

Our Firm Foundation

Volume 23, Number 8 • July 2008

A scourge of scorpions
has stung Christianity . . .



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Part 1

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Editorial

Joe Olson



Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.

Reigning With God

“And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev 22:5.

I would like, for a moment, to consider the idea of being with the Father and Jesus forever, in the city of God, and the idea of perpetual light that never ends. It is beyond our capacity to understand how there can be no night, and that the sun pales into insignificance in the light of God’s presence. It will indeed be a glory indescribable!

But the concept that comes especially to my mind just now is the idea of reigning with the Father and His Son Jesus. I love the idea, but I can’t imagine whom we will be reigning over. Unless, maybe, I don’t understand what this kind of reigning is. Maybe it is a totally different concept than what we are used to.

God reigns and serves more than anyone else does. Maybe the idea of being in charge is actually more of a servant role than I had ever imagined. Jesus Himself said that if someone wanted to be the greatest, to be the servant of all. “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” Mat 23:11.

I think that my concept of truly being a “leader” and “reigning” is so skewed in this world that I would barely recognize a “leader” from heaven if it were not a taller and brighter being than I was used to.

And as I actually write these words, the idea comes to me about Jesus and what He did, and how He was barely rec-

ognized—nay, rather, was treated contemptibly—because He did not fit our pattern and idea of a leader and a God.

“For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Isaiah 53:2.



We are so terribly messed up here that most of us have no idea of what heaven is like, what *leadership* is like, and what service is all about. Even love, that we talk about and sing about in all of our daily rounds of activity, we have no idea what that is either.

To reign *with* Omnipotence means to reign *as* Omnipotence does. The Father and Jesus and the Holy Spirit have given all there was in heaven to reach us and woo us back.

“The divine Comforter is full of pity, sympathy, and love, and seeks to woo them to God. He seeks to direct their attention to Christ as he really is, full of mercy, compassion, and pardoning love, willing to forgive their transgression and sin, when they repent and seek him for forgiveness.” ST, Novem-

ber 26, 1894.

And for 6,000 years, we have been the focus of all their attentions, and frankly, everyone else’s in heaven, as well. Jesus has spent the last 2,000 years “serving” as our High Priest, working in our behalf and that continually, day and night. All while *we* rest and sleep and play.

O, I think we will reign with God, but I think our “reign” will be the same kind as His, a giving, loving, working-for-others kind of reign. And no one will be better qualified for that role than we will be, as we will have seen the God of heaven work for us, basically as our servant, for 6,000 years.

Just as Jesus bent down and washed the disciples’ feet, the Father has spent 6,000 years bending down, working day and night, to clean us up and bring us home. What a humbling thought and a joyous one at the same time. What a God we serve!!! We know of the condescension and service of God more than any others. And as Jesus said, “Whoever has been forgiven much, the same will love much,” we are in the unique position to love and serve more than any others. No one, in the history of all creation, has had the kind of attention that we have.

Then, we will again be in a unique position. This time to “give,” or another word might be to “reign,” as God has done for us. As always, God’s wisdom is seen shining through, once we see through the glass . . . less darkly.

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Our Mission - It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work 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. —*Editor*

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A scourge of scorpions
has stung Christianity, but someday soon,
delivered from Satan's intrusions and
stinging deceptions, we will stand free in
Christ's righteousness.

"And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though thou dost dwell among scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks." Eze 2:6.

"Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, notwithstanding. In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven." Luke 10:19, 20.*

Subject Matter for Parable

It had not been an easy night. Lying on the ground in the shadow of Kilimanjaro, I had found comfort for neither my weary body nor my tired brain. It was camp meeting time, and with Suji Mission director Ken Webster and Pastor Hnytyshyn I had hiked twenty-one miles from Webster's modest home. It was perched high against precipitous mountains separating it from an Edenic valley north of the village of Kiorio.

The valley was inhabited by members of the Pare tribe, among whom were



Oliver Jacques

In Bed

several hundred Christians who each year gather for social and spiritual renewal. The sleeping bag I occupied was zipped up to keep out the cold. Aching muscles conspired with a tortured brain to deny me sleep. I had been praying, wrestling in search of stories or parables useful in reaching the minds and hearts of these precious people. Experience had taught me that abstractions, even of the most elegant sort, are seldom remembered.

Finally, with a parable defining God's kingdom taking shape in my mind, I had fallen asleep, but as dawn breaks, I awake with a start. Something is on my leg—something strange. It doesn't feel like a snake, a rat, or even a mouse. With caution, I slip out of bed. Nothing. Curious, I unzip the sleeping bag and there, with stinger arched and ready for business, is a magnificent scorpion!

Africa boasts several families of scorpions, some lethal. A kindly Pare pastor appears and examines what remains of my bedmate. Grabbing a shoe, I had given it a taste of its heel. His terse comment, "*Mbaya sana. Kali sana!*" ("Very bad. Very potent!"), evokes a shudder.

Pastors Hnytyshyn and Webster, having slept on cots, hear the commotion and dress quickly. "You may wish to join us in the tent tonight," suggests Webster, with a sympathetic smile.

The native pastor speaks of God's protection. "*Munga anasaidia. Atatubariki.*" (God is helping. He will

bless you.)

"It meant no harm," I laugh. "It was lonesome and cold." To myself, I gratefully breathe, "I'm safe, thank God. And I *think* I have another parable!"

Scorpions in Our Minds and Hearts

Referring to my night visitor, I ask during a study, "Does not *Shetano* tempt us and beguile us when our conscience sleeps? Is it not he who leads us to distrust God and forget His unfailing love for us, to forget His commandments, and even His Son? With much craft, he sneaks into our minds. He makes us selfish and proud and sometimes deceitful. Yes. He gets into bed with us. But does he not carry deadly poison?"

During the four-day convocation, several hundred believers and visitors attend to hear *maneno ya Munga* (the words of God) and pray.

Not far away is a large church built of burnt brick, a rarity in this country. It resembles a parish church in a German village. The impressive house of worship bears witness to the vision and energy of the Kotz family and other early missionaries from Germany. It also speaks eloquently of devotion and hard work on the part of African believers. We might have gathered within its walls, but camp meeting, held outdoors like Israel's traditional Feast of Tabernacles, is redolent of unique spiritual blessings.

The only distraction comes from a family of friendly monkeys gathered in the branches of the giant trees that form the canopy shading us.

Pastor Nytyshyn intrigues me. With rare insight and vigor, he uses metaphors readily translated and understood by both the educated and unschooled. (Webster and I had felt concern for the older man's health. During the trek to Kihorio Valley, following a team of porters, we had taken turns pushing him up the steep trails. While doing so, Webster told us that the founding missionaries had harnessed themselves to donkeys trained to pull them to the summit. Things worked well until one day a donkey had fallen off the perilous path, taking the missionary with him!)

Ken Webster's speaking style is simple and direct—no wasted words. He has grown up working with Africans and understands their world.

Saying "goodbye" after the meetings is always difficult. Sharing spiritual concepts with others is always rewarding, and one is enriched by insights and experiences of fellow-believers. Genuine bonding is sensed and treasured.

"Beware of *Shetano*. Watch for his scorpions!" I say to an African youth. "Don't let them into your bed!"

The lad laughs, getting the point. "*Ndio, Bwana. Asante sana.*" ("Yes, Bwana. Thank you very much.")

In the decades since the camp meeting at Kihorio, I have thought about Satan's efforts to invade my spiritual life. There have been some scary times. Have his deadly "scorpions" stealthily crawled

With Scorpions

into my bed? I think of the people of God . . . about the Christian church through the ages. Its history makes a stormy story. What about its traditions, its widely-held doctrines? Has there not been a scourge of “scorpions”?

I think of the people of God . . . about the Christian church through the ages. Its history makes a stormy story. What about its traditions, its widely-held doctrines? Has there not been a scourge of “scorpions”?

Who is Reverend?

Of course, some scorpions have seemed harmless—just seeking comfortable lodging, and often finding it. Here, for example, is one that we scarcely notice: the “innocent” custom of addressing Christian ministers as “Reverend.” The Bible uses the word only once. “He sent redemption unto His people; he hath commanded His covenant forever; holy and reverend is His name.” Ps 111:9.

A revealing incident in the life of Jesus is worthy of attention. “And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He saith unto him, Why callest me good? There is none good but One, that is, God. But

if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Mat 19:16–17.

Why this surprising response? We protest, “Was not Jesus good?” Or do we miss the point? Did not God’s Son become one of us to set an example and to implant in our minds the truth that any “goodness” we might have comes only from God?

Jesus’ Humility Needed

Notice Jesus’ confession: “I can of myself do nothing. . . . I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” John 5:30. Again, “verily, verily [emphatically], I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do.” John 5:19. “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself.” John 8:28. And, “if I honor myself, my honor is nothing.” John 8:54. You see! Our Lord assumed no honors. He didn’t even claim to be good! He didn’t have to.

Against this astonishing example, consider the claims of many Christian ministers. From “reverend” we ascend to “very reverend,” “his holiness,” “father,” “reverend father,” “the holy father,” “the most holy father,” “vicar of Christ,” etc.

Listen to Christ’s instruction: “But be not ye called Rabbi, for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for One is your Father, which is in Heaven.” Mat 23:8–9.

The seemingly innocuous scorpion of claimed sanctity or holiness has become a religious monstrosity with a spiritual venom that seduces and benumbs the minds and souls of millions. The amazing thing is that we don’t even wince when we hear such naked blasphemies!

A Trivial Matter?

Why do we focus on an issue that to many seems trivial—almost irrelevant? John, the beloved disciple, provides a helpful clue. It centers on the absence of pretense—on the humanity, the very human nature of Christ. “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world.” 1 John 4:2–3. The Greek word for “flesh” is *sarx*—the same word used for “carnal.”

Jesus, through His birth in Bethlehem, became a member of our family. He is, and ever shall be, our Brother. Through Mary, he inherited the natures of Judah, Rahab, Ruth, David, Solomon, etc. The Father, without reservations, gave Him to us. He was not here on some sort of sanitized lease. “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” writes Paul. Romans 8:3. And, “though He were a Son, yet learned he obedience through the things which He suffered.” Heb 5:8.

Jesus persisted in referring to Himself as “the Son of man.” . . . That’s what the incarnation is all about!

In scores of references, Ellen White affirms this basic and elemental truth so central to the Christian life of each believer. “He took upon Him our sinful nature.” ST 132. He is ours; He belongs to us. His blood is our blood. Yes! He was just as truly the Son of God, but He did not use His divine heritage on His own behalf. He did use it to bless others.



When people tried to make Him king of Israel, He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36. He persisted in referring to Himself as "the Son of man." Again and again, "the Son of man." That's what the incarnation is all about!

Understanding His Nature

Paul's letter to the Jews helps us understand His nature: to the Hebrews he writes, "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. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb 2:17; 4:14-16. Glory be to God!

During the early centuries of the Christian church, the hottest doctrinal battles were fought over the question of Christ's human nature. Many found themselves in bed with Greek notions about the dual or split nature of men and women. The "spirit" or "soul" is good and real, they said, but the body, the flesh, is bad and illusory.

Some speculated that if Jesus lived a sinless life, He did not partake, or indeed could not have completely partaken, of human nature. He could not really have come in our carnal flesh. This most virulent and elemental scorpion found a bed, even in the apostolic church. See 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now, there

are many antichrists."

The implications of such ideas are obvious, or should be. Jesus, many claimed, and now insist, did not have the same carnal nature as those for whom He came to save. He did not truly come in the flesh. He was different! Yes, He was born of Mary, but even her flesh was not like our flesh.

Mary A "Needed" Intercessor?

Because of her so-called miraculous birth, termed the "immaculate conception," she allegedly did not partake of the nature of fallen man. The "playing field," you see, is really not level. After all, God's commandments cannot be kept by normal descendants of fallen Adam and Eve. The flesh, after all, cannot be controlled (a view taught by Martin Luther).

To nail down this satanic dogma, the papacy, since 1950, now proclaims the doctrine of the "assumption." It is solemnly affirmed by an "infallible" pope that at death Mary, after having lived a sinless life, was taken body and soul to heaven. As with her Son, her flesh did not see corruption.

The spiritual focus of Pope Pius XII, and especially of John Paul II, was on Mary, the "queen of heaven." She is now the preferred heavenly advocate, ministering to the faithful. Visions of her are frequently reported. Her power is worldwide and prodigious. If peace on earth is achieved, it is believed, it will be through her influence.

We must conclude that if Jesus is a Saviour who actually did not inherit the humanity of Rahab and David, then we need Mary.

We must conclude that if Jesus is a Saviour who actually did not inherit the humanity of Rahab and David, then



we *need* Mary. Who better to represent us? In the politics of heaven, we also need the growing host of completely human saints to work on our behalf.

Even Mary Not Enough?

But, since we can never be sure our favorite saint hears us, we need more. We need human priests to forgive us our sins and open heaven's door. If Jesus did not truly come in our flesh, sinners must of necessity have flesh and blood *human* bridges to God. Do we not need "Pontifex Maximus" (one of the pope's titles), the "greatest bridge," to oversee the whole business?

It's no wonder that, wherever he goes, Benedict XVI is worshiped and adored as *pontifex maximus*, man's principal bridge to heaven. After all, people are taught that, as Peter's legitimate successor, the keys to heaven are in his hands, and in his only!

A Compromised Church and a Diminished Savior

And so, while many early Christians found themselves in bed with compromised concepts about Christ's humanity, the church gradually became encrusted with dogmas and rituals that inexorably rob Jesus of both His status and His power to save men and women from their sins.

Apostate Christianity, in bed at first

with that one nasty scorpion, denying the true humanity of Christ, became the breeding ground of antichrists and the nest for a swarm of unscriptural dogmas and rituals. John said that it was happening even in his day. And so, as we wait for a soon-coming Saviour, we see a religious power that reeks with deception, paganism, and blasphemy. Listen:

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird.” Rev 18:1–2. “Whereby,” says John, speaking of antichrists, “we know that it is the last time.” 1 John 2:18.

Contrivances of the Counterfeit

We have neither time nor space to show how, step by step, a counterfeit plan of salvation, hostile to God’s kingdom, took shape, but we must identify a few contrivances:

(1) The position that tradition and the authority of the “Holy See” ranks above the Bible. Pass through this door, and anything that can be concocted to advance the sheer power of the church is permissible!

(2) Those who wish to be Christians are hit with the doctrine of infant baptism. Unbaptized children, born sinners, go to hell! (The doctrine of original sin, according to Rome, Calvin, Luther.)

(3) Auricular confession, a practice that bypasses Jesus as the forgiver of sins.

(4) Penance, by means of which one purchases or suffers to earn eternal life.

(5) The mass and communion, wherein a priest is believed to actually

create the body and blood of Christ, replacing even the fatherhood of God.

(6) A particularly nasty invention is purgatory. It became dogma in the fourteenth century to fund, among other things, the building of St. Peter’s Cathedral. Soon after this hideous scam was put into practice, a highly-placed legate of the church exulted, “Purgatory is the gold mine of the church!”

As we wait for a soon-coming Saviour, we see a religious power that reeks with deception, paganism, and blasphemy.



(7) The Inquisition, which tortured and murdered thousands, if not millions, and focused its activities on the wealthy heretics, so their property could be confiscated by the church. (See *The Spanish Inquisition* by Henry Kamen, Catholic professor of the Higher Council for Scientific Research, Barcelona, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.)

(8) Likewise, celibacy. Its primary design is to acquire and retain properties of bishops, cardinals and priests for the church. They must not have legitimate heirs. Yet Peter was married. And Paul, in a remarkable prophecy, predicts “in the latter times” apostate Christians, “giving heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils,” would “forbid to marry.” 1

Tim 4:1–3.

(9) The claim that Peter was the first pope and the foundation of the church. In his letter Peter said that Jesus is the “chief cornerstone” upon which the church is built, and he ranked himself “an elder” among elders. 1 Peter 2:6–8; 5:1.

(10) We have referred to the “immaculate conception,” the “assumption” of Mary, and praying to saints, all dogmas created by an apostate church.

(11) The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, Satan’s original lie, is loaded with poison. It throws the entire plan of salvation into self-contradicting confusion. When tied to

(12) The idea of an ever-burning hell, it empowers the church to rule by threat and coercion, incentives not used by God.

(13) It also supports the need for “extreme unction,” whereby the priest, usurping the ministry of Christ, claims to assure any dying person a place in heaven. Jesus tells us that even “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” John 5:22.

(14) In replacing the Sabbath with worship on Sunday, the creatorship of Christ is assaulted. The seal of His everlasting covenant is broken.

(15) Indulgences, whether bought, earned, or arbitrarily bestowed, shorten or ease one’s time in purgatory. (John Paul II announced a plethora of indulgences for the Millennial Jubilee. After believers die, “they undergo purification” in purgatory, “so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven.” *Catholic Catechism*, 1994 ed., p. 268.)

Christ’s Role in Question

Satan has initiated these and other insidious innovations to exalt his false apostles while denigrating God and His law. Christ’s work in redeeming a fallen race is systematically undermined and

negated. Billions find themselves in bed with his lethal deceptions. How he must exult! His evil laugh must fill the earth and reverberate throughout the universe. His campaign has effectively attacked Christ's kingdom and the plan for man's salvation at virtually every front.

But, in spite of a worldwide flood of deceit, corruption, and confusion, my heart, my hope, my life is fixed on Jesus, God's only-begotten Son, the One who, assuming my degenerated nature, chose to join my family. The One who wished not to be called "good."

Who is this Jesus?

Who, really, is this "Son of man," this "Son of David," this Jesus of Nazareth? By faith, Adam knew Him as a descendant who would crush the head of the serpent. Enoch walked with Him. Noah knew Him as a Saviour from disaster. Abraham, after the ultimate test, became His friend. Jacob wrestled with Him and earned the name of Israel: "Overcomer." To Moses was revealed the entire plan of salvation and the oracles of God, the ten commandments.

David's choirs sang, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. . . . Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory." Ps 24:7-10. Isaiah knew Him as the sin-bearing Messiah. Isa 53. John the Baptist heralded Him as the Lamb of God. John 1:27. Christ's disciples finally recognized Him as the Messiah, the "Son of the living God." Mat 16:16.

Christ's work in redeeming a fallen race is systematically undermined and negated.

The apostles lived in expectation of His return in the clouds of heaven. To the churches under his care, John wrote, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Rev 1:7.

Where is Our Saviour Now?

But where is He now, today? Daniel and John collaborate. The scene is beyond description. No human eye has seen such magnificence, such ineffable glory, such power. Seated at the right hand of the Father is our Brother and Redeemer. Robed to His feet, He wears a golden vest. His head and hair are white as snow; His eyes as flames of fire. His feet are like fine brass, and His voice is like the sound of many waters. Rev 1.

With Him are the twenty-four elders, representatives from various ethnic groups. Rev 5. Typified by Israel's sheaf offering (the "first fruits"), they arose from their graves with Him at His resurrection. Mat 27:50-53. They represent us. There are powerful, highly-observant (full of eyes, Rev 4:6) "living creatures." They all witness this climactic event. Seven candlesticks indicate the seven spirits of God. Millions of angels, representing the universe, surround the throne. The books are opened; the pre-advent judgment is in progress. The dead, small and great, and then the living, are judged by the books, every man according to his works. All eyes are on the Saviour, our blood Brother and Advocate, as He ministers His matchless, pardoning grace. Rev 5.

One day soon our Judge, in all His majesty, will stand and, with a voice resounding throughout heaven, will declare, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev 22:11.

The judgment, open to the universe, will have been completed. We shall have given Him our hearts. Delivered from Satan's intrusions and stinging deceptions, we stand free—free in Christ's righteousness.

“. . . Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

What about the here and now? Where are we today, with the world swarming with doctrinal scorpions? What is Jesus saying? "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20.

We are His, and He forever is ours. His unforgettable words reassure us and fill our hearts with joyful praise. He speaks again. This is what He says: "And, behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me." Rev 22:12.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev 22:20.

The author is the grandson of Willie and Ethel May (Lacey) White.

***I have since learned that 95% of accidental deaths in Africa's arid regions are caused by scorpions! Their venom benumbs and paralyzes the brain. After excruciating pain, breathing stops.**

To the apostle John on the isle of Patmos were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. Subjects of intense interest and vast importance were presented to him in figures and symbols, that the people of God might become intelligent concerning the perils and conflicts before them. The history of the Christian world to the very close of time was revealed to John. With great clearness he saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing message which is to ripen the harvest of earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner, or as fagots for the fires of the last day.

Persecution Endured

In vision John beheld the trials which God's people would endure for the truth's sake. He saw their unyielding firmness in obeying the commandments of God, in the face of the oppressive powers that sought to force them into disobedience, and he saw their final triumph over the beast and his image.

Under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamblike horns, the earthly governments which would especially engage in trampling upon God's law and persecuting His people, were presented to John. The war is carried on till the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, were represented as greatly in the minority. In the last days only a remnant still existed. Of these John speaks as they "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

New Enforcer Replaced Weakened Papacy

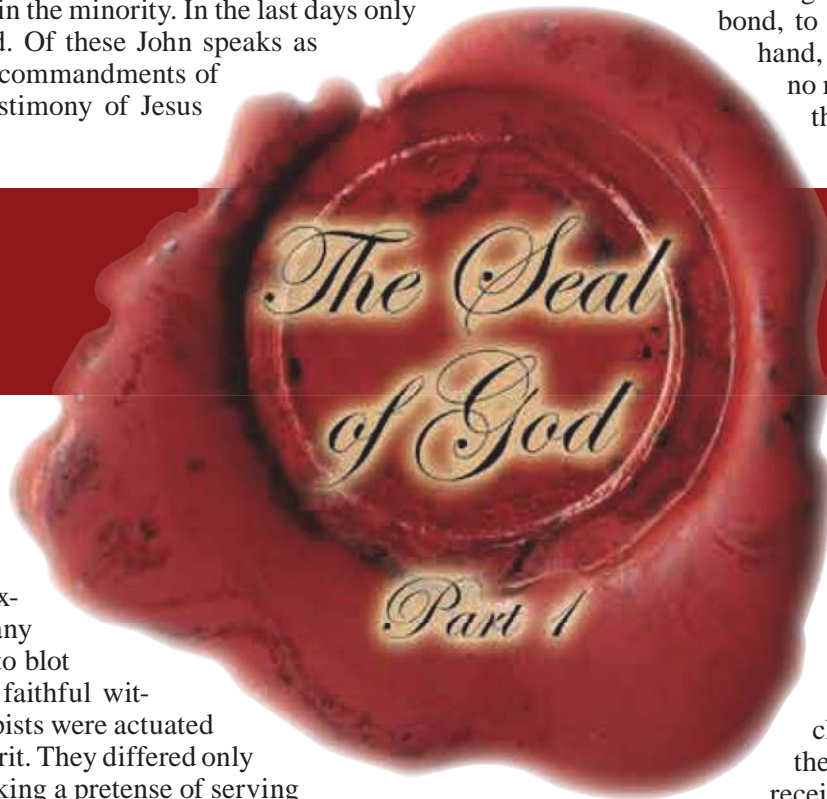
Through paganism, and then through the Papacy, Satan exerted his power for many centuries in an effort to blot from the earth God's faithful witnesses. Pagans and papists were actuated by the same dragon spirit. They differed only in that the Papacy, making a pretense of serving God, was the more dangerous and cruel foe. Through the agency of Romanism, Satan took the world captive. The professed church of God was swept into the ranks of this delusion, and for more than a thousand years the people of God suffered under the dragon's ire. And when the Papacy, robbed of its strength, was forced to desist from persecution, John beheld a new power coming up to echo the dragon's voice, and carry forward the same cruel and blasphemous work. This power, the last that is to wage war against the church and the law of God, was symbolized by a beast with lamblike horns.

***Till heaven and earth pass,
one jot or one tittle shall in nowise
pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.***

The beasts preceding it had risen from the sea, but this came up out of the earth, representing the peaceful rise of the nation which is symbolized. The "two horns like a lamb" well represent the character of the United States Government, as expressed in its two fundamental principles, Republicanism and Protestantism. These principles are the secret of our power and prosperity as a nation. Those who first found an asylum on the shores of America rejoiced that they had reached a country free from the arrogant claims of popery and the tyranny of kingly rule. They determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.

Lamb Assumes Dragon's Voice, Power

But the stern tracing of the prophetic pencil reveals a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamblike horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Prophecy declares that he will say to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, and that "he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of



his name." Thus Protestantism follows in the steps of the Papacy.

Third Angel Warns of "Most Heinous" Sin

It is at this time that the third angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." In marked contrast to the world stands the little company who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. These are they of whom Isaiah speaks as repairing the breach which had been made in the law of God, they who are building the old waste places, raising up the foundation of many generations.

The sin that calls down the wrath of God unmixed with mercy must be of the most heinous character. Is the world to be left in darkness as to the nature of this sin?

The most solemn warning and the most awful threatening ever addressed to mortals is that contained in the third angel's message. The sin that calls down the wrath of God unmixed with mercy must be of the most heinous character. Is the world to be left in darkness as to the nature of this sin?—Most assuredly not. God does not deal thus with His creatures. His wrath is never visited upon sins of ignorance. Before His judgments are brought upon the earth, the light in regard to this sin must be presented to the world, that man may know why these judgments are to be inflicted, and may have opportunity to escape them.

The Seal—the Mark.

The message containing this warning is the last to be proclaimed before the revelation of the Son of man. The signs which He Himself has given declare His coming to be near at hand. For well-nigh forty years has the message of the third angel been sounding. In the issue of the great contest two parties are developed, those who “worship the beast and his image,” and receive his mark, and those who receive “the seal of the living God,” who have the Father's name written in their foreheads. This is not a visible mark. The time has come when all who have an interest in their soul's salvation should earnestly and solemnly inquire, What is the seal of God? and what is the mark of the beast? How can we avoid receiving it?

sabbath which the world has accepted in the place of the true?

The Sabbath enjoined by the fourth commandment was instituted to commemorate the work of creation, thus to keep the minds of men ever directed to the true and living God.

The prophetic declaration that the Papacy was to exalt itself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, has been strikingly fulfilled in the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Wherever the papal Sabbath is honored in preference to the Sabbath of God, there the man of sin is exalted above the Creator of heaven and earth.

Contradicting Christ's Words

Those who assert that Christ changed the Sabbath are directly contradicting His own words. In His Sermon on the Mount He declared: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Ellen G. White

***The Conflicts of the True Church—Persecuting Powers—The Last Great Power—
A Warning Message—The Seal of God, the Mark of the Beast.***

The seal of God, the token or sign of His authority, is found in the fourth commandment. This is the only precept of the Decalogue that points to God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and clearly distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Throughout the Scriptures the fact of God's creative power is cited as proof that He is above all heathen deities.

God's Sabbath Seal

The Sabbath enjoined by the fourth commandment was instituted to commemorate the work of creation, thus to keep the minds of men ever directed to the true and living God. Had the Sabbath always been kept, there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The sacred observance of God's holy day would have led the minds of men to their Creator. The things of nature would have brought Him to their remembrance, and they would have borne witness to His power and His love. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made.

The Beast's Mark

What, then, is the mark of the beast, if it is not the spurious

Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change in the Sabbath was made by their church, and they cite this very change as evidence of the supreme authority of this church. They declare that by observing the first day of the week as the Sabbath, Protestants are recognizing her power to legislate in divine things. The Roman Church has not relinquished her claim to infallibility, and when the world and the Protestant churches accept the spurious sabbath of her creating, they virtually acknowledge her claim. They may cite the authority of the apostles and fathers in defense of this change, but the fallacy of their reasoning is easily discerned. The papist is sharp enough to see that Protestants are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the Sunday institution gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

Signs of the Times, November 1, 1899.

Ellen G. White, 1827-1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an incalculable blessing to God's people around the world.

Spirit of Antichrist Within the Church?

Clark Floyd

Adventism's new theology,
which teaches that Christ came in unfallen flesh
and therefore cannot be our example in sinlessness,
denies the power of Jesus to give us victory over our sins.

Pervasive in Catholic Church

The evidence is overwhelming that the spirit of antichrist pervades the Roman Catholic Church. Scripture after Scripture will testify to this fact. Both Daniel and Revelation contain several points of identification, as do the writings of other Bible writers. Seven times in Scripture the period of 1260 days or its equivalent is given prophetically as the reigning time of antichrist. (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6–7, 14; and 13:5) In actual literal time this was 1260 years, which began in AD 538 as the papacy gained full control of the civil authority under the decree of Justinian. This time continued to 1798, when the civil authority was terminated as Na-

oleon's General Berthier placed the reigning pope into captivity.

History Validates Prophecy

Paul had foretold that the reign of the antichrist would come after the restrainer was taken out of the way. (See 2nd Thess. 2:7.) The papacy came into full authority only after the kingdoms of the Caesars ended. In like manner, the little horn power of Daniel could arise only after the 4th beast, which was the Roman Empire, came to its end.

The deadly wound suffered in 1798, as given above, began to be healed as Scripture predicted. (See Rev. 13:3, 12.) The civil power has been restoring even unto the present time, and the

whole world has begun wondering after the beast.

Other Identifiers

There are other features that would identify the papacy with the antichrist. The "son of perdition" first referred to Judas, one of Christ's inner circle, who betrayed his Lord with a kiss (see John 17:12). The term is again mentioned in regard to one that would arise within the Christian church and would oppose and exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2nd Thess. 2:3, 4.) Notice that the antichrist spirit arises within the church.

Another characteristic of antichrist is found in 1st John 4:2–3. “. . . Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”

As a second witness, God repeats in the Scriptures in 2nd John 7: “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

So clearly, someone who does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is a deceiver and an antichrist. But what does that mean?

Papal Interpretation of “Came in the Flesh”

For the papacy it meant the theory of the “Immaculate Conception,” in order that all the antichrist criteria would be fulfilled. The Roman Church admits that Christ came as a live, real person and was crucified. But she says that He is different from each of us in the type of flesh He had. She recognizes that Jesus received His flesh or nature from His mother Mary. But

in order to keep Him from having our sinful fallen flesh and nature, they invented a way for His mother to be different from all other humans since the fall. She was allegedly born with un-fallen flesh.

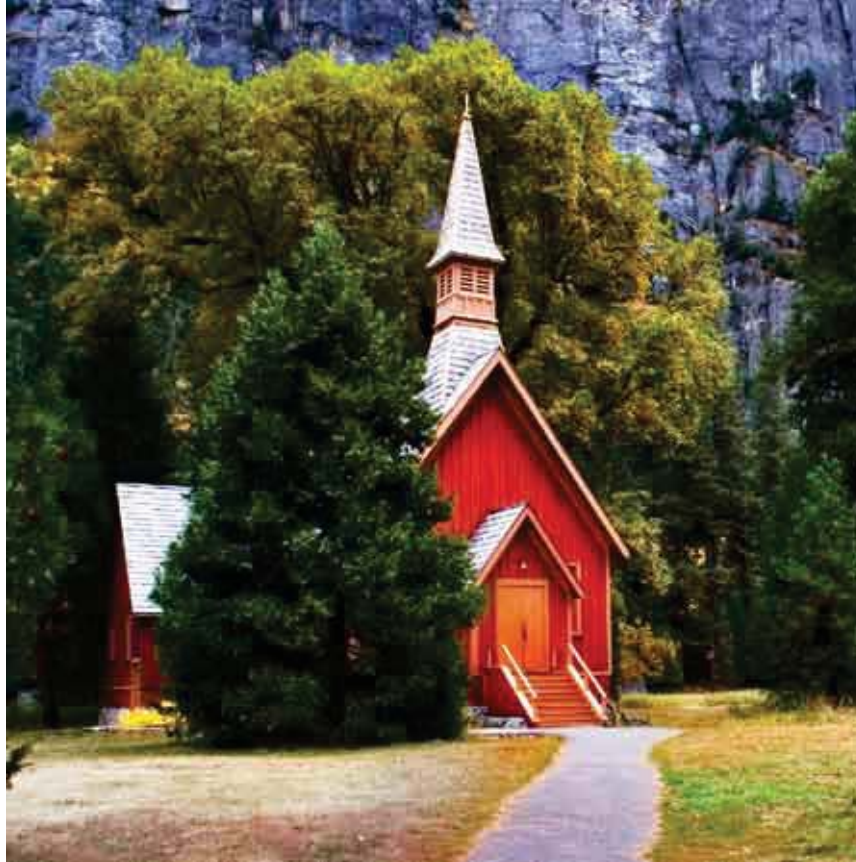
“The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1994, pg. 124.)

Additional Antichrists

The papal system is definitely the

antichrist system, according to all the Bible characteristics of that system. But the Bible also says there would be other manifestations of the antichrist. “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” 1st John 2:18.

The current Protestant world has fallen in a large measure for the deception of futurism.



Into the Seventh-day Adventist Church there has come, in our recent years, a “new theology” that Christ, even though He was born of Mary, came in the flesh and nature of Adam before the fall. Thus, it is believed, He is different from Mary and from us and cannot be our example, and therefore we will sin until Jesus returns the second time. This theology denies the power of Jesus to give us victory in our “sinful human flesh and nature.”

Inventive Interpretations

In the Catholic Church, in order to avoid the stigma that had been placed on them by most Protestant reformers

that they were indeed the antichrist of prophecy, two Jesuit doctors of theology were appointed early on to come up with new interpretations of antichrist. Alcazar, one of the Jesuit doctors (PhD) introduced the idea of preterism: the concept that the antichrist had already appeared in the past and therefore the papal authority could not be the antichrist. Francisco Ribera, the other Jesuit doctor, developed the theory of futurism, which placed the antichrist way down at the end of prophetic time. Again, this would eliminate the papacy as that antichrist power.

Both of these theories fall apart when the Bible is carefully studied and Scripture is compared with Scripture. “If they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20) However, the current Protestant world has fallen in a large measure for the deception of futurism.

Inroads into Adventism

In our own beloved church the pioneers, including Ellen White, very clearly understood that the Bible taught that Jesus came in the nature of Adam after the fall, but that

in doing so, He never committed sin. They taught that Jesus is our example, and that we can and must have complete victory over sin in our lives. But the spirit of antichrist has slowly come in and has been accepted by many, including some of our PhDs. They deny that Jesus has come in the flesh the Scriptures are talking about. They say He came in the flesh that Adam had before the fall, thus making Him totally different from us and no longer our example.

“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh. . . .”

This understanding, like futurism in many of the Protestant churches, has slowly pervaded the thinking of many in our church. Along with this, the idea that they can sin until Jesus comes and still be covered with His robe of righteousness is brought into play.

These proponents have done one of two things. They have taken the “Baker letter,” a private letter written by Ellen White to a Pastor Baker in Tasmania, and put their interpretation on it, which would make Ellen White say something that she would contradict in the majority of her writings. (See *The Word Made Flesh* by Ralph Larson, and *Touched With Our Feelings* by Z. R. Zurcher.) Or they have made the writings of Ellen White of none effect by claiming she is not a prophetic voice. (See *Christian Post*, September 4, 2007.)

But What Do the Scriptures Say?

First, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Secondly, “For then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14) Notice

that it speaks of the flesh and blood of the children. Adam and Eve were never children. They were created as adults. Their children all inherited sinful fallen flesh and natures.

“He could not come in the form of an angel; for unless He met man as man, and testified by His connection with God that divine power was not given to Him in a different way to what it will be given to us, He could not be a perfect example for us.”

Third, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the

flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-5) Notice that the Spirit is the one that helps us to overcome the flesh. It is the power of Jesus in our life through the Spirit that will give us total victory.

Lastly, “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he

could not come in the form of an angel; for unless He met man as man, and testified by His connection with God that divine power was not given to Him in a different way to what it will be given to us, He could not be a perfect example for us. . . . He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In His humanity He understood all the temptations that will come to man.” (Ms 21, 1895)

Secondly, see the books referred to above: *The Word Made Flesh* and *Touched With Our Feelings*. Both books are available through the Hope International bookstore.

An Observation and Appeal

Brothers and Sisters, I practiced law for fourteen years before my conversion experience and my entry into the Seventh day Adventist ministry. As I learned the Seventh-day Adventist message, I knew it was truth. In studying it out, I knew that Ellen White was truly a prophetess, and that her writings were inspired. For over thirty years as a pastor and member of this church, I have seen people slowly being drawn away from the prophetess and the true message of our church. They have given too much credence to the so-called “learned ones.” But remember the lesson of Alcazar and Ribera, the two Jesuits that brought preterism and

futurism to the Protestant world. We need to study for ourselves, or we will end up at the end of the thousand years outside the New Jerusalem. May God and His Scriptures be your study, and may Jesus be your constant companion and friend.



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might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:16-18) The seed of Abraham is not Adam before the fall.

What Does the Spirit of Prophecy Say?

First, it says “He [Christ] came as a helpless babe, bearing the humanity we bear. ‘As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.’ He



The Gospel According to Christ, Part 1

A Compilation and Commentary by Paul F. Clark

*In the Gospel of Jesus Christ
faith is important, but must be understood
as only one component of our relationship to Him
and His salvation for us.*

Obviously, there is no such book as “The Gospel According to Christ” in the canonized Bible of modern Christianity. Yet it is possible to derive Jesus’ own statement on His gospel by reviewing His words recorded in the four gospels, in Acts, and to the apostle John in the Revelation.

When Are We “Saved”?

When someone says, “I was saved ten years ago” (even though today he is backslidden, heathen and perverted in his way of life and not separated from the world in any respect whatsoever), his profession is a presumptuous perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the first place, “saved” is a past tense word, while salvation is a future perfect condition that no one will experience until the Second Coming. We will be saved (future tense) at the resurrection of the “just” *if* we remain faithful unto death. Note that a “person should never be taught to say or feel that he is saved” (COL 155; ISM 314).

When saying we are saved or saying someone is saved, we are presuming on the work of Christ *only*, since “the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son.” (Jn 5:22) Our personal judgment now begins at our death, “as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.” (Heb 9:27) No one has the right to say at death that someone has gone to heaven or hell at that point. Doing so is an infringement upon Christ’s right of judgment.

A Saving Relationship

While we cannot experience salvation today, since it occurs for no one until the Second Coming, we can have the relief of forgiveness today, and can be in a saving relationship with Christ today (present tense). We will be saved (future tense) if we renew our saving relationship each day and remain faithful until the resurrection. Jesus says, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Rev 2:10.



Atonement is the work of Christ alone. However, salvation is a cooperative effort both for us and others.

When we go forward at an altar call, we are not then “saved,” but have merely accepted at that point the sacrifice of Christ’s death on the cross. When we repent, we make effective the atonement for our sins by applying the blood of Christ’s sacrifice to blot out our sins. Atonement is the work of Christ alone. However, salvation is a cooperative effort both for us and others. The gospel of Christ is not a “do-nothing” faith.

We Have a Work to Do for Ourselves and Others

The first thing He asks us to do is



“repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Mt 4:17) Note that Christ does not repent for us, and if we were predestined, there would be no need for repentance. In cooperating in the salvation of others, He says, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mt 5:19) He has called us to be coworkers with Him. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is a “do” for us, and neither for ourselves or others is salvation entirely the work of Christ. Remember, though, that atonement is entirely the work of Christ.

In the book of Matthew alone, there are at least 100 admonitions to good attitudes, behavior, and work for Christ, all of which would be unnecessary if we were predestined, or if salvation was entirely Christ’s work. As our example in resisting Satan, Jesus fasted, prayed and said that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4); that “it is written again, you shall not tempt the Lord your God” (Mt 4:7); that “it is written, you should worship the Lord your God, and Him only should you serve.” (Mt 4:10) No resistance would be necessary if we were predestined or already saved.

Christ’s Teachings Say Belief Not Enough

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His hearers the following beatitudes: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers” (Mt 5:3–9); and comforted those that should be

persecuted for righteousness’ sake by foretelling that “great would be their reward.” (Mt 5:10–12) Christ’s advocacy of the beatitudes would have been pointless if the salvation process involved only belief in Him.

Christ tells us, when working with Him for the salvation of others, to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Mt 5:16)

Moral Law Still in Effect

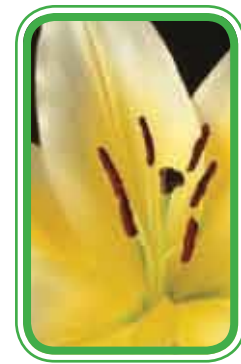
The moral law, as opposed to the ceremonial/ sacrificial law, was perpetuated by Christ who said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” (Mt 5:17) “Till heaven and earth pass, nothing passes from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever breaks one of the least of the commandments and teaches men so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall do and teach the commandments shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5:18–19) Such talk was totally unnecessary if all Christ wants of us is belief.

“Though a man says he has faith, but has not works—can faith save him?” (James 2:14) “The devils also believe and tremble.” (James 2:19) To exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, our work for Christ needs to be motivated by pure love and not selfish pride, or a “holier-than-thou” attitude.

Moral Law Amplified, Clarified

Moreover, Christ magnifies the moral law and extends its reach to thoughts and attitudes. Besides “thou shalt not kill,” there is the amplification to not be “angry with one’s brother without a cause.” (Mt 5:21, 11) Morality is again extended to name-calling such as “raca,” (you worthless good-for-nothing) or “fool” (you negligent ignoramus), both of which could bring judgment. (Mt 5:22) Before bringing our gifts to God, we are to reconcile our differences with our brother. (Mt 5:23–24) Christ recommends that we be not contentious with our “adversary.” Mt 5:25–26.

Christ extends the commandment against adultery to looking and lusting after someone, which He says is committing adultery in our hearts. (Mt 5:27–28) Again He enlarges the commandment by pointing out that if we divorce our spouses, except for unfaithfulness, and marry others, we are committing adultery. Mt 5:31–32.



In the book of Matthew alone, there are at least 100 admonitions to good attitudes, behavior, and work for Christ, all of which would be unnecessary if we were predestined, or

if salvation was entirely Christ’s work.



We are advised not to overcommit ourselves, not to be overly aggressive against wrongs, to be generous to those who want something from us and even to love all our enemies, which separates Christian attitudes from those of the world. (Mt 5:33–48) In all of this, Christ has asked us who believe to also *do* some things that are extremely hard.

No Calling Attention to Self

Continuing the Sermon on the Mount, Christ admonishes us not to be ostentatious in our gifts, but to give anonymously and inconspicuously. (Mt 6:1-4) He also asks us not to try to attract attention to ourselves in our prayers or be showy or prideful in our petitions, but, rather, He gives us a short model prayer that covers in principle all that we need to be concerned with. (Mt 6:5–13) We are told in this prayer to ask forgiveness and also to forgive others. Christ also tells us to keep our fasting to ourselves and wait for the Father to reward us openly. (Mt 6:16–18) We are not to lay up treasure on this earth, but in heaven, where it will be safe, and thus where our thoughts will be channeled toward. (Mt 6:19–21) Our eyes are to be pure and single to the glory of God, so that our whole soul can be filled with brightness, rather than the darkness of evil. Mt 6:22–23.

Trusting the Father; Judging Others

Christ warns us that we cannot serve two masters, or God and money, at the same time. Rather, our attitude

should be faithful in trusting to God's watch care. We are to take no thought for our lives regarding food, drink or clothing, but to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all these things will be added unto us. We are not even to worry about tomorrow or the future. Mt 6:31–34.

In chapter 7 of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ finishes His first discourse in His gospel by warning us to “judge not, that we be not judged” (Mt 7:1), and that the measure we use to judge others will be turned around to judge us. We are asked to take care of our own problems before complaining about someone else's. (Mt 7:2–5) We are warned to be discrete in placing our God-given pearls of wisdom before others who may not be sufficiently knowledgeable to appreciate them, and who may even be insulting in response to them.

Christ tells us to ask, seek and knock, and we will receive from God, Who knows how to give good gifts to us even more than our own parents do. Mt 7:7–11.

Then Christ gives us the “golden rule:” “Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.” (Mt 7:12)

The Strait Gate

Universalism teaches blanket salvation for everyone, but this is not the doctrine in the gospel of Christ. Christ warns us to “enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction,

and many there be that go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.” Mt 7:13–14.



The Sermon on the Mount . . . is only so much hot air if salvation is only by belief or righteousness by faith, without corresponding works of love in service to God and man.

Christ warns us to be on the lookout for false prophets, who will show their true colors by their fruit or the doctrines they propound, which will be out of harmony with the rest of the Word of God. (Mt 7:15–20) Jesus says not everyone who makes a profession of faith will enter into heaven, but rather “he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Mt 7:21.

Jesus says many false pretenders who appear to prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works of deception will be told to depart from Him, for He never knew them. (Mt 7:22–23) However, Christ says whoever hears and does His sayings will be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock, and whose house fell not when the catastrophic storm came. But the foolish man who heard Christ's sayings and did not do them was like a house built upon a foundation of sand, which fell when



the storm came, “and great was the fall of it.” Mt 7:24–27.

Divinely-Ordained Synergy

Thus ends the Sermon on the Mount, which is only so much hot air if salvation is only by belief, or righteousness by faith, without corresponding works of love in service to God and man. One gets the impression, however, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is one of active, ardent involvement in one’s own self-development (putting one’s talents out to the exchangers) and then a service of love to both God and man by entering the harvest field for the salvation of the world, whom “God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son.” We are expected to do what we can for ourselves and others; what we cannot do, our Father does for us. Such is the synergy of imputed and imparted righteousness.

Jesus teaches that when we are signally blessed or healed, we should offer a gift, “as Moses commanded.” (Mt 8:4; see also Leviticus 14.) Today our gift would be of a money thank offering. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, faith is important, but must be understood as only one component of our relationship to Him and His salvation for us. Jesus was impressed with the faith of the centurion in Matthew 8 and even said, “I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” The centurion was bidden to go, and as he believed it would be done, his servant was healed in that selfsame hour. Mt 8:5–13.

Humble Gratitude

Jesus modeled a humble way of

life, for He said: “The foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay his head.” (Mt 8:20) To one disciple, Jesus emphasized the priority of the kingdom, even to the burying of one’s father. He said, “Follow me,” and let the dead bury their dead. (Mt 8:22) When He calmed the roaring sea for His disciples, He taught that they were to be faithful, rather than fearful. Mt 8:26.

Yes, faith is part of the components of our salvation. When our sins are forgiven, we are to be of good cheer (Mt 9:2), but even this attitude of gratitude would be redundant if belief or faith were the only component of our salvation.



Preferring the Prestigious

In working for the salvation of others, we are to pay no heed to social stratification or the relative prestige of those with whom we are mixing, for when Jesus was criticized for eating with publicans and sinners, He said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” “I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Mt 9:12–13) Such oblivion to social norms and folkways in Christian circles would be pointless if belief were the only component to salvation. Notice that

when Jesus says “Follow me,” we are to immediately and positively respond as did Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom. Mt 9:9.

There are times when we are to be discretely confidential in the events of our relationship to Christ, as He taught the two blind men, “See that no man know it.” Mt 9:30.

True Believers Are Harvesters

If belief were all that was necessary, then Jesus would not have taught us to pray and ask for workers to bring in the harvest. “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.” (Mt 9: 37–38) Salvation does require our cooperation as coworkers with Christ, both for others and ourselves.

In giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others, we are to begin right at home and among the current family of God. (Mt 10:5–7) We may even see miracles occur, including for our own livelihood and sustenance. (Mt 10:8–15) We should expect turmoil (even within our own families), but we are to “take no thought of how or what we are to speak, for it will be given us in that same hour what to speak. For it will not be us that speak, but the Spirit of our Father speaking in us.” Mt 10:19–20.

To be continued.

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THE SABBATH, PART 1

Steven Housman

**THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH
IS THE MEANS ORDAINED BY GOD
FOR PRESERVING A
KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF,
AND THE WAY OF DISTINGUISHING
BETWEEN HIS LOYAL SUBJECTS
AND THE TRANSGRESSORS
OF HIS LAW.**

“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 Tim 3:16–17.

In this text we are assured that every word of the sacred Scriptures was given by God; either spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That every doctrine which men should believe is therein revealed; that every fault is therein reproved; that every error is corrected by its words of truth; and that perfect instruction in all righteousness is therein given.

The design of its Author in providing such a Book was that the man of God might thereby be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good

works. This is the treasure which God has given to His church. Nor is this all that He has done. To those who are willing to obey the teachings of His Word, He has promised the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. Jn 16:13.

To men thus situated, Jehovah thus speaks: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is God.” 1 Thes 5:21. That is, bring every part of your faith and practice to the test of God’s sure Word; ask the Holy Spirit’s aid, that your mind may be delivered from prejudice, and your understanding enlightened in the Word of truth. Then, what you find revealed in God’s Word, hang on tight to it; for it is of priceless value; but get rid of, at once, every precept or doctrine that’s not found recorded in there, lest you make the doctrines of men of equal weight with the

commandments of God. “What is the chaff to the wheat? Saith the Lord.” Jer 23:28.

“Give me understanding, and I will keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.” Ps 119:34.

COUNTERFEIT SANCTIFICATION

The sanctification now gaining prominence in the religious world carries with it a spirit of self-exaltation and a disregard for the law of God, which marks it as foreign to the religion of the Bible. Its advocates teach that sanctification is an instantaneous work by which, through faith alone, they attain to perfect holiness. “Only believe,” they say, “and the blessing

is yours.” No further effort on the part of the receiver is supposed to be required. At the same time they deny the authority of the law of God, urging that they are released from obligation to keep the commandments. However, is it possible for men to be holy, in accord with the will and character of God, without coming into harmony with the principles which are an expression of His nature and will?

The desire for an easy religion that requires no striving, no self-denial, no divorce from the follies of the world, has made the doctrine of faith, and faith only, a popular one. But what does that Word of God say? “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? . . . Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works in dead?” James 2:14, 20.

THE WORD OF GOD EXPOSES PRESUMPTION

The testimony of the Word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted. It is presumption. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and

separates the soul from God. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” 1 Jn 2:4–5.

TRUE SANCTIFICATION

True sanctification is a Bible doctrine. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Thessalonian church, declares: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” And he prays: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” 1 Thes 4:3; 5:23.

The Bible clearly teaches what sanctification is, and how it is to be attained. The Savior prayed for His disciples: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Jn 17:17. And Paul teaches that believers are to be “sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Rom 15:16. So what is the work of the Holy Spirit? Jesus told His disciples: “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Jn 16:13. And the psalmist says: “Thy law is the truth.” Ps 119:142.

By the Word and by the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law. And since the law of God is “holy, and just, and good” (Rom 7:12), a transcript of the divine perfection, it follows that a character formed by obedience to that law will be holy. Christ is a perfect example of such a character. He says: “I have kept my Father’s commandments.” “I do always those things that please him.” Jn 15:10; 8:29. The followers of Christ are to become like Him: “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” 1 Pet 1:16, cf. Lev 11:45.

LET NONE DECEIVE THEMSELVES WITH THE BELIEF THAT THEY CAN BECOME HOLY WHILE WILLFULLY VIOLATING ONE OF GOD’S REQUIREMENTS.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” Col 2:6. “He that saith he abideth in him

ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.” 1 Jn 2:6. “And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. . . .” 2 Jn 1:6. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 Jn 5:3. By the grace of God, we are to form characters in harmony with the principles of His holy law. This is Bible sanctification.

To avoid being deceived we must test all doctrines and experiences by the Scriptures. Whatever contradicts the Bible is false. God’s Word is more sure than what we see, hear, or experience. Is 8:20. This means we need to base our lives on what is right and what is wrong, according to God’s Word.

GOD’S LAW STANDS

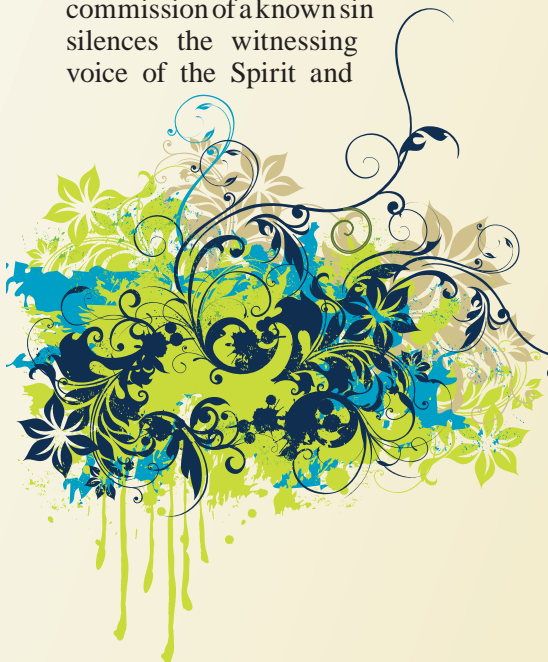
No, the ten commandments were not nailed to the cross. The ten commandments are the very words of God Himself. The Bible says, “And God spoke all these words, saying . . .” Ex 20:1. God’s law is so sacred, so holy, so elevated, that God chose to speak it directly to the fallen race Himself.

In addition to speaking the words, He also wrote them with His own finger. Ex 32:15–16. They stand separate and above the rest of Scripture. They did not come to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for men to put into defective human language. They came to us directly from our Lord Jesus Christ, and were etched in stone by His own finger, representing their enduring, eternal quality. Jn 1:1–3, 14; 5:37; Neh 9:13–14; Ecc 3:14.

NO CHANGE IN GOD’S LAW

There is no place in the Bible where God changed the Sabbath to Sunday. Nowhere in Scripture has He said: “The seventh-day Sabbath is now the first day of the week. Or where did He write that in stone, with His own finger? Did not Jesus say: “I am the Lord, I change not”? Mt 5:17; Mal 3:6.

The Scriptures tell us that man would make an intentional change to God’s times and laws. Dan 7:25. But just because some human “thought”





IF THERE IS NO MORE LAW, THEN THERE IS NO MORE SIN. “FOR WHERE NO LAW IS, THERE IS NO TRANSGRESSION.” ROM 4:15. SO IF THERE IS NO MORE SIN, THEN WHY DO WE NEED TO REPENT? AND IF WE HAVE NO NEED FOR A MINISTER, WE HAVE NO NEED FOR A SAVIOUR. FROM WHAT WOULD WE NEED TO BE SAVED?

to change them, doesn't mean they're changed. "Hath not the potter power over the clay . . . ?" Rom 9:21. So what's it going to be? God's commandments, or the tradition of men? There is no Scriptural authority for the change, only man-made lies! "But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." 1 Pet 1:25.

ORDINANCES BLOTTED OUT, NOT TEN COMMANDMENTS

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let

no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a *shadow* of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Col 2:14–17.

A certain law of ordinances was nailed to the cross. This was the ceremonial law of types and shadows that pointed forward to the death of Jesus, and that had no further meaning beyond the cross. This is why Paul said it was contrary to the Christian. The rent veil in the temple at the death of Christ (Mt 27:51) indicated the end of that ordinance of animal sacrifices. Ephesians 2:15 says that Jesus "abolished . . . the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

WEEKLY AND YEARLY SABBATHS

This is why Paul wrote in Colossians 2:16–17 that we are no longer judged by the meat offerings, drink offerings, and Sabbath days, "which are a shadow of things to come." Please take note that these are yearly Sabbaths, and not the weekly Sabbath of the moral law. These shadowy yearly Sabbaths are described for you in Leviticus 23:24–37. These shadowy yearly Sabbaths fell on certain set days of the month—a different day of the week each year—yet they were called Sabbaths.

Now, please observe in verses 37 and 38 how they were distinguished from the weekly Sabbath of God's ten commandment law: "These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall

proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice and drink offering, everything upon his day, besides the Sabbaths of the Lord . . .”

Now the mystery of Colossians 2:16 is completely cleared up. The law of the yearly Sabbaths, with all of its meat and drink offerings, was nailed to the cross. However, the great ten commandments law, with its weekly Sabbath, was not affected by that “blotting out” of ordinances.

POINTLESS ALTAR CALLS

What do you think is actually happening when a pastor makes an altar call? What are his intentions? Whether is he a Baptist, Methodist, or Pentecostal, his intention is to get one to confess his sins to God, and then ask Jesus into his heart so that he might be saved. If God’s law was nailed to the cross, then there really is no need to encourage someone to ask for forgiveness. Why? Because there wouldn’t be any more sin to be forgiven. Why? Remember the Bible’s definition of sin? “Sin is transgression of the law.” 1 Jn 3:4. So, if the ten commandments were nailed to the cross, then there is no more law. “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Rom 3:20. And if there is no more law, then there is no more sin. “For where no law is, there is no transgression.” Rom 4:15. So if there is no more sin, then why do we need to repent? And if we have no need for a minister, we have no need for a Saviour. From what would we need to be saved?

Why so much confusion over the Scriptures? Why so many different religions or denominations? “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” Acts 20:29–30; cf. 2 Cor 11:13–15. So whom are you going to believe? God and His Word, the Bible—or some man telling you what to believe? *Read your Word.* 2 Tim 2:15.

A SPECIFIC SABBATH

I find it very interesting that God in His Word does not just say to “remember the Sabbath day,” but also to remember that “the seventh day is the Sabbath,” and “to keep it holy.” God did not say “make a Sabbath,” or “keep one day a week.” God is as specific as He can be. It is *the* Sabbath, and in it “you shall do no work,” because in six days He created everything, and on the seventh day He rested from His works. Ex 20:8–11. “There remaineth therefore a Sabbath to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Heb 4:9–10 margin.

The fourth commandment does not command us to worship one day each week, but to worship God on the seventh day of each week. There is, of course, no technical difference between one day of the week and another. They each are twenty-four hours long—except for the fact that God said that we are to keep a specific day. This commandment, like the “tree of knowledge of good and evil” in the Garden of Eden, is a simple test of loyalty to God. From the very beginning God has made obedience the grand test of love and loyalty. This is why Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Jn 14:15.

THIS COMMANDMENT, LIKE THE “TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL” IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, IS A SIMPLE TEST OF LOYALTY TO GOD.

The observance of the Sabbath is the means ordained by God for preserving a knowledge of Himself, and the way of distinguishing between His loyal subjects and the transgressors of His law. “And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. . . .” And “if any man

worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. . . .” Rev 14–10, cf. Ex 20:11.

The Sabbath belongs to Christ, since He made it and everything else, too. Jn 1:13, cf. Mt 12:8. He set it apart as a memorial of the work of creation. Gen 2:1–3. And He rested on it after His work of redemption. Lk 23:52–24:3. The Sabbath points to Him as both the Creator and the One who sanctifies His people. Ex 20:12, 20; cf. Ex 31:13. How thankful we can be that we have the Bible—the precious Word of God. What would we do without it? We dare not leave the Bible for the words of men, especially when those words teach disobedience to the inspired Word of God. “Saying, Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken.” Eze 22:28. Cling to Jesus, and to your Bible, all your life, and obey all that it tells you, and you will be safe! “Holding fast the faithful word . . . that you may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” Tit 1:9.

NOT FOR JEWS ONLY

“Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Is 56:1–2. This Scripture verse is for all those who say “the Sabbath is for the Jews only,” and not for all mankind, like Jesus said (Mk 2:27). Likewise, the command to refrain “from doing any evil” is also for the “Jews only,” and the rest of the human race may do as it pleases. Common sense says, “I don’t think so!”

Besides, what does Exodus 20:10 say? “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.” So again, the answer is “No, the Sabbath is not Jewish! It “is the Sabbath of the Lord!” It is Christ’s day, a memorial of His creative power, established at

the creation of mankind, and 2,300 years before the existence of the Jewish nation.

SPIRITUAL JEWS NOW

Most people either dislike or hate Jews, and they want nothing to do with them. Do you realize that we worship a Jewish Saviour? And that we read a Jewish book called “the Holy Bible”? Don’t you know that all true Christians are considered to be Abraham’s seed? That we are spiritual Jews? “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal 3:26–29.

“Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because there are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed by called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” Rom 9:6–8. Did you catch all that was said here in Romans 9:6–8? If not, please reread it, and don’t forget to ask God for the wisdom to understand.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.” Ex 31:16–18. Well, what are you going to do?

NO EXCUSES

Remember, just because another

person sins, that does not excuse your sins. You can never say to the Lord, “I sinned because he sinned.” God will not accept this excuse. You are responsible for what you say and do. Those who refuse to follow a “thus saith the Lord” will have no excuse to render for their persistent resistance to the Word of God. Those who do so will, in the Great Day of Judgment, be able to plead only that they sinned because others did so, too. Read your Bible! Is 8:20.

“Thus sayeth the Lord, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.” Ex 20:8–11; 31:12–18; Lev 23:3; Dt 5:14; Mk 2:28. There really is no reason for keeping the first day of the week instead of the seventh day. What’s your excuse? “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.” Lk 7:30. And Jesus said to them, “Full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” Mk 7:6–9. “Why call me

Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Lk 6:46.

So whom are you going to obey? Are you going to trust and obey God, or . . . ? “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” “No man can serve two masters . . .” “For one is your Master, even Christ.” Therefore, “we ought to obey God rather than men.” Rom 6:16; Mt 6:24; 23:10; Acts 5:29. There are only two sides—good and evil—Christ or Satan. You have heaven to win, and a hell to shun!

To Be Continued.



News Watch



Sin Not Sin Unless We Think So?

“The moral opposition to gambling might be gasping its

last breaths. As more and more states turn to casinos and gambling to fill shrinking budget coffers, the voices of the religious opposition are struggling to convince people that it is morally wrong.... A recent study... showed that 70 percent of Americans do not consider gambling to be a sin. ‘It’s not acceptable in today’s society to present arguments based solely on religion or morals,’” said a professor who teaches gambling law. Greg Trotter, *Christianity Today*, March 18, 2008.

End-time perspective: “...Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin.” COL 77.



More Global Consolidation?

Kazakhstan’s president has proposed a Central Asian Union that would “primarily deal with interstate border issues, trade, visa regimes, tourism, and security...: ‘In the region, we share economic interest, cultural heritage, language, religion, and environmental

challenges, and face common external threats. The founding fathers of the European Union could only wish they had so much in common. We should direct our efforts towards a closer economic integration, a common market and a single currency.” *Wikipedia*: “Central Asian Union.”

End-time perspective: “Despite human plans for security and prosperity, “as the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.” GC88 614.



Food Price Rise Is Global Crisis

A sharp rise in food prices has become a global crisis, said the UN Sec’y-Gen, calling for immediate international action in a statement made while meeting with top leaders on how the UN and the European Union can “forge closer ties.” The World Food Program has appealed for almost a billion dollars.

He urged international leaders to meet on an “‘urgent basis’ to discuss how to improve economic distribution systems and the production of agricultural products.” V. Oleksyn, *Asso. Press*, April 25, 2008.

End-time perspective: “The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation, and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of his self-sacrificing children.” GC88 629.



Scientists: Stop Some Biofuel Production in Food Crisis

“Some top international food scientists... recommended halting the use of food-based biofuels, such as ethanol, saying it would cut corn prices by 20 percent during a world food crisis. But... President Bush declared the U.S. should increase ethanol use because of national energy security and high gas prices.”

The scientists say work should focus on “nongrain crops such as switchgrass for biofuel. ‘We need to feed the stomach before we need to feed our cars,’ said one scientist.” “A World Bank study has estimated the corn prices ‘rose by over 60 % from 2005-07, largely because of the U.S. ethanol program’ combined with market forces.” S. Borenstein, *Asso. Press*, April 30, 2008.

End-time perspective: “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is evil thereof.” Matthew 6:34.

Food Rationing in the U.S.

“Many parts of America, long considered the breadbasket of the world, are now confronting a once unthinkable phenomenon: food rationing. Major



Losing Church Members

The Presbyterian Church (USA) expects the “largest annual loss of members in its history.... An estimated half are from congregations that left... over theological and sexuality issues.... Some are embroiled in court battles to keep their property....” E. P., *World*, March 22/29, 2008.

End-time perspective: “...The sin of the world’s impenitence lies at the door of the church.” GC88 389.

retailers in New York, in areas of New England, and on the West Coast are limiting purchases of flour, rice, and cooking oil as demand outstrips supply. There are also anecdotal reports that some consumers are hoarding grain stocks....”

“Spiking food prices have led to riots in recent weeks in Haiti, Indonesia, and several African nations. India recently banned export of all but the highest quality rice, and Vietnam blocked the



signing of a new contract for foreign rice sales. ‘ I ’ m surprised the Bush

administration hasn’t slapped export controls on wheat,’ Mr. Rawles said. ‘The Asian countries are here buying every kind of wheat.’” Mr. Rawles, editor of SurvivalBlog.com, said it is hard to know how much of the shortages are due to lagging supply and how much is caused by consumers hedging against future price hikes or a total lack of product.

“There have been so many stories about worldwide shortages that it encourages people to stock up....” Josh Gerstein, *New York Sun* (www2.nysun.com/article/74994), April 21, 2008.

Endtime perspective: In the wilderness, “they had not as yet suffered from hunger; their present wants were supplied, but they feared for the future. They could not understand how these vast multitudes were to subsist in their travels through the wilderness, and in imagination they saw their children famishing. The Lord permitted difficulties to surround them, and their supply of food to be cut short, that their hearts might turn to Him who had hitherto

been their Deliverer.” PP 292.



Obesity Soon a World Crisis

Obesity, “already being called the next deadly global pandemic,” is “projected to be a bigger threat to life than AIDS

and malaria combined.” It’s quickly becoming the “world’s most severe health-care crisis,” with a dire impact “on everything from medicine to the economy” “as health-care costs skyrocket and the size of healthy workforces shrink....” “The United Nations says there are now more overweight people in the world than starving people... as impoverished locals are increasingly introduced to mass-produced imported food that’s often cheaper than their local fare.”

“...Once a symbol of Western abundance and indulgence, today just as many people are overweight because they are filling their stomachs with whatever they can afford— and what they can afford [refined food] is making them obese.” Craig & Marc Kielburger, *The [Toronto] Star*, Feb. 4, 2008.

End-time perspective: “I dismissed my workers a couple of weeks ago, and took on another company of workers who were verily destitute of food to eat and clothing to wear. One...had taken a little fruit farm, to raise peas and vegetables also, but the frost cut off his peas. I gave him a cow. Until he has fruit for sale he will not have anything coming in.... I told him...I would give him work.... I cannot let this family be distressed for food and clothing. I sent my hired man, my horses, and plow, and he broke up the land for them.” Letter 156 (from Australia), 1896.

Pope: Martin Luther Not a Heretic

Pope Benedict XVI is now “arguing that Luther did not intend to split Christianity but only to purge the Church of corrupt practices....



According to Vatican insiders the Pope will argue that Luther, who was excommunicated and condemned for heresy, was not a heretic.”

“Luther [excommunicated by Pope Leo X] challenged the authority of the papacy by holding that the Bible is the sole source of religious authority.... Some theologians argue that Luther did not intend to confront the papacy ‘in a doctrinaire way’ but only to raise legitimate questions—a view Pope Benedict apparently shares.

“The head of the pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity said the move would help to promote ecumenical dialogue....”

Also, a papal “seminar will in part focus on the question of apostolic succession.... After the Reformation Protestants took the view that ‘succession’ referred only to God’s Word and not to church hierarchies, but some German scholars have suggested Luther himself did not intend this.”

“The move to re-evaluate Luther is part of a drive to soften Pope Benedict’s image as an arch conservative hardliner....”

“...This week Muslim scholars and Vatican officials met” to plan for “a meeting between the Pope and leading Muslims....” Richard Owen, *The Times* (timesonline.co.uk), March 6, 2008.

End-time perspective: “The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today.” GC 571.

Health Gem



What is Thyroid-Related Fatigue?

Energy is the backbone of life. All systems in your body need energy to function properly. How you produce and distribute energy is complex; thyroid hormone function has a major impact on all of your energy systems. However, not all fatigue or tiredness is due to thyroid malfunction. How do you tell the difference?

Thyroid hormone governs the basal metabolic rate, which is like the idling speed of a car engine. Even when you are sitting in a chair or sleeping, your 100

trillion cells keep making energy. This type of energy production is the foundation for all other energy and hormonal systems. If it is not up to par, no other system in your body works as well as it should.

When you step on the gas pedal during the day, this is not thyroid hormone that goes into action. Increased activity of any kind is controlled by adrenaline, muscle activity, increased calorie burning, and an increased speed at which your cells make energy. If you have a sluggish thyroid, you may still be able to make yourself have the energy to do things based on adrenaline-driven necessity. You may also notice that you have too much reliance on stimulants such as caffeine, sugar, or cigarettes.

A demanding day may deplete muscles of fuel and induce enough wear and tear so that natural tiredness follows. Such fatigue is normal and why we need to sleep. Even pushing it day after day and cutting sleep short may not be a thyroid problem. However, such a poor lifestyle is pushing your system, and you may eventually develop a thyroid problem as a result. Getting less than seven hours of sleep per night is asking for trouble.

If you have poor thyroid function, you frequently feel like you don't have the energy to exercise, and usually don't on a consistent basis.



Thyroid-related fatigue starts to show up when you cannot sustain energy long enough, especially when compared to a past level of fitness or ability. If the thyroid foundation is weak, sustaining energy output is difficult. You will notice you just don't seem to have the energy to do the things you used to be able to do.

The menstrual cycle, pregnancy, exercise, stress, and physical demands are all examples of increased energy demands requiring increased energy output. Thus, PMS is almost always, to a degree, a thyroid problem. The increased energy demands of the menstrual cycle are simply too much, partly due to an underlying thyroid weakness. Pregnancy is always a major test of the thyroid, as one's thyroid is called upon to do metabolic work for two bodies. This is why thyroid issues often flare up during or following pregnancy.

Thyroid hormone is synergistic with growth hormone in muscles, and when these two are working properly together, then muscles feel fit. Exercise conditions thyroid hormone to work properly to assist general energy production, and a lack of exercise contributes to poor thyroid function. The more fit your muscles feel, the less likely thyroid-related fatigue will be an issue for you. If you have poor thyroid function, you frequently feel like you don't have the energy to exercise and usually don't on a consistent basis. Muscle weakness is a classic hypothyroid symptom.

One of the key symptoms of thyroid fatigue is a heavy or tired head, especially in the afternoon. Thyroid hormone activity is regulated differently in the brain than anywhere else in the body, as brain cells themselves convert T4 to T3 (active

thyroid hormone). Your head is a very sensitive indicator of thyroid hormone status. This is different than low blood sugar symptoms from not having eaten for a while. The head just feels sluggish or tired, lacking clarity or sharpness. When this head tiredness occurs too many hours in the day, then you will feel like you want to sleep all the time and you will feel depressed, signs of more advanced thyroid-related fatigue.



Another key sign of thyroid fatigue is conking out as soon as you sit down and don't actually have to do something.

Another key sign of thyroid fatigue is conking out as soon as you sit down and don't actually have to do something (no necessity making you have to do something). In this case it feels like your body is a car idling too slowly at a stop sign, and it just stalls and goes

to sleep. This is a clear sign of thyroid fatigue.

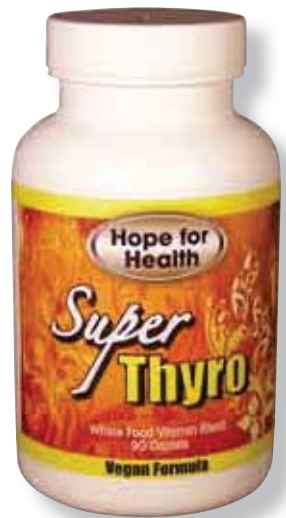
You either do or don't have the symptoms of thyroid-related fatigue. If you wake up energized, maintain decent energy throughout the day, are able to maintain mental alertness/sharpness, have energy as needed to meet demands, and your muscles feel fit, you do not have thyroid-related fatigue. The more you don't feel this way, the greater the problem. No lab test is needed. In many cases thyroid lab tests may still be normal, even though you clearly are not. The symptoms tell the story, and they never lie.

Byron J. Richards is a board-certified clinical nutritionist and author of "Fight for Your Health" and "The Leptin Diet." He is the founder and director of Wellness Resources Inc. www.wellnessresources.com.



If you have problems with your

thyroid or any other health condition and would like to resolve the problem naturally, Hope for Health offers free health counseling as a way to help you reach your health goals. We have a number of natural supplements that can help improve the health of your thyroid and of your whole body. Call us today! We have health professionals standing by to take your call.



Do you or does someone you love suffer from a thyroid condition? If you are fatigued, overweight, depressed, unable to tolerate cold, constantly feeling hot or unable to tolerate heat, are irritable or unable to sleep, your thyroid may not be functioning properly. Try our formula to improve thyroid function and find relief.

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- Guggul Gum Resin** - Stimulates metabolism, promotes weight loss, and increases production of thyroid hormones.
- Magnesium** - Helps balance thyroid gland functioning.
- Manganese** - Required to help transport thyroid hormones.
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*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” E.G. White, *Life Sketches*, 196. Many today have neglected to study the history and people that made up the early days of the Advent movement. To help encourage interest in Adventist history, we have put together questions about people and events of our past. Our goal is to spark faith and further study into “the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”

Historical Footnotes



Source: Excerpted from J. N. Loughborough’s *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Pacific Press, 2003); available in Hope International Bookstore.

1. The Lord turned the slander of the Messenger party into blessings.
 - a. *Review* subscriptions doubled.
 - b. The charges caused people to seek answers, and the number of believers doubled.
 - c. Unity and harmony among God’s people increased.
 - d. All of the above.
2. Tent meetings were considered after
 - a. Unheated barns deterred people.
 - b. School houses could no longer contain the crowds.
 - c. J. White got pneumonia after preaching in an unheated barn.
 - d. Speakers began to tire of so many meetings with small groups.
3. Tents made ____ possible, with a large tent for all and smaller tents for families.
 - a. Camp meetings.
 - b. Proper vacations.
 - c. Medical missionary work.
 - d. Local meetings.
4. In 1893 a camp meeting in Michigan included over ____ family tents.
 - a. 200
 - b. 300
 - c. 400
 - d. 500
5. When a train on which the Whites were traveling derailed and wrecked, the baggage car containing his books was undamaged and their car was miraculously spared because it was
 - a. Lifted off the tracks and set to the side.
 - b. Uncoupled from the rest of the train.
 - c. Stopped and supported by an oak tree.
 - d. Propelled safely past the wreckage.
6. A probation after Jesus’ second coming was taught by the
 - a. Age-to-Come party.
 - b. Second Coming–Second Probation party.
 - c. Mercy and Justice party.
 - d. Advent Expanded party.
7. Both Uriah Smith and J. H. Waggoner wrote on the dangers of
 - a. Delay in accepting the message.
 - b. Spiritualism.
 - c. Baptisms in frozen lakes.
 - d. Meat-eating.
8. During one vision received while Mrs. White was in bed, an unusual physical phenomenon was observed in her body for about half an hour:
 - a. Her upper body was raised from the pillows about 9 inches.
 - b. Her lips moved, but no sound came out.
 - c. She cried and laughed aloud.
 - d. Her eyes opened and closed rapidly.
9. On Sabbath, January 12, 1861, Mrs. White was given a vision of a terrible conflict in America. It would eventually be called
 - a. Custer’s last stand.
 - b. The Revolutionary War.
 - c. The Civil War.
 - d. The French and Indian War.
10. The conflict began exactly ____ months later.
 - a. 3
 - b. 5
 - c. 7
 - d. 9

Answers: 1:d; 2:b; 3:c; 4:d; 5:b; 6:a; 7:b; 8:a; 9:c; 10:a.



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Letters to The Editor



■ Christian greetings to all you folks at Hope International. We appreciated the message “Will the Structure Last?”

J&JS, Minnesota

■ I loved the articles on the “daily.” For the first time, the “daily,” the sanctuary, and everything all fit together and made sense. I told my son the same thing.

LH, Massachusetts

■ I recently sent in several names of people who want to receive the monthly DVDs. Here is another one.

M/MSW

■ This ministry has been such a blessing to me and my husband. Keep the Lord first always. May God continue to work through each and everyone at Hope International.

J&MH, Michigan

■ God bless all. I do believe our God is coming soon. I share all I get and talk to others. Pray for our church.

FS, North Carolina

■ Thank you so much for signing me up to receive the DVDs. Yes, I can play them. Thank you for your ministry. I am looking forward to each and every magazine.

BD, New York

■ Many thanks for the recent DVD. The message melted my heart.

A&BH, Minnesota

■ Just wanted to drop you a line and let you know that today we enjoyed a sermon of substance for the first time in a very long time. I enjoyed the story in the message. I have shared that story about Easy Eddie and Butch O’Hare to a number of men in prison; it’s never too late to change.

JK, Oregon

■ Enclosed is an offering to cover some of the mailing cost. Thank you for all the information.

BA, Colorado

■ We always enjoy the DVDs and we look forward to more. Thank you for the timely articles in *Our Firm Foundation*. Our copies always get read soon after we get them. I always like to read the News Watch right away; the evidence is all around us that Christ is soon going to return.

J&JS, Minnesota

■ We’re enjoying your magazine and thank the Lord for such magazine topics of the last days that we don’t hear in the pulpits today.

J&RW, GA

■ Your DVDs have truly been a blessing to us. We pray many others are blessed by them, too.

M&MO, Kentucky

■ I’m still being blessed by the magazine articles and eager for our Lord’s return.

LP

■ That magazine that you guys put out is far superior to anything that the denomination puts out.

LD, Florida

■ I love the DVDs and the topics covered.

SS, Oregon

■ I love the magazine that you send out every month. I have enjoyed every one. Just keep on doing what you are doing for Jesus, and please pray for my family.

MW, Louisiana

■ Praise God for Hope International ministry. I will keep you in my prayers.

RP, Utah

■ I certainly am in 100% agreement on the “daily.” Those articles were well-constructed and fully documented.

BM, Tennessee

■ Phone call to Hope staff: A caller’s mother went on hospice and then died. Hospice had taken her off all her prescription meds, but told her to keep on taking the vitamins and Heart Max she had from Hope. (They didn’t keep the mother alive, but hospice apparently saw some value in the products.)

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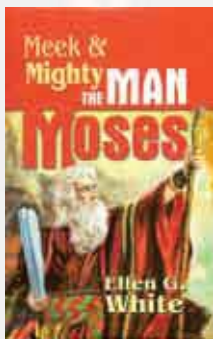
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