

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-Day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

Vol 14, No. 5

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Holy Bible

**Satan's Impersonation
of Christ**

**If My
People**

**A P P L Y I N G
God's Word**

Communing With God

Do you know a personal God?

Prayer is the greatest privilege that man has. The God of our Bible is omnipotent—all powerful—and omniscient—knowing everything and having total knowledge—a God who can speak and make a world. Our God is a God who can design a human being and breathe into him the breath of life and make him a living soul—with the capabilities of thinking and responding to God’s love. What a wonderful God we have! He extends to us a gracious invitation to commune with Him—to come into His presence through the gateway of prayer—promising us access to His wisdom, His guidance, His strength and His power.

How do we begin such a wonderful relationship with our loving Heavenly Father?

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14; see also Isaiah 1:18–19; John 6:37.

When we pray we reveal the fact that we believe in a personal God who knows the number of the hairs on our heads and who remembers each sparrow when it falls. *The God of our Bible is real and infinite in love and power!* Yes, God is love:

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

Daniel prayed three times each day. Abraham pleaded with God to spare the righteous in Sodom.

Oh, how little time we spend in prayer! Prayer is an attitude of mind. It begins when we wake up in the morning, when we are again conscious of His presence, and it continues as we walk through the day practicing His presence. We go to bed knowing that Jesus has walked with us through every trial, that His angels have surrounded us with heavenly protection, and that the Holy Spirit was asked to be in charge of our thoughts, our words, and our actions all day long. This is the power of prayer.

The following inspired statement will help us grasp the great potential that can be ours if we will spend time with God in prayer:

“Let all who are afflicted or unjustly used, cry to God. Turn away from those whose hearts are as steel, and make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart’s desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 174.

The days of trial and persecution will soon burst upon us. The signs of the times are ominous in the world—and even in our beloved church—telling us that the end is very near. Jesus will soon throw down His censer—probation will soon close. Only communion with God through today and every tomorrow will carry the obedient seeker for truth into the very presence of the Almighty God.

Ron Spear, Co-Editor

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world. —Editors

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contents

table of contents

- 4 Applying God's Word
Although we may be reading the scriptures, are we understanding them? Are we applying them?
Jeff Wehr
- 7 Studying the Scriptures
Nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect
S. N. Haskell
- 8 Memorizing Scripture
"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart."
Jeff Wehr
- 11 God's Word Our Guide
The Bible is a chart, pointing out the waymarks of truth.
Ellen G. White
- 14 Satan's Impersonation of Christ
So magnificent will be the counterfeit Second Coming that the vast majority of Christians will be deceived.
Russell R. Standish
- 18 If My People
How to prepare to receive one of God's most wonderful gifts
A. Malkiah Perus
- 26 The Sanctuary Doctrine, Part 5
Do we find New Testament support for the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary?
Kevin D. Paulson



Special Features:

STRATEGIES

FOR MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

page 10

A Sabbath Test

page 16

Departments

Defending the Faith..... 12

Health for Life 25

News Watch 22

Letters to the Editor 31

APPLYING God's Word

Jeff Wehr

According to research by the Barna Research Group, 93 percent of all the households in America own one or more Bibles. Yet, of this group, 57 percent do not read the Bible at all during the week. Why is there such a high percentage of neglect in reading the Bible? Most of these people do not feel that the Bible has much or anything to say about today's world and the challenges we all face every day. After all, wasn't the Bible written by people who lived thousands of years ago in a faraway land?

It is true that the Bible was written by people who lived a long time ago in a land and culture thousands of miles away. But, *reading* the Bible is just the first step. What we all need to do, is to *understand* the principles and teachings of the Bible. And here is where we encounter another major obstacle. Some 31 percent of all adults in America say that the Bible is too difficult to understand. Yet, every church around the world has sung the following children's song about the Bible—namely, “The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the book for me; I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.”

Without question, many Christians know something *about* the Bible, and perhaps know a lot *in* the Bible. However, they do not know how to take these Bible truths and make applications to their world of

school, friends, work, and family.

The Bible says, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [examples, or object lessons]: and they are written [recorded] for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Of course, these things were not recorded so that we could simply get the right answer in Sabbath school. James admonishes us, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22. All these things were written down so that we could be doers of God's Word in this present and final generation. As the apostle Paul wrote, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

There are five simple, but necessary steps we should take in studying God's Word:

First, we have to *read* it.

Second, we need to *understand* it. We do this by looking up all the significant words and phrases in the passage or passages.

Third, we are to *comprehend* the principle involved. The time and place may vary, but the principles taught in the Bible are eternal.

Once we grasp the principle, we are ready for step number *four—application*. Here we need to see ourselves in the story, or consider how situations today are similar to those of Biblical times. In this crucial step we must ask ourselves, What is God asking me to do?

And *fifth*, we are to design a *plan* of action. What will I now *do* to obey God's Word?

Before we proceed, think for a moment and ask yourself a few questions:

1. When I read the Bible do I have a pretty good understanding of the story or lesson?
2. Do I understand most of the words, facts, and concepts associated with the passage?
3. Do I look for and readily see the principle involved?
4. Do I see myself in the passage and readily apply the principle to my own life?
5. Do I usually follow through with a plan of action in keeping God's Word?

The answers to these questions will help us to think about how deeply we have gone with our study of God's Word. When I look at my own life, I can see more knowledge

than application. What I must ever keep in mind is to apply, apply, apply. And we need to think more and more about applying the Word to our everyday life with a plan of action because of (1) who God is, (2) what God has said, (3) who I am, (4) the sinful world in which I live, and (5) the truth that Jesus is coming back very soon!

I believe that most Christians want to apply the Word to their lives; however, so often we find that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. There are a number of reasons for weak applications: Some people just do not persevere in the Christian walk; some do not really want to change; others believe they are too busy for change and application; and, finally, some are misinformed about how to make the applications of the principles to their lives.

Before we look at the “how to” of applying Bible truths, we should do a little more self-examination. The *first* set of questions we should settle in our minds is: Am I truly open to the Word of God? If the Bible teaches me something, and I understand it, will I be willing to do it? Do I really want to do what God says?

The *second* set of questions is: Have I expressed to God my need for change? Have I been open with God about my conflicts at home, school, church, and work? Am I willing to face up to my own shortcomings and struggles in life?

The *third* set of questions is: What Bible-study tools will I use to understand God’s will for my life? Will I make use of the Spirit of Prophecy, a Bible concordance, and/or a set of commentaries? And when will I begin to use these tools to help myself understand God’s Word?

Finding Applications

As we have mentioned, we must begin the process of application by first *reading*, *understanding*, and *comprehending*. These three aspects can be broken down further into *five Ps*:

1. *Identifying the people in the passage*: Who are all the people in

the passage? How are these people like people who live in this present generation? And, do I see similarities between myself and the people described in the passage?

2. *Establishing the place or location of the actions*: What is the setting of the passage? What are some of the significant cultural, geographical, and historical facts? What are the similarities between those times and our present generation?

3. *Ascertaining the plot, conflict, or situation*: What is happening in the passage? What is the tension or conflict? How is this conflict similar to events today? What is happening in my own life that parallels these events?

4. *Determining the point or purpose of the story*: What was the intended message to the original audience? What did God want them to do? Or, what was God’s solution to the problem?

5. *Discovering the principle involved*: What is the timeless message being taught? What is the moral of the story?



Present, Priorities, and Plan

With these facts in mind, we can now move into the application stage. We must first bring the newfound principle into the *present*. For example, James says, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” James 1:19. In the

home, does this mean that parents should take time to listen to their children, and children to their parents? In the school setting, does this mean that teachers should listen to their students, and students to their teacher, and students to one another? In the work place, does this mean that supervisors should not ignore the voices of their employees, and vice versa?

After identifying our present circumstances, we need to establish *priorities* to do what God asks of us. How should I adjust my priorities to

Am I truly open to the Word of God?

become the person God wants me to be? For example, you have learned that you should maintain a healthy lifestyle, which includes regular exercise. However, in your typical daily schedule you watch four hours of television in the evening. Now what? What will be your priorities? Will you exchange those television viewing hours with time to exercise? How about giving priority to family time and worship time?

If you have decided that family worship and exercise have priority over television viewing, you will now need a *plan* to carry out your new priorities. Start by answering a few questions: What steps will get me to that goal? What should be my first step? How can I get started? Next, I suggest that you find someone to hold you accountable for these new priorities. Tell your spouse that you want to make a great and positive exchange, that you want to exchange television viewing time for family worship, family activity time, devotional time, and exercise. Now plan some simple and easy steps: Take the television set to a different place in your house where you are not accustomed to watching it. Make sure you have a good pair of walking or jogging shoes. As soon as you get home from work change your clothes. Put on your activity clothes,

whether it is for going for a walk or working in the garden. Once you have tied your jogging shoes it will be a lot harder to turn back. The next step is simply to walk out the door and begin your walk or work in the garden.

Perhaps you have recently been convinced that you must share the gospel with a friend or co-worker. You just read Jesus' call to "teach all nations" and that we are the "light of the world." Matthew 28:19; 5:14–16. What you need now is a plan of action. What steps can you now take? *First*, begin to pray

more loving? Make sure your goal is not too general such as, "I will be more loving." Get down to some specifics: Will you help your wife clear off the table after dinner and help her wash the dishes? Will you exchange those moments of complaining with words of encouragement? If your children have a bad day, will you sit down and spend some time just listening to them?

Or perhaps you have just read Ephesians 5:19–20, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

unto God" is not a habit with you. The good news is that all these things can be a joyous part of your life! So what prevents most people from being happier in the Lord? In most cases it is the lack of a plan. Start today by putting ten things on a "Thankfulness List." Then every day for the next month add one more thing to your list. By the end of the month you will have expressed forty things for which you are thankful. Now would that make a difference in your life?

We can find applications from the Word of God for all kinds of areas of our lives. There are *relationship* issues—between husbands and wives, parents and children, other relatives, friends, and co-workers. There are *personal* burdens that touch upon our fears, hopes, and goals. There are *character weaknesses* that take in issues of intemperance, dishonesty, impatience, and a lack of love. There are *resource* challenges that deal with time, money, and abilities. There are *responsibilities* you have taken upon yourself—perhaps you feel overburdened. You may feel that your life is out of control and that your priorities have been disrupted.

I do not have an answer to all of your challenges and stresses in life, but I know Who does! God cares for each one of us. More than that, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." Psalm 139:17–18. God has innumerable precious thoughts about each one of us. In His Word He expresses so many of those thoughts in showing us the way to life everlasting. In His Word can be found precious gems of truth that we may not only read, understand, and comprehend, but that we can apply to our everyday lives. My prayer is that you will spend the time to not only read His Word, but to discover the principles of His kingdom that can be lived out in your life with the strength He provides. Let us, dear friends, daily be doers of His Word. Apply, apply, apply. ✨

God has innumerable precious thoughts about each one of us.

earnestly over the situation, asking God's divine leading. *Second*, think about your own testimony. What has the Lord done for you? There is hardly anything more powerful than sharing a heartfelt testimony. *Third*, consecrate all of who you are to the Lord, making sure that there are no unconfessed sins in your life. You might even buy a book on witnessing and educate yourself on some witnessing skills.

Or, suppose you just read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 that speaks about love. You are convinced that you need to show more love to your family. What steps will you take to be

giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." You realize that you have not even looked at the Psalms for a whole year, and the only time you sing a hymn is in church. Then find a hymn of thanksgiving and praise to either read with expression or to sing. I have purchased for myself a little pocket hymnal that I can take with me wherever I go. Now I can find some time during the day to lift my thoughts to God "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

Perhaps the whole concept of "giving thanks always for all things

Holy Bible

Studying the Scriptures

S. N. Haskell

The Bible is truthfully said to be the Book of books. There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. But how will the study of the Scriptures strengthen the intellect? It cannot be done by hastily reading the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through, and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep—hidden meaning. Yet every person should read the Bible through—not once or twice—but do it continually. Then he will involuntarily begin to compare scripture with scripture. Strength comes by taxing the mind not only to retain, but to compare spiritual things with spiritual; as the blacksmith's arm is strengthened by constant use.

The apostle Peter's words are, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18. He again instructs us as to how we may grow. It is by "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Peter 2:1-3. There is no growing by the Spirit without the Word. For Christ's Words "are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. We are begotten by the Word of Truth. If we are not doers of the Word, but hearers only, then we deceive our own selves. We are like the man who beholds his natural face in the glass;

for "he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." James 1:24. We are to be sanctified through the truth; the Word of God is truth. See John 17:17.

No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. 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 seldom seen in our day. The Bible has in it all the power and intelligence of God. But we cannot derive this from the Word of God without taxing the mind, without meditating upon its contents



as we read it. My friend, if you would become acquainted with the Saviour, study the Scriptures. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory.

The secret of the apostle Paul's strength was his personal application of the Scriptures to himself. When

the prophet Ananias came to him, he quoted Isaiah 49:6: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." In believing that the Spirit of God inspired these words and applying them to himself, lay Paul's strength. He lived until he saw the fulfillment of Colossians 1:23.

It is when we take the Scriptures and personally apply them to our own heart, meditate upon them, and act in harmony with them, that they unconsciously impart to us strength of intellect. It is then we will go forward in the strength of God; for it is God that is in the Word, and circumstances bow in submission to the will of the soul. One day without food brings physical weakness. One day without taking some scripture to meditate upon brings barrenness of soul. We cannot live spiritually, we cannot grow in grace, without meditating upon the Word until it becomes the magnet of the soul. It should be the first thought in the morning, the last thought at night. In our waking moments, some rich promise, or some Bible thought, will, like a magnet in the midst of steel shavings, draw us from evil.

"My first thought shall be of Jesus.
To greet the rising day;
My last thought shall be of Jesus,
When twilight fades away." ❀

Review and Herald, February 22, 1906.

Memorizing SCRIPTURE



Jeff Wehr

Reading and studying the Scriptures get the believer in the Word—but memorizing it gets the Word in the believer! Knowing some Bible stories, church doctrines, and historical facts is not the same as having memorized the exact *Words of God*. So in this article, we are going to spend some time considering just that—memorizing Scripture.

Before you say, “I do not have a very good memory,” just remember that memorizing Scripture is not a question of ability, but of interest and desire. It may be true that some have an easier time memorizing lots of Scripture, but all of us can continue to memorize one passage of Scripture after another. Remember also, you are not in competition with anyone. Memorizing Scripture is a wonderful, beautiful, and beneficial Christian exercise between God and you!

Why Memorize Scripture?

Let us begin by asking the question, Why should we memorize Scripture? *First* of all, God commands it. The Lord says, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou

shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” Deuteronomy 6:6–8.

Second, we need God’s Word to survive. The Bible says, “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 8:3.

And *lastly*, we need God’s Word written in our hearts and minds so that we might not sin against God. The Psalmist wrote, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Psalm 119:11.

Three Basic Approaches to Memorizing Scripture

There are three basic approaches that people use to memorize Scripture: *First*, some people choose to memorize the introductory text that goes along with their reading from a daily devotional book. I think this is a very good approach, and there are some excellent devotional books to prepare us for the challenges today and for the coming crisis. My favorite daily devotional book continues to be the book *Maranatha, The Lord Is Coming* by Ellen G. White.

The *second* approach is to memorize whole chapters of the Bible. We have been encouraged to memorize whole portions of the Scriptures. “The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians should be committed to memory, written in the mind and heart.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1090. “The entire chapter [of Isaiah 53] should be committed to memory.” *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 1147. Perhaps one of the most important passages to memorize is Jesus’ command, “That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” John 15:12. Imagine never forgetting these precious words of Jesus as we interact with fellow believers and others not of our faith.

The *third* approach is to memorize passages of Scripture according to a certain topic or subject. For example, you may memorize verses of Scripture that will help you to keep your thoughts holy. Let us consider seven verses we could memorize this week in accordance with this subject:

Sunday	Psalms 19:14
Monday	Philippians 4:8
Tuesday	2 Corinthians 10:5
Wednesday	Romans 12:2
Thursday	Psalms 1:1–2
Friday	Philippians 2:5
Sabbath	Colossians 3:10



By memorizing passages according to a certain topic, each verse will help you to remember the other verses on that same topic. In addition to this, we can find a great variety of topics to memorize. In choosing a topic, we may decide to pick a topic that relates to something we are personally struggling with. Or, perhaps we could choose to memorize Bible promises that will help someone we know who is struggling with something. There are so many people in our world who are facing so many challenges and problems! They not only need our prayers but also the right word at the right time. By having a genuine interest in the salvation of others, we will never fall short of finding Bible topics or promises to memorize.

Understanding What We Are Memorizing

Of course, the key to memorizing scripture is not the mere memorization of the words themselves, but to have an understanding of the passage. Remember, what we do not understand, we do not possess. By having a clear perception of the verse, we will increase our ability to memorize that verse. In the book of Nehemiah, we find these very important words, “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and *gave the sense*, and caused them to understand the reading.” Nehemiah 8:8. (Emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted.)

To best understand the verse, we should read it in its context. Then we should read it aloud distinctly and give the sense of the verse—or place emphasis upon it. For example, I remember the time when I was helping our little boy Nathan learn to count to ten. He would always say, “One, two, three, four, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.” Nathan would never say, “five.” So we counted together, “One, two, three, four, FIVE, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.” After I shouted out “FIVE,” Nathan never again forgot to say “five” when counting to ten. We can help ourselves a great deal in memorizing Scripture by placing emphasis on certain words or phrases in the text.

Concentration

Perhaps the backbone to memorization is concentration. Too often the cares and perplexities of life hinder our concentration. However, if our minds wander, we must bring them back to the task at hand. It will take effort. But since you have decided that you want to memorize Scripture, refuse to allow the world to steal away this precious time.

One of the keys to concentration is to forget—in other words, do not repeat, reread and rethink—unimportant matters. Oftentimes we

cannot remember what we should, because we continue to be troubled by things we should forget.

Our memories can be chained by injuries that people have caused us. However, we must not continue to rehash in our thoughts, or in our conversations with others, what so-and-so said about us, or what so-and-so did to us. We would be better off memorizing Bible promises to help

The key to memorizing scripture is to have an understanding of the passage.

others who have been injured. We cannot go back and change all that has already happened to us and the way we have allowed it to consume our thoughts in the past, but we can choose a new future of dealing with such situations. I can choose to bless those who have done evil to me by memorizing passages of Scriptures that can help me through the trying process—as well as memorizing some verses that can help them. We can also be chained by our achievements, but let us remember that, no matter how far we have come, there is a glorious future of gaining more and more ground in this Christian walk.

Meditation

Trying to memorize without meditation is like trying to eat too fast. When we eat too fast we do not receive all the nutrients that are locked up in the food. However, when we meditate upon that which we are memorizing, the Word sinks deeper into our memories, filling memory's hall with holy associations, saturating our minds with holy thoughts, and motivating our hearts with holy affections. We will increase our understanding of God's Word, sharpen our discernment between good and evil, and increase our desire for prayer, praise, and witnessing!

One of the keys to meditation is the correct application of God's Holy Word. The real test of Scripture is not memorization—but obedience and submission to God's Holy Word. James says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James 1:22. We are not to stop with the memorization of God's Word; we should memorize God's Word so that we can live moment-by-moment by His commands—and at His commands!

Begin Today!

Any time we spend in memorizing God's Word will not be in vain. There are exceedingly rich

rewards for those who will spend time not only understanding God's Word but also making God's Word a part of them. What will be your goal? Will you choose to memorize three verses per week—or even seven? Will you begin to memorize Isaiah 53, or 1 Corinthians 12 and 13? Whatever you decide to do, it is important to decide to do *something*. Remember, "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. ✨

STRATEGIES FOR MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

Here are some strategies for memorizing Scripture. The following is by no means an exhaustive list, but I think it will serve a valuable purpose in getting started:

- Think positively about memorizing Scripture. Do not proceed with the attitude that "Jeff Wehr said we should memorize Scripture." Place a high value upon memorization and enjoy it!
- Begin by choosing several verses along the lines of a certain topic or subject that is meaningful to you **now**. This will give you a great opportunity to see the power of God's Word at work in your own life.
- Read the verse in its context so that you can understand the verse more fully.
- You may even choose to record the verses you are trying to memorize on a cassette tape. You could record many weeks of memorized texts that way. While you are driving the car or washing dishes, you could replay the tapes over and over again. If you choose to try this method, be sure to give expression to the texts as you read them.
- Putting a text to music is an effective way that many people have found for memorizing Scripture.
- Be sure not to try to memorize too much all at one time. Take a little bit at a time, and take the time to reflect upon the verses.
- Write out the verse on a piece of paper or on an index card. Someone wrote, "Once writing out what we desire to remember and giving due attention to what we write, will fix it in the mind more than reading it five times." I have found this to be very true. In the morning write out the verse at least once. Repeat that verse over and over during the day, and then try to write it out by memory at the end of the day.
- Try to recite the verse aloud during the day. In all likelihood you will not be able to recite the whole verse at once by memory, but do not be discouraged. Through repetition you will come to know and remember that verse very well. Remember, you are not in competition with anyone.
- Choose all the verses at the beginning of the week and see the bigger picture. Then take one verse at a time to memorize.
- Begin to use the verses you are memorizing in your conversation with others. After all, one of the greatest purposes of memorizing Scripture is to share God's Word with others.

God's Word Our Guide

Ellen G. White

The one Book that is essential for all to study is the Bible. Studied with reverence and godly fear, it is the greatest of all educators. Its pages are filled with truth. Would you gain a knowledge of God and of Christ, whom the Father sent into the world to live and die for sinners? An earnest, diligent study of the Bible is necessary in order to gain this knowledge.

The words of the Bible and the Bible alone should be echoed from the pulpits of our land. This Book is our great Director, given us by God. It is a Lamp to our feet and a Light to our path. It flashes its light ahead, that we may see the path over which we are traveling, and its rays are thrown back on the past, showing the most perfect harmony in that which, to the mind in darkness, appears like error and discord. In that which seems to the worldling an inexplicable mystery, the student of God's Word sees light and beauty.

We all need a guide through the many straight places of life, as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river; and where is this Guide to be found? We point you to the Bible. Inspired of God, written by holy men, it points out with great clearness and precision the duties of both old and young. It elevates the mind, softens the heart, and imparts gladness and joy to the spirit. The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible Guide under all circumstances, even to the end of the journey of life.

Compared With Words of Men

Had it been essential for us to study the writings of the early fathers, Christ would have told us to do this. But the fathers do not all speak the same thing. Which of them shall we choose as a guide? There is no need for us to trust to such uncertainty. We pass by the fathers to learn of God out of His Word. This is life eternal, to know

God. O, how thankful we should be that the inspired Word of God has been placed in our hands! Holy men of old wrote this Word as they were moved by the Spirit.

The commentaries written about the Word do not all agree. Often they come into collision with one another. God does not ask us to be guided by them, but by His Word. All can search the Scriptures for themselves. And they may know that the teaching of this precious Book is unchangeable. The opinions of human beings differ, but the Bible always says the same thing. The Word of God is from everlasting to everlasting.

God did not leave His Word to be handed down from generation to generation by oral transmission and traditional unfolding. Had He done this, the Word would gradually have been added to by man. Let us thank God for His Written Word.

The Bible Is the Key

The Bible is the Key that unlocks the mysteries which it is essential for human beings to understand in order to gain eternal life. The Bible is its own Expositor. Its bright beams are to shine into all parts of the world, that sin may be revealed. The Bible is a Chart, pointing out the waymarks of truth. Those who are acquainted with this Chart will be enabled to tread with certainty the path of duty, wherever they may be called to go.

He who will search the Bible with a humble, teachable spirit will find it a sure Guide, pointing out the way of life with unflinching accuracy. This Book contains nothing that is non-essential, nothing that has not a bearing upon our lives. It teaches man how to simplify life's complicated experiences. It is an Educator, endowing the simple-hearted followers of Christ with the wisdom that comes from the Author and Finisher of their faith.

If you would be strong, if you would have the integrity and wisdom of a Joseph or a Daniel, study the Scriptures. Parents, if you would teach your children to serve God and do good in the world, make the Bible your Textbook. It exposes the wiles of Satan. It is the great Elevator of the race, the Reprover and Corrector of moral evils, enabling us to distinguish between the true and the false. There is a rich mine of truth in this Holy Book.

The sailor who has in his possession chart and compass, and yet neglects to use them, is responsible for placing the lives of those on board his vessel in peril. The vessel may be lost by his neglect. We have a Guidebook, the Word of God, and we are inexcusable if we miss the way to heaven, for plain directions have been given us.

Whoever will prayerfully study the Bible, desiring to know the truth, that he may obey it, will receive the divine enlightenment. He will understand the meaning of the words, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. As he endeavors to reach the highest standard, the Bible is as a Light to guide his footsteps homeward. By studying it, he finds that he is a joint-heir with Christ to an immortal inheritance. The Guidebook points him to the unsearchable riches of Heaven. Day by day the peace of God is his reward, and by faith he sees a home of everlasting sunshine, free from all sorrow and disappointment.

Every means of grace should be diligently improved, that the grace of God may abound in the soul more and more. We must have spiritual knowledge that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ," that we may "be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:18-19. ❀

“The Most Wonderful Prophecy in the Bible”

How to mark your Bible and know God’s Word better

We present this study with the desire that it will encourage you, our readers, to a deeper examination of God’s Word. We have been warned that “none but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.” *The Great Controversy*, 593–594. We suggest that you use this study personally, in group settings, or with your family. We also encourage you to add other Scriptural references to this study as you proceed in your own personal, careful scrutiny of God’s Word.

THE EDITORS

Bible Marking Directions

1. In this month’s study our Bible marking key letters are WP, which represent “The Most Wonderful Prophecy in the Bible.”
2. On the blank flyleaf at either the beginning or end of your Bible, write in the key letters followed by the first Scriptural text. This month’s beginning entry will appear as follows: *WP Daniel 8:3–14*.
3. Turn to the first reference and in the margin near it write the second reference. Then turn to the second reference and in the margin near it write the third reference, and so on, to the end of the lesson. When you come to the last reference write “*End WP*.”

1WP: Daniel 8:3–14.

In Daniel 8 is recorded the vision wherein the prophet was shown the future under four mighty scenes. In the *first*, he saw a ram with two horns. In the *second*, a goat with a great horn between his eyes came from the west and completely overpowered the ram. After this Daniel saw this great horn broken, and four others came up in its place on the head of the goat. In the *third* scene he saw a little horn which came forth from one of these four horns, and in the end became a greater power than either the ram or the goat. In the *fourth* scene he was told that unto 2300 days—then the sanctuary would be cleansed.

2WP: Daniel 8:16.

The angel Gabriel was commanded to explain these things.

3WP: Daniel 8:20.

Gabriel explained that the ram with two horns represented the kings of Media and Persia who ruled the ancient world from 538 to 331 B.C.

4WP: Daniel 8:21.

The goat was Grecia, which conquered Persia at the Battle of Arbela in 331 B.C., and the great horn on the goat was the first king of the Grecian world empire—Alexander the Great.

5WP: Daniel 8:22.

At the height of his power, Alexander died of a fever brought

on by his excessive drinking of alcohol. His empire was divided among his four leading generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

6WP: Daniel 8:23.

Media-Persia “became great” (verse 4); Grecia “waxed very great” (verse 8); the little horn “waxed exceeding great” (as shown in verse 9). The little horn is none other than the Roman power which surpassed both Media-Persia, and Grecia in extent and power.

7WP: Daniel 8:26–27.

Gabriel did not explain the 2300 days at this time because Daniel fainted when the angel reached that point in the vision. Daniel 10:1 states that Daniel “had understanding of the vision.” Therefore Daniel must have been shown the meaning of the 2300 days in Daniel 9 since he understood it by the time we reach chapter 10.

8WP: Daniel 9:20–23.

Some time after “Daniel fainted” (Daniel 8:27), Gabriel returned to explain to him the 2300 day prophecy.

9WP: Daniel 9:24.

Seventy weeks were literally “cut off” from the 2300 days and allotted to the Jewish nation as their day of special opportunity. In symbolic prophecy a day represents a year. See Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6. So 70 weeks would be 490 years, and 2300 days would be 2300 years.

The 70 weeks would be the first 490 years of the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14.

10WP: Daniel 9:25, First Part.

This time period was to be counted from the time the decree went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem, which was then in ruins.

11WP: Ezra 6:14; 7:6–8.

This decree for the restoration of the Jewish state at Jerusalem, went into effect upon the arrival of Ezra, with a written copy of the decree, in the autumn of 457 B.C., in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.

12WP: Daniel 9:25, Last Part.

The Messiah was to appear to men 69 weeks, or 483 years, from the time when the decree for the restoration of Jerusalem would go forth. Four hundred eighty-three years from the autumn of 457 B.C., when the decree went forth, brings

us to the autumn of A.D. 27, and at that very time Jesus Christ was baptized, and appeared to the Jews as the true Messiah. See Matthew 3:16–17. Thus Daniel foretold years beforehand the exact time when Jesus the Messiah would appear to Israel.

13WP: Mark 1:14–15.

Christ recognized that His ministry began at the very time prophesied by the prophet Daniel.

14WP: Daniel 9:26–27.

In the middle of this seventieth week, which began with the baptism of Jesus, the Messiah would cause the sacrifice of lambs for sin to cease, by offering Himself for man's sins. The middle of the seventieth week would be three and one-half years from the autumn of A.D. 27, when the 69 weeks ended. That would bring us to the spring of A.D. 31. And at that very time, just as

Daniel predicted, Christ our Pass-over Lamb was crucified for our sins. The remaining three and one-half years of this seventieth week, as figured from the spring of A.D. 31, when the Messiah was cut off, brings us to the autumn of A.D. 34, when at the stoning of Stephen, Israel's special opportunity as a nation expired, and the gospel in a special sense went to the Gentiles. When you deduct the 70 weeks, or 490 years, from the 2300 years, you have 1810 years left. These remaining 1810 years, figured from the autumn of A.D. 34, when the 70 weeks expired, bring us to the autumn of A.D. 1844, to the end of the 2300 days, and to the time set for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. ❄

Adapted from *Helps to Bible Study* by J. L. Shuler

For further study . . .

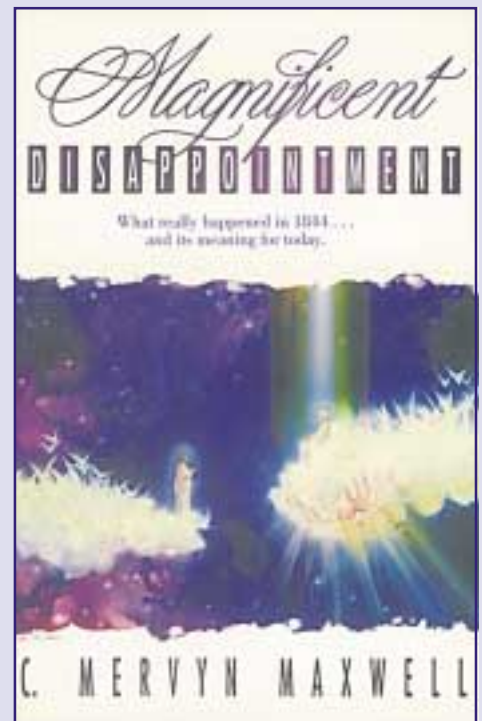
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Satan's Impersonation of

Christ



Russell R. Standish

Make no mistake about it, Satan's ability to counterfeit will not limit him to appearing as an angel of light. Any student of Matthew 24 will be impressed that on two occasions Christ warned against believing the followers of Satan when they make claims that they are Christ. See verses 5, 23–24. While human claims to be Christ will be limited by the skills of human beings, honed by Satan, the ultimate deception will undoubtedly be a counterfeit of Christ's return with the archdeceiver himself impersonating our Saviour. Without doubt, he will present lofty sentiments. He will do apparent good deeds. Every evidence of the eye and the ear will initially deceive. However, those who are students of God's Word will not trust their senses. They will listen to every word spoken. Each word will be measured by the Bible. While Satan doubtless can imitate the melodious voice of our Saviour, while he can tenderly take children onto his lap and pretend to bless them, and while he can appear to bless all of the people, utilizing Christ's mannerisms, nevertheless, it is impossible for him to truly counterfeit Christ's coming. Satan will not speak perfect

Biblical truth. Here it is that the diligent Bible student will be advantaged. The Scriptures, and the Scriptures alone, stand as our Safeguard. No wonder that when Paul was writing to the Roman believers, he applied Isaiah's words (see Isaiah 10:22–23) to God's



people in the last days, for surely all but a few will be deceived! "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Romans 9:27. It is mandatory that God's people be focused upon the Bible, daily dedicating their lives to serving

their Lord, and in His strength obeying every one of His commandments, or else they will be deceived.

Satan's appearance as Christ will undoubtedly result in an enormous following by those of other faiths. Christians of most denominations and also Moslems believe in the second coming of Christ. The Buddhists look forward to the return of "the Buddha of all Buddhas." Many messianic cults are to be found throughout paganism. Further, the Jews believe in the Messiah's return in power and great glory. Such wide acceptance of Satan claiming to be Christ will have a profound impact upon those among us who are superficial Christians—those who are still materialistic, still engrossed in entertainment, and whose hearts remain worldly. This phenomenon, the greatest mass "conversion" of all time, will be advanced as evidence beyond dispute that this being is indeed Christ returned to earth.

However, Scripture states that when Christ really does return, "every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7) and that "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"

(Matthew 24:27). In addition, Scripture enlightens us with the fact that the saints who are alive “shall be caught up together with them [the resurrected saints] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Satan will not be permitted to counterfeit such a coming—even though he will be walking on the earth while apparently performing miracles! However, Scripture plainly states that Christ will not stand on this earth until it is again renewed at the conclusion of the millennium. The promise is that we will be caught up together with Him in the clouds and meet Him in the air.

Furthermore, Satan will not be permitted to be seen by every eye simultaneously, but virtually every television camera will be focused upon him! People will surely cite the fact that men and women around the world are able to view him on their television sets as being evidence of the fulfillment of that prophecy. Nevertheless, not every individual will be able to view him on a television set at that time, even though billions will be focusing upon this apparent return of Christ. Still it can never be that *every* eye will see him at once. When Christ Himself returns He will require *no* electronic equipment to be seen all around the world at the same time.

Yet we must not imagine that the deception will be easy to detect. Only those whose hearts are fully in tune with Christ, and who have taken every opportunity to study His Word, will be able to escape this deception. So magnificent will be the counterfeit Second Coming that almost certainly the vast majority of Christians will be deceived. Paul’s urgent messages concerning deceptions in the last days are matters that should grip our attention today. Writing to the young minister Timothy, Paul prophesied, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” 1 Timothy 4:1–2. Here the devil’s deceptions are aptly termed that of “seducing spirits.” So decep-

tive will that seduction be that it will deceive all but the very elect. Notice that this was a prophecy of the latter days—our present time!

Speaking of the superficial Christians—those who possess a mere form of godliness but are not transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and whose characters are therefore defective—Paul wrote of them in his second epistle to Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:1–5. This passage is not speaking of profligates. It is not speaking of infidels. It is speaking of Christians who profess godliness, but whose lives do not testify to a conversion of heart. These professing Christians



are ready for every deception of Satan.

In the same letter Paul describes the rejection of sound doctrine. Today many people are proclaiming the view that we should discard doctrines and preach only the love of Christ. Little do they recognize that the love of Jesus is

the greatest of all doctrines! This and every doctrine is vital to our understanding of our God and His purposes. Christ is the Center of *every doctrine*. How can we proclaim the Second Coming if we do not preach of the One who is to come? How can we uphold the doctrine of God’s love if we ignore the One who loves us? How can we rightly preach holy Sabbath observance if we ignore the One who is the Lord of the Sabbath? What purpose would the preaching of the doctrine of the

Satan will never speak perfect Biblical truth.

resurrection achieve if we did not center our faith upon the One who is the Resurrection and the Life? How can we preach the mighty doctrine of justification if the One who justifies us is not the focus of this doctrine? Similarly, the doctrine of Christ’s sanctifying power would be an empty doctrine if we did not point to Him as the One who sanctifies us. We cannot preach obedience to God’s commandments unless we recognize that it was He who wrote them with His own hand, and that they represent a transcript of His character.

Every doctrine is a revelation of the Godhead. Every doctrine enlightens us on the character of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Every paragraph of Scripture testifies of the Deity. Every doctrine leads us closer to the foot of the cross.

However, today so many Christians are deceived by their senses! In the last decade, and more, there have been a superabundance of reports of Marian apparitions. Almost without exception, those experiencing these apparitions attribute them to God, heedless of the possibility that they could be deceptions of Satan. In a 1997 video tape presentation entitled “Prophecy and the New Times,” many apparitions of “Mary” were documented.

One such apparition took my attention in a special way.

An obviously sincere Roman Catholic priest had been severely injured in a motor-vehicle accident. He recalled that while he was in a semicoma, he received what he believed to be a vision of Mary and Jesus conversing. The following is a loose recounting of his “vision”: “Jesus” told “Mary” that this priest had not been a true servant of Christ, but that he had been a priest for his own selfish purposes. “Christ,” therefore, was determined that the priest should die and suffer the punishment of eternal hellfire. “Mary,” ever gentle, pleaded with “Christ” to give the priest another chance. However, “Christ” refused. Again, “Mary” pleaded with “Christ,” but again without success. Finally, “Mary’s” third earnest plea for this priest was accepted, and “Christ” decided to give him another opportunity to serve “Him” well.

A study of the subject of the state of man in death, as revealed in the Scripture, as we have seen briefly, points out that men and women have no knowledge in death. Certainly it was not Mary who was speaking in this man’s “vision.” Furthermore, in such a deception Christ would have *no* part. Therefore, the representation of Christ was also faulty. The priest, being unaware of Scriptural understanding on this matter, was deceived by Satan. There can be no other rational explanation for this so-called “vision.”

If we were in that priest’s situation, and truly believed the “vision,” whom would we love more—“Jesus,” who was determined to destroy our earthly existence and send us to an eternal hell, or “Mary,” who pleaded and pleaded with “Jesus” that he give us another opportunity to serve God fully? In recounting this “vision,” the priest

believed that he was doing Christ a favor, but indeed he was not. Had he tested his vision by the law and the testimony (see Isaiah 8:20), he would not have been deceived—nor would the numerous recipients of Marian apparitions be deceived, for they would recognize them as being the very deceptions of which Christ so earnestly warned in His discussion of the signs of events just prior to His second coming.

All Christians would do well to heed the final salutation of Paul to the Thessalonian believers: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Be not deceived! ❄

*For an in-depth discussion on the state of man in death, we recommend “*The Mystery of Death*” by Russell R. Standish and Colin D. Standish—Hartland Publications, P.O. Box 1, Rapidan, Virginia 22733, USA.

A Sabbath Test

We recently became alerted to a problem that has arisen in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a small country on the Arabian Peninsula. Brother S, a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist in the UAE, sent a prayer request by e-mail, which was then forwarded to several Adventists in the USA. In response we wrote to the Adventist brother in the UAE for more information. As the details unfolded, it became clear that the difficulties Adventists are facing in the UAE are strikingly similar to the prophesied Sunday-law crisis.

As you read the dialogue below, you will undoubtedly find some things sobering, and other things encouraging. We pray that it will inspire each of us to make certain that we are living each day according to uncompromising principles—that today we will be forming habits that will lay the foundation for the eternal decisions that we must make in the near future. As we have no desire to publicly embarrass anyone, all names have been replaced with initials.

A Prayer Request From the UAE

Brother S: “The Government of the United Arab Emirates has declared Thursday and Friday as the Official week-end. As a result, a large number of our church members (including myself) are unable to attend church. All our children are now forced to attend school on Sabbath.

“We as a Church are praying that God will work a miracle and the Government will change the laws and allow employers to decide on the week-end. We are confident that Our God Almighty will hear our prayers and we will soon be able to worship Him on the Holy Sabbath.

“Please pray for the members of the UAE Church and also for the special meetings that are being held in Sharjah.”

A Reply Asking for More Information

Brother H (in the USA): “Brother S, . . . Can you tell me a bit more about how the SDA members are relating to the new law? It sounds like many have had to miss church in order to send their children to school. Do they also find themselves having to work on Saturday? Are there some families that are defying the new law and going to church anyway? If you are able to elaborate further, I would appreciate it.

“Thanks, and we pray that the Lord will give you the courage to stay true to His principles in this time of difficulty.”

Brother S’s Response:

“Dear Brother H,

“Thank you for your message and for your

prayers, which we appreciate very much.

“I am not sure if you are aware of the rules governing employment here in the Middle East. They are very tough, and breach of any of these laws can result in one losing his/her job.

“All the members of the Adventist Church here are Expatriates from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Philippines, Jamaica, UK, USA and other countries. The primary reason for coming to work here is the better salary levels than back home. By working here in the Middle East, everyone of us is able to support our families back home.

“Defying the new law could mean losing jobs, which most of the Adventists cannot afford at this stage. Most of us are forced to work on the Sabbath.

“Children have no option but to attend school on Sabbath, as failing to do so would result in attendance at school being below minimum required levels. This could result in children being denied promotion to the next grade.

“Every Adventist Church Member here is facing a major crisis and they need your prayers. They are trying to do what is best based on their individual situations.

“I regret I am unable to comment or advise on each church member’s position/decision, neither am I able to make any other comments.

“With Kind Regards,
“Brother S.”

In another response, much of which was similar to the one above, Brother S also stated:

“I would like to inform you that we as a church are very strong and are confident that Our God Almighty will answer our prayers. I am also confident that each one of us will be able to stand the test when it does come. We would appreciate your prayers on our behalf rather than all these unpleasant and disheartening questions and statements.”

An Encouraging Testimony

After reading the above response from Brother S, Brother R sent him the following personal testimony:

“Dear Brother, I can sympathize with your predicament and you can be certain that I and my family will pray for the believers in UAE. It is evident that the time of trial is already beginning. How shall we stand?”

“I, too, have suffered for keeping Sabbath. I had taken a job with General Electric Ordinance Systems and was making a substantial sum of money. I was then given a position which increased my salary by \$14,000 per year. After a period of time I was told that I would have to work on the Sabbath to support the project. I immediately refused, knowing that the

Lord would be greatly dishonored, and I would risk eternal loss if I were to follow the course which the company had asked. No sooner than I had said ‘no’ to them, they said ‘no’ to me, and I was transferred to another job. I lost \$14K per year off my salary because I would not work on Sabbath.

“Am I sad that I obeyed God? Not on your life! Pleasing God means everything to the Christian. How different our Bible would read if Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had taken this approach. How different my history would read if I had done this evil. How often we rob God of His glory by refusing to believe His Word. My brother in the faith, with all due respect, I tell you that in the end of time, if we are not willing to stand and be counted, to uphold the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, no matter what the cost, we have no business calling ourselves SDAs.

“Stand and be counted. Remember, you are not doing this on your own. The Lord Jesus Himself will be at your side to strengthen and encourage you. Who knows whether your standing firm to principle will not spark a religious revival in your country that will spread to every corner of the globe. Don’t count the Lord’s arm too short.

“Courage, Brother!
“Brother R”

How Shall We Stand?

We note that Brother S said, “I am also confident that each one of us will be able to stand the test when it does come.” It appears that some of our brothers and sisters in the UAE are not aware that a test *has* come.

Perhaps you and I are facing tests today. We, too, may be praying that the Lord will remove the test, rather than give us the courage to stand. Let us pray that God will help us to repent of our unfaithfulness and to win the battles over self and temptation now, while probation still lingers.

While we do not know for sure how we will stand when the “big” tests come, we *can* prepare to make the right decisions. Let us each stand in the “little” tests today, and God will give us strength to bear the greater tests which are just ahead. ✠

The people of God are not ready for the fearful, trying scenes before us, not ready to stand pure from evil and lust amid the perils and corruptions of this degenerate age. They have not on the armor of righteousness, and are unprepared to war against the prevailing sin and iniquity around them. Many are not obeying the commandments of God; yet they profess so to do. If they would be faithful to obey all the statutes of God, they would have a power that would carry conviction to the hearts of the unbelieving.
Review and Herald, September 7, 1886.



If My People

A. Malkiah Perus

The Church has been longing and waiting for the revival, reformation and the latter rain. We often pray from the pulpit, “Lord, send us a revival.” We often sing, “There shall be showers of blessing; this is the promise of God.”

God’s promises are conditional. “Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions.” *The Desire of Ages*, 672.

When the conditions are met, God will surely fulfill His promise of the latter rain. “Before giving us the baptism of the Holy Spirit, our heavenly Father will try us, to see if we can live without dishonoring Him. . . . Do not think that you can have great spiritual blessings without

complying with the conditions God Himself has laid down.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 178.

The Lord has set some conditions for revival. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The Conditions

I. “If My People . . . Shall Humble Themselves.”

The *first* condition for revival is not prayer; it is *humility*. God is calling us to humble ourselves before Him.

The opposite of humility is pride. Pride is one of the major

stumbling blocks on the road to revival. Spiritual pride is a problem in the Laodicean church. The church says, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” Revelation 3:17. Pride does not feel the need of God. Therefore, “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.” Proverbs 16:5.

In our spiritual pilgrimage, humility comes first. It is the first step on the road to revival. Humility means going to God with a broken and contrite heart. It means to deny self. “God’s work of refining and purifying must go on until His servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that, when called into active service, their eye will be single to His glory. . . . God brings men over the ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect

humility and a transformation of character bring them into harmony with Christ and the spirit of heaven, and they are victors over themselves.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 86.

Christ humbled Himself. Humility was the hallmark of Jesus Christ. The God of majesty humbled Himself and was born in the manger of Bethlehem as a helpless babe. He humbled Himself as a servant and washed the feet of the disciples in the upper room. Christ was a Servant-Leader.

In the same manner, God wants us to go to Him in humility with a humble and contrite heart. We should approach the throne of grace, realizing our nothingness and our unworthiness. Christ is all in all.

“We are to pray for the impartation of the Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The church needs to be converted, and why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, as representatives of the church, and from a broken heart and contrite spirit make earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high? Let us pray that when it shall be graciously bestowed our cold hearts may be revived, and we may have discernment to understand that it is from God, and receive it with joy. Some have treated the Spirit as an unwelcome guest, refusing to receive the rich gift, refusing to acknowledge it, turning from it, and condemning it as fanaticism.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, 64.

If we do not humble ourselves, God will humble us as He did the children of Israel. God brought the children of Israel to a place of total humiliation. “He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . 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 8:3.

Because God wanted to teach the children of Israel lessons of humility, He let them go hungry. It was not the work of Satan. It was God who brought that crisis upon them. Forty years later, Moses reminds them of this important lesson. “Thou shalt remember all

the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years.” Verse 2.

What was the reason for humbling the children of Israel? What was the purpose behind it? It was a test to reveal what was in their hearts—“to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart.” Verse 2.

God knows our hearts. But since He also wants us to know what is in our hearts, He takes us on the road of humility. Often it is a humiliating experience. “The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 85.

What is the sign of true humility? True humility always results in the confession of sins and mistakes, and in making things right with others. This is the evidence of true humility.

2. “If My People . . . Shall Pray.”

God’s *second condition* is *prayer*. Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire to know God better.

We are to seek God, and pray earnestly for the preparation needed for the latter rain. “Since this is the means by which we are to receive power, why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning it?” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 50.

“For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 22.

“When we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost will fall on us.” *Ibid.*, 246.

“Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 29.

3. “If My People . . . Shall Seek My Face.”

The *third condition* is not another prayer, but *to seek His face*. “The Lord Jesus has placed Himself under obligation never to disappoint a true seeker for the Holy Spirit’s guidance.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, 26.

To seek His face means to practice the presence of God in our daily walk of life. To seek His face means to do everything for God’s glory. To seek His face means to seek His righteousness. The promise of God is “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33.

Am I truly open to the Word of God?

When we seek after the pleasures of this world instead of seeking His face, He chastens us and brings us back to the narrow way that leads to heaven. “God rebukes His people for their sins, that He may humble them, and lead them to seek His face. As they reform, and His love revives in their hearts, His loving answers will come to their requests. He will strengthen them in reformatory action. . . . Then a multitude not of their faith, seeing that God is with His people, will unite with them in serving the Redeemer.” *Review and Herald*, vol. 4, 386.

When we seek His face earnestly and fervently, we will reflect His glory. When Moses came down to the children of Israel after his encounter with God on the mount, the people could not behold His face because of the reflection of God’s glory. When we spend quality time with God in true fellowship, we will also reflect the glory of God.

The glory of God is His character. To reflect the glory of God means to reflect the character of God.

In order to reflect the character of God, we must first realize our spiritual poverty, and “draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” James 4:8. When we seek His face more earnestly and diligently, we are rewarded. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3.

4. “If My People . . . Shall Turn From Their Wicked Ways.”

Many Christians may not take the *fourth condition* seriously—to *turn from their wicked ways*. By failing to do this, there is a great danger. God’s evaluation of the Laodicean church is that we are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17.

A sick person will not seek the help of a doctor unless he realizes the condition of his sickness. Likewise, a sin-sick soul will not seek God unless he knows the true condition of his soul. We are admonished to “seek” His face, because only God knows the true condition of our soul. He is our Great Physician. He is our Sympathizing Friend. He is our Balm in Gilead.

Sin is deceitful. The Word of God declares, “All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.” Proverbs 16:2. We should learn to look at sin through God’s eyes. Then we will see the misery of our spiritual condition.

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. There are sins of commission and omission. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17. Hatred, jealousy, envy, and anger are some of the problems with our hearts.

God told the rebellious people of Israel: “If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods . . . from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you.” 1 Samuel 7:3.

God’s counsel to each one of us is to *return unto Him with all our hearts*.



Revival in the Apostolic Church

When the apostolic church met the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14, the promise of God was fulfilled.

1. They Humbled Themselves.

“They humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 36. Note the order of their response to the divine directives. They humbled their hearts. They repented. They confessed their unbelief. True humility calls for repentance and confession of sins.

“Under the Holy Spirit’s working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled. As in humility they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they received the fullness of the Godhead, and were

fashioned in the likeness of the Divine.” *Ibid.*, 49–50.

2. They Prayed Earnestly.

“The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men, and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ.” *Ibid.*, 37.

They prayed daily: “Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection.” *Ibid.*, 49.

“Under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven.” *Ibid.*, 38.

3. They Sought His Face Diligently.

“They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were ‘continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.’ Luke 24:53.” *Ibid.*, 35. “They drew nearer and nearer to God.” *Ibid.*, 37.

4. They Turned From Their Wicked Ways.

“Putting away all differences, all desire for supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship.” *Ibid.*

“Those who at Pentecost were endued with power from on high, were not thereby freed from further temptation and trial. . . . They were compelled to strive with all their God-given powers to reach the measure of the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection.” *Ibid.*, 49.

5. They Were United.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Acts 2:1.

“The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.” *Ibid.*, 48.

The Promise Fulfilled

When the apostolic church achieved the goal of unity, the Holy Spirit was poured out.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:2–4.

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my

servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” Acts 2:14–18.

The Mission Accomplished

“What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost? The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church

“The Holy Spirit. . . . enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.” *Ibid.*, 39.

“Their hearts were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying to the power of Christ.” *Ibid.*, 46.

The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of Heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.

beheld converts flocking to her from all directions. Backsliders were re-converted. . . . Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions. . . . Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence. One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character, and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.” *Ibid.*, 48.

What a glorious testimony! “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41. “In Jerusalem, the stronghold of Judaism, thousands openly declared their faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah.” *Ibid.*, 44.

“What followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of Heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.” *Ibid.*, 38.

The Final Victory

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children.” *The Great Controversy*, 464.

“In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. Many were praising God. . . . Hundreds and thousands were seen visiting families and opening before them the Word of God. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. . . . I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 126.

Praise God! Hallelujah!
AMEN! ❖

Deadly Hot Dogs and Ham

News Item: In the *U.S. News and World Report*, February 22, 1999, issue the story is related that many people who have eaten hot dogs have become ill, and death has followed. The report mentions the stillborn death of two children who “were two of the youngest victims in a 14-state *listeria* outbreak that began last August, with more than 75 confirmed cases and 17 deaths, including 12 adults and 5 miscarriages or stillbirths, making this the second-largest outbreak of *listeria* in U.S. history. . . . Even when treated with antibiotics, about 1 in 4 listeriosis patients dies, or 425 people yearly.”



Prophetic Perspective: Years ago Seventh-day Adventists were warned regarding the dangers of meat eating. The servant of the Lord said, “The liability to take disease is increased tenfold by meat eating.” *Healthful Living*, 62.

She also says that “a very serious objection to the practice of meat eating is found in the fact that disease is becoming more and more widespread among the animal creation. The curse because of sin causes the earth to groan under the inhabitants thereof, and every living thing is subject to disease and death. Cancers, tumors, diseases of the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, all exist among the animals that are used for food. . . . The only way to avoid contracting disease from the use of flesh meats is to discard them

altogether.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 421.

We certainly have a duty to share with others the dangers of including flesh meat in their diets, especially as the dangers of disease and death increase.

Rediscovering Sunday Before 2000

News Item: “As part of today’s culture wars, we face a struggle over the meaning of Sunday.

“Pope John Paul II pointed to this phenomenon in *Dies Domini*, his 1998 apostolic letter on the meaning of Sunday. The letter notes the contemporary confusion between Sunday and the weekend (which includes a secularized Sunday) . . .

“John Paul makes it clear that Sunday is first of all a religious celebration and that it exists so that, particularly on the threshold of the year 2000, Christians can rediscover the significance of the Lord’s Day ‘for human and Christian life.’” *National Catholic Register*, February 28–March 6, 1999.

Prophetic Perspective: “The churches of our time are seeking worldly aggrandizement, and are as unwilling to see the light of the prophecies, and receive the evidences of their fulfillment which show that Christ is soon to come, as were the Jews in reference to His first appearing. They were looking for the temporal and triumphant reign of Messiah in Jerusalem. Professed Christians of our time are expecting the temporal prosperity of the church, in the conversion of the world, and the enjoyment of the temporal millennium.” *Maranatha*, 11.

In connection with this “temporal millennium” will be a law enforcing Sunday observance. See *Maranatha*, 209; Revelation 13:11–18. Professed Christians will claim that this movement for Sunday is part of the great movement for the

conversion and peace of the world. Those who stand against this movement will be derided and threatened. Some will become martyrs, but God has promised in His Word that those who are faithful will live and reign with Christ. See Revelation 20:4. Let us hold fast to Christ in these last hours.



Chinese Mystical Movement

News Item: A new mystic movement called “Falun Gong” is sweeping through China. Its leader, Master Li Hongzhi, has an estimated 60 million followers. “Adherents in China say the Falun Gong master can cure cancer, heal the blind, and make white hair turn black. Even from afar, Li is said to bestow on each of his followers a mystical ‘law wheel’ that perpetually rotates in the lower abdomen, curing disease and physical decay.

“Falun Gong (literal translation: the power of the law wheel) is a modern variant of the ancient practice of *qi gong*, the use of breathing exercises to regulate the *qi* (also spelled *chi*), an energy or life force circulating within the body.” *U.S. News & World Report*, February 22, 1999.

The report goes on to say that the government, instead of opposing this movement, may actually be embracing it.

Prophetic Perspective: “Satan has long been preparing for his final



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effort to deceive the world. . . . Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet: 'I saw three unclean spirits like frog. . . . They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.' Revelation 16:13-14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His Word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion." *The Great Controversy*, 561-562.

"The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism. . . . Papists, Protestants, and worldlings . . . will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium." *Ibid.*, 588-589.

Freedom to Choose Religious Belief Under Assault Globally

Religious Liberty Update:

"Worldwide, the right of an individual to convert to another religion is under assault in dangerous and unprecedented ways.

"In India, Hindu nationalists accused Christians of forcing the rural poor to become Christians. . . . Hindu fundamentalists are engaged in one of the worst outbreaks of violence against Christians in India's modern history. . . .

"In Israel, Jewish émigrés* who openly affirm Jesus as their Messiah are considered Christian converts and thereby may lose their citizen-

ship rights, while ultra-Orthodox Jewish extremists single out Messianic Jews for harassment and intimidation.

"In Egypt, a Muslim who accepts Christianity is prevented from legally changing his official identity papers.

"In Eastern Europe and Russia, Orthodox clergy frequently use their influence with local government officials to interfere with evangelistic outreach by Protestants.

"In Mexico City in January, Pope John Paul II, in a veiled reference to the rapid growth of charismatic and Protestant congregations, urged Catholics to confront 'the challenge of the sects.'" *Christianity Today*, March 1, 1999.

Prophetic Perspective: To the Reformers at the Diet of Spires in 1529, came the papal decree that the Reformers were not to extend the reformed faith to new territories. The freedom to speak of their faith was prohibited, and no new conversions would be allowed. See *The Great Controversy*, 199. Praise God the Reformers refused to surrender their religious freedom.

Today we also face a crisis over whether we will obey God or man. The U.S. will soon fulfill its prophetic role by attempting to crush out religious liberty. See Revelation 13:11-18. But God has given us a message in the third angel of Revelation 14 that cannot be muted or compromised without encountering the frown of God. The choice is ours!

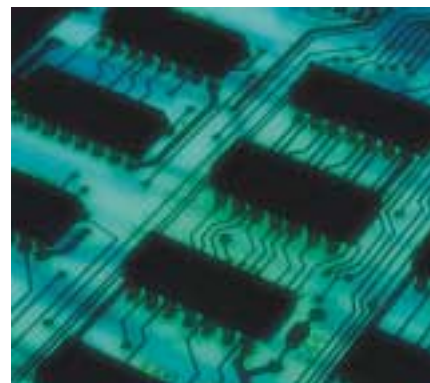
CIA Predicts Serious Y2K Problems Globally

News Item: "The Year 2000 computer problem could cause serious disruptions abroad, including breakdowns in nuclear reactors and strategic missile systems, mid-winter power outages and disruptions in world trade and oil shipments, a CIA official warned. . . .

'We currently do not see a danger of unauthorized or inadvertent launch of ballistic missiles from any country due to Y2K problems.'

"But he said there could be serious local problems with missiles if temperature or humidity monitors malfunction, and problems in early-warning systems could lead to incorrect information." *AP*, February 25, 1999.

"Bennett and Dodd [who is vice chairman of the Senate's Y2K committee] said the U.S. nuclear arsenal appeared to be safe, but the computer bug could cause weapons systems in other countries to malfunction. Dodd said it was critical that Russia, Pakistan, India, China and other nations work together on the problem. But both senators said there was no way to tell how serious the disruptions would be. 'When we get to New Year's Eve, everybody, no matter how informed we think we are, is going to be holding his breath,' Bennett said." *Reuters*, February 28, 1999.



Prophetic Perspective: Jesus has forewarned us that there would be "distress of nations with perplexity." What should our attitude be as Christians as we see the events that are happening around us? The Bible plainly declares that we are to "look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." See Luke 21:25-28. Jesus expects us to have a calm spirit and assurance of

His care—not the unrest and panic that the world exhibits.

Taking the Gospel to the Rich

News Item: “Last month, when Pope John Paul II toured Mexico and St. Louis, he sternly warned against a runaway free-market system based on a ‘purely economic conception of man.’ But he also exhorted church leaders not to forget the wealthier members of their flock. . . .

“Among the Pope’s avid listeners was Thomas S. Monaghan, the founder of Dominos Pizza, Inc. . . .

“Late last year, Mr. Monaghan sold most of his stake in Domino’s, the world’s largest pizza-delivery chain, . . . for a reported \$1 billion. And inspired by the Pope, he vowed to devote the rest of his life—and his money—to spreading the Gospel, especially among the business elite. . . .

“Mr. Monaghan plans to use his fortune to finance a network of Catholic schools . . . to support politicians who oppose abortion . . . to promote his conservative agenda through Credo, a newspaper; WDEO, a radio station he owns, and the Thomas Moore Law Center. . . .



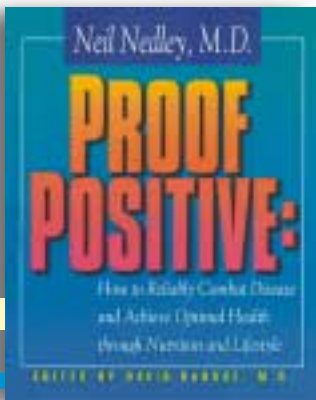
“But most of all, he is focusing his attention on Legatus, a lay support group for Catholic executives and their spouses that he

believes can ‘change the world.’” *The New York Times*, February 14, 1999.

Prophetic Perspective: Revelation 17:4 speaks of the false church being “decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.” Revelation 18:15, 17 speak of both the merchants and the mariners being “made rich by her.” Certainly prophecy describes the Papacy in very accurate terms. And now we see this new movement called “Legatus,” which is strengthening the already powerful Catholic Church. Surely the time is not far off when the antichrist power will again ride atop the nations of this world.

May the people of God lift up their voices like a trumpet to give the message while there is still time! ✝

* émigrés: People who left their native country, especially for political reasons.

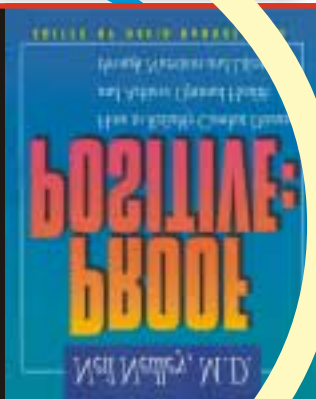


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Did you Know...

According to the Guinness Book of Records, the largest apple ever plucked from a tree weighed three pounds, two ounces, and was picked in Caro, Michigan!

Why Apples?

Apples. Perhaps they remind you of the school days, when no matter what else was in your lunch, you always had an apple. Remember how hard apples were to eat when you could not rely on your front teeth? It seems that apples, teachers, and school are inextricably linked together!

Regardless of where you are today, apples should still play an important role in your diet. This attractive fruit contains many properties that are essential to optimum health.

Apples contain both soluble and insoluble fibers which enhance many body functions. Eating only one apple a day will supply you with 20% of the RDA of fiber for a 2,000-calorie diet.¹

Eating two or three apples a day lowers cholesterol, reduces blood pressure, and keeps blood sugar levels steady.²

Pectin, a soluble fiber making up 25% of the apples' total fiber, improves transit time through the intestines, thus aiding weight loss. Pectin helps to lower cholesterol by reducing the absorption of fat. One French study showed a 28% drop in cholesterol, which translated into a 56% drop in the risk of heart disease. Even more beneficial is the apples' ability to raise the desirable HDL cholesterol level, and lower the destructive, artery-clogging, LDL level.³

The insoluble fibers—cellulose and hemicellulose—are helpful for the removal of cancer-causing substances from the colon wall. They also aid in weight loss by giving a sense of fullness while not adding fat.⁴

Studies have shown that those who eat more apples tend to have fewer colds, fewer upper respiratory infections, and less sickness all around.

Apples aid in the prevention of both constipation and diarrhea. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that apples helped to decrease the time it took to have a bowel movement, by increasing the stool weight, which in turn increased the number of trips to the bathroom during a 24-hour period.⁵ If suffering a bout of diarrhea, grate one ripe apple, and allow it to stand at room temperature for several hours until it is considerably darkened before eating. The oxidized pectin is the same basic ingredient used in Kaopectate®.⁶

A poultice made from apple helps to reduce fevers. In order to make one, finely grate an apple and spread it ½" thick on a piece of double-layered cheesecloth about 6" in length. Apply this to the forehead. It may also be applied to the throat or chest area if needed. Leave on for one hour.⁷

Two British doctors gave a group of children one or two thin slices of raw apple after each meal or for a snack. They subsequently discovered that as a result there was a substantial decrease in cavities.⁸

Apples give off large amounts of ethylene gas—a substance produced by fruit that aids in its ripening. To speed the ripening of other fruits, you may place an apple (or apple slices) in a bag with them. You can also use apple slices to soften hardened fructose or granulated sugars.⁹

It is always amazing to see the wonders that God has created—so many nutrients put in such a small package! ✨

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The Sanctuary Doctrine

Cultic or Biblical?

Part 5

Kevin D. Paulson

Our last article reviewed evidence from the book of Daniel for the Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary doctrine, in response to arguments raised in Dale Ratzlaff's recent book, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*.¹ In this article we begin examining Ratzlaff's arguments against the sanctuary doctrine which he claims are based on certain New Testament passages, particularly from the book of Hebrews.

Again, we state for the record that our purpose in reviewing these issues is not to persuade hardened critics, whose contempt for our faith will not likely change apart from a Damascus Road experience. We simply wish to provide answers for those persons with honest questions about the Biblical faithfulness of Adventist beliefs.

The Atonement

We need to review once more the methods of Bible study taught

by the Bible itself, which constitute the basic tools of historic Adventist theology:

1. All Scripture is inspired by God, profitable for doctrine, and able to make us "wise unto salvation." 2 Timothy 3:15–16; see also Matthew 4:4.
2. Scripture consists of the words of God's holy men, inspired by the Holy Spirit. See 2 Peter 1:20–21.
3. What the Holy Spirit inspires is to be spiritually discerned, by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Corinthians 2:12–14; see also Isaiah 28:9–10; 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

The need to consider all of Scripture before reaching a doctrinal conclusion becomes especially critical as we study the Bible doctrine of the atonement. Like any other doctrine, the atonement can

only be understood in the light of the whole Bible. If any one portion of Scripture is used to the neglect of another, or if one portion is mistakenly viewed as theologically superior to another, confusion and falsehood will be the sure results.

Ratzlaff, like other evangelicals, criticizes historic Adventism for teaching that Christ's atonement for sin was not completed at the cross.² He declares that "the incomplete atonement has been a thorn in SDA's flesh for many years."³ He condemns Ellen White because of her denial of a finished atonement on the cross—she "pictures Christ as now having a *standing, pleading* ministry before the Father."⁴ This teaching of Ellen White's, of course, comes straight out of the New Testament:

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.⁵

The book of Daniel identifies Christ as being Michael, “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.” Daniel 12:1. While many evangelicals deny that Michael refers to Christ, the Messiah is the only heavenly being identified in Daniel as a Prince. See Daniel 9:25; see also 8:25. No heavenly angel, which many evangelicals believe Michael to be, is ever identified in Scripture as a Prince. The New Testament declares that at His Second Coming, “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Here the voice of Jesus is identified as the voice of the Archangel—or rather, the Ruler of the angels. See also Jude 9. Moreover, Michael is the only heavenly being described in Scripture as an Archangel. Paul likewise states that “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5. If Paul is right, only One could be standing for God’s people at the end of time or any time—and that is Christ.

A mediator is the same as an intercessor. The work of such a one is to plead, so that reconciliation might be accomplished. Hebrews 7:25 is clear, in contrast with Ratzlaff’s view, that Christ is doing exactly that just now. God does not need to be reconciled to man, but man needs to be reconciled to God because of the sins that have separated man from God. See Isaiah 59:2. This reconciliation is, in fact, the process of atonement, as our discussion will demonstrate.

The Bible is clear about what the word atonement means. In Leviticus, chapters 4 and 5, we read that the process of atonement required three phases:

1. Confession of sin over the sacrificial victim.
2. The slaying of the victim.
3. The mediation of the blood by the priest in the sanctuary.

Only after these three phases occurred do we read that an atonement had been made, with forgiveness for the sinner taking place. See

Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:9–10.

This three-phase atonement is the same in the New Testament as in the Old. The apostle John declares what is required for the sinner to receive God’s forgiveness:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . .

“My little children, 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 1:9; 2:1.

Paul teaches the same thing when he writes: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Romans 2:13. Elsewhere the Bible reinforces what the ancient sanctuary service illustrates:

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD; and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7.

God’s forgiveness, or justification, is not merely the judicial removal of our sins. It also involves the removal of sin from our hearts and lives. David stated his understanding of this principle after his sin with Bathsheba, when he prayed: “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.” Psalm 51:7, 10. In Paul’s words:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5–7.

The reason God’s forgiveness—or atonement—cannot occur until sin has been confessed and forsaken is because God cannot remove sin from our hearts unless we want Him to. And because God’s

judicial forgiveness involves the actual cleansing of the heart and life (which is what the “renewing of the Holy Ghost” in Titus 3:5 is all about), judicial forgiveness cannot take place unless sin has been willingly given up. See Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7. God’s reverence for liberty demands that sin not be removed unless it is voluntarily relinquished. The Bible declares, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

“Atonement,” or at-one-ment, is another word for reconciliation—bringing estranged parties back together. Romans 5:11 in the King James Version reads:




“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

Most modern translations use the word “reconciliation” rather than “atonement” in this verse, but the two really mean the same thing. Does the Bible teach that this reconciliation process took place at the cross? Or did the cross simply make the process possible?

The Bible contains several passages which speak of the death of Christ reconciling man to God:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:10.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imput-



ing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.

"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in

audience which doubtless included many who were not yet converted.

The verse in Romans which states that "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10), must be placed alongside Colossians 1:21, which states that "you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." These verses clearly speak of those who have relin-

of the law shall be justified." Romans 2:13. We have already seen how this teaching of Paul's is based on the Old Testament teaching that the confessing and forsaking of sin are necessary in order to receive God's forgiveness. See Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7.

Ratzlaff declares: "Contrary to EGW, the Bible clearly states that the atonement was completed at the cross."⁶ The following two verses are cited by Ratzlaff⁷ as proof for his position:

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30.

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:14.

The first passage says nothing about the *atonement* being finished; it simply says that Jesus cried, "It is finished," without in context explaining *what* was finished. We need to look elsewhere in Scripture for an explanation. Ironically, Ratzlaff quotes the context of the above passage from Hebrews, which in fact explains just what was finished at Calvary:

"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first [covenant], that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Hebrews 10:9–14.

The theme of this passage, of course, is that the many sacrifices of the Old Testament, which could not take away sin, have been replaced by

A finished or completed atonement can only occur when human beings respond affirmatively to the apostle's invitation: "Be ye reconciled to God."

heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Colossians 1:20–23.

Notice that while Paul says in one place, "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10), and in another that God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:18), he yet invites his readers to, "Be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20. Paul's earlier statement in 2 Corinthians 5 that "we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf" (verse 12), gives evidence that "we" in this context refers to himself and his fellow evangelists who had experienced God's converting power, while "you" refers to his

quished their evil deeds by availing themselves of Calvary's reconciling power. Without question this cannot—as many believe—refer to the whole world, but only to those who have chosen through God's grace to give up their sins.

We also notice that 2 Corinthians 5:19, which speaks of the world as the focus of reconciliation, uses the word "*reconciling*," which is in the present, continuous tense. Never does Paul say that the *world* has been *reconciled* (past tense). The verse also says, "Not imputing their trespasses unto them." In Romans Paul cites an Old Testament passage on this subject:

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans 4:7–8; see also Psalm 32:1–2.

Does Paul apply these statements to the whole world?— Obviously not, since two chapters earlier he maintains that "the doers



the one Sacrifice of the New Testament which can. See also Hebrews 7:27. Seventh-day Adventists have never denied this truth. At no time in our history has it been denied that Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary was complete and fully capable of saving all people who have ever lived—provided they avail themselves of this saving power. This is what Ellen White means in context when she speaks in several places of a finished, or complete, atonement at the cross.⁸ But what Adventists have historically denied, because it is not Biblical, is the “finished atonement” theology—which teaches the involuntary forgiveness and reconciliation of every human being to God at Calvary, whether they like it or not.

In short, that which was finished when Jesus died was His sacrifice for sin. No more sacrifices needed to be offered. All the power essential for man's salvation has been provided by the cross. But the atonement cannot be completed until man confesses and forsakes his sins, and the blood is mediated by our High Priest Jesus in the sanctuary above. See Hebrews 2:17; 7:25.

We find it interesting that neither the word “atonement” nor its synonym, “reconciliation,” can be found in the verses quoted earlier from Hebrews 10. We do find Christ's work of making reconciliation described in the following verse:

“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17.

In other words, Jesus' work of reconciliation (atonement) is part of His high priestly ministry, which the book of Hebrews repeatedly identifies with His intercession in heaven. See Hebrews 4:1–16; 6:19–20; 7:24–26; 9:11–12. The book of Hebrews is telling us that Christ is now making

reconciliation for our sins as our High Priest in heaven. No hint can be found anywhere in Hebrews, or elsewhere, that this work of reconciliation was completed at the cross.

Hebrews 10 teaches that only the sanctified are depicted as saved because of Calvary. Never is the whole world described as being involuntarily saved because of Calvary. Again we note the words of Hebrews 10:14: “By one offering he hath perfected for ever *them that are sanctified*.” (All emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted). Verse 10 speaks of how “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” We noted earlier the passage from Colossians which speaks of making peace through the blood of the cross by the relinquishing of evil deeds. See Colossians 1:20–23. Elsewhere Paul speaks of how the ordinance of baptism symbolizes the believer's participation in Christ's death. See Romans 6:3–5. This obviously does not apply to the whole world, though the whole world is offered the chance to claim the grace and power thus provided.

Ratzlaff claims that while Ellen White portrays Jesus as *standing* in His high priestly ministry, the Bible pictures Him as *seated*—supposedly implying a finished atonement at the cross.⁹ However, the Bible is quite clear that Jesus' physical posture in heaven is not at all the issue. We have already seen the verse from Daniel which depicts Michael (Christ), as “the great prince which *standeth* for the children of thy people.” Daniel 12:1. Moreover, the symbolic nature of this posture (much like the “seating” of delegates at a convention) is obvious in this verse, since Michael is said to “stand up, the great prince which *standeth*.” In other words, He is standing in either case. Obviously, this language is symbolic. Whether seated or standing, Jesus' work as Mediator is essential to the comple-

tion of the atonement process.

In short, there is no possible way for the atonement—the reconciliation of man to God—to be completed at the cross. According to Scripture, man has been separated from God by sin. See Isaiah 59:2. Therefore, the only way we can come back to God is to get rid of sin. But since no one can accomplish this work in his own strength (see John 15:5), Jesus came to earth to provide power whereby we can be saved from our sins (see Matthew 1:21). But this salvation cannot be ours unless we want it. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17. “And being made perfect, he [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Hebrews 5:9.

The Bible texts quoted by Ratzlaff in no way teach a finished atonement on the cross. They do teach a complete sacrifice, which Adventism has always believed. But neither the Scriptures nor historic Adventism teach a finished atonement on the cross. A finished or completed atonement can only occur when human beings respond affirmatively to the apostle's invitation: “Be ye reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20. ✠

In our next article we will take a closer look at Hebrews 9 and the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the Atonement.

References:

- ¹ Dale Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists: An Evangelical Resource. An Appeal to SDA Leadership* (Sedona, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996).
- ² *Ibid.*, 219–220.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 219.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 221 (emphasis original).
- ⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are from the King James Version.
- ⁶ Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 220.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 220–221.
- ⁸ See Ellen G. White statements quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7a, 663–664.
- ⁹ Ratzlaff, *Cultic Doctrine*, 223.



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Parents, what is our first work?

Many are ever restless and disappointed, seeking for some greater work than that which now occupies them. Some mothers long to engage in missionary labor, while they neglect the simplest duties lying directly in their path. The children are neglected, the home is not made cheerful and happy for the family, scolding and complaining are of frequent occurrence, and the young people grow up feeling that home is the most uninviting of all places. As a consequence, they impatiently look forward to the time when they shall leave it, and it is with little reluctance that they launch out into the great world, unrestrained by home influence, and the tender counsel of the hearth-stone.

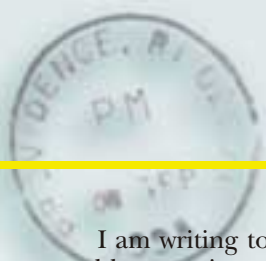
The parents, whose aim should have been to bind these young hearts to themselves, and guide them aright, squander their God-given opportunities, are blind to the most important duties of their lives, and vainly aspire to work in the broad missionary field.

As I have marked these unhappy, restless spirits, and deplored their power to shadow the lives of others, the thought would arise: What a fearful deception is upon them! How terrible a mistake they are making!

Some of this class pronounce the faithful Christian mother worldly, as they mark how attentive she is to the wants of her husband and children, how zealous in performing the sweet home duties. They sigh because of her lack of spirituality, thinking the labor wasted that goes to make home a place of comfort and happy rest. Their minds fail to understand how the performance of these humble tasks can satisfy the heart. *Signs of the Times*, August 9, 1877.

Parents, your own home is the first field in which you are called to labor. The precious plants in the home garden demand your first care. To you it is appointed to watch for souls as they that must give account. Carefully consider your work, its nature, its bearing, and its results. *Adventist Home*, 200

*You may also order the tapes of the 1997 and 1998 family camp meetings. Please inquire regarding prices.



Use this offering where needed and continue to keep me on the mailing list. Keep me posted on the Spanish project that Brother Wehr spoke about when he was here. I thank God for your ministry and dedicated service to Him and to us.

H. P., California

I will just like to thank you for the material you sent to me. I hope you will continue with the good work.

A. S., Zambia

I am a lay activity coordinator in our local church over here. We have been organizing so many crusades and revivals, but whenever we go, we do not get books and tracts concerning the teachings we deliver. That has made our work a little bit difficult. I therefore want to appeal to you to send me some books which give more information about the Sabbath, the change of the Sabbath and marriage.

I hope you will help by sending me books which will enable me to expand the evangelical work of the Lord. Hoping to hear from you very soon.

A. P., Ghana

Please, will you kindly send me some books or pamphlets which contain the Words of God—more especially a paper called *Earth's Final Warning*.

I was in darkness. I was really a Roman Catholic since I was in childhood, but I read this paper from a Seventh-day Adventist member, and I am planning to make a change.

About 4 or 5 months ago I read another paper that you published called *Our Firm Foundation*. On the front of the page I believe it read: "Will the Pope rule the world again?" It was excellent in all accounts, being of total truth which everyone should have the chance to

read. I never saw it again. I truly would like to have a copy of the paper and others for my own.

Would it be possible to get some? I would be willing to pay for some, if needed, as I have never read such truth on this subject. I shall be very glad to receive more books from you.

A. C., Ghana

I am a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and I came about with your address from a friend of mine who is also an Adventist, when he was reading your popular magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*. I decided to write to you so that you will post me some of your books like *The Great Second Advent Movement*, *Health For Today*, books written by Ellen G. White and other Bible books you can afford.

Through my friend, I got to know how your ministry has helped many Adventists who were backsliding from God. Thank God that now they are Adventists forever!

Your provision of these books and magazines will not benefit me alone but other Adventist members in our area. Since most of us have got the belief but how to build upon the belief is a problem now. I hope by your help all will be well for all.

LK

Absolutely beautiful, a tremendous improvement! I just received your recent copy of *Our Firm Foundation*. The response in our church has been tremendous! "A long needed change," was the response of one dear soul. "Finally, the monotony of reading *Our Firm Foundation* is no more. I look forward to reading this issue," was the response of another member. I am not going to list all the comments I received about this issue, but suffice to say they were all very positive.

B. W., Florida

I am writing to request your monthly magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*, which is inspiring. I also would like to get some cassettes each month.

I am a registered, handicapped person, being assisted in many things by charitable organizations and the government. Hence, I request from your organization so that I do not miss the blessed Word of the Lord that is in these magazines. May the Almighty bless the organization so that it goes on spreading the truth.

C.H., Lu Salca

Yes, I appreciate *Our Firm Foundation*. I can't get out to go to church anymore, but I enjoy the magazine! I can't afford it. I'm on Social Security and I have rent, electricity, medical bills, tithe, and so forth and there's nothing left.

After I read *Our Firm Foundation* I send it on to my son in Oklahoma.

L. B., Washington

I have read different editions from the Hope International magazine and in each one of them I have found the materials very helpful for both my personal spiritual edification and for the establishment in the faith of the brethren whom I meet and teach every day. Since I have been using borrowed Hope International copies from my friends, I would like to ask if you can include my name on the mailing list, for I would like to be receiving my own copy, please.

If you favor me with the magazine, please include the book entitled, *The Earth's Final War*.

I am also a Seventh-day Adventist member and like the preaching.

A.P.S., Malawi, Africa

God is so good! God's blessings to you all, pressed down and running over.

R.G., New York

Have a letter to share?

contact editor@hopeint.org or see page 2 for our mailing address.



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First meeting begins Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

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If your answer is Yes, then please plan now to join us in fellowship and worship.

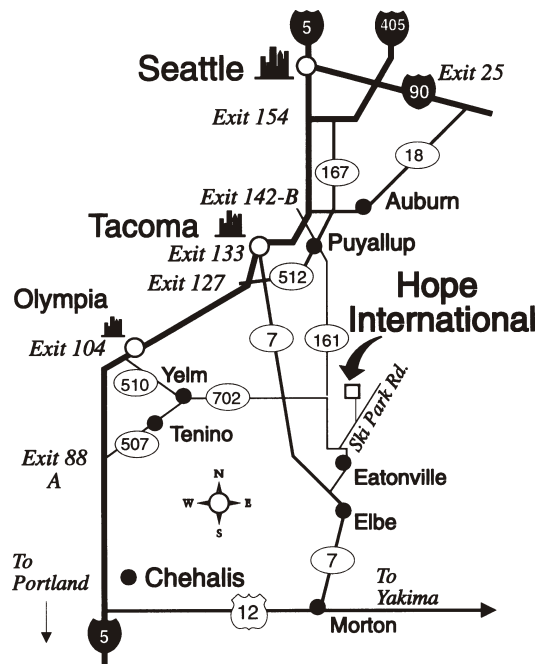
If you plan to attend our camp meeting in Eatonville, and wish to stay on our grounds, you are more than welcome. Water, restrooms, and limited showers will be available, but hookups for water, sewer, and electricity are not available. Please plan on a real *camp* meeting.

As usual, there will be no charge for staying on our campus, but we cannot provide either lodging or food. Please do not take it for granted that we will be able to provide special services for those who need them. Instead, please call and let us know what your needs are, and we will do our best to accommodate all who desire to attend.

If you do not plan to stay on our grounds, the following list of motels may be of some assistance:

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- **Motel Puyallup**—25 miles north of Hope International. Call 800-921-2700
- **Northwest Motor Inn**—25 miles north of Hope International. Call 800-845-9490
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