are seeking to save the lost. Angels will help you to reach the most careless and the most hardened. And when one is brought back to God, all heaven is made glad; seraphs and cherubs touch their golden harps, and sing praises to God and the Lamb for their mercy and loving-kindness to the children of men.” (COL 196-197)

xyz

The Terror of Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29; 538-1517)

Hymns: 598 Watch, Ye Saints | 602 O Brother, Be Faithful

Introduction

I almost skipped over Thyatira and went on to Sardis. Thyatira is an R-rated letter – I will refrain from reading it out loud. R for really bad relationships.

Thyatira is the longest letter. 12 verses – Ephesus and Philadelphia have 7, Smyrna has 4, Pergamum 6, as does Sardis, and Laodicea closes with 9. In other words, there is much to say about Thyatira, and I just couldn't skip it.

V18: Christ

We always meet Jesus. Thyatira starts out with a stunning view of Jesus: “Son of God” – 47x in NT, only once in Revelation – right here. Here in Thyatira it is the piercing, inescapable eyes of Jesus, and feet of brass: nothing escapes his eyes, absolutely nothing – which is very appropriate because, as you will see, Thyatira hides behind the façade of an active church. The brass I hesitated a bit but found that when I ran “brass” through the OT, 1/3 of its occurrences is in relation to the Sanctuary.

V19: The Church

Not bad at all! This charity here is the charity from 1 Cor 13 – they got it in Thyatira!

But things go south rather quickly: two verses into the letter we find a startling change in tone. In fact, we encounter the Terror of Thyatira. It shouldn't come as a surprise, because count with me how much Thyatira has going for itself: 1) works, 2) charity, 3) service, 4) faith, 5) patience, 6) works – repeated, and on top of that, a growth in works. This is an active church! This is a candidate for the NAD shark tank award. Thyatira is a church that could find itself on the front page of the Review or the Record! Model church! The pastor of Thyatira is the type to get invited to pastors' meetings and hold seminars. They probably have a website too, and a full parking lot. Where do you go to church? *We are members in Thyatira . . .*

Pause. How much we fool ourselves when we're doing pretty good, not really bad. We are quick to ignore the negative for the positive. And, if there are blemishes, why make mountains out of mole hills? Why focus on the negative? Nobody's perfect, right?

Whiskey, too, is about 70% water. But here comes the voice of the eternal investigator, the eternal assessor. Here comes Judge Jesus. He has taken inventory, and he found something not in Thyatira's attic but in Thyatira's living room: a bold intruder. Someone with muddy boots on a white carpet. And – blood stains in the kitchen.

V20: Jezebel

- Jezebel almost a household name for evil
 - Let me ask you something: is Jezebel the problem, or is the Church the problem? How many of you vote for Jezebel? How many of you vote for the Church? – The Church “allows, permits, tolerates” Jezebel. The church is the problem!

Jezebel:

- 2-way appeal: teach the head, seduce the heart; 2-way attack: business & body
 - Let me translate that: Sister Jezebel rewires your mind and then redirects your body
 - 1 Kings 18:19: 400 prophets of Baal at Jezebel's table! Jezebel was in the business of Baal.
 - 1 Kings 21: The Seizure of Naboth's Vineyard. Jezebel was in the business of death.

V21: Repentance

Repentance: definition: to change one's mind and action. We got that, right?

Let me tell you something: If you know you need to repent of something in your life now, do it now! Don't wait, because if you wait you might end up too late!

Check this out: Every time *chronos* is used in the book of Revelation, it is about a short time, and that time is limited and won't last forever. Look at it; Bible Study! Concordance!

- Rev 6:11 "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
- Rev 10:6 "And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:
- Rev 20:3 "And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

I can only underline, highlight, emphasize: The clock is ticking. Jesus is waiting for you.

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:14). Yes, Jesus waits for a long time. A looong looong time (3 o's!) – but He won't wait forever.

Some manuscripts read that Jezebel didn't want to repent. In any case, the King James is beautifully – but so tragically, terminally – punctuated: "She repented not." It's final. Now there's only judgment left.

Now it wouldn't be so bad if Jezebel just messed up her own life, but she drags other people with her!

V22: "them that"

- other parties involved: "them that" – don't be a "them that"!

2 Kings 9:22: "And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it* peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the **whoredoms** of thy mother Jezebel and her **witchcrafts** *are so many?*"

Prophetic leap: Revelation 18:1-4!!!

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. ³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 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."

I don't think the Adventist interpretation of this church being the church of the Dark Ages is far-fetched at all. Something unclean has entered a good church and mislead thousands, millions! Now before you think that I'm church-bashing, there are people in Rome that can repent and come out (mind you, in the Bible, coming out is a good thing . . .).

You notice that Jesus again holds out the offer and opportunity and grace and mercy of repentance. Jesus is a forgiving Savior! He sees rebellion – we can't hide from it – rebellion of the worst kind! - He offers repentance! All sin has a solution in Jesus Christ! Every person has a chance to turn around!

We've got to wrap our minds around this. I don't think it can get worse in someone's life than Jezebel. And Jesus offers her – and her minions – repentance! That means only one thing: there is not a person in this church here this morning that can't repent. You have not fallen below the threshold of Jezebel. **You can turn from the terror of Thyatira today!**

V23: Children

Deadly offspring. Caution, parents: you pass on to your children more than you think, even though they have to make their own choices. I thought this is a terrible verse, I shouldn't even read it out loud. But I hear over and over the age-old question, Why doesn't God stop the evil in this world? Well, He does. Evil has an end-point. Evil has an expiration date stamped on its dirty bottom! In due time, God will cut things short in righteousness.

P.S. We need to hear what happened to Jezebel. 2 Kgs 9:30, 33, Rev 11:2; 19:15

V24: The Rest

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan” . . . You can be different from your environment. You do not have to be a victim of your environment! You can stand out by standing up!

Ps 1:1 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

You don't have to give in. You don't have to laugh at the dirty joke. You don't have to compromise. You don't have to go along. You don't have to float along with the debris of the world. You don't. Stand up! Stand out! Speak up! Speak out!

V25: What a clarion call by Christ to hold on for dear eternal life until the end! Don't let go until He gets a hold of you! Walk with Him until you fly into the sky!

V26: Victory over self = power over nations! Most tyrants do the opposite: they force victory over the nations to cover up deficiencies in self. You can name them straight out of the history books: Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, etc. The world has plenty of sad examples.

V27: I don't know what situation you are in. But here is the promise: One day, one day, Christ will exercise complete control over this world, and all evil and all sin will be broken! All of it! Done. Finished. It's over.

Let me suggest something to you: if Jesus wants to do this globally, at the end, why don't you let Him start complete victory over sin in your life NOW?! Let Him smash those idols, let Him destroy what destroys you, let Him vaporize evil in your life!

V28: morning star

I know there are some discussions out there on Lucifer being the morning star in Isa 14:12 (Luther translated Lucifer that way), but I think Revelation solves this for us: Rev 22:16: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.”

In the end, you will have Jesus. If you love Him now (and if you have ever tasted the matchless love of Jesus, it's not hard to love Him; it's hard not to love Him!), your eyes will remain on this moment, in good days and in bad days, in bright days and in dark days. Jesus is waiting for you.

V29: He that has an ear . . . moved to the last line in church #4. We need divine hearing aids.

Conclusion

The Tyranny of Thyatira

Introduction: I graded student's essays on the Book of Revelation this week, and I quickly noticed two trends. A consensus, if you will: 1) despite Revelation Seminars and classes on Revelation, students complain that the book is so difficult to understand. And 2) specific questions about specific texts, the meaning of the 7 seals, plagues, the 144,000, the 24 elders, 4 creatures, etc.

And then I paused when a student asked something about Thyatira, specifically this verse: Rev 2:23 "And I will kill her children with death".

Now who would do that? This is horrible! Something doesn't sound right about this, and I don't even want to get into the "Does God kill?" debate.

Who are those children? And what have they done?!

Sardis (Rev 3:1-6): “The Church is dead; long live the church!”

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” ↔ V5: “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

2 Observations:

- 1) God does not like death (**Nature:** Coyotes – Buzzards and vultures – ants – microbes)
- 2) God likes resurrections

Adam & Eve: Gen 2:17 “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” . . . “Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case?-Because a ransom was found. God’s only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam’s sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint” (RH April 23, 1901).

Enoch – Our End-Time Example: Gen 5:20-24 8x “and he died” . . . ²⁴ **Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”**

“We can have what Enoch had. We can have Christ as our constant companion. Enoch walked with God, and when assailed by the tempter, he could talk with God about it. He had no ‘It is written’ as we have, but he had a knowledge of his heavenly Companion. He made God his Counsellor, and was closely bound up with Jesus. And Enoch was honored in this course. **He was translated to heaven without seeing death. And those who will be translated at the close of time, will be those who commune with God on earth.** Those who make manifest that their life is hid with Christ in God will ever be representing Him in all their life-practices. Selfishness will be cut out by the roots” (MS 38, 1897).

“While trusting in your heavenly Father for the help you need, He will not leave you. God has a heaven full of blessings that He wants to bestow on those who are earnestly seeking for that help which the Lord alone can give. **It was in looking in faith to Jesus, in asking of Him, in believing that every word spoken would be verified, that Enoch walked with God.** He kept close by the side of God, obeying His every word. . . . His was a wonderful life of oneness. Christ was his Companion. He was in intimate fellowship with God” (MS 111, 1898).

“[Enoch] did not make his abode with the wicked. He did not locate in Sodom, thinking to save Sodom. He placed himself and his family where the atmosphere would be as pure as possible. Then at times he went forth to the inhabitants of the world with his God-given message. Every visit he made to the world was painful to him. He saw and understood something of the leprosy of sin. After proclaiming his message, he always took back with him to his place of retirement some who had received the warning. Some of these became overcomers, and died before the flood came. But some had lived so long in the corrupting influence of sin that they could not endure righteousness. They did not retain their purity of faith, but returned to their former customs and practices” (MS 43, 1900).

Jude 14-15!

Hebrews 11:5 “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

“In the midst of a world by its iniquity doomed to destruction, Enoch lived a life of such close communion with God that he was not permitted to fall under the power of death. The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be “redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:3) at the time of Christ’s second advent. Then, as in the world before the Flood, iniquity will prevail. Following the promptings of their corrupt hearts and the teachings of a deceptive philosophy, men will rebel against the authority of Heaven. But like Enoch, God’s people will seek for purity of heart and conformity to His will, until they shall reflect the likeness of Christ. Like Enoch, they will warn the world of the Lord’s second coming and of the judgments to be visited upon transgression, and by their holy conversation and example they will condemn the sins of the ungodly. **As Enoch was translated to heaven before the destruction of the world by water, so the living righteous will be translated from the earth before**

its destruction by fire. Says the apostle: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God;” “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” “The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18” (PP 88-89).

Moses: Jude 1:9 – Moses – come on up!

Babylonian Captivity: The death of the church. Long live the church! “Satan had seemingly triumphed in his efforts to destroy Israel; but the Lord was overruling the events of the present” (PK 474).

The Cross of Christ should have wiped out the church of Christ – but the church multiplied!

In the Dark Ages it appeared that the church would never see the light of day again – for 1260 years! What appears to be the end – the death of the church as we know it – is the resurrection of a new people of God!

The Church is dead – long live the church!

Sardis . . . Rev 3:2 “I know they works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” . . . Be watchful . . . Wait a minute! I thought the church was dead?! Why didn’t Jesus let a dead church die, be dead, and move on to the next one? Because Jesus doesn’t like death! “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die”.

What appears to be dead, can live. Ultimate Example: Jesus: interrupted every funeral he attended!

“He who stood beside the sorrowing mother at the gate of Nain, watches with every mourning one beside the bier. He is touched with sympathy for our grief. His heart, that loved and pitied, is a heart of unchangeable tenderness. **His word, that called the dead to life, is no less efficacious now than when spoken to the young man of Nain.** He says, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Matthew 28:18. **That power is not diminished by the lapse of years, nor exhausted by the ceaseless activity of His overflowing grace. To all who believe on Him He is still a living Saviour.** . . . **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” (DA 319-320).

The Church May Appear as About to Fall

“The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. 4T 89. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. 5T 81. Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal.... When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. 5T 136. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. 2SM 380. As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. GC 608.

Mark 16:1-4: While they’re still thinking death, He’s already alive! And Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow!

6:1 “conquering and to conquer”

In the darkest days of her long conflict with evil, the church of God has been given revelations of the eternal purpose of Jehovah. His people have been permitted to look beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future, when, the warfare having been accomplished, the redeemed will enter into possession of the promised land. These visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, should be dear to His church today, when the controversy of the ages is rapidly closing and the promised blessings are soon to be realized in all their fullness. Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, **conquering and to conquer**. The darkest hour of the church’s struggle with the powers of evil is that which immediately precedes the day of her final deliverance. But none who trust in God need fear; for “when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall,” God will be to His church “a refuge from the storm.” Isaiah 25:4 PK 722-725

“The issue of the battle does not rest upon the strength of mortal man. ‘The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.’ In the power of Him who rides forth conquering and to conquer, weak, finite man may gain the victory” (MS 181, 1899).

Laodicea: 1T 181, 187

Revelation 14

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ, ἀρνίον ἐστηκὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών,
καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἑκατὸν τεσσαρακοντατέσσαρες χιλιάδες,
ἔχουσαι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

2 καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,
ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν,
καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης·

καὶ φωνὴν ἤκουσα κιθαρῶδῶν κιθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν.

3 καὶ ἄδουσιν ὡς ᾠδὴν καινὴν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων·

καὶ οὐδεὶς ἠδύνατο μαθεῖν τὴν ᾠδὴν, εἰ μὴ αἱ ἑκατὸν τεσσαρακοντατέσσαρες χιλιάδες,
οἱ ἠγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

4 οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν·
παρθένοι γὰρ εἰσιν.

οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγῃ.

οὗτοι ἠγοράσθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων,
ἀπαρχὴ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ.

5 καὶ ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν οὐχ εὐρέθη δόλος·
ἄμωμοι γὰρ εἰσιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ.

The First Angel

6 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετώμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι,
ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον, εὐαγγελίσει τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,
καὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν,

7 λέγοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ,
Φοβήθητε τὸν Θεόν,
καὶ **δότε** αὐτῷ δόξαν,
ὅτι **ἦλθεν** ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ,
καὶ **προσκυνήσατε** τῷ **ποιήσαντι** τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

The Second Angel

8 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησε, λέγων,

Ἔπεσεν ἔπεσε Βαβυλὼν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη,
ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικε πάντα ἔθνη.

The Third Angel

9 Καὶ τρίτος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς, λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ,

Εἴ τις τὸ θηρίον προσκυνεῖ καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ,
καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ, ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ,

10 καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ,
τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ,
καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων, καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἄρνιου·

11 καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν ἀναβαίνει εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων·
καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ,

καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

12 ὧδε ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν·
ὧδε οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ.

13 Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης μοι,

Γράψον, Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπ' ἄρτι·
ναί, λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν·
τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

14 Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ, νεφέλη λευκὴ,
καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην καθήμενος ὅμοιος υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου,
ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν,
καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ δρέπανον ὄξύ.

The Fourth Angel

15 καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ,
κράζων ἐν μεγάλῃ φωνῇ τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης,

Πέμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου καὶ θέρισον·
ὅτι ἦλθέ σοι ἡ ὥρα τοῦ θερίσαι,
ὅτι ἐξηράνθη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς.

16 καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ γῆ.

The Fifth Angel

17 Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ,
ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς δρέπανον ὄξύ.

The Sixth Angel

18 καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου,
ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός,
καὶ ἐφώνησε κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξύ, λέγων,

Πέμψον σου τὸ δρέπανον τὸ ὄξύ καὶ τρύγησον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς,
ὅτι ἠκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς.

19 καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν,
καὶ ἐτρύγησε τὴν ἄμπελον τῆς γῆς,
καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴν μεγάλην.

20 καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληνὸς ἔξω τῆς πόλεως,
καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληνοῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων, ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων.

Revelation 14:1-5 Behold the Lamb

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion”

“The fourteenth chapter of Revelation is a chapter of the deepest interest. This scripture will soon be understood in all its bearings, and the messages given to John the revelator will be repeated with distinct utterance” (RH Oct. 13, 1904/7BC 978).

Introduction: We were all afraid of Frau Koch. Frau Koch was our French teacher in High School in Germany. We feared her. She drove an Opel Kadett, and after school she would get out those long Virginia Slim cigarettes and just sit there in her car, smoking. The reason we feared her was because every class period she gave an oral quiz to two or three terrified students. This was no True/False/Multiple Choice Quiz. You had to know your stuff. And there were no words of encouragement, no smile. You got it right, or you got it wrong. Let me give you an example: The very first quiz in French class, French 101 in 7th grade, was to write the following sentence on the board: *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* This is what it looks like written out [project]. Literally it means, What is it that it is?, but it simply means, What is this? Now the poor victim of this first quiz was a schoolmate of mine named Jürgen. He couldn't write *Qu'est-ce que c'est?*! Neither could we have! We were just glad it wasn't us at the chalk board!

He got a 0. The next class period it was time for quiz #2. Frau Koch nailed us with the same question! *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* She called on Jürgen again. 0 again. While I was glad again that it wasn't me, I felt bad for him. Then some 4.0 girl wrote it perfectly.

To find and determine her victims, Frau Koch wouldn't just call a name. She'd intensely scan the whole class - who sat in utter silence - for what appeared to be an eternity. Now here is what we did at the beginning of every class period. Our strategic plan that would grant us a fighting chance of success: We would look away! We would look down, we tried to appear invisible, we would have this look of No big deal on our faces. We did everything except establish eye-contact with Frau Koch! Why? Because we thought that if we don't look, we might not get picked! If we don't look, we can avoid reality! Don't look, and you'll live!

Revelation 14:1. I wonder if John didn't want to look. After chapter 12 and esp. 13, did anybody still want to look anymore? After two horrible beasts doing horrible things (horrible beasts do horrible things!), who wants to look?

Context

Just glance over Revelation 12-13, and you will see dragons, persecutions, floods, beasts, blasphemous names, deadly wounds, war, death penalties, people killed with the sword, fire out of heaven, more death penalties, and that dreadful number 666. After seeing all that, I wonder if John wanted to close his eyes rather than look and see?! Could it get any worse?

If we had to compare Rev 12-13 to the weather, it would be dark clouds, thunder and lightning, tornadoes and flash floods. Rev 12 and 13 is a disaster! John probably thought the world was in bad shape back then. And personally he was banned to a lone island in the Aegean Sea. It couldn't get much worse; what he sees in Rev 13 proved that it would get worse before it would get worse! But he is shown more. And so John looks and beholds.

Here is a clear message: when we think things cannot get any worse, we need to look again!

The book of Revelation has another 7 chapters, but God in His mercy - to John and us - pulls the curtain aside and shows us how this story's going to end! 666 is not have the final word.

The Lamb

John had already looked or seen twenty times. But in the midst of apocalyptic disaster, he looks again. And to look again is well worth it. Right after the darkness of 666 he sees . . . the Lamb! No dragons, no beasts, no horns and heads and

tails and abyss. A lamb. In Revelation, Jesus is also shown as a Lion, as king of kings, and Lord of Lords! But here He is shown as the Lamb. There is an important lesson in this for us: ultimate success comes through sacrifice.

The Lamb reminds me of Zech 4:6: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," Says the LORD of hosts." Might makes right - among humans. Not with God. It is a lamb that wins in the end, not the beast, nor a dragon. If - since - that is the case, we might want to be(come) a bit more lamb-like than beastly. *Beauty, not the beast.*

Standing

I want you to notice something about the Lamb: the Lamb is standing, not slain! Five times before the Lamb was depicted as slain (5:6, 9, 12; 6:9; 13:8); now He stands! This standing is therefore highly significant:

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall **stand up**, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book."

Acts 7:56 "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man **standing** at the right hand of God!"

Standing is a sign of final judgment, when God says, Enough is enough!

There is only one way that this Lamb could stand after it had been slain . . . and you know it. You know the solution to standing after being slain, right? There is only one possibility, and it's spelled *resurrection*.

Incidentally, the Lamb being slain is not just the report of a cold-blooded murder, senseless and ruthless. This death accomplished something of infinite value:

"And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). . . saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12)

In other words, the Lamb slain for us was not an afterthought, like an "oops, now what?!"

"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

Interestingly, the Lamb is not the only person slain in the Book of Revelation:

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).

"And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." (Rev. 18:24)

Now people slain is tragic. But you can be slain because you made the right choices in life and followed God. It's called persecution. Or you can be slain because you made the wrong choices in life and followed someone other than God. But there is a difference: one slain is temporary, the other is permanent.

As I was studying the Sabbath School Lesson about Captain Namaan this week, I ran across this quote:

"God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness" (PK 590).

Then my eyes got big; from Captain Namaan's experience Ellen White ends up with Rev. 14! Listen to this:

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments," and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zech 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A "fair miter" is set upon their heads." . . . "While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Rev 14:4, 5" (PK 591).

Allow me to read a most familiar Bible text here: 1 Thess 4:13-18!

Mathematical formula: If what happens to Christ happens to Christians, then *slain* is not the end. It's not a stop sign - it's just a pause.

Question to you then: Is your life in the hands of Jesus? Is your life and death in the hands of the Lamb? Are you beholding the Lamb? Or what are you beholding? What screen has your attention? Is your life stuck in darkness, or have you caught a glimpse of the rays of hope from God's throne?

I want to remind you of what exactly happens when we behold the Lamb:

1. Beholding changes your behavior

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29) . . . "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (Jn. 1:34 NKJ)
Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ **The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus"** (Jn 1:35).

Beholding the Lamb we start following Him! John looks, he invites others to look, and the invitation is followed by discipleship! Truly by beholding we become changed! Remember this famous quote:

2. Beholding changes your identity

"Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, **and by beholding we become changed.** Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity" (COL 355).

This beholding the Lamb is, of course, not new. Remember Abraham's journey with Isaac?

Gen 22:8: And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." **So the two of them went together.**

Because Abraham beheld the Lamb by faith, he didn't have to quit his journey!

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." (Jn 8:56)

Warning: Pilate had the chance but missed the moment

Jn 19:5 "Behold the man!" = he said the right thing but didn't act on his conviction!

Mt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God!"

When will we see Him? When? Of course. At the Second Coming! I suggest we start beholding Him Now!

[Song: We Have this Hope] - Up next: Mount Zion.

Location Location Location: Where are you going?

It is an interesting and highly enlightening exercise to slice through the book of Revelation based on pre-defined filters. We understand reality in 3 dimensions: Time, Space, Matter/People.

In this section I'd like to consider a location. When you buy a home or even rent an apartment, location makes a huge difference. In fact, the mantra of every real estate agent is Location Location Location.

Consider these locations in the Book of Revelation: earth vs heaven - Patmos, 7 churches, Babylon, God's throne, Satan's throne, temple, bottomless pits, cities, wilderness, New Jerusalem, sea shores, the midst of heaven, the river Euphrates, and, in Rev 14:1: Mount Zion.

21 references in the Bible on "Mount Zion". What makes it a bit difficult is that the precise meaning of Mount Zion changed over the course of time:

- 1) A part of Jerusalem
- 2) The land of Israel
- 3) Heaven!

How can that be? Well, look at the little city of Keene. Through annexation, it too has changed its geographic definition. Same with countries. Saddam Hussein wanted to change the size of Irak. The Ukraine is undergoing definition right now. But when we look at the Bible texts, it's not so much the geographic location as the spiritual connotation that matters. Here are some examples:

Mount Zion in the Bible

Part of Jerusalem: [2Ki 19:31 KJV] For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD [of hosts] shall do this.

Jerusalem: [Psa 48:2 KJV] the joy of the whole earth, [is] mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

[Psa 48:11 KJV] Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

Where God dwells: [Psa 74:2 KJV] Remember thy congregation, [which] thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, [which] thou hast redeemed; **this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.**

Israel: [Psa 78:68 KJV] But chose the tribe of Judah, **the mount Zion which he loved.**

Forever!: [Psa 125:1 KJV] [[A Song of degrees.]] They that trust in the LORD [shall be] **as mount Zion, [which] cannot be removed, [but] abideth for ever.**

[Isa 4:5 KJV] And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory [shall be] a defence.

Where God dwells: [Isa 8:18 KJV] Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me [are] for signs and for wonders in Israel **from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.**

Part of Jerusalem: [Isa 10:12 KJV] Wherefore it shall come to pass, [that] when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

[Isa 18:7 KJV] In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, **to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.**

[Isa 24:23 KJV] Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

[Isa 29:8 KJV] It shall even be as when an hungry [man] dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, [he is] faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

[Isa 31:4 KJV] For thus hath the LORD spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, [he] will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

[Isa 37:32 KJV] For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

Place of Delivery: [Joe 2:32 KJV] **And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.**

[Oba 1:17 KJV] **But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance**, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

[Oba 1:21 KJV] **And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.**

[Mic 4:7 KJV] **And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.**

[Isa 10:32 KJV] As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand [against] the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

[Isa 16:1 KJV] Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

[Jer 31:6 KJV] **For there shall be a day, [that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.**

The location is in contrast to those who “dwell on the earth” (Rev 13:14)!

Mount Zion means, you have arrived, you made it - because you are in the presence of God!

Too many times these days the presence of God is some mystical feeling, requiring completely non-biblical elements.

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22).

Question: Which direction in life are you headed? Where are you going?
Are you just dwelling on earth, or are you driving towards Mount Zion?

Now the real question is, How do you get to Mount Zion?

“and with Him”

This, to me, is mind-boggling. Remember that the question we are pursuing is Location, location, location. Here is a group of people who are “with him”. I have to admit something: I thought the focus should just be on this Lamb. The Lamb is what it’s all about, isn’t it?! The Lamb, period. After all, the Adventist church even has a ministry called the One Project. Jesus. All.

According to Rev 14:1, it’s not Jesus alone, but Jesus comma and. “and with Him”. When you let this phrase melt on your tongue, there might not be anything more beautiful than those three words. “And with Him.” The Lamb is not alone! There are people with Him, 144,000 to be precise.

I don’t know who exactly will be the 144,000, but let me ask you this: Are you “with Him” - now? Are you really? Moment by moment? If we want to be “with Him” then - shouldn’t we be “with Him” now?

So, How do you get to Mount Zion, and how can you be “with Him?”

“having his Father's name written in their foreheads”

Two questions arise immediately: 1. Why in their foreheads and not in their hearts?

After all, we ask people, “Have you accepted Jesus in your heart?”, not, “Have you accepted Jesus in your forehead?”

The frontal lobe is where we make decisions, plan for the future, and just plain think.

In the mid-1800s, Phineas Gage was struck by an iron peg in the frontal lobe. He survived the accident, but his friends say that he became a different person. No longer hard-working and kind, Phineas became lazy and rude.

Notice a contrast right within the book of Revelation: “Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand” (Rev 14:9).

“And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev 17:5).

“Now listen to a description of the opposite: “The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done. {RH June 10, 1902, Art. A, par. 14} We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for his fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us,—the perfection of his character? When the Lord’s people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, “It is finished.” {RH June 10, 1902, Art. A, par. 15}

“Those who have in their foreheads the seal of the infinite God will regard the world and its attractions as subordinate to eternal interests. They will keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. Christ resisted the temptations of the enemy with the only weapon that the soldier of the cross of Christ can successfully use,—“It is written.” Where?—In the Old and New Testaments. With these words we are to defend ourselves and warn others, holding forth to them the word of life. {RH July 13, 1897, par. 3}

“Those who come out from the world, to stand distinct from worldlings in words and works, those who realize that it is an honor to bear God’s sign, will receive power to become His sons. The Lord will have men who can be depended on. No one will enter the courts above who does not bear the sign of God. Those who in this sin-cursed earth bear this sign in holy boldness, looking upon it as an honor, will be recognized and honored by Christ in the courts above (Letter 125, 1903). {7BC 969.8} (Jeremiah 8:20; 1 John 3:3.) Will the Angel Pass Us By?—“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” In a little while every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. O that it may be placed upon our foreheads! Who can endure the thought of being passed by when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads (RH, May 28, 1889)? {7BC 969.9}

The Father’s Name

What is the Father’s Name? Moses already asked this question, and received the following answer:

“Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘**What is His name?**’ what shall I say to them?”¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.**” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘**I AM** has sent me to you.’ ”¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord God of your fathers, **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**, has sent me to you. **This is My name forever**, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”

Many philosophical attempts have tried to explain this seemingly cryptic phrase “I am who I am”. But in context God is simply saying that His identity can only be understood (right now) by His saving relation to the human race. He is thus not simply a philosophical entity, but a real being that exists in relation to us esp. in our Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land.

While true religion is a matter of the heart, it cannot forever be kept a secret. While your sins are erased, your Savior got engraved!

“It is written” is neither just a Bible quote nor an Adventist ministry, it is the engraving of God’s name onto the most significant part of your conscious existence! “It is written” means your relationship with God is permanent; it has had time to develop roots.

You got brain-washed, and it shows on your forehead!

When and how do you use your name the most often?

Identification

1) When you introduce yourself to someone who doesn’t know you. God on your forehead means He has had a chance to introduce Himself to you.

2) When you sign something, esp. important papers! God’s signature is on your life! He felt comfortable to sign His name on your forehead, on your decision-making process, on your life!

Signed, sealed, and delivered!

Is God on your mind? 24/7 - I mean, non-stop? Always, day and night?

No, I’m not talking about avoiding reality. (Karl Marx already claimed religion was the opium for the masses).

I’m not talking about withdrawing from society, living the life of a hermit, moving into a monastery, checking out.

I’m talking about allowing God to have a signature role in your life in all that you do, in all that you say, in all that you think. In everything. 100%.

What would be tragic is if He didn’t. Because if His signature is not on your life, someone else’s signature will appear on your signature line.

But what might even be worse if you as a Christian try to have 2 signatures on your signature line. Impossible, because there’s room for only one! God won’t sign it if someone else has already signed it!

This means, in practical terms, if God’s signature is *not* on your life, you need to erase someone else’s signature first. Yours, the Devil’s, other people’s, it doesn’t matter.

Only God’s signature belongs on your forehead, or He won’t sign your permanent visa papers into the pearly gates.

So, surrender your knuckle-headed, stiffnecked, bull-headed forehead today. He wants to sign His name on your forehead!

I had a student one time who forges someone’s signature on a credit card while working at a retail store - I don’t remember the details - but his boss found out, called the cops - felony with a record for the rest of his life. **You don’t want the wrong signature or name on your forehead!**

In essence, if you want to stand with your feet on Mount Zion one day, let God sign your forehead!

“In all you do, let your thought be, “Is this the way of the Lord? Will this please my Saviour? He gave His life for me; what can I give back to God? I can only say, ‘Of Thine own, O lord, I freely give Thee.’” Unless the name of God is written in your forehead,—written there because God is the center of your thoughts,—you will not be meet for the inheritance in light. It is your Creator who has poured out to you all heaven in one wondrous gift,—His only-begotten Son.... {CS 46}

“The only hope of any man lies through Jesus Christ.... The pure and holy garments are not prepared to be put on by any one after he has entered the gate of the city. All who enter will have on the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and the name

of God will be seen in their foreheads. **This name is the symbol which the apostle saw in vision, and signifies the yielding of the mind to intelligent and loyal obedience to all of God's commandments.** {SD 370.2}

“The same angel who visited Sodom is sounding the note of warning, “Escape for thy life.” The bottles of God’s wrath cannot be poured out to destroy the wicked and their works until all the people of God have been judged, and the cases of the living as well as the dead are decided. And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come; but the furnace is closely watched by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed—“God, New Jerusalem.” They are God’s property, His possession. {TM 446.1} Will this seal be put upon the impure in mind, the fornicator, the adulterer, the man who covets his neighbor’s wife? Let your souls answer the question, Does my character correspond to the qualifications essential that I may receive a passport to the mansions Christ has prepared for those who are fitted for them? Holiness must be inwrought in our character.” {TM 446.2}

We need to practically imagine this process: God calls you over, adjusts your head (like at the barbershop), you have to hold still in the presence of God, and God thinks it’s safe to put His name on your forehead. This requires Facetime with God, Face to Face.

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me?

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!

Only faintly now, I see Him,
With the darkling veil between,
But a blessed day is coming,
When His glory shall be seen.

What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are
straightened,
And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face! O blissful moment!
Face to face—to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so.

The 144,000

Most noticeable is the swift shift to the 144,000.

It's easy to shy away from the 144,000. After all, aren't they some kind of elite group? The perfect?

Two immediate problems arise with the 144,000: 1. we just don't know 100% who they are, 2. when you talk about the 144,000, I have found it's easy to drift into arrogance and pride on one hand, or despair on the other - I'm so far from those characteristics.

I have to admit I noticed Stephen Bohr from Secrets Unsealed had a DVD package on the 144,000 for sale at the GC - I resisted the temptation to microwave someone else's study and instead present my own.

First to notice is that the 144,000 were already mentioned in chapter 7. Notice where they are located: on earth! (7:x). Now they are with the Lamb where what I presume is Heaven, on Mount Zion.

I'm going to front load a couple of key EGW quotes about the 144,000 and read them right here, then look at them in detail.

*** Ellen White on the 144,000

No further description of the Lamb - the camera lense moves to the 144,000 with a detailed list of ten characteristics:

- 1) having His Father's name written on their foreheads
- 2) they learn a song nobody else can learn
- 3) redeemed from the earth
- 4) not defiled with women
- 5) they are virgins
- 6) they follow the Lamb wherever He goes
- 7) redeemed from among men
- 8) firstfruits to God and to the Lamb
- 9) in their mouth was found no deceit
- 10) they are without fault before the throne of God

"Those who have learned of Christ will 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness' (Ephesians 5:11). In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth 'was found no guile' (Revelation 14:5)" (MB 69).

*** Let's work through these characteristics one by one:

- 1) having His Father's name written on their foreheads
- 2) they learn a song nobody else can learn
- 3) redeemed from the earth
- 4) not defiled with women
- 5) they are virgins
- 6) they follow the Lamb wherever He goes
- 7) redeemed from among men
- 8) firstfruits to God and to the Lamb
- 9) in their mouth was found no deceit
- 10) they are without fault before the throne of God

“The vision of the prophet pictures [the 144,000] as standing on Mount Zion, girt for holy service, clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints. But all who follow the Lamb in heaven must first have followed Him on earth, not fretfully or capriciously, but in trustful, loving, willing obedience, as the flock follows the shepherd” (AA 591).

The Three Angels' Message

“The message of Revelation 14 is the message that we are to bear to the world.
It is the bread of life for these last days.” 8T 27

"He has given us a world-wide message. This truth must be extended to all nations, tongues, and people." 3T 388

The importance and magnitude of the Three Angels' becomes apparent when we consider the immediate context: In rapid succession, John sees

- a war in heaven (12:7)
- a persecuting dragon (thrown to earth!) (12:13)
- a beast rising (13:1)
- another beast rising (13:11)!
- dramatic switch: a lamb (14:1)
- then the Three Angels' Message (14:6-13)

14:6 “another angel”

The last angel that functioned as a communicator is the angel of the 7th trumpet. Thus the “another angel” of Rev 14:6 can be considered the first in a new sequence.

Location - Duration -

mid-heaven: defined by the following phrase within the verse: to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

eternal gospel: a term unique to Revelation. Why is gospel defined by this qualifier - eternal?

Eternal refers to the beginning of human history to the end, as marked by Creation (“worship Him who made”), esp. the Sabbath, and the Second Coming (with a pre-warning via “hour of judgment”). These two points in time mark the beginning and end of humanity’s need for the Gospel, from Fall to ultimate resolution:

Creation	The Everlasting Gospel	Second Coming
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This also means that the hour of His judgment is a key hinge point for humanity prior to the Second Coming.

euaggelion (good news): 77x in the Bible (once in the OT: 2 Sam 4:10)

Mt 4x; Mk 8x; Acts 2x; the rest mostly Paul; Revelation uses the term only here (14:6).

Gospel dominance: the Gospel is something that is preached globally

Acts 15:7: the word of the Gospel

Rom 10:16: the Gospel is something to be obeyed (see 2 Thess 1:8; 1 Pet 4:17)

1 Thess 1:5: not in word only, but in power - demonstrated by Paul’s lifestyle (see 2:8!)

2 Tim 1:10: gospels overcomes death and introduces immortality! (see 2 Tim 2:8)

Ellen White on Revelation 14:6

If angels occupied the place of man in the administration of the gospel, there would not be whole regions left in darkness and the shadow of death. The work would have been as is represented by the angel flying through the midst of heaven proclaiming the everlasting gospel to them that dwell on the earth. But the Lord does nothing without the cooperation of man. Could the intense interest which the angels have for man be put into voice that would be heard by the human agent, what appeals would be heard in burning words to communicate to others that which heaven had communicated to them. ML 304

To all people and nations and kindreds and tongues the truth is to be proclaimed. The time has come for much aggressive work to be done in the cities, and in all neglected, unworked fields.—The Review and Herald, June 23, 1904. {Ev 59.1}

When will the church do her appointed work? She is represented as an angel of light, flying through heaven with the everlasting gospel to be proclaimed to the world. This represents the speed and directness with which the church is to prosecute her work. In the medical missionary work Jesus is to behold the travail of His soul. Human beings are to be snatched as brands from the burning. {MM 131; see also 7T 106-107 for medical missionary work at the end.}

Let us remember that the Word Christ has commanded us to preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples is confirmed by the Holy Spirit. This is God's plan of work. Christ is the mighty power which confirms the Word, bringing men and women, through conversion to the truth, to an understanding faith, making them willing to do whatsoever He has commanded them. The human agent, the seen instrument, is to preach the Word, and the Lord Jesus, the unseen, agency, by His Holy Spirit is to make the Word efficacious and powerful.—Letter 105, 1900. {2SM 18.3}

"The message of truth is to go to all nations, tongues, and people; its publications, printed in many different languages, are to be scattered abroad like the leaves of autumn" (4T 79).

Through the prophet Isaiah is given the promise, "Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward." Isaiah 58:8. It is the righteousness of Christ that goes before us, and this is the glory of the Lord which is to be our rearward. Ye churches of the living God, study this promise, and consider how your lack of faith, of spirituality, of divine power, is hindering the coming of the kingdom of God. If you would go forth to do Christ's work, angels of God would open the way before you, preparing hearts to receive the gospel. Were every one of you a living missionary, the message for this time would speedily be proclaimed in all countries, to every people and nation and tongue. This is the work that must be done before Christ shall come in power and great glory. I call upon the church to pray earnestly that you may understand your responsibilities. Are you individually laborers together with God? If not, why not? When do you mean to do your heaven-appointed work? {6T 438}

[An appeal made by Mrs. White in 1886. Written from Europe.] If we indeed have the truth for these last days, it must be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Erelong the living and the dead are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and the law of God is the standard by which they are to be tested. Then they must now be warned; God's holy law must be vindicated, and held up before them as a mirror. To accomplish this work, means is needed. I know that times are hard, money is not plenty; but the truth must be spread, and money to spread it must be placed in the treasury.... {CS 39.2}

Shall We Abandon the Work?

Our message is world wide; yet many are doing literally nothing, many more so very little, with so great a want of faith, that it is next to nothing. Shall we abandon the fields we have already opened in foreign countries? Shall we drop part of the work in our home missions? Shall we grow pale at a debt of a few thousand dollars? Shall we falter and become laggards now, in the very last scenes of this earth's history? My heart says, No, no. I cannot contemplate this question without a burning zeal to have the work go. We would not deny our faith, we would not deny Christ, yet we shall do this unless we move forward as the providence of God opens the way. {CS 39.3}

The work must not stop for want of means. More means must be invested in it. Brethren in America, in the name of my Master I bid you wake up! You that are placing your talents of means in a napkin, and hiding them in the earth, who are building houses and adding land to land, God calls upon you, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." There is a time coming

when commandment keepers can neither buy nor sell. Make haste to dig out your buried talents. If God has entrusted you with money, show yourselves faithful to your trust; unwrap your napkin, and send your talents to the exchangers, that when Christ shall come, He may receive His own with interest.{CS 40.1}

In order that the gospel may go to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, self-sacrifice must be maintained. Those in positions of trust are in all things to act as faithful stewards, conscientiously guarding the funds that have been created by the people. There must be care to prevent all needless outlay. In erecting buildings and providing facilities for the work, we should be careful not to make our preparation so elaborate as to consume money unnecessarily; for this means in every case inability to provide for the extension of the work in other fields, especially in foreign lands. Means are not to be drawn from the treasury to establish institutions in the home field, at a risk of crippling the advancement of truth in regions beyond.{7T 215.2}

God's money is to be used not only in your immediate vicinity, but in distant countries, in the islands of the sea. If His people do not engage in this work, God will surely remove the power that is not rightly appropriated.{7T 215}

Upon us is shining the accumulated light of past ages. The record of Israel's forgetfulness has been preserved for our enlightenment. In this age God has set His hand to gather unto Himself a people from every nation, kindred, and tongue. In the advent movement He has wrought for His heritage, even as He wrought for the Israelites in leading them from Egypt. In the great disappointment of 1844 the faith of His people was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had the Adventists in the early days still trusted to the guiding Hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen of the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work of 1844 had received the third angel's message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work would have been completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people. {8T 115.

The light that God has given His people is not to be shut up within the churches that already know the truth. It is to be shed abroad into the dark places of the earth. Those who walk in the light as Christ is in the light will co-operate with the Saviour by revealing to others what He has revealed to them. It is God's purpose that the truth for this time shall be made known to every kindred and nation and tongue and people. In the world today men and women are absorbed in the search for worldly gain and worldly pleasure. There are thousands upon thousands who give no time or thought to the salvation of the soul. The time has come when the message of Christ's soon coming is to sound throughout the world.{9T 24

"The Lord is soon to come, and the message of warning is to go forth to all nations, tongues, and peoples. While God's cause is calling for means and laborers, what are those doing who live under the full light of the present truth?" (LS 299)

The Last Period of Probation—The gospel dispensation is the last period of probation that will ever be granted to men. Those who live under this dispensation of test and trial and yet are not led to repent and obey will perish with the disloyal. There is no second trial. The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life. Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him (Manuscript 40, 1900). {7BC 971.9}

"Without Me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." Are we who claim to be workers with Christ, united to Him? Do we abide in Christ? and are we one with Him? The message that we bear is world wide. It must come before all nations, tongues, and peoples. The Lord will not require any one of us to go forth with this message without giving us grace and power to present it to the people in a manner corresponding to its importance. The great question with us today is: Are we carrying to the world this solemn message of truth in a way to show its importance? The Lord will work with the laborers if they will make Christ their only dependence. He never designed that His missionaries should work without His grace, destitute of His power.{5T 591

Christ ascended to heaven and sent His Holy Spirit to give power to the work of His disciples. Thousands were converted in a day. In a single generation the gospel was carried to every nation under heaven. But little by little a change came. The church lost her first love. She became selfish and ease-loving. The spirit of worldliness was cherished. The enemy

cast his spell upon those to whom God had given light for a world in darkness, light which should have shone forth in good works. The world was robbed of the blessings that God desired men to receive. {8T 26.3}

Is not the same thing repeated in this generation? Many in our day are keeping back that which the Lord has entrusted to them for the salvation of a world unwarned, unsaved. In the word of God an angel is represented as flying in the midst of heaven, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:6, 7.

{8T 26.4}

The message of Revelation 14 is the message that we are to bear to the world. It is the bread of life for these last days. Millions of human beings are perishing in ignorance and iniquity. But many of those to whom God has committed the stores of life look upon these souls with indifference. Many forget that to them has been entrusted the bread of life for those starving for salvation. {8T 27.1}

Oh, for consecrated Christians, for Christlike consistency, for the faith that works by love and purifies the soul! May God help us to repent and change our sluggish movements into consecrated activity. May He help us to show in our words and works that we make the burden of perishing souls our own. {8T 27.2}

Let us be thankful every moment for God's forbearance with our tardy, unbelieving movements. Instead of flattering ourselves with the thought of what we have done, after doing so little, we are to labor still more earnestly. We are not to cease our efforts or relax our vigilance. Never is our zeal to grow less. Our spiritual life must be daily revived by the stream that makes glad the city of our God. We must be always on the watch for opportunities to use for God the talents He has given us. {8T 27.3}

In proclaiming the truths of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, God's church on earth today is fulfilling the ancient prophecy, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Isaiah 27:6. The followers of Jesus, in co-operation with heavenly intelligences, are rapidly occupying the waste places of the earth; and, as the result of their labors, an abundant fruitage of precious souls is developing. Today, as never before, the dissemination of Bible truth by means of a consecrated church is bringing to the sons of men the benefits foreshadowed centuries ago in the promise to Abraham and to all Israel,—to God's church on earth in every age,—"I will bless thee, ... and thou shalt be a blessing." Genesis 12:2. {PK 703.1}

This promise of blessing should have met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming. At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain." And of His people He said, "Behold, ... I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8. {PK 703}

But the world's need today cannot be met fully by the ministry of God's servants who have been called to preach the everlasting gospel to every creature. While it is well, so far as possible, for evangelical workers to learn how to minister to the necessities of the body as well as of the soul, thus following the example of Christ, yet they cannot spend all their time and strength in relieving those in need of help. The Lord has ordained that with those who preach the Word shall be associated His medical missionary workers,—Christian physicians and nurses, who have received special training in the healing of disease and in soul winning.—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 468 (1913). {Ev 519}

"It may be that you will not at once see the result of your labor, but this should not discourage you. Take Christ as your example. He had many hearers, but few followers. Noah preached for one hundred and twenty years to the people before the flood; yet out of the multitudes on the earth at that time only eight were saved." {LS 208.5}

The messenger continued: "You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. You are trying to plan the work so that you can embrace it in your arms. You must take broader views. Your light must not be put under a bushel or under a bed, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Your house is the world.... {LS 208.6}

"The verity and truth of the binding claims of the fourth commandment must be presented in clear lines before the people. 'Ye are My witnesses.' The message will go in power to all parts of the world, to Oregon, to Europe, to Australia, to the islands of the sea, to all nations, tongues, and peoples. Preserve the dignity of the truth. It will grow to large proportions. Many countries are waiting for the advanced light the Lord has for them; and your faith is limited, it is very

small. Your conception of the work needs to be greatly enlarged. Oakland, San Francisco, Sacramento, Woodland, and the large cities in the United States must hear the message of truth. Go forward. God will work with great power if you will walk in all humility of mind before Him. It is not faith to talk of impossibilities. Nothing is impossible with God. The light of the binding claims of the law of God is to test and prove the world"....{LS 209.1}

14:7 And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him the glory, because the hour of His judgment has come! And worship Him who made the Heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water!"

loud voice: Rev 5:2, 12; 6:10; 7:2, 10; 8:13; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 16:17; 19:7 (interestingly, the term "great" is reserved 8x for Babylon in chapters 17-18!).

Why so many loud voices? A loud voice is no stranger to Revelation; it occurs 13x overall, as Revelation has to turn up the volume in a noise-saturated world, for ears filled with sounds and ear-buds and the beats of this world. What happened to the still small voice (1 Kgs 19:12)?

"And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice" (1Kgs 19:12).

Laodicea still has to contend with that voice: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20).

Sad, the conditional sentence: "if any man hear my voice". If. May be. Possibly not.

Noise.

What do you do with the noise in your life? The constant barrage of sound?

I have found only three spaces of silence: early morning, late at night, and geographical solitude.

The rest is noise.

Voice-cancelling noise.

Seek solitude today and listen to His word.

He still has a voice.

Fear God.

Two words. Fear God.

Before we explore the actual meaning of the term "Fear God", two aspects shall be pointed out:

- 1) It's plural. The world is asked to fear God - the entire world!
- 2) It comes from the angel, which is the message of the Advent movement to the entire world.

We routinely assume that the Three Angels' Message is a message *to* the Advent movement. But it is, again, actually the message *of* the Advent movement to the world.

This leads us to a crucial point: If we are the messengers of a message, wouldn't that assume that we exhibit evidence of living that message ourselves?

We are not uninvolved mechanism - "we're just the messengers". We are involved in this message. We believe this message, and we live this message. We who solicit the fear of God from the world fear God ourselves.

What is this “fearing God”?

Survey of “fear God” phrases in the Bible:

Gen 22:12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me." (Gen 22:12 NKJ)

Gen 42:18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, *for* I fear God: (Gen 42:18 NKJ)

"Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (Exo 18:21 NKJ)

"how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God. (Deu 25:18 NKJ)

So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? (Job 1:9 NKJ)

God will hear, and afflict them, Even He who abides from of old. Selah Because they do not change, Therefore they do not fear God. (Psa 55:19 NKJ)

Come *and* hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul. (Psa 66:16 NKJ)

For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But fear God. (Ecc 5:7 NKJ)

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. (Ecc 12:13 NKJ)

saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. (Luk 18:2 NKJ)

. . . "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, `Though I do not fear God nor regard man, (Luk 18:4 NKJ)

"Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.

(Act 13:26 NKJ)

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? (Luk 23:40 NKJ)

I am afraid that we think the Three Angels’ message is some kind of special prophetic message, disconnected from the “real” Gospel - the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. It’s a good message, for sure, but not the same message as believing in Jesus.

But consider this verse again - “Fear God” shows up at the very moment of Christ’s death! And fearing God leads a sinner to be saved!

It is wrong to think that fearing God is important, but the real deal is believing in Jesus.

Fearing God and getting saved carry the same biblical DNA!

Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: (Act 13:16 NKJ)

Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

(1Pe 2:17 NKJ)

saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." (Rev 14:7 NKJ)

Ellen White on Fearing God

The love of God ever tends to the fear of God—fear to offend Him. Those who are truly converted will not venture heedlessly upon the borders of any evil, lest they grieve the Spirit of God and are left to their own way, to be filled with their own doings. The Word of God is the Guidebook; turn not from its pages to depend upon the human agent. That Book contains the warnings, the admonitions, from God, the rebuke of every evil, the clear definition of sin as the transgression of the law which is God's great standard of virtue and holiness.{14MR 194.1}

The Word is full of warnings, of the most merciful invitations, and also of words in decided condemnation of evil. Not one who will study the Word of God and apply its teachings will miss the way. By the love of God, by the fear of God, by the reverence and honor we feel for the Author of truth and righteousness, we are instructed, admonished, and profited. 14MR 194

Example: Noah

Noah did not mix the soft, pleasing deceptions of Satan with his message. He did not utter the sentiment of many of his day who declared that God was too merciful to do such a terrible work. Many asserted that God would grant the wicked another season of probation; but Noah did not indulge them in the faintest hope that those who neglected the present opportunity, who rejected the present message, would be favored with another opportunity of salvation. God means that men shall not only love him, but that his fear shall be in their hearts. Noah's faith was mingled with fear; for it is written that Noah, being warned of God, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house. His faith intensified his fear; for it was no cowardly fear that moved him. He dared not suppress the words of God for fear of men, or withhold his message in dread of the consequences that might result because of the opposition and hate of the wicked and unbelieving about him. He knew the power of God, and realized that God would fulfill his word. His fear of God did not separate him from God, but served to draw him closer to him, and to lead him to pour out his soul in earnest supplication. There were many who at first received Noah's message, but the fear of men was greater than the fear of God, and they turned away from the truth of God to believe a lie. As time passed on, and reproach and ridicule were heaped upon them, their hearts failed them, and they did not bear the test. It is the testing time that will measure professed faith and assurance in God. Courage and integrity cannot be estimated rightly by men until the day of trial puts them to the test.{ST April 18, 1895, par. 9}

"Now it is impossible for us to love God with all our heart while breaking the fourth commandment, for this precept stands in the center of the decalogue. We should be as a family of obedient children, having the fear of God before us--not slavish fear, but filial fear." 3 MR 67-68?

**"To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known.
And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God" (MS 16, 1890).**

Ellen White on the Hour of Judgment

The Elijah Message—In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. The Lord is giving messages to His people, through the instruments He has chosen, and He would have all heed the admonitions and warnings He sends. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ's soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear,— "Prepare to meet thy God." {4BC 1184.6}

Our message must be as direct as was that of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding the peril his life was in, he never allowed truth to languish on his lips. Our work in this age must be as faithfully done....{4BC 1184.7}

In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ's first advent, called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." With the earnestness that characterized Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ's second advent (The Southern Work 3-21-1905).{4BC 1184.8}

"Today, in the spirit and power of Elias and of John the Baptist, messengers of God's appointment are calling the attention of a judgment-bound world to the solemn events soon to take place in connection with the closing hours of probation and the appearance of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. Soon every man is to be judged for the deeds done in the body. **The hour of God's judgment has come, and upon the members of His church on earth rests the solemn responsibility of giving warning to those who are standing as it were on the very brink of eternal ruin. To every human being in the wide world who will give heed must be made plain the principles at stake in the great controversy being waged, principles upon which hang the destinies of all mankind.**" (PK 716)

God did not design that the medical missionary work should eclipse the work of the third angel's message. The arm is not to become the body. **The third angel's message is the gospel message for these last days, and in no case is it to be overshadowed by other interests and made to appear an unessential consideration. When in our institutions anything is placed above the third angel's message, the gospel is not there the great leading power.**—T 6:235-241 (1900).{Ev 522.3}

God's message for the inhabitants of earth today is, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." **Matthew 24:44.** The conditions prevailing in society, and especially in the great cities of the nations, proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God's judgment is come and that the end of all things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.{PK 278.1}

"Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." **Isaiah 26:21.** **The storm of God's wrath is gathering; and those only will stand who respond to the invitations of mercy, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah, and become sanctified through obedience to the laws of the divine Ruler. The righteous alone shall be hid with Christ in God till the desolation be overpast.** Let the language of the soul be:{PK 278.2}

*"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, O, leave me not alone!
Still support and comfort me.{PK 278.3}*
*"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide!
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!"{PK 278.4}*

(See also PK 714)

John in the Revelation foretells the proclamation of the gospel message just before Christ's second coming. He beholds an angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." **Revelation 14:6, 7.**{COL 227.1}

In the prophecy this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ's second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message. {COL 227}

The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities. Christ says, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." [Matthew 24:37-39](#).{COL 228.1}

So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table.{COL 228.2}

The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world—"to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." [Revelation 14:6](#). The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. It is to reach all classes of men, rich and poor, high and low. "Go out into the highways and hedges," Christ says, "and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled."{COL 228.3}

The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins. {COL 228.4}

In the command to go into the highways and hedges, Christ sets forth the work of all whom He calls to minister in His name. The whole world is the field for Christ's ministers. The whole human family is comprised in their congregation. The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul.{COL 229.1}

To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands.{COL 229.2}

We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. When the word has been preached in the pulpit, the work has but just begun. There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them.{COL 229}

[\[An appeal made by Mrs. White in 1886. Written from Europe.\]](#) If we indeed have the truth for these last days, it must be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Ere long the living and the dead are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and the law of God is the standard by which they are to be tested. Then they must now be warned; God's holy law must be vindicated, and held up before them as a mirror. To accomplish this work, means is needed. I know that times are hard, money is not plenty; but the truth must be spread, and money to spread it must be placed in the treasury....{CS 39.2}

The looker-on may discern no difference; but there is One who said that the tares were not to be plucked up by human hands lest the wheat be rooted up also. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then the Lord sends forth His reapers to gather out the tares and bind them in bundles to burn, while the wheat is gathered into the heavenly garner. The time of the judgment is a most solemn period, when the Lord gathers His own from among the tares. Those who have been members of the same family are separated. A mark is placed upon the righteous. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light; they shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. The one shall be taken. His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God.{TM 234.

Fear God = keep His commandments: Eccl 12:13

By the first angel, men are called upon to “fear God, and give glory to Him” and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#). Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” [1 John 5:3](#); [Proverbs 28:9](#).{GC 436.1}

The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. “All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.” [Psalm 96:5](#). “To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.” “Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: ... I am the Lord; and there is none else.” [Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18](#). Says the psalmist: “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” [Psalm 100:3; 95:6](#). And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things.” [Revelation 4:11](#). {GC 436}

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world. {GC 449}

The Solidity of the Calculation

The preaching of a definite time for the judgment, in the giving of the first message, was ordered by God. The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. The repeated efforts to find new dates for the beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late.{GC 457}

Child Preachers

The movement was chiefly among the lower class, and it was in the humble dwellings of the laborers that the people assembled to hear the warning. The child-preachers themselves were mostly poor cottagers. Some of them were not more than six or eight years of age; and while their lives testified that they loved the Saviour, and were trying to live in obedience to God’s holy requirements, they ordinarily manifested only the intelligence and ability usually seen in children of that age. When standing before the people, however, it was evident that they were moved by an influence beyond their own natural gifts. Tone and manner changed, and with solemn power they gave the warning of the judgment, employing the very words of Scripture: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” They reproved the sins of the people, not only condemning immorality and vice, but rebuking worldliness and backsliding, and warning their hearers to make haste to flee from the wrath to come. {GC 366.3}

The people heard with trembling. The convicting Spirit of God spoke to their hearts. Many were led to search the Scriptures with new and deeper interest, the intemperate and immoral were reformed, others abandoned their dishonest practices, and a work was done so marked that even ministers of the state church were forced to acknowledge that the hand of God was in the movement. {GC 367.1}

The last movement mightier than the first

The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel's message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of world-wide extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; **but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel.** {GC 611}

Now is the time to work!

Recently in the night season, my mind was impressed by the Holy Spirit with the thought that if the Lord is coming as soon as we believe He is, we ought to be even more active than we have been in years past in getting the truth before the people. {2SM 402.3}

In this connection my mind reverted to the activity of the Advent believers in 1843 and 1844. At that time there was much house-to-house visitation, and untiring efforts were made to warn the people of the things that are spoken of in God's Word. We should be putting forth even greater effort than was put forth by those who proclaimed the first angel's message so faithfully. We are rapidly approaching the end of this earth's history; and as we realize that Jesus is indeed coming soon, we shall be aroused to labor as never before. We are bidden to sound an alarm to the people. And in our own lives we are to show forth the power of truth and righteousness. The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over His broken law. Those only who turn from transgression to obedience can hope for pardon and peace. {2SM 402}

The Hour of His Judgement

In the typical system, which was a shadow of the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, the cleansing of the sanctuary was the last service performed by the high priest in the yearly round of ministration. It was the closing work of the atonement—a removal or putting away of sin from Israel. It prefigured the closing work in the ministration of our High Priest in heaven, in the removal or blotting out of the sins of His people, which are registered in the heavenly records. This service involves a work of investigation, a work of judgment; and it immediately precedes the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; for when He comes, every case has been decided. Says Jesus: "My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." [Revelation 22:12](#). It is this work of judgment, immediately preceding the second advent, that is announced in the first angel's message of [Revelation 14:7](#): "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." {GC 352}

A Great religious awakening under the proclamation of Christ's soon coming is foretold in the prophecy of the first angel's message of [Revelation 14](#). An angel is seen flying "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." "With a loud voice" he proclaims the message: "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." [Verses 6, 7](#). {GC 355.1}

The fact that an angel is said to be the herald of this warning is significant. By the purity, the glory, and the power of the heavenly messenger, divine wisdom has been pleased to represent the exalted character of the work to be accomplished by the message and the power and glory that were to attend it. And the angel's flight "in the midst of heaven," the "loud voice" with which the warning is uttered, and its promulgation to all "that dwell on the earth,"—"to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"—give evidence of the rapidity and world-wide extent of the movement. {GC 355.2}

The message itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the "everlasting gospel;" and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all

ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had come*. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.” Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” [Daniel 12:4](#). {GC 355

The Hour of His Judgement = 1844 and Christ’s ministry in the Most Holy Place

Dan 7:13; 8:14; Mal 3:1

Historical Marker

To William Miller and his collaborators it was given to preach the warning in America. This country became the center of the great advent movement. It was here that the prophecy of the first angel’s message had its most direct fulfillment. The writings of Miller and his associates were carried to distant lands. Wherever missionaries had penetrated in all the world, were sent the glad tidings of Christ’s speedy return. Far and wide spread the message of the everlasting gospel: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” {GC 368.1}

The testimony of the prophecies which seemed to point to the coming of Christ in the spring of 1844 took deep hold of the minds of the people. As the message went from state to state, there was everywhere awakened widespread interest. Many were convinced that the arguments from the prophetic periods were correct, and, sacrificing their pride of opinion, they joyfully received the truth. Some ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings, left their salaries and their churches, and united in proclaiming the coming of Jesus. There were comparatively few ministers, however, who would accept this message; therefore it was largely committed to humble laymen. Farmers left their fields, mechanics their tools, traders their merchandise, professional men their positions; and yet the number of workers was small in comparison with the work to be accomplished. The condition of an ungodly church and a world lying in wickedness, burdened the souls of the true watchmen, and they willingly endured toil, privation, and suffering, that they might call men to repentance unto salvation. Though opposed by Satan, the work went steadily forward, and the advent truth was accepted by many thousands. {GC 368.2}

The Purpose and Result of the Message

The first angel’s message of [Revelation 14](#), announcing the hour of God’s judgment and calling upon men to fear and worship Him, was designed to separate the professed people of God from the corrupting influences of the world and to arouse them to see their true condition of worldliness and backsliding. In this message, God has sent to the church a warning, which, had it been accepted, would have corrected the evils that were shutting them away from Him. Had they received the message from heaven, humbling their hearts before the Lord and seeking in sincerity a preparation to stand in His presence, the Spirit and power of God would have been manifested among them. The church would again have reached that blessed state of unity, faith, and love which existed in apostolic days, when the believers “were of one heart and of one soul,” and “spake the word of God with boldness,” when “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” [Acts 4:32, 31; 2:47](#). {GC 379.1}

If God’s professed people would receive the light as it shines upon them from His word, they would reach that unity for which Christ prayed, that which the apostle describes, “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “There is,” he says, “*one* body, and *one* Spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” [Ephesians 4:3-5](#). {GC 379.2}

Such were the blessed results experienced by those who accepted the advent message. They came from different denominations, and their denominational barriers were hurled to the ground; conflicting creeds were shivered to atoms; the unscriptural hope of a temporal millennium was abandoned, false views of the second advent were corrected, pride and conformity to the world were swept away; wrongs were made right; hearts were united in the sweetest fellowship, and love and joy reigned supreme. If this doctrine did this for the few who did receive it, it would have done the same for all if all had received it. {GC 379}

The 2nd Commandment: Gateway to the Ten!

“All false worship is spiritual adultery. The second precept, which forbids false worship, is also a command to worship God, and Him only serve. The Lord is a jealous God. He will not be trifled with. He has spoken concerning the manner in which He should be worshiped. He has a hatred of idolatry, for its influence is corrupting. It debases the mind, and leads to sensuality and all kinds of sin. {2SAT 184

The Central Role of the Sabbath

Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. GC 437

The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, “Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment. GC 438

Fulfillment of the prophecies of Isa 6:3; 35:2:

“Today this prophecy is meeting rapid fulfillment. The missionary activities of the church of God on earth are bearing rich fruitage, and soon the gospel message will have been proclaimed to all nations.” PK 314

The Reason for the Great Disappointment: God created a Readiness among His People

I saw the disappointment of the trusting ones, as they did not see their Lord at the expected time. It had been God’s purpose to conceal the future and to bring His people to a point of decision. Without the preaching of definite time for the coming of Christ, the work designed of God would not have been accomplished. Satan was leading very many to look far in the future for the great events connected with the judgment and the end of probation. It was necessary that the people be brought to seek earnestly for a present preparation. {EW 246.2}

The Three Angels’ Message in a Nutshell

To prepare a people to stand in the day of God, a great work of reform was to be accomplished. God saw that many of His professed people were not building for eternity, and in His mercy He was about to send a message of warning to arouse them from their stupor and lead them to make ready for the coming of the Lord. {GC 311.2}

This warning is brought to view in **Revelation 14**. Here is a threefold message represented as proclaimed by heavenly beings and immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man to reap “the harvest of the earth.” The first of these warnings announces the approaching judgment. The prophet beheld an angel flying “in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” **Revelation 14:6, 7.** {GC 311.3}

This message is declared to be a part of “the everlasting gospel.” The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth. {GC 312.1}

Faithful men, who were obedient to the promptings of God’s Spirit and the teachings of His word, were to proclaim this warning to the world. They were those who had taken heed to the “sure word of prophecy,” the “light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise.” **2 Peter 1:19**. They had been seeking the knowledge of God more than all hid treasures, counting it “better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” **Proverbs 3:14**. And the Lord revealed to them the great things of the kingdom. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.” **Psalms 25:14.** {GC 312.2}

It was not the scholarly theologians who had an understanding of this truth, and engaged in its proclamation. Had these been faithful watchmen, diligently and prayerfully searching the Scriptures, they would have known the time of night; the prophecies would have opened to them the events about to take place. But they did not occupy this position, and the message was given by humbler men. Said Jesus: "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." [John 12:35](#). Those who turn away from the light which God has given, or who neglect to seek it when it is within their reach, are left in darkness. But the Saviour declares: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." [John 8:12](#). Whoever is with singleness of purpose seeking to do God's will, earnestly heeding the light already given, will receive greater light; to that soul some star of heavenly radiance will be sent to guide him into all truth. [GC 312](#)

The First Angel's Message - A Historical Description and Perspective

as retold by Ellen White, *Early Writings* pp. 232-237

The First Angel's Message

[\[See Appendix.\]](#)

I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was His design to arouse the people and bring them to a testing point, where they should decide for or against the truth. Ministers were convinced of the correctness of the positions taken on the prophetic periods, and some renounced their pride, and left their salaries and their churches to go forth from place to place to give the message. But as the message from heaven could find a place in the hearts of but few of the professed ministers of Christ, the work was laid upon many who were not preachers. Some left their fields to sound the message, while others were called from their shops and their merchandise. And even some professional men were compelled to leave their professions to engage in the unpopular work of giving the first angel's message. [EW 232.2](#)

Ministers laid aside their sectarian views and feelings and united in proclaiming the coming of Jesus. Wherever the message was given, it moved the people. Sinners repented, wept, and prayed for forgiveness, and those whose lives had been marked with dishonesty were anxious to make restitution. Parents felt the deepest solicitude for their children. Those who received the message labored with their unconverted friends and relatives, and with their souls bowed with the weight of the solemn message, warned and entreated them to prepare for the coming of the Son of man. Those cases were most hardened that would not yield to such a weight of evidence set home by heartfelt warnings. This soul-purifying work led the affections away from worldly things to a consecration never before experienced. [EW 232.3](#)

Thousands were led to embrace the truth preached by William Miller, and servants of God were raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the message. Like John, the forerunner of Jesus, those who preached this solemn message felt compelled to lay the ax at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Their testimony was calculated to arouse and powerfully affect the churches and manifest their real character. And as the solemn warning to flee from the wrath to come was sounded, many who were united with the churches received the healing message; they saw their backslidings, and with bitter tears of repentance and deep agony of soul, humbled themselves before God. And as the Spirit of God rested upon them, they helped to sound the cry, "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." [EW 233.1](#)

The preaching of definite time called forth great opposition from all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, heaven-daring sinner. "No man knoweth the day nor the hour," was heard from the hypocritical minister and the bold scoffer. Neither would be instructed and corrected by those who were pointing to the year when they believed the prophetic periods would run out, and to the signs which showed Christ near, even at the doors. Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ's coming, but they objected to the definite time. God's all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unchristian lives would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path marked out by Him. These false shepherds stood in the way of the work of God. The truth spoken in its convincing power aroused the people, and like the jailer, they began to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" But these shepherds stepped in between the truth and the people, and preached smooth things to lead them from the truth. They united with Satan and his angels, crying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. Those who loved their ease and were content with their

distance from God would not be aroused from their carnal security. I saw that angels of God marked it all; the garments of those unconsecrated shepherds were covered with the blood of souls. {EW 233.2}

Ministers who would not accept this saving message themselves hindered those who would have received it. The blood of souls is upon them. Preachers and people joined to oppose this message from heaven and to persecute William Miller and those who united with him in the work. Falsehoods were circulated to injure his influence; and at different times after he had plainly declared the counsel of God, applying cutting truths to the hearts of his hearers, great rage was kindled against him, and as he left the place of meeting, some waylaid him in order to take his life. But angels of God were sent to protect him, and they led him safely away from the angry mob. His work was not yet finished. {EW 234.1}

The most devoted gladly received the message. They knew that it was from God and that it was delivered at the right time. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of the heavenly message, and when the churches turned from and rejected it, they in sadness consulted with Jesus. He turned His face from the churches and bade His angels faithfully watch over the precious ones who did not reject the testimony, for another light was yet to shine upon them. {EW 235.1}

I saw that if professed Christians had loved their Saviour's appearing, if they had placed their affections on Him, and had felt that there was none upon the earth to be compared with Him, they would have hailed with joy the first intimation of His coming. But the dislike which they manifested, as they heard of their Lord's coming, was a decided proof that they did not love Him. Satan and his angels triumphed, and cast it in the face of Christ and His holy angels, that His professed people had so little love for Jesus that they did not desire His second appearing. {EW 235.2}

I saw the people of God joyful in expectation, looking for their Lord. But God designed to prove them. His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Those who were looking for their Lord did not discover this mistake, and the most learned men who opposed the time also failed to see it. God designed that His people should meet with a disappointment. The time passed, and those who had looked with joyful expectation for their Saviour were sad and disheartened, while those who had not loved the appearing of Jesus, but embraced the message through fear, were pleased that He did not come at the time of expectation. Their profession had not affected the heart and purified the life. The passing of the time was well calculated to reveal such hearts. They were the first to turn and ridicule the sorrowful, disappointed ones who really loved the appearing of their Saviour. I saw the wisdom of God in proving His people and giving them a searching test to discover those who would shrink and turn back in the hour of trial. {EW 235.3}

Jesus and all the heavenly host looked with sympathy and love upon those who had with sweet expectation longed to see Him whom their souls loved. Angels were hovering around them, to sustain them in the hour of their trial. Those who had neglected to receive the heavenly message were left in darkness, and God's anger was kindled against them, because they would not receive the light which He had sent them from heaven. Those faithful, disappointed ones, who could not understand why their Lord did not come, were not left in darkness. Again they were led to their Bibles to search the prophetic periods. The hand of the Lord was removed from the figures, and the mistake was explained. They saw that the prophetic periods reached to 1844, and that the same evidence which they had presented to show that the prophetic periods closed in 1843, proved that they would terminate in 1844. Light from the Word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time—"Though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it." In their love for Christ's immediate coming, they had overlooked the tarrying of the vision, which was calculated to manifest the true waiting ones. Again they had a point of time. Yet I saw that many of them could not rise above their severe disappointment to possess that degree of zeal and energy which had marked their faith in 1843. {EW 236.1}

Satan and his angels triumphed over them, and those who would not receive the message congratulated themselves upon their farseeing judgment and wisdom in not receiving the delusion, as they called it. They did not realize that they were rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and were working in union with Satan and his angels to perplex God's people, who were living out the heaven-sent message. {EW 236.2}

The believers in this message were oppressed in the churches. For a time, those who would not receive the message were restrained by fear from acting out the sentiments of their hearts; but the passing of the time revealed their true feelings. They wished to silence the testimony which the waiting ones felt compelled to bear, that the prophetic periods extended to 1844. With clearness the believers explained their mistake and gave the reasons why they expected their Lord in 1844. Their opposers could bring no arguments against the powerful reasons offered. Yet the anger of the churches was kindled; they were determined not to listen to evidence, and to shut the testimony out of the churches, so the others could not hear it. Those who dared not withhold from others the light which God had given them, were shut

out of the churches; but Jesus was with them, and they were joyful in the light of His countenance. They were prepared to receive the message of the second angel. {EW 237.1}

Revelation 14:8

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἠκολούθησε, λέγων, Ἔπεσεν ἔπεσε Βαβυλῶν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότικε πάντα ἔθνη

Observations:

- global (all nations)
- an alliteration on pi!
- Babylon: Hebr. *balal* to confuse (Gen 11:9)
Judg 9:35; Ruth 4:1; 1 Kgs 22:10; Jer 22:3
- founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:10; 11:1-9)
- 1 Pet 5:13!
- Sibylline Oracles, pseudepigraphical Jewish book: "In widowhood shalt thou sit beside thy banks. . . . But thou hast said, I am unique, and none shall bring ruin on me. But now God . . . shall destroy thee and all of thine").

also in 2 Baruch 11:1

also in Midrash Rabbah SS 1:6 "They called the place Rome Babylon"

Tertullian: *Against Marcion* iii. 13; *Answer to the Jews* 9; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* v. 26.1

Talmud *Makkoth* 12a,

- is fallen: 2x Isa 21:9
- made drink: coercion
- fornication: church and state (Eze 16:15; James 4:4)

Direct definition by Ellen White:

In the professedly Christian world many turn away from the plain teachings of the Bible and build up a creed from human speculations and pleasing fables, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the lips of eloquence while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the professed followers of Christ would accept God's standard, it would bring them into unity; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be divisions and dissension. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the world-loving churches of the last days. {PP 124

Church not Babylon: TM 20-23

The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that "Babylon is fallen, . . . because she made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has

been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination. {GC 389.2}

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work “with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;” and they that “received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,” will be left to receive “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future. {GC 389}

This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844. A terrible condition of the religious world is here described. With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings which God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the Decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at nought in the contempt placed upon His word and His people. As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches. {GC 603.2}

Of Babylon, at the time brought to view in this prophecy, it is declared: “Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Revelation 18:5. She has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and “receive not of her plagues.” Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: “Come out of her, My people.” These announcements, uniting with the third angel’s message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth. {GC 604.1}

Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator’s rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. {GC 604.2}

With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God’s law to obey a human enactment receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God. The warning from heaven is: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.” Revelation 14:9, 10. {GC 604.3}

But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently. {GC 605.1}

The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God’s law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God. {GC 605}

In a nutshell

GC 381 “The term “Babylon” is derived from “Babel,” and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion.”

Satan and his angels are wide awake and intensely active, working with energy and perseverance through human instrumentalities to bring about his purpose of obliterating from the minds of men the knowledge of God. But while Satan works with his lying wonders, the time will be fulfilled foretold in the Revelation, and the mighty angel that shall lighten the earth with his glory will proclaim the fall of Babylon, and call upon God’s people to forsake her (The Review and Herald, December 13, 1892).{7BC 985.2}

(Revelation 14:8.) Part of a Series of Events—The message in regard to the fall of Babylon must be given. God’s people are to understand in regard to the angel who is to lighten the whole world with his glory, while he cries mightily, with a loud voice, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.” The solemn events which are now taking place belong to a series of events in the chain of history, the first link of which is connected with Eden. Let the people of God prepare for what is coming upon the earth. Extravagance in the use of means, selfishness, heresies, have taken the world captive. For centuries satanic agencies have been at work. Will they now give up without a struggle (Manuscript 172, 1899)?{7BC 985.3}

(Matthew 15:9; 21:11, 12; John 2:13-16; seeEGW comment on Revelation 6:9.) Two Calls to the Churches—[Revelation 18:1, 2 quoted.] This is the same message that was given by the second angel. Babylon is fallen, “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” What is that wine?—her false doctrines. She has given to the world a false sabbath instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and has repeated the falsehood that Satan first told to Eve in Eden—the natural immortality of the soul. Many kindred errors she has spread far and wide, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”{7BC 985.4}

When Jesus began His public ministry, He cleansed the temple from its sacrilegious profanation. Among the last acts of His ministry was the second cleansing of the temple. So in the last work for the warning of the world, two distinct calls are made to the churches. The second angel’s message is, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” And in the loud cry of the third angel’s message a voice is heard 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. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities” (The Review and Herald, December 6, 1892).{7BC 985.5}

Three Messages to Be Combined—The three angels’ messages are to be combined, giving their threefold light to the world. In the Revelation, John says, “I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.” [Revelation 18:2-5 quoted.] This represents the giving of the last and threefold message of warning to the world (Manuscript 52, 1900).{7BC 985.6}

1-8 (see EGW comment on Revelation 14:9-12). Danger in Worldly Alliances—[Revelation 18:1-8quoted.] This terrible picture, drawn by John to show how completely the powers of earth will give themselves over to evil, should show those who have received the truth how dangerous it is to link up with secret societies or to join themselves in any way with those who do not keep God’s commandments (Manuscript 135, 1902).{7BC 985.7}

“There are God-fearing men in the fallen churches. If this were not so, we should not be given the message to bear, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . . come out of her, My people.’” Ev 559

“The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Ev 197

“Canvassers, remember that in the books you handle you are presenting, not the cup containing the wine of Babylon, doctrines of error dealt to the kings of the earth, but the cup full of the preciousness of the truths of redemption” (6T 317).

The Wine of the Wrath of Her Fornication

If we do our very best to present the truth in its stirring character, crossing the opinions and ideas of others, it will be misinterpreted, misapplied, and misstated, to those who are entertaining error, in order to make it appear in an

objectionable light. There are few to whom you bring the truth, who have not been drinking of the wine of Babylon. It is hard for them to comprehend the truth, therefore the necessity of teaching it as it is in Jesus. {1SM 405.1}

Those who claim to be lovers of truth can afford to be meek and lowly of heart, as was the Great Teacher. Those who have been diligently working in the mines of God's Word, and have discovered the precious ore in the rich veins of truth, in the divine mysteries that have been hidden for ages, will exalt the Lord Jesus, the Source of all truth, by revealing in their characters the sanctifying power of what they believe. Jesus and His grace must be enshrined in the inner sanctuary of the soul. Then He will be revealed in words, in prayer, in exhortation, in the presentation of sacred truth, for this is the great secret of spiritual success. {1SM 405.2}

When self is woven into our labors, then the truth we bear to others does not sanctify, refine, and ennoble our own hearts; it will not testify that we are fit vessels for the Master's use. It is only through fervent prayer that we may hold sweet fellowship with Jesus, and through this blessed communion the words and the spirit are made fragrant with the spirit of Christ. There is not a heart that will not bear watching. Jesus, the precious Saviour, enjoined watchfulness. The oversight of self must not be relaxed for a moment. The heart must be kept with diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Watch and discipline the thoughts, that you may not sin with your lips. {1SM 405.3}

The Wine of Babylon in a Nutshell

The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also [it is] the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon. Kings, merchants, rulers, and religious teachers are all in corrupt harmony. (2SM 68)

"This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ." GC 388

"Were it not that the world is hopelessly intoxicated with the wine of Babylon, multitudes would be convicted and converted by the plain, cutting truths of the word of God" (GC 389)

"The theory of eternal torment is one of the false doctrines that constitute the wine of the abomination of Babylon, of which she makes all nations drink. . . . If we turn from the testimony of God's word, and accept false doctrines because our fathers taught them, we fall under the condemnation pronounced upon Babylon; we are drinking of the wine of her abomination." GC 536-537

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy, sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches. Ev 365

Coercion

The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved ... [Revelation 18:3-7 quoted] (Manuscript 24, 1891). {7BC 949.11}

"God has a controversy with the churches of today. They are fulfilling the prophecy of John. . . . They have divorced themselves from God by refusing to receive His sign." 7BC 979 (Lt 98, 1900).

The Man of Sin

“The man of sin thinks himself able to change the times and the laws of God, and the Protestant world have accepted the authority of the papal power, and in so doing have apostatized from God. All nations have been made drunk by partaking of the wine of Babylon, by accepting the presumptuous work of the man of sin, who has tampered with the law of God, and thought to change the precepts of Jehovah.” ST Nov. 14, 1895

“The human family have been made drunk with the wine of Babylon, and drunken men will not reason. They have taken large drafts of Satan’s sophistry, and they are determined that they will not see the foolishness of accepting another standard, while casting aside the law of the Lord of hosts.” ST NOV 14, 1895

True sanctification is found in yielding the will to the will of God, in rendering obedience to his commandments, and in making his standard of righteousness the aim of our life. If men would consent to follow the Lord fully, if they were not confused with the wine of Babylon, they would see that to tamper with the Lord’s standard, to depart from his commandments, is the worst species of rebellion. This is well represented as the wine of the wrath of the abomination of Babylon, the cup which she has presented to all nations to drink. Were it not for this, thousands, yes, millions, would be found in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. But the will of God, expressed in his law, the direction which he has given to guide men in the path to heaven, is authoritative and divine. We have more than a royal road to heaven, we have a divine pathway in which to travel. The opinions of men are not to weigh as amendments to the law of God; for the law of God is the expression of the will and mind of God, of him who is unchanging in counsel. The precepts of the law are not given to the human family as propositions to criticize. They are the positive declarations and decisions of an infallible Judge, and they will stand through eternal ages. They are the very laws that will test character, by which we are to be judged for the deeds done in the body. Who hath bewitched you, that you who are finite by nature, who are sinful and erring, should presume to handle the law of God in the manner in which you do? How is it that you think yourselves at liberty to cancel the decisions of Jehovah, to remove the ancient landmarks, and substitute in place of the true guideboards false waymarks that will lead men to follow the path of the first great apostate in place of following Jesus Christ? God has not left his law to be endorsed, reviled, or annulled according to the pleasure of his creatures. The wise man declares the true attitude of man to the law, and says: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” {ST November 14, 1895, par. 9}

The Second Angel’s Message

[see Appendix.]

As the churches refused to receive the first angel’s message, they rejected the light from heaven and fell from the favor of God. They trusted to their own strength, and by opposing the first message placed themselves where they could not see the light of the second angel’s message. But the beloved of God, who were oppressed, accepted the message, “Babylon is fallen,” and left the churches. {EW 237.2}

Near the close of the second angel’s message, [see Appendix.] I saw a great light from heaven shining upon the people of God. The rays of this light seemed bright as the sun. And I heard the voices of angels crying, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!” {EW 238.1}

This was the midnight cry, which was to give power to the second angel’s message. Angels were sent from heaven to arouse the discouraged saints and prepare them for the great work before them. The most talented men were not the first to receive this message. Angels were sent to the humble, devoted ones, and constrained them to raise the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!” Those entrusted with the cry made haste, and in the power of the Holy Spirit sounded the message, and aroused their discouraged brethren. This work did not stand in the wisdom and learning of men, but in the power of God, and His saints who heard the cry could not resist it. The most spiritual received this message first, and those who had formerly led in the work were the last to receive and help swell the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!” {EW 238.2}

In every part of the land, light was given upon the second angel’s message, and the cry melted the hearts of thousands. It went from city to city, and from village to village, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. In many churches the message was not permitted to be given, and a large company who had the living testimony left these

fallen churches. A mighty work was accomplished by the midnight cry. The message was heart-searching, leading the believers to seek a living experience for themselves. They knew that they could not lean upon one another. {EW 238.3}

The saints anxiously waited for their Lord with fasting, watching, and almost constant prayer. Even some sinners looked forward to the time with terror; but the great mass manifested the spirit of Satan in their opposition to the message. They mocked and scoffed, repeating everywhere, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour." Evil angels urged them on to harden their hearts and to reject every ray of light from heaven, that they might be fastened in the snare of Satan. Many who professed to be looking for Christ had no part in the work of the message. The glory of God which they had witnessed, the humility and deep devotion of the waiting ones, and the overwhelming weight of evidence, caused them to profess to receive the truth; but they had not been converted; they were not ready for the coming of their Lord. {EW 238.4}

A spirit of solemn and earnest prayer was everywhere felt by the saints. A holy solemnity was resting upon them. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the effect of the message, and were elevating those who received it, and drawing them from earthly things to obtain large supplies from salvation's fountain. God's people were then accepted of Him. Jesus looked upon them with pleasure, for His image was reflected in them. They had made a full sacrifice, an entire consecration, and expected to be changed to immortality. But they were destined again to be sadly disappointed. The time to which they looked, expecting deliverance, passed; they were still upon the earth, and the effects of the curse never seemed more visible. They had placed their affections on heaven, and in sweet anticipation had tasted immortal deliverance; but their hopes were not realized. {EW 239.1}

The fear that had rested upon many of the people did not at once disappear; they did not immediately triumph over the disappointed ones. But as no visible tokens of God's wrath appeared, they recovered from the fear which they had felt and commenced their ridicule and scoffing. The people of God were again proved and tested. The world laughed and mocked and reproached them; and those who had believed without a doubt that Jesus would ere then have come to raise the dead, and change the living saints, and take the kingdom, to possess it forever, felt as did the disciples at the sepulcher of Christ, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." {EW 239.2}

Revelation 18

Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: "Come out of her, My people" (Revelation 18:4). {GC 390.2}

Appendix

Greek Outline of Revelation 1

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεὸς δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει,

καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ,

² ὃς ἐμαρτύρησε τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅσα τε εἶδε.

³ μακάριος
ὁ ἀναγινώσκων,
καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας
καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα·
ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.

John

⁴ Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ·

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη

ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος·

καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ·

⁵ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς.

Doxology

τῷ ἀγαπήσαντι ἡμᾶς,

καὶ λούσαντι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ·

⁶ καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ·

αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν.

⁷ ἰδοὺ, ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν,

καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμός,

καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν·

καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. ναί, ἀμήν.

Who: God/Jesus

⁸ Ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος,

λέγει ὁ Κύριος, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

Who: John

⁹ Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνός

ἐν τῇ θλίψει

καὶ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ

καὶ ὑπομονῇ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

Where

ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ, διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

When

¹⁰ ἐγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ·

What

καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος, ¹¹ λεγούσης,

Ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος·

καί, Ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον, καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ,

εἰς Ἔφεσον, καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν, καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον, καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα, καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις, καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν, καὶ εἰς Λαοδίκειαν.

John

¹² καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλησε μετ' ἐμοῦ.

καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσαῖς,

Person ¹³ καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν ὅμοιον υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου,

Clothing ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη, καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσοῦν·

Head ¹⁴ ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὡσεὶ ἔριον λευκόν, ὡς χιών·

Eyes και οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός·
 Feet 15 και οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ, ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπυρωμένοι·
 Voice και ἡ **φωνή** αὐτοῦ ὡς **φωνή** ὑδάτων πολλῶν.
 Hand 16 και ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ **χειρὶ ἀστέρας** ἑπτὰ·
 Mouth και ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὀξεῖα ἐκπορευομένη·
 Face και ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ, ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.

17 και ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς **νεκρός**·

και ἐπέθηκε **τὴν δεξιάν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα** ἐπ' ἐμέ, **λέγων** μοι,

Μὴ φοβοῦ·

ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος και ὁ ἔσχατος, ¹⁸

και ὁ **ζῶν**,

και ἐγενόμην **νεκρός**,

και ἰδοῦ, **ζῶν** εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, **ἀμήν**·

και ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ ᾄδου και τοῦ θανάτου.

19 **γράψον** ἃ εἶδες, και ἃ εἶσι, και ἃ μέλλει γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα·

20 τὸ μυστήριον τῶν **ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων ὧν εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου**, και τὰς **ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσαῖς**.

οἱ **ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες** ἄγγελοι τῶν **ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν** εἰσί·

και αἱ **ἑπτὰ λυχνίαι** ἃς εἶδες **ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαι** εἰσί.

English Outline of Revelation 1 (author's translation)

The Seven Trumpets

1st trumpet: OT parallel: Ezek 5

“And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone” (Ezek 38:22).

Revelation 9:1-11: The 5th Trumpet

Rev 9:5, 10: 5 months:

July 27, 1299: Ottoman (Turkish) Empire invades Eastern Rome in Battle of Bapheus = the sting of the Islamic scorpion [some: 1301, 1302]

Osman I

Pope Urban II

Children's Crusade

1260 = 42 months = 30 days/prophetic months

1260 : 3.5 = 360 days/prophetic year

5 months: $5 \times 30 = 150$ days = 150 years

July 27, 1299 to Rev 9:15 hour, day, month, year = 1449 (start of the 391 days and 15 days)

1 hour = 15 days

1 day = 1 year

1 month = 30 years

1 year = 360 years

6th trumpet:

George Pachymeres:

Letter of bishop Athanase to Emperor Andronicus Paleologus:

Rev 9:13-14: great river Euphrates: dries up, woman falls

Babylon: apostate Christianity, held back by 4 angels

Rev 9:15

1/3 mankind:

1377 Wycliff

Early 1400s: Huss and Jerome

1449: Islam controls Christian empire

1453: Islam strikes like snake: Constantinople falls

1492: America discovered

1517: Martin Luther

1527: Islam strikes Spain, draws away Charles V

1700 – John Wesley

1776 – Decl of Independence (no king, no pope)

1798 – Napoleon, Pope

1750, 1850 The Great Awakenings, 2nd Advent Movement 1831-1844

Rise of Advent Movement

Mighty angel: movement of Protestant Reformation

Charles V: I will lay to waste the states if they don't release the Protestants (protests of the princes: Charles, you can't rule over man's conscience)

Charles V: I'll come back with a sword

On way from Speyer he heard that Spain had been invaded by the Turks, allowing the Reformation to take place

Islam = judgement on apostate idolatrous Christianity

Then Moslems decrease and fell under power of Christian nations

Time of the end: allows Islam again to sting and bite the Christian world

ISIS: return of the dark ages!

Rev 10:5 angel swears by Him who lives forever and ever

"delay no longer": Dan 8:13, 14: how long the delay?

No more time prophecies after this.

End of the 2,300 days: last time prophecies

Josiah Litch: August 11, 1840 (San Francisco Times): Britian, Russia, Prussia: ultimatum by Sultan appealing to Britain + European powers to help with Egyptian ruler Muhammed Ali Pasha (founder of Egypt)

May 7, 1805 = March 2, 1848

Sultan: I know what Ottomans want to do. I will build my empire on its ruins.

Deliverance of ultimatum on Aug. 16 due to plague and quarantine

We know the specific boat from England that delivered the message!

See *Great Controversy!*

Revelation 11:1

6th trumpet summary: For major movements:

1. power of Muslims
2. Reformation
3. Rise of Remnant out of Reformation
4. Rise of Atheism and Communism

6th trumpet, seal, church: transition from holy place to most holy place

Rev 11: courtyard: earthly ministry

Holy and most holy: heavenly ministry

“court” = earth

Rev 11:18: Investigative Judgement, Oct 22 1844!

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

2,300 years encompasses both Jewish and Christian apostasy!

Witnesses: to Gentiles

Sackcloth: because of persecution by little horn in Daniel 7-8

Rev 11:4 – Ps 119:105; Zech 4:2-6; 2 Pet 1:21; Mt 24:14!

No man has lived 1260 years = not 2 people

Symbolized characters, not 2 men

Great Controversy over Scripture!!

Rev 11:7: finish their testimony: 1798, because the opposing enemy power is now locked up.

Next: end of 2,300 days and cleansing of the Sanctuary

Devil can't use the pope (deadly wound)

1776 American Revolution is Protestant based

Replace Bible with atheism

1793 French Revolution is rebellion against the abuses of the Roman power.

Catholic church: false image of God (roasting people in Hell)

France throws out Rome + Bible, replaced with atheism and reason

Darwin: evolution

Lenin: philosophy from French Revolution

Atheism: beast from the bottomless pit