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our firm
FOUNDATION

*The Immutable Law of God • Christ Our Righteousness • The Seventh-day Sabbath
The Three Angels' Messages • The Non-Immortality of the Soul • The Sanctuary*

**THE POWER
OF GOD**
IN THE WEAKLING



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Ellen White's Vision: The Open and the Shut Door

As we near the close of this earth's history God is looking for a people that, like Enoch, will reflect the character of Jesus. In Christ's Object Lessons at page 331, it states: "Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ....It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected."

As we watch the things that go on in our world today, we can readily see that time is short. A time of trouble like never was could be right before us. But the Lord is giving us time to perfect our characters by allowing the Holy Spirit to work through each one of us.

Dear brothers and sisters, how is it with each of you? Are you becoming more familiar with the Scriptures day

*The question that arises
for each of us is,
will we be safe to save?*

by day? Are you always ready to give an answer for the Bible truths you believe? Could you stand in Court without your Bible in your hand and speak up for the true Sabbath?

We must learn to renounce self and give ourselves completely to Christ. Then the Holy Spirit can stand with

you as you stand for truth.

As we experience the cooler weather that we have this time of year, I arise from bed at least two times a night to put more wood on our fire places. When I come back to my warm comfortable bed I am sometimes more awake than I would like to be at that time of night. I find that if I go over memory work I fall back to sleep much faster than if I just lay there. First I go through all the 39 books of the Old Testament and then the 27 books of the New Testament. I follow that up by going through Psalm 91, a psalm that Ellen White has referred to as a psalm of omnipotence.

Then I repeat, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20.

Soon, I am back asleep.

We must learn how to renounce self and give ourselves to Christ.

In 4BC 1161, the prophet says, "Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come." Apparently, God is waiting on His people, on you and me.

In 5T451, we read, "The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God's commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image."

In 5T214 we are warned, "Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God

while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost."

In Nahum, chapter one, verse nine, the Bible says, "What do ye imagine against the Lord? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time."

The question that arises for each of us is, will we be safe to save? God has allowed this world to go on as long as it has in order for us to really see what sin is like, and to thereby hate sin as much as He does. He hates the sin but loves the sinner. If we totally surrender our lives to Him, we will also hate the sin but love the sinner, and sin will never rise again. We will then be safe in a world made new.

Remember, "The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God." AA 50.



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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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We are a lay ministry founded, supported, and operated by Seventh-day Adventists to assist God's Church in the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel in every way that is consistent with the principles of God as revealed in Inspiration.

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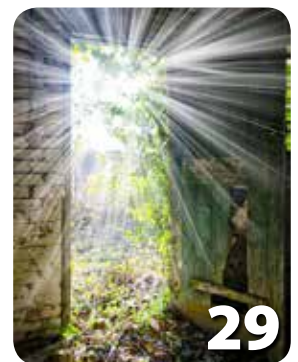
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A key to the abbreviations for Ellen White's material used in each magazine can be found at www.whiteestate.org

THE POWER OF GOD

IN THE WEAKLING

By Emmanuel Machakaire



“Is anything too hard for the LORD?” Genesis 18:14

In the book of Judges we learn of Israel’s difficult time with the Midianites. The Midianites would come into Israel’s land and wipe out all their food supply. They destroyed their livestock (cows and sheep), their crops (grains and wheat to make bread), and other possessions of the children of Israel.

FOR FEAR OF THE MIDIANITES, THE ISRAELITES BEGAN TO HIDE IN CAVES

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the

LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: [and] because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which [are] in the mountains,

and caves, and strong holds. And [so] it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; [for] both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.” Judges 6:1-6.

The Bible says, “they cried out to God and He heard their prayers.” Once again, God moved to deliver the children of Israel. God called Gideon to lead a small army into battle. “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD [is] with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my LORD,



if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where [be] all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family [is] poor in Manasseh, and I [am] the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Judges 6:12-16.

God moved to deliver Israel. He did not want Israel to glory, boasting that their own strength and resources had won the battle. God desired all the glory for the victory He would give. He wanted to teach the Israelites to depend on Him. Gideon and his army were camped together near the well of Harod. His army, at that time, numbered 32,000 soldiers. Gideon's army was nothing compared to the Midianite army, numbering 135,000 soldiers (Judges 8:10). Gideon was probably concerned; but perhaps, he thought his army

of 32,000 could defeat them with the help of the Lord. The Lord had other plans in mind. The Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'my own hand has saved me.' "

THE LAW OF DUTY IS SUPREME

Can you imagine what Gideon must have thought? "Too many soldiers? I'm short about 100,000 men!" However, Gideon obeyed the voice of the Lord and followed His instructions. He



got on their knees to drink. Gideon kept the 300 men who drew water to their mouths and sent the other 9,700 home. "Under similar circumstances, doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans, would suggest ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loth to submit to so simple an arrangement, and one that reflected no glory upon themselves, save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of conquering a mighty city in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should wield authority over human reason." 2 SDABC 995.

said to his army, "If there is anyone afraid among you, let him depart from here." At that time, 22,000 left to go home and only 10,000 remained. The army was much smaller; but, God was not finished sifting the army yet. God told Gideon that there were still too many people. He told Gideon to take the men down and let them drink water. He was to separate the ones who lapped up the water like dogs from those who

"When Man Builds Theories, He Loses Simplicity of Faith. There are deep mysteries in the Word of God, there are mysteries in His providences, and there are mysteries in the plan of salvation, that man cannot fathom. But the finite mind, strong in its desire to satisfy curiosity, and solve the problems of infinity, neglects to follow the plain course indicated by the revealed will of God, and pries into the secrets hidden since the foundation of the world. Man builds his theories, loses the simplicity of true faith, becomes too self-important to believe the declarations of the Lord, and hedges himself in with his own





conceits. Many who profess to be children of God are in this position. They are weak because they trust to their own strength. God works mightily for a faithful people, who obey His Word without questioning or doubt. The Majesty of heaven, with His army of angels, leveled the walls of Jericho before His people. The armed warriors of Israel had no cause to glory in their achievements. All was done through the power of God. Let the people give up all desire for self-exaltation, let them humbly submit to the divine will, and God will again manifest His power, and bring freedom and victory to His children.” ST April 14, 1881.

THE LORD HAD ALREADY GIVEN GIDEON VICTORY

“And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that [were] in the host. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley

like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels [were] without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. And when Gideon was come, behold, [there was] a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto

a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of



Israel: [for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. And it was [so], when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.” Judges 7:9-16.

WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE SOMEONE AS WEAK AS GIDEON?

The Lord came to Gideon that same night and told him that it was time for the attack against the Midianites. Now, Gideon must have been a little scared about leading an army of 300 against an army of 135,000 soldiers. God graciously told Gideon that if he was still afraid, he and his servant, Purah, should go down to the camp of Midian; and there, his hands will be strengthened and encouraged to lead God’s chosen army into battle. Gideon and Purah went down into the camp of Midian where they overheard a man telling his dream to his friend. He dreamed that a loaf of barley bread tumbled into camp and struck a tent and overturned it. The man’s friend interpreted the dream saying, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon...Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.” The Lord is a gracious God and full of mercy. When we are afraid, He does not get angry with us; He reassures us. Whether through a person or through the richness of the Bible, God comforts His children. It seems Gideon was a fearful man from the beginning. Why would God choose someone as weak as Gideon? God often chooses to use those that are



weak and helpless apart from His help in order that He might receive the glory for what He has accomplished through them. In 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 we read, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty... that no flesh should glory in his presence." Perhaps you have thought that God cannot use you because you are weak in some areas. Not so, it is God who enables us to do what He has called us to do.

GIDEON'S ACTIONS CAUSED SUCH CONFUSION IN THE MIDIANITE CAMP THAT THEY FLED

Upon hearing the dream and its interpretation, Gideon worshipped God. Then, he went back to the camp of Israel and told his men "... the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." Gideon split the army into three companies and gave them each trumpets and torches to hide inside empty jars. After receiving instructions for the battle, the three companies positioned themselves. Just as the guards for the Midianite army were put on their posts for their shift, Gideon blew his trumpet and smashed his jar. His

torch glowed against the dark sky and he shouted "a sword of the Lord and of Gideon." All the other soldiers did likewise. This confused the Midianites so much that they began to attack one another, thinking that there was more than one army fighting against them. The Midianites fled and the men of Israel pursued them. Gideon sent messengers throughout all the land calling them to pursue the Midianites. The children of Israel could not say that they beat the Midianites through their own strength--it was all the Lord's doing. The Lord defeated the Midianite army with three hundred men led by feeble Gideon! God would receive the glory for His work



The leader whom God had chosen occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a Levite, or a priest. He thought himself the least in his father's house. Human wisdom would not have selected him; but God saw in Gideon a man of integrity and moral courage. He was distrustful of self, and willing to listen to the teachings of God, and carry out his purposes. The Lord is not dependent upon men of high position, of great intellect, or extensive knowledge. Such men are



frequently proud and self-sufficient. They feel themselves competent to devise and execute plans without counsel from God. They separate themselves from the true Vine, and hence become dry and fruitless, as withered branches. The Lord would put to shame the vaunting of men. He will give success to the feeblest efforts, the most unpromising methods, when divinely appointed, and entered upon with humility and trust. God will not test our faith beyond endurance. He will give us sufficient evidence, that we may, in our weakness, lean upon the arm of his strength, and trust wholly in his power.

and would again demonstrate that in times of war or peace, He was worthy of their trust. God wants to be glorified in our lives. Our weaknesses provide opportunity for God to receive the glory for His work! We need only surrender our lives. Remember God does not look for ability, He looks for availability.

GOD SAW IN GIDEON A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND MORAL COURAGE

"The experience of Gideon and his army, was designed to teach a lesson of simplicity and faith.

Success does not depend upon strength or numbers. God can deliver



by few as well as by many. A large church is not necessarily a strong church. Some of its members may be cherishing selfishness, pride, or unbelief; some may be dishonest, others corrupt in heart and life. All these are a source of weakness to the church. They bring the frown of God upon his people, and the great adversary will work through them to advance his own cause.

“The Majesty of Heaven works by whom he will. His providence sometimes selects the humblest instruments to do the greatest work; for his power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard of reckoning, and by it we pronounce one thing great, and another small; but God estimates not according to the standard of men; he does not graduate his scale by theirs. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, and what is small to us must be small to him.”

“These victories

teach the great lesson that the only sure ground of success is the help of God, working with human effort. Those who trust to their own wisdom and their own skill will surely be disappointed. The only safe course in all the plans and purposes of life is to preserve the simplicity of faith. Humble trust in God and faithful obedience to his will are as essential to the Christian in waging spiritual warfare as they were to Gideon and his brave associates in fighting the battles of the Lord.” ST, July 21, 1881.



- God does not look for ability, He looks for availability.
- We are feeble in our own strength.
- God always hears our cries and prayers.
- God always saves us in many ways we know nothing about.

There is nothing too hard for the Lord, He takes pleasure in us, we must obey Him regardless of the circumstances and we must trust His willingness to help.

Lord, I do not ask for an easy road but for courage to walk the path you set before me. I thank you that my life is in your hands and that I have nothing to fear because all my days are appointed by you. Give me the faith of Gideon. I ask for courage to face the life's battles with you. Above all else, may you be glorified in my life so that others will see Jesus in me, for there is power in God for the weaklings. Amen.



Emmanuel Machakaire is a(n) SDA writer who is based in So. Africa. He enjoys studying, writing, and sharing Bible truths.

AS I WRAP UP THIS MESSAGE, HERE ARE THE MAIN LESSONS TO PONDER:

- Since we can see that nothing is too hard for the LORD, we must trust His willingness to help.
- When man builds theories, he loses simplicity of faith.
- Strip yourself of all self-confidence, and trust the Lord only for help.
- Don't doubt the LORD's ability, even in the worst circumstances.
- Those who trust in their own wisdom and their own skill will surely be disappointed.
- Success does not depend upon strength or numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many.



The Guiding Star

O Thou who by a star didst guide
The wise men on their way,
Until it came and stood beside
The place where Jesus lay;

Thy servants now below,
Thy Holy Spirit, when they need,
Will show them how to go.

As yet we know Thee but in part;
But still we trust thy word
That blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see the Lord.

O Saviour! give us, then, Thy grace,
To make us pure in heart,
That we may see Thee face to face
Hereafter, as Thou art.

-Unknown



Christ the true vine

By Mrs. E. G. White

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

Our heavenly Father planted on earth a goodly vine, whose fruit should be to eternal life. But this precious plant appeared to human eyes as a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. When the claim was put forth that it was of heavenly origin, the men of Nazareth became enraged, and cast it from them. The inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem took the vine of God’s own planting, and bruised it, and trampled it under foot, hoping to utterly destroy it forever. But now the Husbandman removed this goodly vine, and planted it in his own garden, beyond the spoiler’s reach. The stock and root were concealed from human sight, but still “the branches run over the wall.” Thus grafts can be united to the vine, and, partaking of its nourishment, become flourishing branches, and bring forth much fruit.

Everything necessary to man’s happiness and well-being was in Christ

The figure of the vine is a perfect symbol. God sent his Son from the heavenly courts to a world seared

and marred by the curse of sin. In Christ all fullness dwelt; in him was righteousness, peace, life,—everything necessary to man’s happiness and well-being. But the world hated the Son of the most high God. The world saw nothing attractive in him. The best gift of Heaven was slighted and spurned. Christ was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” yet “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” He was hated by evil men because his character was spotless, his works righteous. He came as the Redeemer of the world; yet he was taken by cruel hands, and shamefully entreated and crucified. God raised him from the dead, and he ascended to Heaven to plead his blood as the propitiation for our sins.

In this vine is all spiritual life

Though invisible to mortal sight, Christ still lives as the Redeemer of the world, the representative of man in the heavenly courts, and the medium through whom all blessings flow to the fallen race. His love is without a parallel. We cannot estimate the value of his life of toil and sacrifice, the precious ransom paid for our redemption.



Surely it is not too much to ask the heart's best and holiest affections in return for such wondrous love.

Said the Saviour to his disciples: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." In this vine is all spiritual life. From the fullness of Christ alone can we obtain the nourishment that will enable us to bear fruit unto eternal life. The vine stock is unseen; but the branches, the members of his body, are visible. The branch that was apparently dry and leafless, by being connected with the living vine, becomes a part of it,—a partaker of its life and fatness. Fiber by fiber, and vein by vein, it adheres to the vine, till the life-giving sap causes it to bud, and blossom, and bear fruit.

Meekness and truth will guide the way of those connected to the vine

The scion becomes a part of the vine by forming a perfect union with it. Thus it is with the sinner. The soul, dead in trespasses and sins, must experience a similar process in order to be reconciled to God, and to become a partaker of Christ's life and joy. As the graft receives life when united to the vine, so the sinner partakes of the divine nature when connected with Christ by repentance and faith. This connection joins soul with soul, the finite with the infinite. When thus united, the words of Christ abide in us, and we are not actuated by a spasmodic feeling, but by a living, abiding principle.

Every branch united to the true vine brings forth fruit, not of its own kind, but that of the vine of which it has become a part. The Spirit of Christ flowing into the hearts of all who are truly united with him, makes them partakers of the divine nature. They will walk in the footsteps of their self-sacrificing, self-denying Redeemer. His purity and love will appear in their characters and their daily lives, while meekness and truth will guide their way.

Every fruitful branch is pruned that it may bring forth more fruit

"I am the true vine," says Christ, "and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me [everyone who claims connection with me] that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." This is the solemn warning that is addressed to each disciple. The careless and indifferent will after a time be overcome of temptation, and at last wholly separated from Christ.

But "every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Every fruitful branch is pruned; for even fruitful branches may display too much foliage, and appear what they really are not. Husbandmen



clip off the surplus foliage of the vines, and the tendrils that are grasping the rubbish of earth, thus making them more fruitful. And when the Master sees that worldliness, self-indulgence, and pride are cropping out in the lives of his followers, he prunes them. These hindering causes must be removed, and the defective overgrowth cut away, to give room for the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

The result of union with Christ is purification of heart

Said Christ: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." The branch can maintain its connection with the living vine only on condition that it bear fruit. And the fruit borne on the Christian tree is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Rich clusters of this precious fruit will appear on every branch that is subjected to the pruning of the wise Husbandman. The result of union with Christ is purification of heart, a circumspect life, and a faultless character. Yet those who have attained to this degree of Christian perfection are the last to claim that they have any merits of their own. "Accepted in the Beloved," objects of their heavenly Father's constant care and unfailing mercy, they feel unworthy of the divine favor, and have too vivid a sense of utter dependence upon God to boast of their exalted position.

Love to God and love to our neighbor is the sum and substance of true piety

It is a sad fact that many who profess to be branches of the true vine show by their lives that they have no connection with it. Their words and actions, destitute of



grace and meekness, resemble the stinging branches of the noxious thorn-tree, rather than the lovely, fruit-laden boughs of the precious vine. Love to God and love to our neighbor is the sum and substance of true piety. Those who are destitute of this love, and yet claim that they have gained high attainments in spiritual things, may for a time deceive their fellowmen, but they cannot deceive God. Says the true Witness, "I know thy works." And in the great day of final accounts, God "will render to every man according to his deeds."



Many misunderstand the object for which they were created. They do not realize that they were placed here to bless humanity and glorify God, rather than to enjoy and glorify self. God is constantly pruning his people, cutting off profuse, spreading branches, that they may bear fruit to his glory, and not produce leaves only. Idols must be given up, the conscience must become more tender, the meditations of the heart must be spiritual, and the entire character must become symmetrical.

Fruitful Christians are connected with God and place a right value on eternal things

Some who claim to be followers of Christ are withered branches, that must ere long be separated from the living vine. The love of the world has paralyzed their spiritual life, and they are not awake to the precious theme of redemption. The impression made on the world by these professed Christians is unfavorable to the religion of Christ. They manifest ambition and zeal in the business of the world; but they have little interest in things of eternal importance. The voice of God through his messengers is a pleasant song; but its sacred warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are all unheeded. Eternal interests are placed on a level with common things. The Holy Spirit



is grieved, and its influence is withdrawn. Fruitful Christians are connected with God, and hence they are able to place a right value on eternal things. They feast upon the words of life; and whenever they listen to the "message of glad tidings," they can say, as did the disciples to whom Christ explained the prophecies on the way to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" It is the duty of every child of God to store his mind with divine truth; and the more he does

this, the more strength and clearness of mind he will have to fathom the deep things of God. And his growth in grace will be more and more vigorous, as the principles of truth are carried out in his daily life.

He who is in harmony with God will constantly depend on him for strength

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." It should be our life-work to be constantly reaching forward to the perfection of Christian character, ever striving for conformity to the will of God. The efforts begun here will continue through eternity. The advancement made here will be sure when we enter upon the future life.

Those who are partakers of Christ's meekness, purity, and love, will be joyful in God, and will diffuse light and gladness around them. The thought that Christ died to obtain for us the gift of everlasting life is enough to call forth from our hearts the most sincere and fervent gratitude, and from our lips the most enthusiastic praise. God's promises are rich, and full, and free. Whoever will comply with the conditions may claim these promises, with all their wealth of blessing, as his own. And being thus abundantly supplied from the treasure-house of God, he may, in the journey of life, "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," thus blessing his fellow-men, and honoring his Creator. While our Saviour would guard his followers from self-confidence by the reminder, "Without me, ye can do nothing," he has coupled with it for our encouragement the gracious assurance, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

ST, March 10, 1887



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.



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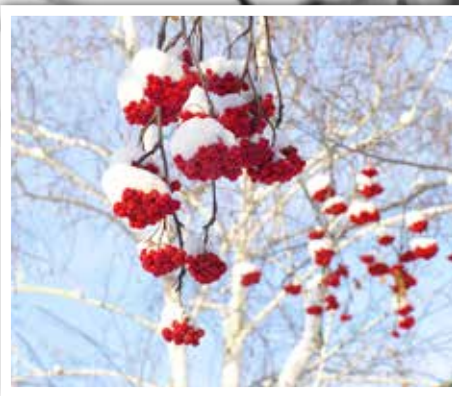
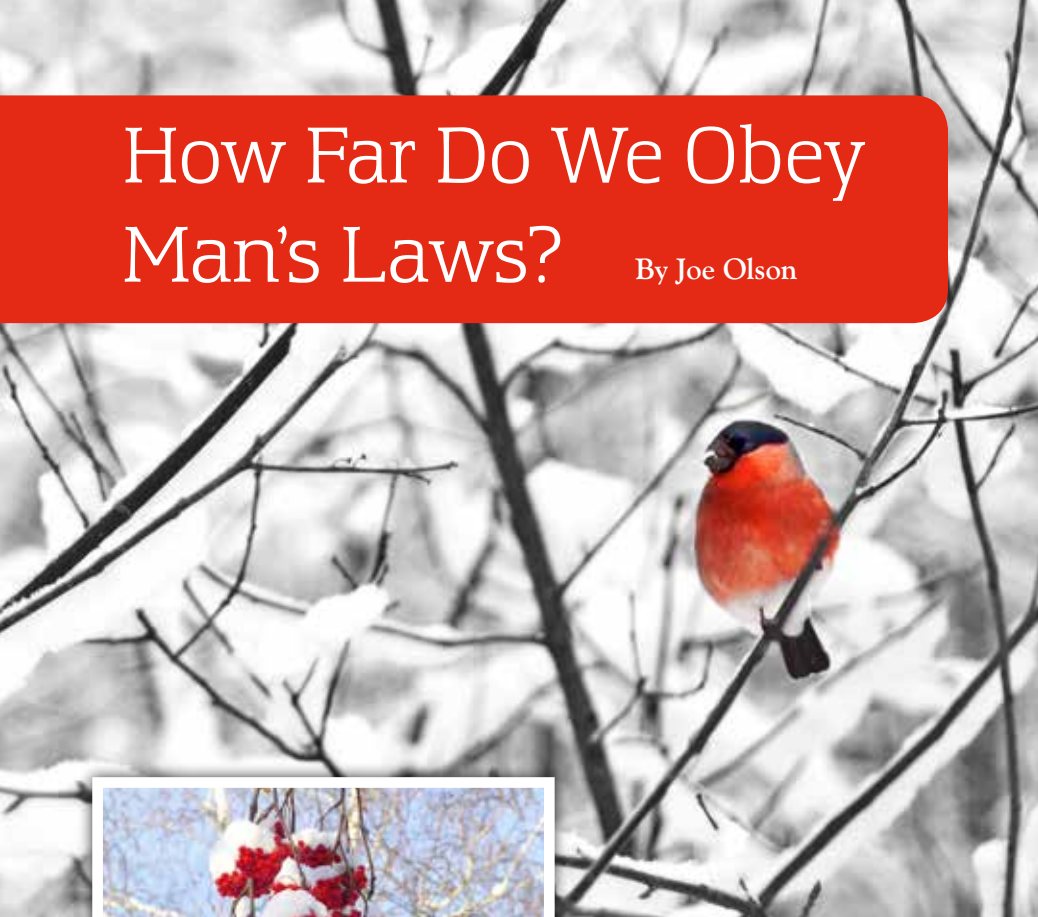
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How Far Do We Obey Man's Laws?

By Joe Olson



In our world today, we are seeing more and more government intrusion into our lives. So much so, that the Christian has to begin asking when and how far will we obey what laws man sets up. The Bible has been the Christian's guide all through life and this is no exception. We have been given specific guidance through the scriptures to do all we can to get along with our fellow man. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Rom. 12:18. Jesus tells us that it is our responsibility to get along with others, to get along in our churches, communities and nation. This is our Christian duty. Not just the spouse or the pastor or Christians... but everyone, including our soldiers, police, legislators and presidents. "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." 1 Pet. 2:17.

We are to honor, and be subject to, those in charge

Please note that we are to fear God, of course, and to love the brotherhood, which means fellow Christians, but it goes further than that. We are to honor all men; and then Peter included the head of the political realm as well. God told Peter to write that. God wants us to honor our politicians. That can be hard to do in this political climate, can't it? Some of our politicians don't appear to be very honorable. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work," Titus 3:1. Here in Titus, we are told not only to honor those in charge, but to be subject to, and to obey them. This reminds me of the scripture that tells women to obey their husbands. But what if your husband is an idiot? What if your husband does not make good judgment calls? What if your husband is more concerned for himself than for you? What if the politicians are the same way? What then? Do we do what they say only when we feel they are making the right decisions?

Peter addresses that issue for us... "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." 1 Pet. 2:18. The word "froward" is not used by us very much any more, but it means to be obstinate or disobedient. We are not responsible to be good and gentle and obedient only when those in charge make good decisions, but also when they make bad ones. Their duty is to judge and rule righteously. Our duty is to be peaceful and good and gentle and obedient. God will address what they do. God will also address what we do. We both have jobs, and God will judge us according to how we have fulfilled our responsibilities.

No one has any power unless it was given to him by God

One of the reasons that I am addressing this now is because the day is coming, and in some cases now is, when this concept and these scriptures are going to be thrown in the faces of Christian people. We need to be prepared and ready to give an answer when these things arise. How far do we obey man's laws?

Here is another verse that we will have to deal with... "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1. What are you going to say when you are told to obey some injunction, and this verse is given to you? Are the powers that be "ordained of God"? Isn't that what it says? We have to be very, very wise here. God has told us to be subject unto the higher powers, or those in a





higher position than we are. Power comes from God and no one has any power except it was given him from God... whether or not they admit it or understand it or believe it.

Remember what Jesus said to Pilate? Pilate was asking Jesus questions and Jesus was not answering him. That frustrated Pilate and he couldn't believe it. Then Pilate stated to Jesus what power he had... "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." John 19:10-11.

Jesus knew where Pilate's power came from. Jesus knew that Pilate had no power or authority or ability other than what God allowed. This is something we have to keep in mind. The president, congress, local magistrates, etc., etc., have no power but what God allows them to have. "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:" Dan. 2:20-21. And... God holds them accountable for the positions of authority that they have been given.

The devil knows scripture better than we do

Paul understood this concept, too. "Obey them that have the rule over

you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Heb. 13:17. Now I think this refers more to the pastors and teachers that are striving to prepare you for heaven, but it has reference also to anyone who is in charge of you. Everyone who has any kind of authority... from a spouse to a parent to an elder in the church to the president of our country will be held accountable for that authority. They will have to give an account of their stewardship, or the trust that has been given them. The one with little authority will be accountable for little. The one with great authority will be accountable commensurately. This is fair; this is right; this is how God set it up.

But again, we ask the question... how far do we obey man's laws? Another verse from God's holy word will be addressed to us... "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Rom. 14:19. Be peaceful! Get along! Obey them that have the rule over you! We must be prepared to give an answer for these things. You cannot quote one scripture for doing what you do, and reject another scripture because you do not agree with it; that is called hypocrisy. Remember that the devil is doing all he can to destroy God's people and God's law! And the devil knows the scripture better than we do. And you can be sure that he will use every man, woman and child that he can to try to trip us up.

One more verse to address the

submission of ourselves to those in authority... "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Pet. 5:5. We are commanded to all be subject one to another. Be humble... do what you're told. Submit. Obey.

All of the scriptures about a subject must be used in order to prove a point from the Bible

When we say that we are Christians, then it is only right and fair for the world to use these references in the Bible and tell us that we must follow what the Bible tells us to do. These verses are straight out of the Bible. They have not been twisted or rearranged or changed to make them appear different than they are. They mean what they say. *We are* to be humble; we *are* to obey; we *are* to submit to the higher authorities.

Now... I think I have clearly stated what the scripture says about obedience to those in charge, whomever they may be. But, just as anyone trying to prove a point in the Bible using scripture, the only way to be safe is to use all of the scripture dealing with a particular issue. There are so many wild, supposedly Biblical doctrines out in the world today because they do not follow this scriptural rule... "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept;

line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” Isa. 28:9-10. Those who want to understand Biblical doctrine and want to have the knowledge that the Bible has to offer must do it this way. “Precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” In other words, one must use all of the scripture that deals with a specific issue to make his point. You can’t pick out a verse here and there, leaving out other verses that contradict what you are saying. You must use all of them. THIS is how you get knowledge; THIS is how you understand. And it makes perfect sense. The Bible is God’s guide for life here on earth. How much of the Bible? The whole thing. You can’t just use the New Testament, or just the gospels, or just Paul’s writings. You can’t leave out Revelation, or Daniel, or one of the smaller books because they seem too hard or inconsequential to you. Think of the Bible as a giant puzzle and all of the scriptures are pieces of that puzzle. Any piece left out makes an incomplete picture. And God knew that we would be inclined to use His book that way so He made the point that we needed to use all of it together.

Did the disciples obey those in authority over them?

That being said, we now need to be sure that we are to *always* obey the “higher powers”. According to the scriptures, were there, or are there, ever times when we do *not* obey the higher powers? Remember, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a

little, there a little. Are there any of the puzzle pieces that will give us a better picture of what the whole Bible is referring to? Taken as a complete message, and not just a paragraph or a sentence out of the entire letter, what does God require of us?

Are we to always obey man’s laws? Well, this very situation arose with Jesus’ disciples about what they preached to others about. The people over them, the people of authority, those with “higher power”, told them to stop preaching about Jesus. Now, according to all we have read from the Bible thus far about obeying those in authority, about being humble and submitting, about getting along and living peaceably with others, we might get the impression that the disciples should have just shut up and obeyed. You might think that because they were some of the very ones who were telling others that we should be obedient, that they would have dutifully submitted to the higher authorities and done what they were told.

Peter and John were preaching the gospel to people. They were healing people. And they weren’t just saying, “Jesus loves you.” “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are

witnesses.” Acts 13-15. Peter was telling the people and leaders of his country that they delivered Jesus into the hands of evil men, that they denied their Lord, that they preferred a murderer to their Saviour and that they, for all intents and purposes, murdered the Son of God. This doesn’t seem to fit the picture of trying to get along with everyone does it? This doesn’t appear to follow along with “making peace” and “submission” and “subjection” and “loving the brotherhood” and everyone else, does it?

The rulers demanded to know who gave the disciples, and even Jesus, their authority

That’s why it is so important to look at *all* the scriptures... precept upon precept and line upon line, here a little, there a little. Peter and John seem to be doing the exact opposite of the scriptures we have just been reading. And as you would expect, what they were doing and saying did not go over well with the people in charge... “And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.” Acts 4:1-3. The Bible says that they were “grieved” and did not like what Peter and John were saying... so much so that they grabbed them and held





them until they decided what they were going to do to them. Not too much “peace” going on here. Not too much “humble submission” happening at this point, either.

Finally the rulers came together. “And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” Acts 4:5-7. Peter and John are asked who they think they are. How dare they go around and condemn others for their actions. Who told them to act this way? Who told them to say these things? Who gave them the okay or the authority to do this? Interestingly, they asked Jesus the very same things. “And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” Matt. 21:23.

Peter and John were commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus

You see... people of the world like being in charge. They like authority. Earthly rulers and leaders often feel because they have been put in charge, and have been given authority, that they are free to treat people any way they want. Some take advantage of their positions and go further than they should in their rule of the people. Here, in both of these cases, you see

where they demanded to know who gave them their authority to do what they did, because it was not what the rulers and leaders wanted.

So, the men in charge decided on a course of action... “But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” Acts 4:17-18. Now here was a direct order from those whom God had put in charge and allowed to be the leaders and rulers of the people.

Peter and John were, “straitly threatened”. They were “commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus”, or in other words, what Jesus had taught them. What do they do? How do they respond? The leaders have laid down the law to them. Do they have to obey this law that has been “straitly” given to them? Are they now to humbly submit and get along and strive to live peaceably with everyone? This is extremely important here, for the day is coming, and now is for some people, that we will be told to keep our mouths shut about what Jesus, or the Bible, has to say about certain subjects! Even now authorities are condemning those who address what the Bible says about homosexuality or immorality or even the Catholic Church!

Here is the answer to the question about how far we go in obeying man’s laws and rules

So... what happened, and what did Peter and John say? “But Peter and

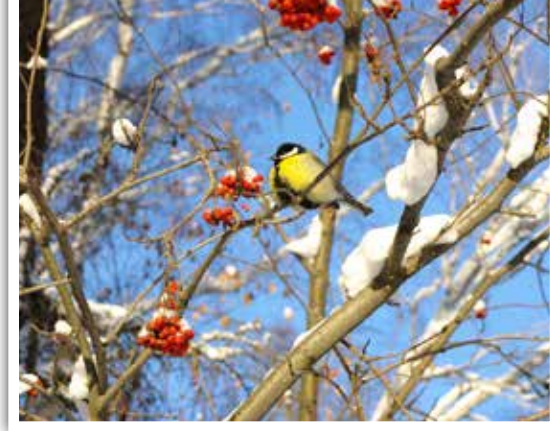
John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.” Acts 4:19. The Modern King James version of the Bible translates this same scripture like this: “But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right before God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.” This is why it is so terribly important that we know what ALL of the Bible says. We must read and study God’s word, precept upon precept, and line upon line, here a little, there a little.

In these verses and this story, those in charge do not want us to remember or read. They do not want us to include these precepts in our decisions about obeying their laws. And this concept, this precept, relates to whomever is in charge... from a spouse to a parent to the pastor and the church, all the way up to the president of our country. We are indeed under authority. We have a responsibility to obey those who have the rule over us. But all of their rule, all of their instruction, all of their commands, are subject to God’s laws and commands.

Here is the answer to the question about how far we go in obeying man’s laws and rules...If following man’s laws and rules *interferes* with God’s laws and rules, then we ought to obey God rather than men. This is exactly what happened with Peter and John. Remember, they were “straitly charged” to no longer speak in the name of Jesus.

An angel of the Lord freed His disciples from prison

Well... what happened? They went right back out and continued



with their preaching and teaching and healing. And they were thrown into prison for it. They were being disobedient to the rulers. They were not humbling themselves and submitting to the authority of those in charge. And God intervened and let them out of prison. “Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.” Acts 5:25. Now, how do you think that made the rulers feel? Their power and authority are being usurped. Others are watching this behavior and are being affected by it. I can only imagine where they thought this might lead.

So, once again they accosted them and brought them before the leadership. “And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” Acts 5:27,28. “Did we not tell you to obey us?” “How dare you go out and do other than what we have commanded you?” Can’t you just hear it? “You have told everyone about your doctrine.” “And... you are blaming us for the problems we are facing!”

This is so very, very typical. Many people want authority and power and command. But precious few are willing to accept the responsibility that goes with it. If you are in charge, then what happens is your responsibility. But most people,

including parents and spouses and pastors, all the way up to the congress and president, are loathe to take responsibility. They just want the power and authority. The leaders here just wanted the disciples to obey them... just do what they said to do.

Peter and John drew a line in the sand for the leaders

But, how far do we follow man’s rules? Peter and John drew the line in the sand for the leaders... “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. THIS is where the rubber meets the road. THIS is what all orders, commands and instructions from man are to be compared to. THIS answers the question of, “How far?” When man presumes to take the authority that God alone possesses, then we can know for a surety that man has gone too far. When man presumes to tell us to do something, or to not do something, that is contrary to God’s word, then man has gone too far. Man has presumed to order us to wear seatbelts. Man has presumed to order us to take vaccinations. Man has presumed to order us to have health insurance. Man has presumed to order us to do many, many things. How far can man go? When it crosses the line from what God says... then we can know it has gone too far; then we can righteously, yet humbly, but authoritatively... disobey what man says.

Jesus Christ Himself said what the requirements were to come after Him... “And he said to them all, If any

man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23. Jesus said to follow Him. We are not to follow man, spouse, pastor, leader or anyone else, unless in following them ... we are following Jesus. Does that make sense to you?

Our marching orders are to follow Jesus

Our liberties are being stripped from us, one by one, day after day. And there are many liberties that if taken from us, do not necessarily interfere with following our Lord and Master. But... when they do, we have been told what to do... “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27. In following man’s rules and laws, we must be very careful to do whatever they say, as long as it does not interfere with our obedience to God. But the day is coming where man will set up rules that *will* interfere with our service and commitment to God. When that happens, the early disciples’ words will apply to us... “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29.



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



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The New Jerusalem

By James Edson White

And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:2

Christ, when about to leave His disciples, comforted them with these words: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

While Christ was still on earth, He began constructing the glorious city

There is a glorious city being built in heaven for the faithful. Mansions are being built in it for the overcomers. This wondrous city was already under construction when Christ was on earth. On His return to heaven He promised to continue this work; and as the years passed, new mansions were to be added to meet the demands of the saints as they finished their course, even down to the time when the king shall come and claim His own.

Then the resurrected saints and the living



righteous will be caught up "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air". See 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. Borne from earth to the mansions prepared for them in the city of God, they will there live and reign "with Christ a thousand years". Revelation 20:4.

Satan will be confined to this earth alone for 1,000 years

During this thousand years the saints will "judge the world", as stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:2, and as recorded in Daniel 7:22. At the end of the thousand years the wicked dead will be raised. See Revelation 20:5, 6. The New Jerusalem will come down to earth from heaven. Revelation 21:2, 10.

For a thousand years Satan will be confined to this earth. During this time his subjects will all be dead, and his occupation of deceiving the world will be gone; for there will be none alive to be deceived, so the earth will be a dreary prison for him. This is called the binding of Satan. Revelation 20:2.

But with the resurrection





of all the wicked who have ever lived, a field opens again in which Satan can work, and he is thus “loosed out of his prison”. Revelation 20:7. With the occupation before him of again deceiving “the nations” (verse 8), the earth no longer confines him as in a prison.

Satan makes plans to capture the New Jerusalem

The glorious New Jerusalem is before him. He once before waged war with heaven (Revelation 12:7), and he now determines to marshal his forces and, if possible, capture the city. It is a desperate undertaking, but it is his last opportunity, and he hopes to win. This hope he presents to the vast throng of the resurrected wicked. In this multitude are the great warriors of every age. He deceives them with the vain hope of success in his enterprise.

The earth rings with preparation for war. When all is ready, the mighty army is gathered “to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints and about the beloved city.” Revelation 20:8, 9.

But as they are about to wage impious war upon Christ and the redeemed host, fire comes “down from God out of heaven”, and devours them. Verse 9. Thus will end the kingdom of Satan, and the reign of wickedness in all the universe of God.

God will purify the earth with fire, and all will be made new

This purifying fire will cleanse the earth, and it will come forth perfect and lovely as on the day when it came from the hand of the Creator, and He pronounced it “good”.

Peter, speaking of this event, says that “the elements (the atmosphere surrounding the earth) shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also (shall melt) and the works that are therein shall be burned up”. “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Peter 3:10, 13.

The earth will melt with the burning of that day. The “works” of man “that are therein shall be burned up”; but from it will come a new earth, glorious in all the beauty that an all-wise Creator can give it. The “heavens”, or atmosphere which surrounds it, will be made “new”, freed from all the poisonous elements which now contaminate it.

Jesus will return to the earth in the same location as He ascended from it

The New Jerusalem has been preserved through these terrible scenes by the power of God. When the holy city comes down from God out of heaven, our Saviour precedes it and prepares a place for it. “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley,” Zechariah 14:4.

It is reasonable to suppose that in this wonderful valley, so miraculously prepared, the New Jerusalem will descend. It is the largest city the world has ever known, and requires spacious grounds.

The Mount of Olives is surrounded by memories of the most sacred. It is close by Jerusalem, and near the temple where God was wont to meet His faithful people. Here the Saviour loved to go with His disciples. Whole nights He spent upon its sides in prayer, and from it He ascended to heaven when His mission to earth was finished.

When He returns, accompanied by the New Jerusalem, how appropriate that His feet should first rest upon the spot from which He ascended. How appropriate that the New Jerusalem, the capital city of the new earth, should rest upon the spot where the earthly Jerusalem once stood.



God has shared with us the description of the glorious city

Hallowed by the presence of Christ, and transformed by His power, this spot of earth is purified and made ready without the action of the fires of the great burning. So while the rest of the earth being melted and made new, the city of our God remains unmolested, the peaceful home of Christ and the redeemed throng.

God has seen fit to give us a minute description of this glorious city. It lies four-square, and it is twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles around it. This makes three hundred and seventy-five miles on every side. It has a wall about two hundred and fifty feet high, built of jasper. This wall has twelve foundations, made up of the rarest and most beautiful stones. In this wall are twelve gates, each one made of a single pearl. The mansions are made of transparent gold.

The fruit of the tree of life perpetuates the life of those who eat of it

The river of life issues from “the throne of God and the Lamb”, and runs through the main street of the city. The river flows beneath the tree of life, which grows on either side. From the description given in Revelation 22:2, we understand that this wonderful tree has two trunks—one on each side of the river. Its branches join at the top, forming a beautiful arch over the river.

“And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Verse 2. Sin has dwarfed and enfeebled mankind; but the leaves of this tree will restore the race to its original condition before the curse of sin rested upon it. Thus

all effects of the curse will be removed.

The fruit of the tree ripens every month, and it bears “twelve manner of fruits”. Revelation 22:2. And as the saints come up “from one new moon to another” (Isaiah 66:23), it is reasonable to infer that this tree will be found loaded with a different variety of



fruit each month. The fruit of this tree perpetuates the life of those who eat of it.

The redeemed will have a city home and a country home

The New Jerusalem is the city residence of the saved. In it are mansions for all. Outside the city, to earth’s remotest bounds, the nations of the saved dwell in peace, plenty, and happiness.

But they are not idle. They have their occupations and individual interests as we have now. Read Isaiah 65:21-25. They will “build houses” to suit their own tastes, and they will live in them forever. “They shall not build and another inhabit.” They will attend to farming pursuits; for “they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them”. “They shall not plant, and another eat.” There will then be no mortgages to foreclose, no rents to pay, nor taxes to be collected.

Their occupation will be varied by frequent visits to their city home in the New Jerusalem; for “from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 66:23. But there will be order in this new realm, and there will be those who will govern the various provinces of the empire of Christ; for it is stated that “the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Revelation 21:24.

The saved will live and reign forever

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4. Forever separated from death, the saved will live an eternal life in duration as the life of God, with whom they shall reign forever and ever. Revelation 22:5

Lost in amazement as we contemplate these wonderful themes, we can only join with Paul in exclaiming: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Cor. 2:9.



*Walking
By Faith*

We cannot see, when in the hush of some deep sorrow,
How shadows of the night,
With the coming of a happier morrow,
Grow into light.

We do not know how unseen hands are guiding
In dangerous paths our feet,
Nor how the shadow of the rock is hiding
Us from the noontide heat.

We do not know of snares and pitfalls lying
Where our short sight would lead,
Nor that the bread is all unsatisfying
On which our souls would feed.

But up alone, where threads of life are woven,
Wisdom directs our lot;
And God's own hand will guide us to the haven,
By "ways which we know not."

—E. Elliot

Health Gem

Vitamin D3

In this article we will take a look at the many wonderful benefits of Hope for Health's Vitamin D3.



New research suggests that **most** Americans - in fact, most people **worldwide** - are lacking this crucial vitamin! The truth is, before the last few years, physicians didn't even measure vitamin D levels in the blood. Everyone just **assumed** if you got a bit of sunshine and weren't an elderly shut-in, you were "good"!

"Vitamin D deficiency soars in the U.S.", was the headline in the publication "Scientific American", March 23, 2009. In fact, it was stated in that report that as large a group as three-quarters of the population of U.S. teens AND adults are deficient in vitamin D, the so-called "sunshine vitamin". "We were anticipating that there would be some decline in overall vitamin D levels, but the magnitude of the decline in a relatively short time period was surprising," says study co-author Adit Ginde, an assistant professor at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine. Lack of vitamin D is linked to soft, weak bones in children. It also leads to porous bones and softening of the bones in **adults**. In addition, a vitamin D deficiency also causes bone, joint and muscle **pain**, and THINNING bones in the elderly. These issues in turn

can lead to bone fractures, which can mean the end of independent living for the elderly in particular. Now it begins to make some sense why so many older people have bone problems, even though they may get plenty of calcium!

Scientists also believe vitamin D is actually essential for a number of other functions in the body. These include:

1. Our autoimmune system's efficiency
2. Healthy cell growth
3. The maintenance of healthy heart and pulmonary systems
4. Cognitive function



5. Healthy blood sugar levels
6. Pain control
7. Healthy muscle activity
8. And helping to relax our nerves!

A lack of vitamin D can also lead to:

1. Nervous tension
2. Irritability
3. And even insomnia!

Who knew that sleeplessness might be related to a lack of sunshine? In relation to sleep and vitamin D, interesting results were obtained in a recent study taken at LSU. The study involved 81 adult patients. All the patients had sleep problems, or musculoskeletal pain either in the day

or the evening, or both. They were also diagnosed with a sleep disorder. Nearly three-quarters of the group had obstructive sleep apnea, while others suffered from insomnia, or restless leg syndrome. All patients were evaluated for excessive daytime sleepiness using the Epworth Sleep Scale, a standard measurement. Their levels of Vitamin D were measured, using blood tests. The results of the study supported a **strong** correlation between excessive daytime sleepiness and insufficient levels of Vitamin D. Are you tired in the middle of the day or just get sleepy? Could be a lack of vitamin D!

"We're just starting to scratch the surface of what the health effects of vitamin D are," Ginde told ScientificAmerican.com. "There's reason to pay attention for sure." The trend marks a dramatic increase in the amount of vitamin D **deficiency** in the U.S. The same was found and later published in the Archives of Internal Medicine. Between 1988 and 1994, 45% of 18,883 people (who were examined as part of the federal government's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) had 30 nanograms per milliliter or more of vitamin D. That's the blood level a growing number of doctors consider





sufficient for overall health. A decade later, just 10 years, only 23% of 13,369 of those surveyed had at least that amount. That means more than **half** of the people no longer had sufficient vitamin D. In just 10 years! Just a quick look indicates that if half the people in the study now were deficient in vitamin D, then another 10 years would increase it by half again. If 1994 was the start date of the study, as stated above, then 10 years from then was 2004. It is now 2015. What does **that** tell us? It means that a lot **more** of us are becoming deficient in vitamin D!

The slide was particularly striking among African Americans

Just 3% of 3,149 black people sampled in 2004 were found to have the recommended levels compared with 12 percent of 5,362 sampled two decades ago. **That** drop was FOUR times more than the others in the test! Ginde blamed **increasing** use of sunscreen and people wearing long sleeves. Also, there have been a lot of “skin cancer-prevention” campaigns that have caused many people to avoid being out in the sun very much. Using a sunscreen with as **little** as a 15-spf factor protection cuts the skin’s vitamin D production by **99 percent**, the study notes. There are few sources of vitamin D in our diets, so sun exposure is very necessary. The report goes on to say that Jim Fleet, a professor of foods and nutrition at Purdue University (who

was not involved in the study), also advised ScientificAmerican.com that real deficiencies in vitamin D exist. He went on to say that some 40 percent of African Americans are vitamin D deficient according to that threshold. “If you look at people in the categories that we worry about,” he says, “that’s a lot of people.”

And on 28 July 2011, another headline appeared on dailyburn.com which confirmed: “New Data Shows 77% of Americans Have Low Vitamin D Levels”. It went on to say: “Data presented this week at the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) meeting showed that Americans have low vitamin D levels that go undetected because of lack of testing.”



So, what is vitamin D, and how important is it?

How much of it should we get each day? And why is vitamin D3 of particular benefit to our health? Vitamin D refers to a group of related fat-soluble vitamins that are vital for good health throughout our lives. It plays many roles in our bodies including:

1. Aiding in bone mineralization
2. Muscle contraction
3. Nerve conduction
4. And helps to regulate cell growth

But the most important role of

Vitamin D is to maintain calcium levels for strong bones. It decreases parathyroid hormone (PTH) levels, which **decreases** the amount of calcium **released** from bone. This is extremely important for maintaining bone density! It **increases** the body’s ability to **absorb** calcium from food thereby reducing the loss of calcium in urine. It also releases calcium from storage in the bones into the bloodstream when required. Vitamin D helps regulate the body’s levels of phosphorus, **another** important bone mineral. Adequate levels of vitamin D throughout life are important for building and maintaining healthy bone mass. Low levels of vitamin D have been especially associated with reduced bone **density** and **increased** risk of hip fracture in the elderly. Vitamin D has the added benefit of helping to improve **muscle strength** in the elderly. Improving muscle strength can help reduce the incidence of falls, which in turn can reduce the risk of fractures.

Vitamin D goes through a complicated synthesis within the body to make a biologically active form. There are vitamin D receptors in the intestine, prostate, colon and breast and most tissue and cells in the body. Vitamin D is one of the most **potent** regulators of cell growth in both normal and abnormal cells.

Where is vitamin D obtained from?

The best source of Vitamin D is sunshine, which allows your body to





produce it naturally through your skin. Some 99% of the vitamin D we **make** comes from exposure to the sun. Limited amounts of vitamin D can be found in cod liver oil, fish, fortified cereals, fortified soymilk and dairy products, eggs and mushrooms. However, it is important to note that, with current food supplies and patterns of eating, it is almost **impossible** to obtain sufficient vitamin D from the diet alone, especially in a **vegan** diet.

As seen from the above reports, there is a large proportion of people who are simply unaware that they are vitamin D deficient, and these are **additional** to those who receive inadequate exposure to daily sunlight. A daily supplement appears to be the only method wherein an adequate supply of vitamin D3 can be assured. This is **particularly** true if 15 minutes each day of non-peak period sunshine on the skin cannot be maintained.

Some population groups who need to take extra care to ensure they have an adequate intake of vitamin D are:

- As previously mentioned, people with naturally very dark skin, such as the African American – the pigment in skin (melanin) acts as a filter to UVB (Ultraviolet B) radiation and **reduces** the amount of vitamin D the body makes. This group may need three to four **times** the amount of sun exposure that fair to olive skinned people require.
- People with little or no sun exposure

– a range of life circumstances and occupations can lead to low sun exposure. People with little or no sun exposure could include those who are hospitalized, living in an aged care facility or working jobs that prevent sun exposure. Examples of jobs that could prevent adequate sun exposure include shift workers, miners, or even office workers working particularly long hours.

- People who cover up with long robes and head coverings because of religious or cultural reasons.
- People eating a vegan diet or a low-fat diet, or who have a condition that affects the body's ability to absorb fat, may be lacking in vitamin D.



- Breast-fed babies of mothers who have low vitamin D levels. Although breast milk is the best food for babies, unfortunately it does not contain much vitamin D. Since babies get their initial store of vitamin D from their mothers, if the mother has low vitamin D levels, so will her breast milk, putting the baby at risk of low vitamin D also.
- People with malabsorption conditions.
- Older adults are also at an increased risk of developing vitamin D insufficiency in part because, as they age, the skin cannot synthesize vitamin D as efficiently. They are also likely to spend more time indoors, and they may have inadequate intakes of the vitamin.

Aging **significantly** decreases the skin's capacity to produce vitamin D3 in particular. For example, when we compare a 70-year-old person with a 20-year-old who has been exposed to the same amount of sunlight, the 70-year-old makes approximately 25% of the vitamin D3 that the 20-year-old person can make. Did you catch that? Same amount of sun – $\frac{1}{4}$ the vitamin D3.

- Overweight people have a problem with vitamin D. It is sequestered deep in body fat, making it more difficult for it to be bio-available.
- People with chronic **kidney** and **liver** problems are at increased risk of low active vitamin D levels. That is because they lack important enzymes found in these organs that change vitamin D from the sun or food to the biologically active form of vitamin D.
- People taking certain medications that can contribute to vitamin D deficiency, including certain antibiotics and anticonvulsants.
- People living further from the equator, where there are lower UV radiation levels, are at increased risk of a deficiency in vitamin D. Canada and most U.S. States are **far** from the equator.

Still more groups of people that need to make sure they get plenty of vitamin D are:

- Those having inflammatory bowel disease.





- Those who have had surgery, such as gastric bypass surgery, which removes or bypasses portions of the stomach or intestines, can also have low vitamin D levels.

There appears to be no significant difference in vitamin D deficiency **between** men and women. Both sexes' requirement for vitamin D is the same. Elderly men and women are at equal risk of vitamin D deficiency in part due to not being able to synthesize vitamin D in the skin as effectively as they age.

Vitamin D deficiency can be treated with supplements that are relatively economical to purchase. How much vitamin D or D3 should we get each day? For healthy people, at least 1,000-2,000 IU/day should bring low levels up to a normal range. For people who have more of a deficiency (malabsorption, healing fractures, bone thinning), and in the case of African Americans, **larger** doses may be necessary. People should also take greater amounts of vitamin D in the winter when there is less sunlight.

Why is vitamin D3 (the natural form of vitamin D) of **particular** benefit to our health? Vitamin D is an essential nutrient that's produced when our skin is exposed to sunlight, and it occurs in two forms. The **natural** form is vitamin D3, or cholecalciferol (it is vitamin D3 that is specifically referred to as the "sunshine vitamin"). It is formed in our bodies when sunlight penetrates the skin.

The other form, vitamin D2 or ergocalciferol, is found in a limited range of foods derived from plants. However, as earlier commented, with current food supplies and patterns of eating, it is almost impossible to obtain sufficient vitamin D3 from diet alone.

Some particular benefits of vitamin D3 are that it:

- (a) Is longer-lasting and more **effective** at raising vitamin D levels in the blood than vitamin D2.
- (b) Helps to improve absorption of calcium and phosphate, both of which are essential for healthy bones.
- (c) Helps to maintain healthy bone density by providing minerals to the skeleton. Remember, a major function of calcium is building and maintaining **bones** and **teeth**.



- (d) Helps to build and maintain muscle strength in older people, which may reduce risk of falls.
- (e) Plays an intrinsic role in calcium metabolism, stimulating the absorption of calcium from the small intestine, and the re-absorption of calcium from the kidneys.
- (f) Plays an intrinsic role in the immune and nervous systems; and bone, heart and kidney health.
- (g) Provides nutritional support for the maintenance of healthy skeletal, cardiovascular and immune systems.
- (h) Is involved in **healthy** prostate cell differentiation.

- (i) Supplementation may help reduce the risk of falls in older adults which in turn may help reduce the risk of fractures.
- (j) Is Halal-certified.

There is also new evidence that a lowered level of vitamin D may be responsible for:

1. vision problems
2. loss of balance
3. poor coordination
4. tremors
5. numbness in the limbs
6. severe fatigue
7. memory problems
8. concentration difficulties

If you suspect you may be at risk for vitamin D deficiency, talk to your health care provider.

Supplements, such as Hope for Health's Vitamin D3 (the natural and most effective form of vitamin D), dietary changes, and safe and controlled exposure to the sun for about 15 minutes each day, can all help boost levels in the body. Making sure your body has sufficient levels of vitamin D offers important health protections and a welcome boost of energy in place of daytime sleepiness!

Hope for Health's Vitamin D3 supplement can be found in our online store at www.hopeforhealthusastore.com, together with additional helpful information and ordering methods. You can also call for our free, informative and educational product catalog at 1-800-468-7884.



News Watch

SHARES WORTHLES
Crash!
anxiety deepens
Interest rates
liquidity
RECESSION FORECAST

Time Magazine, Dec. 1/Dec. 8, 2014, Milestones, page 21, Killed, Peter Kassig, U.S. aid worker and ISIS captive, by Nick Schwellenbach.

“Peter Kassig, whose death at 26 was claimed by the Islamic State of Iraq and greater Syria (ISIS) on Nov. 16, was brave, intense, sensitive, tough, thoughtful and humble. He was a former Army Ranger who had served in Iraq but found he couldn’t sit in a university classroom in Indiana while Syrians died and refugees suffered. ...He was volunteering in hospitals treating refugees and delivering supplies on risky trips to Syria, where civil was raged.... ISIS militants captured Peter when he was on an aid mission to Deir ez-zor in eastern Syria in October 2013.”



Abdul Rahman (Peter) Kassig Photograph: SERRA

End Time Perspective: “The terrible reports we hear of murders....and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord’s second coming.” Last Day Events, page 23.



Time Magazine, November 24, 2014, World, page 11, Border Patrol, by Noah Raymond and Karl Vick.

Border Patrol—Ukraine, A Ukrainian volunteer fighter stands guard on Nov. 11 in the village of Peski, eastern Ukraine. NATO officials accused Russia on Nov. 12 of sending troops and tanks across the Ukrainian border, fueling fears of escalating hostilities in the disputed region. Russia’s Defense Ministry denied that its troops were in Ukraine and has long rejected claims that it gives military aid to pro-Russian separatists in the country’s east.

Exercises: Soldiers were seen near Ukraine’s eastern border strengthening defensive positions and drilling tactics in the event of an invasion in the region, which is home to many ethnic Russians. PHOTO CREDIT: AFP/Getty Images

End Time Perspective: “The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. Men’s hearts are failing them for fear of the things coming upon the earth. But those who believe in God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, ‘It is I; be not afraid.’” ST Oct. 9, 1901.

Ellen White's *Vision*

The Open and the Shut Door

Sabbath, March 24, 1849, we had a sweet and very interesting meeting with the brethren at Topsham, Maine. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the city of the living God. Then I was shown that the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844. Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches.

God's people are now being tested on the Sabbath question

I saw that Jesus had shut the door of the holy place, and no man can open it; and that He had opened the door into the most holy, and no man can shut it (Revelation 3:7,8); and that since Jesus has opened the door into the most holy place, which contains the ark, the commandments have been shining out to God's people, and they are being tested on the Sabbath question.

I saw that the present test on the Sabbath could not come until the mediation of Jesus in the holy place was finished and He had passed within the second veil; therefore

Christians who fell asleep before the door was opened into the most holy, when the midnight cry was finished, at the seventh month, 1844, and who had not kept the true Sabbath, now rest in hope; for they had not the light and the test on the Sabbath which we now have since that door was opened. I saw that Satan was tempting some of God's people on this point. Because so many good Christians have fallen asleep in the triumphs of faith and have not kept the true Sabbath, they were doubting about its being a test for us now.



Such deceptions as the knocking in New York and other places would be more and more common

The enemies of the present truth have been trying to open the door of the holy place, that Jesus has shut, and to close the door of the most holy place, which He opened in 1844, where the ark is, containing the two tables of stone on which are

written the ten commandments by the finger of Jehovah.

Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth and to cause them to waver. I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty.

Satan knew this, and he was at work in mighty power to keep the minds of as many people as he possibly could wavering and unsettled on the truth. I saw that the mysterious knocking in New York and other places was the power of Satan, and that such things would



be more and more common, clothed in a religious garb so as to lull the deceived to greater security and to draw the minds of God's people, if possible, to those things and cause them to doubt the teachings and power of the Holy Ghost.

Some ministers were so deceived they thought they were working under the power of God

I saw that Satan was working through agents in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers who have rejected the truth and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned. While they were preaching or praying, some would fall prostrate and helpless, not by the power of the Holy Ghost, but by the power of Satan breathed upon these agents, and through them to the people. While preaching, praying, or conversing, some professed Adventists who had rejected present truth used mesmerism to gain adherents, and the people would rejoice in this influence, for they thought it was the Holy Ghost. Some even that used it were so far in the darkness and deception of the devil that they thought it was the power of God, given them to exercise. They had made God altogether such a one as themselves and had valued His power as a thing of nought.

Satan was at work to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people in this sealing time

Some of these agents of Satan were affecting the bodies of some of the saints--those whom they could not deceive and draw away from the truth by a Satanic influence. Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that Satan was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people, just now in



this sealing time. I saw some who were not standing stiffly for present truth. Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were not firmly planted on the truth, and the covering of Almighty God could not be drawn over them while they were thus trembling.

God has begun to draw a protective covering over His people

Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God's people, and they left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter. God will work in power for His people; and Satan will be permitted to work also.

I saw that the mysterious signs and wonders and false reformations would increase and spread. The reformations that were shown me were not reformations from error to truth. My accompanying angel bade me look for the travail of soul for sinners as used to be. I looked, but could not see it; for the time for their salvation is past. [THE WRITER OF THESE WORDS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEM AS TEACHING THAT THE TIME FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL SINNERS WAS PAST. AT THE VERY TIME WHEN THESE THINGS WERE WRITTEN SHE HERSELF WAS LABORING FOR THE SALVATION OF SINNERS, AS SHE HAS BEEN DOING EVER SINCE.

HER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MATTER AS IT HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO HER IS GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS, THE FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1854, AND THE SECOND IN 1888:





waters of the flood. In the time of Abraham, mercy ceased to plead with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot with his wife and two daughters were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. So in the days of Christ. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, 'Your house is left unto you desolate.' Looking down to the last days, the same infinite power declares, concerning those who 'received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved', 'For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.' As they reject the teachings of His Word, God withdraws His Spirit, and leaves them to the deceptions which they love."

EW 42

"The 'false reformations' here referred to are yet to be more fully seen. The view relates more particularly to those who have heard and rejected the light of the advent doctrine. They are given over to strong delusions. Such will not have 'the travail of soul for sinners' as formerly. Having rejected the advent, and being given over to the delusions of Satan, 'the time for their salvation is past.' This does not, however, relate to those who have not heard and rejected the doctrine of the second advent."

If they choose to believe a lie, the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn, leaving them to the deceptions which they love

"It is a fearful thing to treat lightly the truth which has convinced our understanding and touched our hearts. We cannot with impunity reject the warnings which God in mercy sends us. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah's day, and the salvation of men depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the



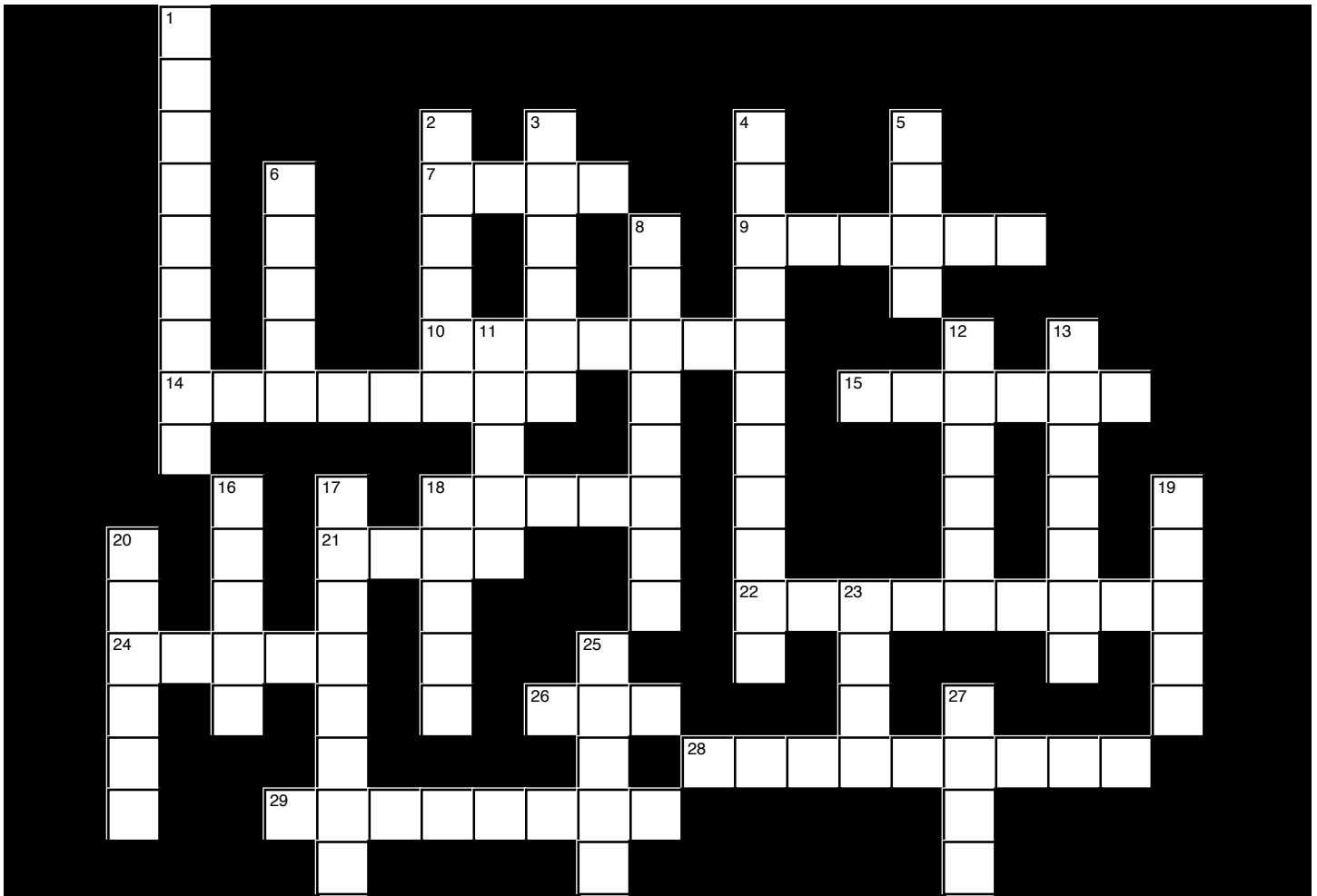
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Christian Crossword



ACROSS

7. Enoch's son and Cain's grandson
9. The first in the Bible to practice polygamy
10. Son of Jezebel and Ahab
14. The youngest son of Jacob
15. One of three friends that visited Job
18. Abraham's grandfather
21. Meaning of his name in Hebrew is "of the ground"
22. The mother of John the Baptist
24. David's nephew who joined Absalom's revolt
26. The father of Joshua, the great leader
28. A rabbi that visited Jesus at night
29. One of two men nominated to take Judas' place

DOWN

1. The adulterous wife of Uriah the Hittite
2. The older sister of Moses and Aaron
3. David's fearless and upright advisor
4. A combination priest and king
5. She skewered Sisera, the Canaanite, with a tent peg
6. A Jewish convert to Christianity who lived in Thessalonica
8. One of the two Hebrew midwives at Moses' birth
11. A wealthy and powerful king of Tyre
12. The disciple and successor to Elijah
13. The son of Alphaeus, originally named Levi
16. The harlot of Jericho who saved two spies
17. The High Priest who presided at the hearing of Jesus

18. The wife of Elimelech who immigrated to Moab
19. The minor prophet from the town of Elkosh
20. A Christian prophet from Jerusalem that spoke to Paul
23. The father of Abinadab
25. Noah's grandson and Japheth's son
27. The third son of Jacob and Leah

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