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The Third Angel's Message

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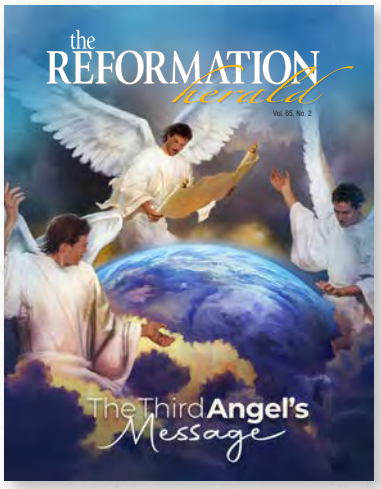
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"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold."—*Education*, p. 57.

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Editorial

The Incredible Message

Two chapters in the book of Revelation—chapters 13 and 14—are uniquely amazing. In recent years, many have speculated rather casually as to the meaning behind the symbols portrayed. People sense that something big is on the horizon, yet most have never invested in the time to compare diligently scripture with scripture, pleading to God for wisdom to understand what it all means and why it is so significant.

By the time we get to the third angel's message in Revelation 14, we need to understand Revelation 13. The majesty of Heaven has seen fit to have placed much of Revelation in symbolically coded language that can be only understood through the aid of the Holy Spirit, coupled with serious Bible study in the books of Daniel and the opening chapters of Revelation, with diligent research into history which has already occurred. Once these pieces of the puzzle come together, the picture is unmistakable.

AN INCREDIBLE MESSAGE

The third angel's message comes as a shock to most who hear and fully comprehend it for the first time. It seems hard to believe—indeed, incredible. Yet it is open to the understanding of those who heed the counsel of God: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path" (Proverbs 2:1–9).

This is a message with an incredible purpose, mission, and truth. It speaks of an incredible character to be cultivated through the power of Jesus Christ. And ultimately, all glory goes to the amazing God who makes it all possible.

THE BACKGROUND

"As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment was placed in the angel's hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, 'They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.' The third angel closes his message thus: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. . . . The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future, and they know that God has indeed led them by His mysterious providence."[1] ℛ

References:

[1] *Early Writings*, pp. 254, 255.



by By Septimiu D. Muresan

THE INCREDIBLE PURPOSE

Solemn words. . . . It's quite a warning!

Only when we try to imagine how God thinks, can we rightly interpret the final events of this world's history. From rocky Patmos, John the Revelator saw the history of the church in its purity and watched as it became entirely corrupt. Yet at every moment, the love of God was etched in unmistakable language. History reveals His infinite love both for the nations of the world and for His church. Revelation chapter 12 summarizes the church from the days of Christ until the plan of redemption is complete. Chapter 13, although in coded language, clearly unveils the chief actors in the great controversy at the close of time.

As John stood upon the desolate, sandy beach, watching the Mediterranean waves dash upon the shore, his mind naturally went to the Creator who walked among men. The scene before him is knit together with thoughts of the Majesty of His Lord: "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14). Suddenly he was taken off into vision:

A BEAST RISING FROM THE SEA

The mind of John was opened to the influence from on high. From the midst of the waves, he saw "a beast rise up out of the sea" with the spotted body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. In Daniel 7, the Lord had before represented the history of nations by beasts and these were interpreted by the angel Gabriel in chapter 8. Now the same symbols are brought forth in the vision given to John. Four beasts representing kingdoms span the time from when Israel lost its standing as a nation until Christ would set up His everlasting kingdom:

Babylon = The Lion, ruling by worldly grandeur, symbolized also



in Daniel chapter 2 as gold among the nations. The empire of Babylon was overthrown as she imputed all her wisdom and power unto false gods. Yet her philosophies live on.

Medo-Persia = The Bear. Less noble in appearance than the king of beasts depicted first, but stronger and more savage. With its feet it



stamped and crushed its foe—fittingly symbolic of its tyrannical government. This was a monarchy to the extreme, illustrated in the fact that the laws decreed by the king could not be changed (even by the monarch himself)—and further illustrated in the book of Esther. The law passed by Xerxes, the greatest of Persian monarchs, would have wiped out the people of God if the Sovereign of the universe had not wrought deliverance. This history will be repeated in the closing scenes of earth. As the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the empire, likewise did its heyday cease.

Greece = The Leopard. The enticing, infatuating charm of Greek philosophy and culture introduced a new tactic by which the minds of men were to be drawn away from the simple truth of God's Word. It



proved more effective even than government oppression had done. As a result of the conquests of Alexander the Great, the beauty and æsthetic nature of the learned Greek scholars brought subtle deception as never before seen. The spotted leopard well depicts the mixture of good and evil, and the effortless grace of its agile movements aptly portrays its universal acceptance.

A COMBINATION

Now, the beast which John saw combined the characteristics of the leopard, bear, and the lion all put together. The devil merged the false religion with the tyrannical government, eloquently promoted by a flattering, false system of education.

The beast had seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon these horns. Starting off as a monarchy, pagan Rome had dethroned its king and the wealthy ruled as consuls, but not for long. As the people attempted rulership, it became a republic until human greed brought the triumvirate of three into power before the constant change had morphed it into an empire by the time of Christ's advent.

Despite the obstacles, the Gospel spread even to the household of the Cæsars, and believers were soon sprinkled among family members, soldiers, and servants. Then a novel movement subtly came into play: Paganism stealthily crept in under the garb of Christianity. The prince of darkness clothed himself in garments of light and the "mystery of iniquity" took root.

Exactly as foretold in Daniel chapter 7, the pagan Roman Empire broke into ten divisions—the ten horns, each fed by the same root. Seven of these horns became the nations of modern Europe, each wearing a crown as an independent monarchy. All cluster around a little horn which plucks up three of the horns, usurping their place and boasting itself above the rest. Nineteenth-century missionary and Bible scholar Stephen N. Haskell has much to share on this history:

"In 330 A. D. Constantine removed his capital from Rome to Constantinople. The ancient city was left to the papal power and the pope occupied in Rome a throne higher than any occupied by the Cæsars. Constantine laid the foundation of the papacy; but it remained for Justinian to complete the edifice in 533 A. D., by declaring that memorable decree which constituted the pope the head of all the churches. The Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths were of the Arian faith and opposed to the bishop of Rome. The decree could not go into effect until 538 A. D., when the last of the opposing powers was overthrown by the armies of Justinian."[1]

FROM PAGAN ROME TO PAPAL ROME

The year 538 A. D. marks the beginning of the 42 prophetic months—1,260 years, using the year-day principle for prophetic time as cited in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. During this dark period, the mouth speaking great blasphemies had virtually no restraint. "He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God." He "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (Revelation 13:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Bible definition of blasphemy is to be claiming the prerogative to forgive sin, which God alone can do (Matthew 9:2, 3; 26:62–65; Mark 2:5–7; 14:60–64; Luke 5:20, 21; John 10:31–33.)

The little horn power indeed claimed this authority, plus full jurisdiction over the souls of men. Its institution boasted of being the sole interpreter of Scripture and delegated upon itself the right to sit in judgment.

"With unbounded audacity, the attempt was made to change the immutable law of God. The Sabbath was trodden underfoot, the second commandment was dropped from the decalogue, and the tenth was

divided into two. The memorial of creation and redemption was thus denied to man, the atoning work of Christ was set aside, and the worship of idols was instituted. Any who dared lift a voice in opposition, or who denied, by word or act, the right of the church to control the conscience of man, found death a welcome relief—a thing to be sought in preference to the incessant torture inflicted by the ecclesiastical tyranny which held the world with an iron grip."[2]

As soft glimmers of hope in pitch darkness, the light of the great Reformation shone forth in the last few centuries preceding 1798—exactly as prophesied, when the period of 1,260 years closed and the power that dominated the Dark Ages was held in check for a time.

Now we find ourselves at a later stage in history. Behind the scenes, the same power that ruled over in the Dark Ages begins to manipulate the leaders of another nation—one that, according to Revelation 13:11, rises up from the earth rather than the sea. This one has two horns like a gentle lamb, thus rightly earning the trust and confidence from people all around the world. Yet at some point it begins to speak like a dragon. Why the drastic change? Because of the influence of the first beast that precedes it in Revelation 13:1–10. Then, in Revelation 13:12–15 we see that eventually, every kindred, nation, tongue, and person is to feel the oppression of a civil/ecclesiastical merger.

The Moral Law of God as Changed by the Papacy

I
I am the Lord thy God: thou shall not have strange gods before me.

II
Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

III
Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

IV
Honour thy father and thy mother.

V
Thou shalt not kill.

VI
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VII
Thou shalt not steal.

VIII
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

IX
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

X
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

HOW DOES THIS MERGER OCCUR?

The little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 represents the same power as the beast rising up from the sea.

But the lamblike beast sprang up from the earth—the undeveloped wilderness on the western continent discovered in 1492 and onward. Let's consider that history.

In what became known as the New World, "navigators, usually in search of gold or glory, explored the shores and established colonies. But neither wealth nor honor was to have a hand in the final settlement; God reserved the territory, afterwards known as the United States of America, for the planting of downtrodden truth. When Germany refused full liberty, and clung to some forms of papal tyranny, Protestantism passed on to England. England and Holland for a time gave freer scope for the development of these principles; but space was limited in the Low Countries; and the British returned at last to their kings, and those seeking liberty of conscience, passed to the eastern shores of North America. In America the oppressed had freedom of worship, the right to educate their children according to their ideas of God, and the privileges of a free government. These were the things sought by the Pilgrim Fathers.

"On the bleak New England shores, principles of Protestantism and republicanism struggled for existence. These two went hand in hand. Historians recount the hardships of braving the sea and making new homes; but these were light trials, compared with the soul-strivings against bondage and oppression. So strongly ingrained were the principles of monarchy and the spirit to dictate in religious matters—the two foundation stones of the papacy—that only by dint of perseverance and strong determination on the part of a few souls who were open to heaven-born convictions, there gradually grew up in New England a representative form of government. The towns about Boston refused to be taxed unless they had a voice in the legislative body. Thomas Hooker, with his whole congregation, emigrated to the wilds of Connecticut for greater liberty; and as a result, the first written constitution ever known to exist in America, was framed in 1633. Rhode Island had an existence solely, because of the attempt of man to oppress the conscience of his fellow man; and it stands in the Union today as a monument of the struggle for religious liberty.

"In the more Southern Colonies the same battles were fought. Finally, in 1776, the Declaration of Independence published to the world the purpose of the new and growing states to cut loose from the tie which bound them to the mediæval forms of government. The step appeared rash; but this was the thing necessary, to bring unity and united effort among the people of America. With one common enemy, all internal strife was forgotten; but when the new nation was acknowledged free and independent, the problem of ages was just before it. Having thrown off the fetters of monarchy, and with no definite ideas as to the actual workings of an administra-

tion by the people, the ship of state was in the greatest danger of foundering on the rocks of anarchy; or, tired of the open sea, of again seeking shelter in the harbor from which it had sailed. There were men who advocated return; but God had His angels in the meetings of statesmen, and His Spirit guided the minds of those who sought to follow the light of the Reformation."[3]

> "The controversy closes when it has been demonstrated, before the universe, that it is possible to serve God, and obey His law on the enemy's ground. . . . Such is the power of our God."

THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence of the thirteen colonies newly settled on the North American continent expressed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. . . . That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

In 1787, an extraordinary meeting took place in the city of Philadelphia. From that convention, a wave was set in motion that has influenced every nation since. It was here that fifty-five representatives from among the various colonies framed the United States Constitution—the results of which prompted British Prime Minister William Gladstone to aptly observe nearly a century later, "The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain of man."

Regarding the impact of these historical documents, Stephen Haskell proclaims: "This was a deathblow to the papal hierarchy; it was the outgrowth of the principles advocated in the sixteenth century—the result of restoring to their proper place the Two Witnesses, that for twelve hundred and sixty years prophesied, clothed in. sackcloth. Thus the earth helped the woman, by giving to her a home where the sunlight might shine unobstructed by the darkness which covered Europe during the twelve hundred and sixty years. The beast which came up out of the earth in the sight of the prophet, symbolizes the United States; and the two horns represent the two foundation principles of the government, Protestantism and republicanism. The seed of the Reformation, having been planted in congenial soil, soon grew into a mighty tree, sheltering the oppressed of all nations. Glorious as the sun rising was the establishment of the new government. It was a wonder to all the world; but when its freedom and stability once became known, America became the center of progress. All nations have been molded, more or less by the example of this country. Her constitution has been the model for the reorganization of nations, especially since 1840. The monarchs of Europe were forced to relax their hold upon their subjects, and America is the place toward which all eyes have been directed in these crises. Even the Orient has relaxed to the warming influence of the United States."[4]

Indeed as the conclusion of the national anthem describes it, this has long been "the land of the free and the home of the brave." It has been a beacon of light and hope for the nations of the world, through the principles of Protestantism and republicanism.

Yet the enemy of souls has not been happy. The dragon-like beast with seven heads and ten horns has not been happy. What it could not stop by force of arms, it has instead employed through a stealthy, strategic plan of infiltration.

Pagan Greek philosophy began to permeate the educational system. False theories of science contrary to inspired Scripture brought doubt and perplexity. Occult spiritualism began to undermine purity of faith. Now, the dragon's voice resonates throughout nearly every aspect of culture. The rich dominate the poor and the oppressed and hardworking middle class is overwhelmed by the cares of this life.

REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS OWN CONSTITUTION

"When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.

"Through spiritualism, Satan appears as a benefactor of the race, healing the diseases of the people, and professing to present a new and more exalted system of religious faith; but at the same time he works as a destroyer. . . . While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. . . . And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils."[5]

When this remarkable nation represented by the lamblike beast refuses to acknowledge its own Constitution, tragedy results.

"America is the home of Protestantism, but her churches today are Protestant only in name. The exaltation of man above God, the enthroning of human intellect, the hope of righteousness by works, the trampling underfoot of the law of God—these are some of the things which mark the Protestant churches as daughters of the Babylon, which swayed the world from her seat at Rome."[6]

GOD'S PEOPLE REPUDIATED TOGETHER WITH THE CONSTITUTION

According to Revelation 12:17, the persecution triggered against faithful Christians by forming an image to the beast reaches an all-time peak. The true people of God are identified as they that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus. Comparing Revelation 19:10, we see that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

As the beast power has long prided itself in thinking to rewrite the law of God, seeking to change times and laws, the image to the beast passes laws enforcing the observance of its mark—the false Sabbath.

"The spirit of prophecy is given to guide the church through the darkness; but this is counterfeited by the working of miracles, and by manifestations of a false spirit. Through human agents, the devil seeks to imitate the workings of the Spirit of God; and finally, at the very end of time, he appears in person claiming to be the Christ. 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no strange thing if his ministers also, be transformed as the ministers of righteousness. ' Through his human instruments, he will have power to make fire come down from heaven in the sight of men. 'There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' These are the Saviour's own words, spoken as He looked forward to the time of His second appearing."[7]

Occult spiritualism is taking the world by storm and false prophets abound even in professedly Christian circles. Ultimately, the devil himself is soon to appear in person, claiming to be Christ. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15). The demand will be made that those who refuse to accept the false day of worship will be killed.

"Not only in the forehead, as a sign of acceptance, but also in the hand, as typical of actual service for the beast, the mark will be required. There will be no spot too secluded for that power to reach."[8]

Modern technology today is such that none can think to escape such a boycott. It is only the divine power of God that will protect His people. What, then, is the call of the hour—and why?

"Our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near."[9]

"The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."[10]

"The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."[11]

MODERN INQUISITION RISING THROUGH DEMOCRACY

As the historic tyranny of the beast marches on, how soon the biblical scene is to be fulfilled: "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

"Nations have risen, and fallen, in the controversy between Christ and Satan; but the last leading nation to arise is now in existence; it will be the battlefield for the final struggle. From its borders, will be heralded the last great message, and from its people will be gathered a remnant church. The members of this church will join with those of other countries, who, in the very presence of the beast, stand true to the God of heaven and earth when the Saviour comes to receive His subjects.

"The time of the fall of all nations approaches. They will be succeeded by the kingdom of God. Christ and the Father will reign forever, and the subjects will be those who have developed a character in harmony with Jehovah; and they will have done this when surrounded on all sides by the concentrated iniquity of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Lucifer claimed that it was impossible to serve God in heaven. The controversy closes when it has been demonstrated, before the universe, that it is possible to serve God, and obey His law on the enemy's ground, and in the midst of all the evil which it is possible for him to invent. Such is the power of our God. May 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' "[12] Amen! ℛ

References:

[1] Stephen Haskell: *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 229, 230.
[2] Ibid., p. 230.
[3] Ibid., pp. 235, 236.
[4] Ibid., p. 237–239.
[5] *Maranatha*, p. 216.
[6] *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, p. 241.
[7] Ibid., pp. 241, 242.
[8] Ibid., p. 242.
[9] *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 451.
[10] *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 984.
[11] *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 19.
[12] *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pp. 244, 245.



The Incredible Mission

by Marian Sirbu

"The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them."[1]

What is this message?

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

It is well known that all the inhabitants of the world are called to give glory to God according to the message of the first angel in Revelation 14. But many have a sense that they are not worthy to stand before such a holy God to give Him glory. They are afraid that any lingering sin may act as a barrier between them and God, as the apostle Paul says: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). From old times, the wise Solomon stated that "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

In his vision, Isaiah the prophet was a witness to God's manifestation of His power and glory, to which the angels exclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Being made privy to such glory and holiness, Isaiah remarks: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6: 5).

All these holy men of God felt undeserving and unworthy to experience even a glimmer of God's holiness and glory. Therefore living at the height of corruption as our generation does, how much more should we pause to recognize our own sinful nature! This should make us seriously consider and analyze

our lives, and to realize the terrible mission of the angel proclaiming the Third Angel's Message.

THE MOST FEARFUL THREATENING EVER ADDRESSED TO MORTALS

Revelation 14:9–12 is given in terrifying words. The chapter is preceded by Revelation 13, where is presented an entity symbolized by a beast without mercy imposing on all inhabitants of the earth worship and adoration. In Bible prophecy, a "beast" represents a kingdom or power with significant worldwide influence (see Daniel 7:17, 23). The second beast of Revelation 13 "causeth *the earth* and *them which dwell therein* to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12, emphasis added). Those who will not cooperate with the beast will be threatened with economic sanctions and finally death. Meanwhile, God is calling people to explain to a confused world how justice will ultimately be fulfilled through His Majesty—yet not without anguish on their part.

"In the issue of the contest **all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), to receive 'the mark of the beast,' yet the people of God will not receive it.**"[2]

SPIRITUAL ANGUISH AMONG THE FAITHFUL

In bravely taking their stand with God's Word against the majority, "the people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.' Jeremiah 30:5–7.

"Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24–30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble."[3]

Why is this experience of God's people called the time of Jacob's trouble? What do we know about Jacob?

During his life, Jacob was able to experience firsthand how God can transform people to be faithful witnesses for Him. His grandfather Abraham, called "the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11) experienced in His life what righteousness by faith truly is. Although Abraham trusted in God with all his heart, he was not exempt from making mistakes in his life. This served as an example for Jacob, who from a young age learned that to lead a life of faith required total dependence on God. Although his desire to be fully dedicated to God was admirable, his mistake was that he did not ask God how to best achieve such dedication to Him. Again, in Jacob's case we can see the limitation of the human mind. Together with his mother, Jacob devised a deceitful plan to gain Isaac's blessing, which to them was the whole purpose of Jacob's life as a servant of God. Through their actions, they demonstrated that they had not understood what it is to have righteousness by faith, because instead of trusting God's plan, they took matters into their own hands.

WHAT KIND OF BLESSING DID JACOB RECEIVE—AT LEAST IN THE EARTHLY SENSE—OVER THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED?

"Because of the deception practiced to secure his father's blessing, intended for Esau, Jacob had fled for his life, alarmed by his brother's deadly threats. After remaining for many years an exile, he had set out, at God's command, to return with his wives and children, his flocks and herds, to his native country. On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau's approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge."[4]

At this point, all the blessings Jacob was supposed to have received as a result of gaining his father's blessing seemed to be ruined! On one side, Laban accused him of stealing his possessions—including his gods and his family—and Jacob felt threatened to go back. On the opposite side, Esau came forth with men of war to seek revenge for the wrong that Jacob had committed against him years before. Jacob was caught in the middle of an extremely strenuous and terrible situation.

"Jacob's wrong, in receiving his brother's blessing by fraud, is again brought forcibly before him, and he is afraid that God will permit Esau to take his life. In his distress he prays to God all night. An angel was represented to me as standing before Jacob, presenting his wrong before him in its true character. As the angel turns to leave him, Jacob lays hold of him, and will not let him go. He makes supplications with tears. He pleads that he has deeply repented of his sins, and the wrongs against his brother, which have been the means of separating him from his father's house for twenty years. He ventures to plead the promises of God, and the tokens of his favor to him from time to time, in his absence from his father's house. **All night Jacob wrestled with the angel, making supplication for a blessing.** The angel seemed to be resisting his prayer, by continually calling his sins to his remembrance, at the same time endeavoring to break away from him. Jacob was determined to hold the angel, not only by physical strength, but by the power of living faith. In his distress Jacob referred to the repentance of his soul, the deep humility he had felt for his wrongs. The angel regarded his prayer with seeming indifference, continually making efforts to release himself from the grasp of Jacob. He might



"The angel then inquired, 'What is thy name? And he said Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.' "

have exercised his supernatural power, and forced himself from Jacob's grasp, but he did not choose to do this. But when he saw that he prevailed not against Jacob, to convince him of his supernatural power he touched his thigh, which was immediately out of joint. But Jacob would not give up his earnest efforts for bodily pain. His object was to obtain a blessing; and pain of body was not sufficient to divert his mind from his object. His determination was stronger in the last moments of the conflict than at the beginning. His faith grew more earnest and persevering until the very last, even till the breaking of the day. He would not let go his hold of the angel until he blessed him. 'And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' The angel then inquired, 'What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.' "[5]

No earthly resource or power could help Jacob in this situation. This will likewise be the experience of the people of God in the last days.

PICTURE THE SOON-COMING SCENE:

"As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the 'rulers of the people.' 'It is expedient for us,' said the wily Caiaphas, 'that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.

"The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. . . . All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.' Jeremiah 30:5–7.

"Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24–30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. Jacob's company, unarmed and defenseless, seemed about to fall helpless victims of violence and slaughter. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. Yet he leaves nothing undone on his own part to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger. So should the followers of Christ, as they approach the time of trouble, make every exertion to place themselves in a proper light before the people, to disarm prejudice, and to avert the danger which threatens liberty of conscience."[6]

HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

What can we say in view of all this? Is there any hope for humanity? What is God's way of guiding people unto eternal life and offering them salvation?

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger–a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time."

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

"Jacob's history is also an assurance that [in the final time of trouble] God will not cast off those who have been deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. **While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril**."[7]

WHAT DO WE NEED TO REALIZE?

"Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.

"Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.

"Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the *result* of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed. . . .

"The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. **His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it.** Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God."[8]

Indeed in this experience is clearly fulfilled Revelation 14:12, **Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**"

Amidst it all—carrying out the incredible, divine mission of sharing unpopular truth with the precious few who will accept it—Jesus has promised: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:15–19).

Yes, in the perilous days soon to come, may we be among those faithful few who cling with unyielding faith to God's promises and proactively carry out His will! *R*

References:

[1] *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 282.
[2] *The Great Controversy*, p. 450. [Emphasis added.]
[3] Ibid., p. 616.
[4] Ibid.
[5] *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 118, 119. [Emphasis added.]
[6] *The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 616.
[7] *To Be Like Jesus*, p. 392. [Emphasis added.]
[8] *The Great Controversy*, pp. 620, 621. [Emphasis added.]

The Incredible Truth

by Barbara Montrose

AREN'T YOU TIRED OF BEING LIED TO?

It seems that every day we find out that something we had thought was true was not completely accurate after all. In some cases, malice or deception may have been involved, and in other cases not necessarily. Either way is disappointing, sometimes even heartbreaking. Often, the matter is something minor and of little consequence, but other times it can be quite significant and life-altering.

Substack commentator Thomas Buckley observes:

"What is a consensus? At its heart it is a group of people thinking that something is most likely correct or good or the best way to do or think about something.

"What is a conspiracy? At its heart it is a group of people thinking that something is most likely correct or good or the best way to do or think about something.

"The difference between the two is the impression of the intent of the group by those on the outside. Conspiracies are manifestly suspect and created out of nefarious motives to achieve a specific, most likely at least unethical, goal. Consensuses are seen as positive constructs, having been arrived at after open discussion, healthy debate, and a consideration of all relevant factors."[1]

His overall conclusion ends up being that sometimes the consensuses turn out to be conspiracies and vice versa.

Whatever the reason, whenever we realize that some bit of information received from a beloved one, friend, coworker, educational system, news outlet, or government has not in fact been transparent or truthful, an interesting thing may happen. We may tend to seek God more. Our faith in unseen reality can be strengthened when the ties that bind us to what is seen suffers any measure of deterioration. After all, security and trust depend heavily on honesty and reliability.

What about if this occurs in the realm of religion? If we have been deceived about essential truths involving the plan of salvation, our eternal life could be at stake. This is no small matter—and this is why we need to understand very deeply the whole truth precisely as revealed by the Creator of the universe.

The big tragedy is that many prefer to be deceived if acting on the truth happens to be inconvenient—somehow involving a cross. Such would rather hear lies than the truth. The prophet Isaiah was instructed:

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:

which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isaiah 30:8–11). What a self-destructive position to take!

A STRONG DELUSION

In writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul gives eye-opening truth about the biggest threat to Christians in the last days. He starts with words of assurance:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2).

Then he warns about the danger of a great deception—and the shocking place where it originates: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth 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" (Verses 3, 4).

Paul reminds us that, despite the widespread influence of the imposter, the true and living God is still in control.

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And 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" (Verses 5–12).

Shockingly, why will there be such strong delusion? We read above that this delusion will come upon those who received not the **love** of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Do you know the truth for the last days of earth's history? You might be among the many who have even heard about it since childhood. Do you take it for granted? Does it fail to thrill your soul? Do you find the Bible to be a little bit boring? It may be because you do not **love** it. Beware! If that is the case, then pray earnestly as did the psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

God can open your eyes to a new appreciation of His will and His ways, a fresh zeal for His glory. Pray earnestly to regain that "first love" experience. Without it, the strong, overpowering delusion will surely sweep you away. Scripture has stated it clearly. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24). While in a state of spiritual lethargy, will you be able to withstand the supernatural signs and wonders soon to come? The saying, "Seeing is believing" will no longer apply. We will not be able to trust what we see; our only safety is in a "Thus saith the Lord."

THE SURPRISING POWER OF TRUTH

When we have been longing for truth, it is so refreshing when we finally get it! We read in Scripture, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31, emphasis added). We see here some

Paul reminds us that despite the widespread influence of the imposter, the true and living God is still in control.



details often overlooked: The condition upon which we can be genuine disciples of Jesus is that we **"continue"** in His word. The apostle Paul also declares: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you **holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith** grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:21–23, first part, emphasis added). This is no shallow experience.

As we proceed further in the passage from John chapter 8, we read: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Lord does not say "set" you free as many misquote. He says "make" you free. That means the creative power of God that brought the universe into existence by His Almighty word can remake you through His truth. Jesus prayed to His Father in our behalf, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy

word is truth" (John 17:17). As we diligently apply to our hearts and lives the truth found in the word of God, we become sanctified—spiritually washed, made holy. Then when Jesus comes back to redeem His people, we can be among those with the following testimony:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is. **And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure**" (1 John 3:2, 3).

The passage then goes on to explain what sin is. So many people have no idea what sin is. They know it's something wrong somehow, but they don't stop doing it because they're not quite sure what sin even is. Having essentially been taught a deception by virtue of its vagueness, they don't take much action about the question of sin. Their relationship with Christ is rather lukewarm because they figure they don't really need Him much because they know in theory that He came to save us from sin, but since they don't know what sin is, anyway, they assume they're pretty much okay as they are.

But in contrast, through the purification process mentioned above, sin is defined! Finally! At last! We can know what exactly sin is! How refreshing is the truth: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for **sin is the transgression of the law**" (1 John 3:4). Sin = violation of God's moral law of Ten Commandments.

Many assume, "Oh, I keep the Ten Commandments. I'm a good person," but they don't even know where the Ten Commandments are found in the Bible, much less read them!

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:1–17 and should certainly be committed to memory if we plan to take them seriously and live by them. If as children we all memorized our addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tables, surely we can handle this important goal! It's much easier to remember. God even gave us ten fingers to help us keep track of them.

The New Testament reiterates the spirit of the Ten Commandments by describing the New Covenant experience in Christ: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16, 17). So, if we want the law of God to be written in our hearts, we need to know what it says and meditate upon its beauty every day.

WHAT IS TRENDING TODAY?

According to Revelation chapter 13, the powers of earth are soon to declare and enforce a law trampling upon the seventh-day Sabbath of the Lord, to exalt the counterfeit Sabbath dedicated to the pagan venerable day of the sun. It sounds hard to believe, doesn't it? Let's check out a commentary which indeed reveals what is looming on the horizon:

"Enacting Sabbath [*i.e.,* likely here referring to Sunday] laws, for example, follows not from a principle of grace but from a principle of nature—that civil government ought to order outward conditions for the good of man, including the highest good. Civil law cannot command inward worship or belief, but it can suppress public blasphemy, heresy, and flagrant disregard for public worship among the baptized."[2]

"Scripture clarifies our natural duties to God, telling us to worship him alone, to worship him how he desires to be worshipped, to revere him and all his works, and to set aside a time for his worship. We can expect a Christian magistrate, having this inscripturated clarification, to understand the most basic principles of man's duty in natural religion and to know what clearly violates those duties, namely, (1) atheism, polytheism, and idolatry; (2) strange and profane rites; (3) blasphemy and sacrilege; and (4) profanation of the Sabbath [*i.e.,* likely referring to Sunday]. These principles and their violations should be indisputable to a Christian magistrate, since they are known (at least vaguely) by natural reason and conscience and clarified in Scripture. Therefore, the Christian magistrate has good and confident epistemic ground to act against those who violate natural religion [*i.e.,* profane the Sunday]."[3]

Do we see what is afoot here? The well-intentioned plan described above may sound harmless enough to most, but clearly points to a fulfillment of prophecy that will indeed do great harm in the sight of God and His changeless law of Ten Commandments. Sincere, well-intentioned people are getting mixed up—distorting and going contrary to God's revealed will. Yet we all are warned: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

The third angel's message of Revelation 14:9–12 reminds us not to be intimidated by what will quickly escalate into the harsh threatenings presented in Revelation 13. Yet one of the apostles who refused to be censored from testifying of Jesus Christ reminds us, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Are we afraid to teach this reality to others? Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:27, 28: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

This is what the third angel's message is all about: "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; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence

"Those servants to whom God has entrusted the solemn, fearful message which is to bring out and fit up a people for the coming of Christ should bear a plain, pointed testimony."

of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:9–12).

The mark of the beast is a clever counterfeit to trap those who don't bother to learn what the Ten Commandments actually say—that holy, moral law of God written by His own finger, carved into tables of stone. Those who fall for the counterfeit law are guilty of breaking the Ten Commandments, because as Scripture says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10, 11).

It's not easy to tell people they are lawbreakers. After all, they might get upset, especially if they profess to be Christians and happen to foster self-righteous confidence. But what does God say? Wouldn't you rather know the actual truth than be lied to?

WHAT ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE PROCLAMATION OF THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE?

This is a real message. Yet, too many standing in the sacred desk as ministers of the gospel are content to preach smooth things to please carnally-minded people. One such individual was "Elder N":

"Elder N was fearful of offending, fearful lest the peculiarities of our faith should appear; the standard was lowered to meet the people. It should have been urged upon them that we possess truths of vital importance, and that their eternal interest depended upon the decision they there made; that in order to be sanctified through the truth, their idols would have to be given up, their sins be confessed, and they bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

"Those who engage in the solemn work of bearing the third angel's message must move out decidedly, and in the Spirit and power of God fearlessly preach the truth and let it cut. They should elevate the standard of truth and urge the people to come up to it. It has too frequently been lowered to meet the people in their condition of darkness and sin. It is the pointed testimony that will bring them up to decide. A peaceful testimony will not do this. The people have the privilege of listening to this kind of teaching from popular pulpits; but those servants to whom God has entrusted the solemn, fearful message which is to bring out and fit up a people for the coming of Christ should bear a plain, pointed testimony. Our truth is as much more solemn than that of nominal professors, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

"The people are asleep in their sins and need to be alarmed before they can shake off this lethargy. Their ministers have preached smooth things; but God's servants, who bear sacred, vital truths, should cry aloud and spare not, that the truth may tear off the garment of security and find its way to the heart. The straight testimony that should have been given to the people . . . was shunned by the ministers; the seed of truth was sown among thorns and has been choked by them. With some, evil besetments have flourished, and the heavenly graces have died out.

"God's servants must bear a pointed testimony, which will cut the natural heart and develop character."[4]

Being aware of this kind of situation, the apostle Paul exhorted Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:2–4).

People are tired of being lied to in the secular realm—and a large number are tired of being lied to in the religious realm as well. Are we ready to speak candidly and with love, to help them understand the truth?

"As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel."[5]

UNDER THE POWER OF THE LOUD CRY

"The Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning."[6]

At this time in history, "God has sent messengers who have studied their Bibles to find what is truth, and studied the movements of those who are acting their part in fulfilling prophecy in bringing about the religious amendment which is making void the law of God and thus giving ascendancy to the man of sin. And shall no voice be raised of direct warning to arouse the churches

to their danger? Shall we let things drift, and let Satan have the victory without a protest? God forbid.

"The Lord Jesus understands the pressure that is brought to bear against those who are loyal and true to Him, for He has felt the same in the highest degree. Those who witnessed a good confession in behalf of truth in the Reformation counted not their lives dear unto themselves, that truth might be vindicated. God and angels are looking on as witnesses from their holy dwelling place, and marking the earnestness and zeal of the defenders of the truth in this age. What do they defend? The faith once delivered to the saints. Then let the message go to all nations, tongues, and people. . . .

"There are many souls to come out of the ranks of the world, out of the churches—even the Catholic church—whose zeal will far exceed that of those who have stood in rank and file to proclaim the truth heretofore. For this reason the eleventh hour laborers will receive their penny. These will see the battle coming and will give the trumpet a certain sound. When the crisis is upon us, when the season of calamity shall come, they will come to the front, gird themselves with the whole armor of God, and exalt His law, adhere to the faith of Jesus, and maintain the cause of religious liberty which Reformers defended with toil and for which they sacrificed their lives. . . .

"There were many not of our faith who were deeply stirred with the importance of doing something and doing it now, in the struggle for religious freedom. Many were awakened to see what this religious amendment meant—turning from a 'Thus saith the Lord, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.' A spurious sabbath is presented to be legislated into power, compelling the observance of a sabbath which God has not enjoined upon man.

"The persecutions of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated, will be more than rivaled when Protestantism and popery are combined. The darkest pages of history will be opened in that great day when it will be too late for wrongs to be righted. Registered in the book are crimes that have been committed because of religious differences. We are not ignorant of the history. Europe was shaken as though with an earthquake, when a church, lifted up in pride and vanity, haughty and tyrannical, devoted to condemnation and death all who dared to think for themselves, and who ventured to take the Bible as the foundation of their faith."[7]

ARE WE READY TO FACE THE CHALLENGE?

"The kings and rulers of the earth, however great their power, are to consider themselves under a Ruler who owns the world. No earthly ruler is to be looked upon as above the Ruler who made the world in six days, and rested on the Seventh-day [from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset], sanctifying and blessing it, and giving it to man to be set apart as holy, and observed to the glory of His name. But priests and rulers have set up the first day of the week to be observed by the beings God has made. They compel His creatures to transgress the law of their Creator. Man has set himself above the Lord of heaven, and has turned human beings aside from the observance of the day of God, as their Creator, declared to be kept holy, as a sign between Him and them throughout their generations forever.

"We are every one of us to look from finite man to the Omnipotent God, who has the ownership of all to whom He has given life. They are under His government, and when finite rulers make laws that conflict with a plain, 'Thus saith the Lord,' we are to obey the law of God. Shall man dare to take the place of God, setting aside the laws of the Ruler of the universe, and placing in their stead human enactments? Shall he dare to compel obedience to these human laws? "[8] In the face of such pressure, again, we must reflect the words of the apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Let us humbly determine to follow God and His word no matter what the cost! ℛ

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"We are every one of us to look from finite man to the Omnipotent God, who has the ownership of all to whom He has given life. They are under His government, and when finite rulers make laws that conflict with a plain, 'Thus saith the Lord,' we are to obey the law of God."





by J. N. Andrews

AN EXAMINATION OF SEVEN REASONS FOR SUNDAYKEEPING

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

In this text we are assured that every word of the sacred Scriptures was given by 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 Spirit to guide them into all truth.

To men thus situated, Jehovah thus speaks: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 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 that word, hold fast; it is of priceless value; but relinquish at once every precept or doctrine not therein recorded, 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."

As the first day of the week is now almost universally observed in the place of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, we design [here] to examine the grounds on which this observance rests. Those who are willing to submit their opinion to the test of Scripture and of reason are invited to unite with us in the examination of this subject. For what reason do men prefer the first day of the week to the ancient Sabbath of the Lord? On what authority do men continually violate

the day which God sanctified, and commanded mankind to keep holy? Come, now, and let us reason together. Here is the commandment which it is said has been changed:–

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8–11).

That this commandment requires men to remember and to keep holy the rest day of the Creator, which He hallowed at the close of the first week of time, none can deny. We now ask for the authority for the change of this commandment.

Papists believe that their church had power to change the fourth commandment; and, on that authority alone, they are perfectly satisfied in observing the first day of the week.

Protestants deny the authority of the church or Rome, and attempt to vindicate the change of the Sabbath by an appeal to the Bible. This is what we wish them to do. We ask them, therefore, to present a single text in which it is said that God has changed His Sabbath to the first day of the week. The advocates of the change have none to offer. If they cannot present such a text, will they give us one which testifies that God ever blessed and sanctified the first day of the week? Its observers admit that they have none to present. But will they not give us *one* text in which men are required to keep the first day holy, as a Sabbath unto the Lord? They acknowledge that they have none. How, then, do they dare to exalt the first day of the week above the Sabbath of the Lord, which the commandment requires us to remember, and keep holy?

The Bible thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good works. Can Sundaykeeping be a very good work when the Bible has never said anything in its favor? Or, if it is a good work, can men be very thoroughly furnished in its defense when God has said nothing in its favor? Instead of being a good work, must it not be a fearful sin against God to thus pervert the fourth commandment, when once the mind has been enlightened on the subject?

But there are several reasons urged for the observance of the first day of the week, which we will here notice.

> **FIRST REASON.** *Redemption is greater than creation; therefore we ought to keep the day of Christ's resurrection, instead of the ancient Sabbath of the Lord.*

Where has God said this? Sundaykeepers are compelled to admit that He never did say it. What right, then, has any man to make such an assertion, and then to base the change of the Sabbath upon it? But suppose that redemption is greater than creation who knows that we ought to keep the first day of the week on that account? God never required men to keep any day as a memorial of redemption. But if it were a duty to observe one day of the week for this reason, most certainly the crucifixion day presents the strongest claims. It is not said that we have redemption through Christ's resurrection; but it is said that we have redemption through the shedding of His blood. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12, 15).

Then redemption is through the death of the Lord Jesus; consequently the day on which He shed His precious blood to redeem us, and said, "It is finished," (John 19:30), is the day that should be kept as a memorial of redemption, if any should be observed for that purpose.

Nor can it be urged that the resurrection day is the most remarkable day in the history of redemption. It needs but a word to prove that, in this respect, it is far exceeded by the day of the crucifixion. Which is the more remarkable event, the act of Jehovah in giving his beloved and only Son to die for a race of rebels, or the act of the Father in raising that beloved Son from the dead? There is only one answer that can be given: It was not remarkable that God should raise His Son from the dead; but the act of the Father in giving His Son to die for sinners was a spectacle of redeeming love on which the universe might gaze, and adore the wondrous love of God to all eternity. Who can wonder that the sun was vailed in darkness, and that all nature trembled at the sight! The crucifixion day, therefore, has far greater claims than the day of the resurrection. God has not enjoined the observance of either; and is it not a fearful act to make void the commandments of God by that wisdom which is folly in His sight! 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20.

But if we would commemorate redemption, there is no necessity of robbing the Lord's rest day of its holiness in order to do it. When truth takes from us our errors, it always has something better to take their place. So the false memorial of redemption being taken out of the way, the word presents in its stead those which are true. God has provided us with memorials, bearing his own signature; and these we may observe with the blessing of Heaven. Would you commemorate the death of our Lord? You need not keep the day of His crucifixion. The Bible tells you how to do it.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread,

and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Would you commemorate the burial and resurrection of the Saviour? You need not keep the first day of the week. The Lord ordained a very different and far more appropriate memorial. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:3–5). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

It is true that the professed church have changed this ordinance to sprinkling, so that this divine memorial of the Lord's resurrection is destroyed. And that they may add sin to sin, they lay hold of the Lord's Sabbath and change it to the first day of the week, thus destroying the sacred memorial of the Creator's rest, that they may have a memorial of Christ's resurrection! "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." When will the professed church cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Not until the "inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isaiah 24:5, 6).

SECOND REASON. *The disciples met on the day of our Lord's resurrection to commemorate that event, and the Saviour sanctioned this meeting by uniting with them. John 20:19.*

If every word of this were truth, it would not prove that the Sabbath of the Lord has been changed. But to show the utter absurdity of this inference, listen to a few facts. The disciples did not then believe that their Lord had been raised from the dead, but were assembled for the purpose of eating a common meal, and to seclude themselves from the Jews. The words of Mark and of John make this clear: "He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:12–14). John says: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (John 20:19).

It is a fact, therefore, that the disciples were not commemorating the resurrection of the Saviour; it is equally evident that they had not the slightest idea of a change of the Sabbath. At the burial of the Saviour, the women who had followed Him to the tomb returned and prepared spices and ointments to embalm Him; the Sabbath drew on; they rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment; and when the Sabbath was past, they came to the sepulcher upon the first day of the week to embalm their Lord. (Luke 23:55, 56; 24:1). They kept the Sabbath, according to the commandment, and resumed their labor on the first day of the week.

THIRD REASON. *After eight days, Jesus met with His disciples again.* John 20:26. *This must have been the first day of the week, which is thereby proved to be the Christian Sabbath.*

Were it certain that this occurred on the first day of the week, it would not furnish a single particle of proof that that day had become the Sabbath of the Lord. But who can be certain that "after eight days" means just a week? It would be nearer a literal construction of the language to conclude that this was upon the ninth day. As an illustration, read Matthew 17:1: "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John," etc. Now turn to Luke 9:28: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James," etc. Then, "after six days" is about *eight days* in this instance. But if "after eight days" means just a week, how does this prove that Sunday has taken the place of the Lord's Sabbath? Rather, how does it prove that Sunday has become the Christian Sabbath, when there is not a particle of evidence that either Christ or His apostles ever rested on that day? There is no such term as Christian Sabbath found in the Bible. The only weekly Sabbath named in the Bible is called the Sabbath of the Lord.

Was the act of Christ in appearing to His disciples sufficient to constitute the day on which it occurred the Sabbath? If so, why did He next select a fishing day as the time to manifest Himself to them? John 21. If it is not sufficient, then the Sunday on which He was first seen of them, the fishing day on which they next saw Him, and the Thursday on which He was last seen of them, may not be Sabbaths. It was not very remarkable that Christ should find His disciples together, inasmuch as they had one common abode. Acts 1:13.

FOURTH REASON. *The Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week. Therefore, the first day of the week should be observed instead of the Sabbath of the Lord. Acts 2:1, 2.*

Admitting that the day of Pentecost occurred upon the first day of the week, it remains to be proved that that day thereby became the Sabbath. But that it was the feast of Pentecost, and not the first day of

the week, that God designed to honor, the following facts demonstrate:

1. While the day of Pentecost is distinctly named, the day of the week on which it occurred is passed in silence.

2. The disciples had been engaged in earnest prayer for the space of ten days; for the day of Pentecost was fifty days from the resurrection of Christ, and forty of those days He spent with His disciples. Acts 1. Forty days from His resurrection would expire on Thursday, the day of His ascension. A period of ten days *after* His ascension on Thursday would include two first-days, the last of which would be the day of Pentecost. If the design of God had been to honor the first day of the week, why did not the Holy Ghost descend on the first of those first-days? Why must the day of Pentecost come before the Holy Ghost could descend? This answer is obvious: It was not the design of Heaven to honor the first day of the week, but to mark the antitype of the feast of Pentecost. Hence the first day of the week is passed in silence.

The slaying of the paschal lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month had met its antitype in the death of the Lamb of God on that day. Exodus 12; John 19; 1 Corinthians 5:7. The offering of the first-fruits on the sixteenth day of the first month had met its antitype in the resurrection of our Lord on that day, the first-fruits of them that slept. Leviticus 23; 1 Corinthians 15:20–23. It remained that the day of Pentecost, fifty days later, should also meet its antitype. Leviticus 23:15–21. The fulfillment of that type is what the pen of inspiration has recorded in Acts 2:1, 2. God has spoken nothing in this place respecting a change of His Sabbath. Yet grave men, calling themselves Doctors of Divinity, consider this text one of their strongest testimonies for their so-called Christian Sabbath. They might be profited by this advice of the wise man: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6).

FIFTH REASON. *Paul once broke bread upon the first day of the week at Troas. Hence this day was observed as the Christian Sabbath. Acts 20:7.*

We answer that at one period the apostolic church at Jerusalem broke bread every day. Acts 2:42–46. If a single instance of breaking bread at Troas upon the first day of the week was quite sufficient to constitute it the Sabbath, would not the continued practice of the apostolic church at Jerusalem in breaking bread *every* day be amply sufficient to make every day a Sabbath? Moreover, as the act of the great Head of the church in breaking bread must be quite as important as that of his servant Paul, must not the day of the crucifixion be pre-eminently the Christian Sabbath, as Christ instituted and performed this ordinance on the evening with which that day commenced! 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

But on what day of the week did this act of Paul's occur? For, if it is of sufficient importance to make the day of its occurrence the future Sabbath of the church, the day is worth determining. The act of breaking bread was after midnight; for Paul preached to the disciples until midnight, then healed Eutychus, and after this attended to breaking bread. Acts 20:7–11. If, as time is reckoned at the present day, the first day of the week terminated at midnight, then Paul's act of breaking bread was performed upon the second day of the week, or Monday, which should henceforth be regarded as the Christian Sabbath, if breaking bread on a day makes it a Sabbath.

But, if the Bible method of commencing the day, viz., from sunset, was followed, it would appear that the disciples came together at the close of the Sabbath for an evening meeting, as the apostle was to depart in the morning. If it was not an evening meeting, why did they have many lights there? Paul preached unto them until midnight, and then broke bread with the disciples early in the morning of the first day of the week. Did this act constitute that day the Sabbath? If so, then why did Paul, as soon as it was light, start on his long journey to Jerusalem? If Paul believed that Sunday was the Christian Sabbath, why did he thus openly violate it? If he did not believe it had become the Sabbath, why should you? And why do you grasp, as evidence that the Sabbath has been changed, a single instance in which an evening meeting was held on Sunday, while you overlook the fact that it was the custom of this same apostle to preach every Sabbath, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles? Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4.

Paul broke bread on the first day of the week, and then immediately started on his long journey to Jerusalem. So that this, the strongest argument for the first day of the week, furnishes direct proof that Sunday is not the Sabbath.

SIXTH REASON. *Paul commanded the church at Corinth to take up a public collection on the first day of the week; therefore it follows that this must have been a day of public worship, and consequently is the Christian Sabbath. 1 Corinthians 16:2.*

We answer, It is a remarkable fact that Paul enjoins exactly the reverse of a public collection. He does not say, Place your alms in the public treasury on the first day of the week; but he says, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you *lay by him* in store."

J. W. Morton, in his "Vindication of the True Sabbath," pp. 51, 52, says:

"The apostle simply orders that each one of the Corinthian brethren should lay up *at home* some portion of his weekly gains on the first day of the week. The whole question turns upon the meaning of the expression, 'by him;' and I marvel greatly how you can imagine that it means 'in the collection-box of the congregation.' Greenfield, in his Lexicon, translates the Greek term, *'by one's self, i.e., at home.'* Two Latin versions, the Vulgate and that of Castellio, render it, *'apud se,'* with

one's self, at home. Three French translations, those of Martin, Osterwald, and De Sacy, *'chez soi,'* at his own house, at home. The German of Luther, *'bei sich selbst,'* by himself, at home. The Dutch, *'by hemselven,'* same as the German. The Italian of Diodati, *'appresso di se,'* in his own presence, at home. The Spanish of Felipe Scio, *'en su casa,'* in his own house. The Portuguese of Ferreira, *'para isso,'* with himself. The Swedish, *'noer sig self,'* near himself. I know not how much this list of authorities might be swelled; for I have not examined one translation that differs from those quoted above."

The text, therefore, does not prove that the Corinthian church was assembled for public worship on that day; but, on the contrary, it does prove that each must be at his own home where he could examine his worldly affairs, and lay by himself in store as God had prospered him. If each one should thus, from week to week, collect his earnings, when the apostle should come their bounty would be ready, and each would be able to present to him what he had gathered. So that, if the first-day Sabbath has no better foundation than the inference drawn from this text, it truly rests upon sliding sand.

> **SEVENTH REASON.** *John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, which was the first day of the week. Revelation 1:10.*

This is the kind of reasoning which the advocates of Sunday are invariably obliged to adopt. But we ask, What right have they to assume the very point which they ought to prove? This text, it is true, furnishes direct proof that there is a day in the gospel dispensation which the Lord claims as His; but is there one text in the Bible which testifies that the first day of the week is the Lord's day? There is not one. Has God ever claimed that day as His? Never. Has God ever claimed any day as His, and reserved it to Himself? He has. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:3). "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord" (Exodus 16:23). "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God" (Exodus 20:10). "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day," etc. (Isaiah 58:13). "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28).

Then the seventh day is the day which God reserved to himself when he gave to man the other six; and this day He calls His holy day. This is the day which the New Testament declares the Son of man to be Lord of.

Is there one testimony in the Scriptures that the Lord of the Sabbath has put away His holy day and chosen another? Not one. Then that day which the Bible designates as the Lord's day is none other than the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. ℛ





by Alonzo Trévier Jones

Are There Any Protestants?

ORIGIN OF "PROTESTANT"

What is the meaning of the word "Protestant"? How came it into the world? How came these people to bear it as a religious distinction? . . .

The word "Protestant" as expressing a religious distinction, the word "Protestant" with a capital P, the word "Protestant" . . . came into the world with the word "Protest" that was used in the Protest that was made at the Diet of Spires in Germany, April 19, 1529 . . . the result of a deadlock in that Diet over the enforcement, by all the power of the then papacy, of the Edict of Worms that had been issued in 1521 commanding the destruction of Martin Luther, his adherents, his writings and all who printed or circulated his writings, or who on their own part should print or circulate the like.

Thus is will be seen that the Protest in which originated the word "Protestant" was against the effort of the papacy to destroy the Reformation, and was in behalf of the Reformation and its principles. . . .

EDICT OF WORMS

And that all may see for themselves that just such is unquestionably the meaning of that action taken, let us consider directly the facts, documents, and dates, in which rests the unquestionable truth of the case.

In 1521 the Diet of Worms condemned Luther and the Reformation. There immediately followed, the "Edict of Worms" that is the key to the Protest in which originated the word "Protestant." This Edict was issued by the Emperor Charles V. . . . After denouncing Luther personally in sweeping terms, the imperial edict says:

"We have therefore sent this Luther from before our face, that all pious and sensible men may regard him as a fool, or a man possessed of the devil; and we expect that after the expiry of his safe-conduct, effectual means will be taken to arrest his furious rage.

"Wherefore, under pain of incurring the punishment due to the crime of treason, we forbid you to lodge the said Luther as soon as the fatal term shall be expired, to conceal him, give him meat or drink, and lend him, by word or deed, publicly or secretly, any kind of assistance. We enjoin you, moreover, to seize him, or cause him to be seized, wherever you find him, and bring him to us without any delay, or to keep him in all safety until you hear from us how you are to act with regard to him, and till you receive the recompense due to your exertions in so holy a work.

"As to his adherents, you will seize them, suppress them, and confiscate their goods.

"As to his writings, if the best food becomes the terror of all mankind as soon as a drop of poison is mixed with it, how much more ought these books, which contain a deadly poison to the soul, to be not only rejected, but also annihilated! You will therefore burn them, or in some other way destroy them entirely.

"As to authors, poets, printers, painters, sellers or buyers of placards, writings or paintings, against the pope or the church, you will lay hold of their persons and their

goods, and treat them according to your good pleasure.

"And if any one, whatever be his dignity, shall dare to act in contradiction to the decree of our imperial majesty, we ordain that he shall be placed under the ban of the empire.

"Let every one conform hereto." . . .

This of necessity caused that the Princes who had received the Gospel should form an alliance mutually to support each other against the enforcement of the Edict of Worms in their dominions; and to give free course to the Gospel there. The document which these evangelical Princes signed reads as follows:

"God Almighty having, in His ineffable mercy caused His holy and eternal Word, the food of our souls and our greatest treasure here below, to appear again amongst men; and powerful maneuvers having been employed on the part of the clergy and their adherents to annihilate and extirpate it; we being firmly assured that He who has sent it to glorify His name upon the earth is able to maintain it, engage to preserve this holy Word to our people: and for this end to employ our goods, our lives, our States, our subjects, all that we possess—confiding not in our armies, but solely in the omnipotence of the Lord, whose instruments we desire to be."

THE DIET OF SPIRES

There were eleven powerful princes who signed this document. This step effectually suspended the enforcement of the Edict of Worms; and thus matters stood at the assembling of the Diet of Spires, June 25, 1526. The emperor's instruction to the Diet ordered that "the church-customs should be maintained entire"; and called upon the Diet to "punish those who refused to carry out the Edict of Worms." Against the emperor's instructions the evangelical Princes stood firmly for the Reformation; and their calm firmness encouraged the Princes who were willing to be neutral, to oppose the enforcement of the Edict of Worms in their States.



August 1, a general committee of the Diet reported the necessity of a reform of church abuses. No such thing as this was wanted by the papacy, and to counteract the report the church party brought forth a decree of the emperor commanding the enforcement of the Edict of Worms. The evangelical Princes broke the force of this move. . . . This brought the Diet to a deadlock. . . .

The evangelical Princes insisted on the maintenance of the resolution of religious liberty, of the Diet of 1526. In this they were wholly in the right, as well as wholly within their rights. . . .

THE PROTEST

April 7, 1529, the papal party secured a majority vote in the Diet for a resolution providing that: In all places where the Edict of Worms could not be enforced, there should be no new reform; the reformers should not touch any controverted point; they should not oppose any celebration of the mass; they should not permit any Catholic to embrace the doctrines of Luther; they **should acknowledge** the episcopal jurisdiction of the Catholic church; and should not tolerate any Anabaptists nor any Sacramentarians.

This on its face was a proposal for the positive smothering of the Reformation; for it stopped every activity of the reformers, and gave full scope to every activity of the Catholics. The evangelical Princes contended that "This Diet is incompetent to do more than to preserve the religious liberty agreed upon in the former Diet, until the council shall meet according to the original agreement. Therefore we reject this decree. We reject it also because, **in matters of faith the majority have no power."**

The evangelicals were then ordered to submit to the majority. They retired, according to custom, to deliberate. In their absence the imperial commissioners adjourned the meeting, declaring, "All is over. It is a settled affair. Submission is all that remains." When the evangelicals returned from their deliberation, to present their answer, and

found the meeting adjourned, and the whole matter decided against them, and all **in their absence,** then, from this arbitrary and unjust course, those true Princes decided to "appeal to the Word of God, and from the Emperor Charles V to Jesus Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords." And the statement of this appeal formed the **Protest** that put the word "Protestant" in the world, and gave to the Reformation the name and title of **Protestant.**

They said that they could not consent to the action and course of the majority in the Diet, "because it concerns the glory of God and the salvation of our souls, and that in such matters we ought to have regard, above all, to the commandment of God, who is King of kings and Lord of lords; each of us rendering Him account for himself, without caring the least in the world about majority or minority."

Also they said, "What! we ratify this edict! We assert that when Almighty God calls a man cannot, however, receive the knowledge of God! . . . For this reason we reject the yoke that is imposed upon us."

"Moreover, the new edict declaring the ministers shall preach the Gospel, explaining it according to the writings accepted by the holy Christian church; we think that, for this regulation to have any value, we should first agree on what is meant by the true and holy church. Now, seeing that there is great diversity of opinion in this respect; that there is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the word of God; we are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His holy word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the old and new testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it.

"This Word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine, and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.

"For these reasons, most dear lords, uncles, cousins, and friends, we earnestly entreat you to weigh carefully our grievances and our motives. If you do not yield to our request we **PROTEST** by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Savior, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, in anything that is contrary to God, to His holy word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls, and to the last decree of Spires."

Thus, in the presence of the Diet, "spoke out those courageous men whom Christendom will henceforth denominate **'the Protestants.'** And that is the origin of the word "Protestant." That is the true story of the word "Protestant." . . .

WHAT IT MEANS

And now in fact and in truth what does this word "Protestant" mean? By the open evidence of the plain story—

It means protest against the burning or otherwise destroying of either the men or the writings of the men who are found to disagree in religion or faith with other men either in a church or a state.

It means protest against arbitrary and unjust procedure of ecclesiastical combines.

It means protest against any denunciation or condemnation of men in their absence, and without their being heard.

It means protest against any alliance or connection whatever between the ecclesiastical and the civil power.

It means protest against any assertion or claim of any power or right of any majority in matters of religion or faith.

It means protest against any intrusion whatever of the civil power, under whatever plea, in any matter that in any way partakes of religion or faith.

It means protest against all arbitrary authority of the church under whatever form, name or claim.

In this is means protest against any exercise of ecclesiastical authority or power in any other wise than only by the ministry of the word of God.

It means protest against any restriction whatever, or any kind, on the full preaching of the word of God, even on "controverted points," to every creature everywhere and always.

It means protest against any restriction whatever, of any kind, on the full and free exercise and enjoyment of the right of any individual at any time to embrace any doctrine that he may choose to believe.

It proclaims and defends the full and complete liberty of every individual, himself alone.

In this it proclaims and defends the perfect individuality of every soul.

And in this it proclaims and defends the sole and complete responsibility of the individual soul to God only, in all things pertaining to religion or faith.

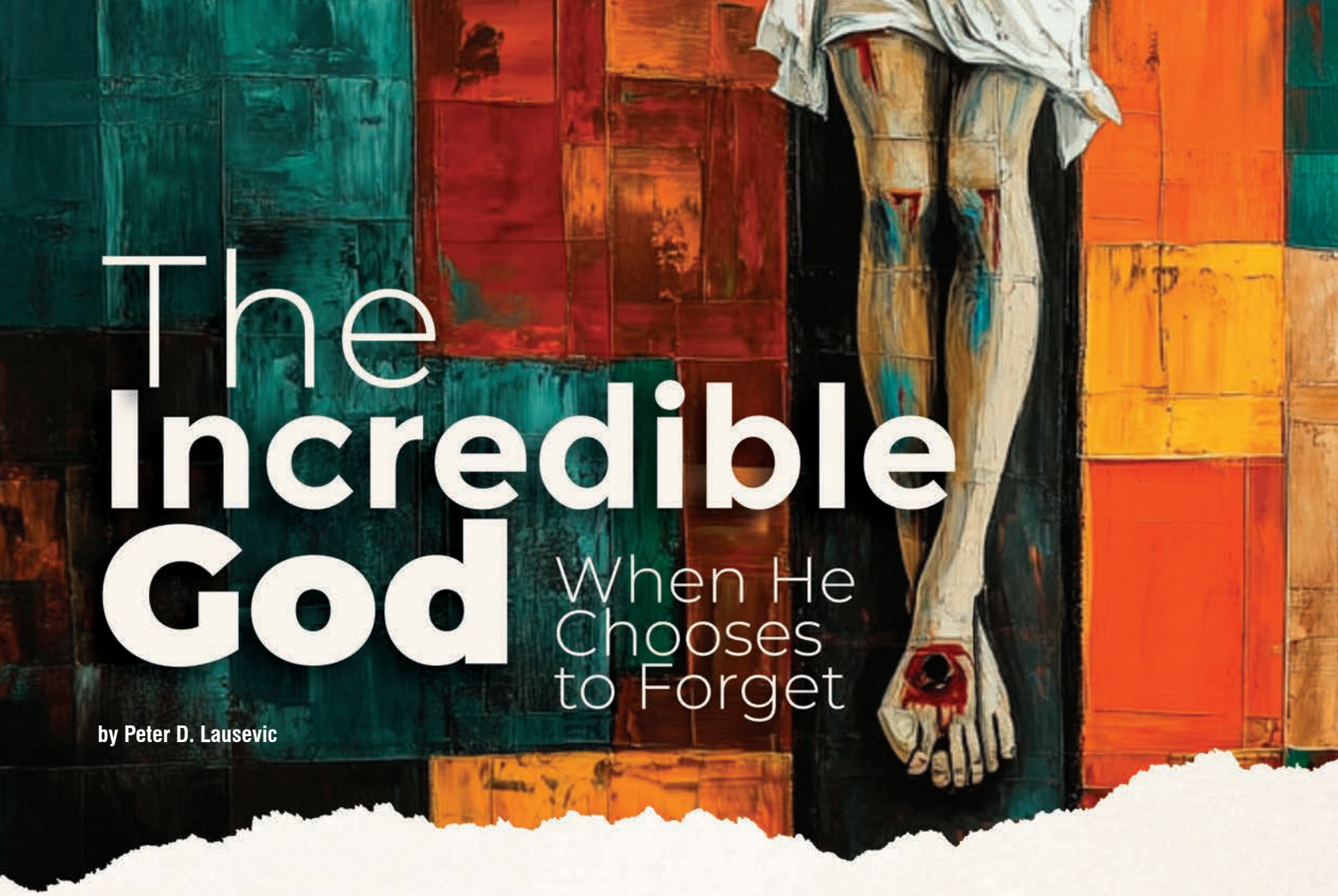
It rests in and proclaims the word of God alone, as in the Bible of the Old and New Testaments as all-sufficient in all things pertaining to religion and faith.

That, all of that, and nothing less than that, in truth and in fact, is what the word "Protestant" means. . . .

IN THE UNITED STATES

. . . In the light of the truth of what the word "Protestant" means, it is clearly seen that the principle of religious liberty in the separation of religion and the state in the United States by the National Constitution is the fullest and truest expression of the Protestant principle that there is in any organic connection in the world. This is explained in the fact that it was expressly declared in so many words by Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, and their noble compatriots in the making of this nation, that it was "upon the principles on which the Gospel was first propagated and the Reformation from popery carried on" that they established this religious liberty as a supreme right guaranteed by the National Constitution.

Are You a Protestant? ℛ



The Incredible God When He Chooses to Forget

by Peter D. Lausevic

From a human perspective, there are many anomalies in the Bible and as well as in the plan of redemption itself. These anomalies become seeming contradictions from a human perspective. However, when a sinful human being finds himself at the foot of the cross, all of it makes perfect sense—they become "the power of God." For this reason, Christ Himself becomes "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18. 24).

This power does not manifest itself fully to the righteous and godly nor to the unfallen worlds—although they also receive some benefit. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)." And not just sinners in the common sense of the word. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10). The plan of redemption was designed for those who have become the **enemies** of God. This is why in the work of evangelism we need to be looking for people who are recognized enemies of God, as they are the very ones for whom this plan of redemption was designed.

But if Christ came to this earth, lived a holy life, and died on the cross of Calvary, gave us the perfect example of what a good human being should be—and that was all—there would be no salvation whatsoever. And why is that? Because the verse continues, "we shall be saved by his life." The death of Christ brings about forgiveness that is able to give us a new beginning. However, salvation comes beyond the cross—through the resurrection of Jesus, the God/man. The resurrection is not the end of the story. "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:8–11). The ultimate plan of God is to make us one with Him—this is the atonement.

THE RIGHT TO HEAVEN

Obedience is the only thing that gives us the right to enter heaven. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14). The majority of this world has a wrong concept of this obedience. They think that if the good is greater than the evil (as if measured on a scale), then it would somehow give us that right kind of obedience. However, the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount give us a different picture: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Heaven demands perfect obedience—not an attempt at right doing as many say, "I am trying." And why is that? "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:6–9).

It is quite simple. A righteous person does not sin nor have they

ever sinned. This is the simple requirement to be in the presence of God. And this simple requirement gives us a very complex problem. "For **all have sinned,** and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, emphasis added) And here is the very anomaly or contradiction that we are speaking about. We know that "God . . . cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). That means that God cannot be righteous and at the same time declare someone that is a sinner to be righteous or sinless and hence have the right to enter the pearly gates.

You may want to remind me that there is the forgiveness of God. In the plan of redemption we just read that the death of Christ is designed for the sinner in order to bring forgiveness. However, does forgiveness completely remove our sins?

UTTERLY DESTITUTE

In Matthew 18:23–35 we have a parable that describes "the kingdom of heaven" as of a king who took "account of his servants" and found one that "owed him ten thousand talents." In order to understand the gravity of this debt and why Christ uses this example, we need to know what is a talent. It comes from the Greek word *tálanton,* which was the largest unit of measurement of the time. It was equal to 6,000 drachmas or denarii and a denari was equal to one day's wages. So when a person was looking for a job, they would work an entire day for one denari. If we would modernize that idea into a five-day work week, one talent would be equal to 1,200 weeks of work or 23 years of labor. If we would extend that to the 10,000 talents owed, that would be 60 million denari or 60 million days of work which would translate to 12 million weeks of labor or nearly 231,000 years. If a person lives to the age of 80, that would mean nearly 3,000 lifetimes of work if they were to begin labor as soon as they were born.

This takes the words of Romans 6:23 to a new dimension: "The wages of sin is death." This clearly shows the impossibility of one to redeem themselves because it would take 3,000 lifetimes of righteous living. This enormity is still magnified when we consider our own sinful human nature. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Although we are not sinners because we are born, it is a fact that humans will sin. It is in their nature. They cannot live a sinless life and this is clearly seen in the parable we are evaluating.

The man who owes the 231,000 years of labor begs for time to pay it all back. But the king knowing that is impossible "was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." Forgiveness is a good beginning but cannot be the end of it all. The reason being is because forgiveness can be remembered both from a human perspective as well as from a heavenly. Keep in mind that "the kingdom of heaven" is "likened unto a certain king" in this example of Jesus.

When this man did not treat his fellow servant in the same way, the matter was brought up to the king who "was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." The man was genuinely forgiven by the king. But when the man treated others in so evil a manner, he was delivered "to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him." And what was due unto him? 10,000 talents—the same ones that he owed. This clearly shows that forgiveness does not completely remove sin. It removes the consequences for a time, but does not remove the sin itself.

THE REMOVAL OF SIN

Does God have a plan in which sin is actually removed—going beyond forgiveness? "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and **will not remember thy sins"** (Isaiah 43:25, emphasis added). Here is a promise in which God will actually forget our sins because He has "compassion upon us" and will "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). Now, do you think you can remember something that God forgets? Is there going to be a time when we actually cannot remember any of the sins which we have committed?

In the Old Testament, when someone sinned there were various ceremonies involving the shedding of blood that the person was to go through in order to receive forgiveness. This was done individually or collectively through the morning and evening sacrifice. But once per year on what was called the Day of Atonement, a special ceremony was done "to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30). This brought about ceremonial cleansing.

When we look at the entire sacrificial system, there was an inherent flaw in it because through the ceremonies themselves, a person could never live a perfect life. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can **never** with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually **make the comers thereunto perfect** (Hebrews 10:1)." Perfection—yes, that perfection that is required to enter the pearly gates—was illusive. With all the ceremonies the people did each year, their nature remained the same.

Why was it that they continued in sin if they relied only on the ceremony itself? There are actually two things. One is that a person must see where the sacrifice leads to the Supreme Sacrifice that alone can bring pardon for sin. The other has to do with the memory of sin. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Hebrews 10:3)." Through the yearly service on the Day of Atonement they remembered the sins even from the previous year because the blood of animals was insufficient to change human nature. Even today when we receive full forgiveness in Christ and a change in our nature, we still remember that. In order to change human beings to have a permanent change that lasts eternity, something more than forgiveness of sin is needed. Removal of the memory of all sin is needed erased, then there is a truly clean slate. This the ceremonial

"Now is our opportunity to change our character in preparation for Christ second coming. 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure' (1 John 3:3)."

system could not offer. "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:1–4). Our memory of past sins affects our decisions to sin and that is why the memory needs to be cleansed.

The plan of redemption includes the removal of the consciousness of the sin itself both from the records of heaven as well as from the human mind. (See *The Great Controversy*, p. 620:1.) This is why there was a necessity to change that ceremonial law and turn our attention to the heavenly ministry of Christ.

FORGIVENESS AND BLOTTING OUT

Do forgiveness and blotting out of our sins happen at the same time in the New Testament? On the day of Pentecost, the apostles called upon the people to repent and be converted. When we speak of repentance, we understand that simultaneously this brings about forgiveness of our sins. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). We find here that through the death of Christ we receive the gifts of both repentance and forgiveness. They happen at the same time. When one repents and is converted, they are forgiven by our Saviour.

But the blotting out of our sins that includes the cleansing of our memory from these sins happens at a future time when we experience the times of refreshing: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your **sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come** from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19, emphasis added).

To remove sins from the record books of heaven and from the human mind, we have to recognize that there must be a judgment. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). This is why all must expect a judgment.

Unfortunately, when we hear the word "judgment" we only think of a criminal accusation—and based on the fact that we know that "all have sinned" we recognize that all are criminals. But in the plan for our redemption, there is the criminal aspect to the judgment and also a reward aspect to it. "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of **the dead, that they should be judged,** and that thou shouldest give **reward unto thy servants** the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18, emphasis added). In this judgment we find that some are destroyed and others are rewarded.

This judgment has to happen prior to Christ's second coming because He has something special to bring with Him upon His arrival. "And, behold, I come quickly; and **my reward is with me,** to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12, emphasis added). When Jesus comes again, He brings a reward to the faithful. And what determines that reward? It is the judgment. Although we understand that there is a judgment at the very end, there also must be a judgment to determine the reward that must happen prior to Christ's second coming. For this reason the professed followers of Christ are judged before the unbelievers. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17)

When we examine the parables of Christ, we find that often He is comparing common earthly events to the way the heavenly kingdom operates. One such example is in Matthew 22:1–14 when a king held a marriage feast for his son to which many guests were invited. There were three invitations (two going to the same group). During the last invitation, all were invited. "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

Once all the guests were present, before the wedding reception could take place, the king judged all the guests. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." This judgment obviously was an evaluation of character.

Why does character need to be evaluated in a judgment-style environment? When we speak of the second coming, we must understand that not all will be ready. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2, emphasis added). This group of people must be like Jesus. This is not like a bumper sticker I once saw which said, "I'm not perfect, just forgiven." The people waiting for Christ must have His character to perfection. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing; but that it should be **holy and without blemish"** (Ephesians 5:27, emphasis added). This is why now is our opportunity to change our character in preparation for Christ second coming. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Those who do not have on the wedding garment, those who do not reflect His character are lost. "And [the king] saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This one individual represents the majority of those who profess to be waiting for the coming of Jesus. "For many are called, but few are chosen."

TIME FOR BLOTTING OUT

The message on the Day of Pentecost was very clear. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." When were the people on that day to repent? Immediately. There was no future time for them. When were they to be converted? Immediately. Their opportunity was on that very day. But when was the blotting out of sins to take place? Not immediately. "When the times of refreshing shall come." The way that is written shows that the times of refreshing was in the future. And what was to happen after the sins were blotted out? "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." Jesus will come again.

Is there something holding Jesus back from coming to His waiting people? "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19–21). There is to be a "restitution of all things" as they were in the beginning of this world's history. This is why Elijah must come. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5, 6). This is why sin must be removed from His waiting people. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:2–6).

THE SANCTUARY SERVICE

How does the sanctuary service help us understand this process? Hebrews chapters 1–7 describe the reason Jesus came to this world, His right to be our Hight Priest, and His ministry in heaven. The apostle Paul summarizes these seven chapters in this way: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2). Jesus is ministering in a temple built like no earthly temple because God made it not humans.

Since His work in heaven is so important, how can we understand what is happening there? "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5). The earthly tabernacle service was made like pictures of the heavenly ministry. So if we study the sanctuary service in the Old Testament, it will be like looking at pictures of a country that you have never been to. You can imagine what it looks like and when you arrive there for the first time, you will recognize what was in the photos. Of course it will be much





"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30). Here is typified the aspect of cleansing from the sins–future removal from our memory or blotting out of sin."

more glorious in reality but it will be recognizable. So the heavenly sanctuary can be recognized if we study the earthly pictures that God gave us.

We read this verse earlier but let us look at it in the context of the heavenly sanctuary. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30). Here is typified the aspect of cleansing from the sins—future removal from our memory or blotting out of sins. On this day there was not just a work of the priests in the sanctuary but also a special work of preparation on the part of the people. "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God." And what happened if one neglected this important work of preparation? "For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people" (Leviticus 23:27–32).

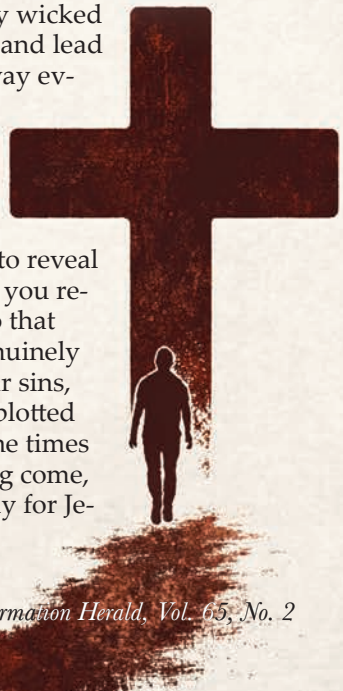
This cleansing of the sanctuary has been given a more specific time in the study of Daniel chapter 8 (especially verse 14): "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." And what is to happen during this cleansing of the sanctuary judgment?". . . because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:2). **God wants to forget our sins. He declares: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25). Once God blots them out, we will have no memory of them and thus will have the right to enter heaven.**

OUR OPPORTUNITY

God is inviting you for this opportunity to have a complete change in your life. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). This cleansing comes upon the condition of our genuine confession of sins. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Cleansing or blotting out of sins is the result of genuine confession.

However, the problem that persists is our nature. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). We deceive ourselves. We convince ourselves that we are not as bad as it is made up to be. We convince ourselves that it is not even a sin.

How can a sinner whose heart deceives him come to genuine confession and repentance so that his sins can be blotted out of the sanctuary in heaven and removed from the memory of the human mind provides the right to the tree of life and to enter the pearly gates? We can pray the same prayer of David: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).



Are you ready to ask God to reveal to you who you really are—so that you can genuinely confess your sins, have them blotted out when the times of refreshing come, and be ready for Jesus? ℛ

NEWS SDARM WORLD

Medical Mission Trip
Dodoma, Tanzania

Dodoma, Tanzania—A dedicated team of over 150 volunteers from 19 countries participated in a medical mission in Dodoma, the capital of the United Republic of Tanzania. Dodoma was strategically chosen for its access to local hospitals (where major surgeries took place), schools (where health education was offered), and the local church (where renovations were made), allowing for a comprehensive outreach effort.

The volunteers brought medicine, supplies, equipment, and an unwavering commitment to serve those in need. Over the 10-day mission, more than 4,200 people received medical care.

While medical services were being provided, another group of volunteers renovated the local church in Dodoma, offering a refreshed place of worship. The mission drew the attention of local media, and reporters arrived to interview organizers and document the impact of the initiative. Opportunities to share the Gospel were woven throughout the mission. The brethren sang hymns as they waited for their appointments, counseling sessions were offered, and invitations to attend church on Sabbath were made.

When Sabbath arrived, mission activities paused, allowing volunteers and local members to worship together. It was moving to see patients who had been treated during the week there, as well as to hear the testimonies of the volunteers. For some, the medical mission was their first contact with the church. They had heard about the mission trip, registered as a volunteer, and participated in a Sabbath service for the first time during the mission. One young woman from Dodoma, moved by her experience as a patient, took time off work to volunteer as a translator and worshiped with the brethren for the first time.

Throughout the mission, the volunteers witnessed miracles of resilience and healing, often beyond what was expected. Praise the Lord for the opportunity to serve, and a heartfelt thank you to the sponsors who provided additional funds when supplies ran low. We pray that the mission's impact will result in ongoing physical and spiritual health for all who were touched.

- **Dental:** 641 appointments
- **Gynecology:** 863 appoint.
- **Cardiology:** 431 appointments
- **Physical Therapy:** 324 appointments
- **ENT:** 299 appointments
- **Ophthalmology:** 1,776 appointments
- **Surgical Reference:** 48 appointments
- **Counseling:** 236 sessions
- **Lab:** 1,503 tests
- **Internal Medicine & General Care:** 4,187 appointments
- **Welfare:** 4,716 individuals assisted, 9,836 pieces of clothing, and 1,612 pairs of shoes distributed
- **Pharmacy:** 5,326 medications distributed
- **Nutrition:** 192 appointments
- **Children's Health Education:** 2,929 participants
- **Meals Cooked:** 3,900



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BEING BRAVE
IN THE FACE OF THE BEAST



How important it is to worship God! He is the One who made you. He is the One who made your loving family and your best friends. He made everyone in your church, the place where you live, and all over the world. He also made the sun, moon, stars, plants, and animals. He is the One who takes care of us and gives us food, air, water, and a place to sleep at night. He is the One who keeps you alive. He is so good! That's why we worship Him—honoring Him as the highest and best in the whole universe.

The Bible warns us against worshiping the beast and his image. What is a beast? You may have heard the word "beast" to describe a cat, dog, horse, or other animal. That's because those living creatures are all created by God. They did not make themselves. They are only created beings, so there is no reason to worship them as God.

But there is another way the word "beast" is used in the Bible. God showed the mind of the prophet Daniel pictures to know what would happen in the future. He showed him beasts—they were sort of like animals Daniel had seen, but a little different. These beasts were just to show what the most powerful kings and biggest, strongest kingdoms in history would act like. God told Daniel, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth" (Daniel 7:17). "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth" (Daniel 7:23, first part). Then He tells what that fourth beast would act like: It "shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" (Daniel 7:23, second part). That's exactly what happened for hundreds of years. What a cruel beast!

That same beast is talked about again in Revelation 13. Soon, a second beast comes along to work together with the first beast to try to scare and hurt the faithful people of God. The second beast tries to force everyone to go along with what the first beast says to do instead of following Jesus.

But Jesus has given us His holy Word, the Bible. His Word teaches us how to worship Him by trusting in Jesus and praying to God through Him as the Son of God.

In Exodus 20:1–17, we find God's Ten Commandments. Jesus wants us to keep these commandments. This law of Ten Commandments is very special, and we are happy as we keep it. Jesus can help us keep the Ten Commandments. He says "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). He wants these commandments to be in our hearts. But only if we will let Him. He is so kind that He will not force us; we need to allow Him to soften our hearts to obey.

In Heaven, everyone will keep the Ten Commandments. So, if we want to be in that beautiful place forever, we will look to Jesus and keep His Word now. Then all the cruel actions of the beast cannot harm us. We will be safe in the arms of Jesus.—*BHM.*

CHILDREN'S CORNER