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IN TIMES LIKE THESE

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"In Times Like These" is a theme that has fascinated me ever since I heard a song with the same title.

I had heard many sermons about last-day events in which the speakers gave a list of traits we need to possess in order to stand firm in trial. I was determined to get ready fast, for I was convinced that time was short. I worked hard on gaining victory over defects of character, I tried to change my temperament, I learned how to be independent of grocery stores by identifying wild edible plants, etc.

As a young man, with no support from anybody, I found it hard to get ready on time, until I heard the song "In Times Like These" for the first time. It was then when I understood that Jesus and Bible truth is what I needed to possess first and foremost.

Knowing Jesus and being aware of His promises gave me peace and assurance for the future. I am still working on getting ready, but it is not hard anymore.

Dear friends, I hope that you will be blessed and motivated through the reading of these articles, to get to know Jesus through the book of nature and divine providence, as you trust the promises of His word, the Bible.

—Adrian Finaru

Our Need of a Saviour:

Jesus, our only hope in time of distress

by Abel Barraza

INSENSITIVE TO SUCH A NEED

Since ancient times, in the far east, Buddhists have believed that salvation is achieved through self-effort and through the understanding of Buddha's Dharma. This Dharma is merely the acknowledging of their true nature versus Buddha's nature, operating on the premise that they have the potential to uplift themselves and be good. Therefore, they don't realize the need for a Saviour.

In Hindu philosophy, there are three ways to be saved. Knowledge [mystical meditation], works, and devotion. But all this is dependent upon mere human power and does not recognize the need for a Saviour, either.

In Islam, salvation is the belief that people can enter paradise after death if they are forgiven by God and their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds. They don't see the need for a complete victory over sin, so they keep depending upon what human nature can do.

These human ideas have permeated Christianity, so that Jesus is given but little room to work for our salvation.

The True Witness denounces the Laodicean spirit in Christianity that claims to be "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). The fundamental reason for this rebuke is that this mindset either overstates the work of Jesus at the cross of Calvary, thinking that salvation grants complete forgiveness of sins and requires no turning away from sin—or, on the other hand, thinking that we are sufficient to be righteous and



need not a complete dependence on the Saviour. Nearly the whole world feels no need of a Saviour. And when they get in really deep trouble, they think that there is no one to save them, so every 40 seconds, someone commits suicide. Everything around us proves that we are in a desperate situation. Is there a Saviour? Do we need a Saviour or not?

FACTS ON WHY WE NEED A SAVIOUR

There are some outstanding biblical facts that we need to have clear in our minds that lead us to recognize our need of a Saviour.

1. The first one is that we "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
2. The second is that we are "carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). Jesus stated: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34).
3. And the third one, is that "sin... dwelleth in" us (Romans 7:17, 20, 21). And just as "the Ethiopian [can't] change his skin, or the leopard his spots..." so neither can we "do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23).
4. And the inevitable fate of this all is that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) unless we be saved.

Satan is always leading us to falsely presume we can solve our guilt through human means. In our experience, we must come to a point of realizing our impossibility. When the apostles were told about such an impossibility, in astonishment they said: "Who then can be saved?" and the divine reply was, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Mark 10:26; Luke 18:26, 27).



In the Bible we are told of a desperate case, "a woman having an issue of blood twelve years . . . had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any" (Luke 8:43). She had spent every resource possible, hoping that human knowledge or power would be

able to help her, till there was no more hope left but one option. That was Jesus. This illustrates our desperate situation with sin. We may try various means, but there is only one way out. It is Jesus.

As sinners, we are likened to a great debtor "which owed . . . ten thousand talents" to "a certain king" and "as he had nothing to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made" (Matthew 18:23–25).

Of course, even selling all that he had was still not enough to pay off such a huge debt. With today's value, that man would owe US$1,400,116x10. This is an exorbitant amount that would require you to live several lives earning a huge salary dedicated only to pay that debt. Thus, Jesus illustrated the impossible cost of our sinful debt before our King.

Realizing his utterly hopeless inability to pay it off, "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all" (Matthew 18:26).

He still was insisting that he would do everything to pay it all, but there was nothing that he could have done to pay it off. There was one only option. Jesus said, "Then the lord of that servant ***was moved with compassion***, and loosed him, and ***forgave*** him the debt" (Matthew 18:27).

"The pardon granted by this king represents a divine forgiveness of all sin. Christ is represented by the king, who, moved with compassion, forgave the debt of his servant. Man was under the condemnation of the broken law. He could not save himself, and for this reason Christ came to this world, clothed His divinity with humanity, and gave His life, the just for the unjust. He gave Himself for our sins, and to every soul He freely offers the blood-bought pardon. 'With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.' Psalm 130:7."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 244.

The apostle Paul explains that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **being justified freely by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that **he might be just**, and **the justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:23–26).

It was an immeasurable price to pay for each and every one of us. Many people "trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches", and many of us are led to trust in "our righteousnesses" which the Lord holds "as filthy rags." Through king David, God says: "none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" "For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever" (Psalm 49:6–8; Isaiah 64:6).

Going back to the parable, we



see that no human promises could avail. "When the debtor pleaded with his Lord for mercy, he had no true sense of the greatness of his debt. He did not realize his helplessness. He hoped to deliver himself. . . . So there are many who hope by their own works to merit God's favor. They do not realize their helplessness. They do not accept the grace of God as a free gift but are trying to build themselves up in self-righteousness."—Ibid., p. 245.

"It is impossible for man to save himself. He may deceive himself regarding this matter, but he cannot save himself."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 1, p. 331.

Every human being, who through the working of the Holy Ghost, comes to a turning point when he/she "sees the enormity of sin," discovering themselves as they "really are" at that instance should "not give up to despair. It was sinners that Christ came to save."—*Steps to Christ,* p. 35.

THE ULTIMATE SAVIOUR

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). And He promises, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Whenever Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, right away you should look up to your Redeemer and take hold of the assurance that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Jesus tells us all: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).

The most startling thing is that He is the King referred to in His parable of the debtors. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). He is "the Word [that] was made flesh" (John 1:14). He is the "the Lamb" offered for our ramson and "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Revelation 17:14).

He is the very one that paid your ranson and mine. He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). You will experience that "the closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in

broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature."—Ibid., p. 64.

But we need not falter nor be discouraged. As we perceive our own sinfulness, together with the apostle Paul, we can surrender, crying out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24).

THE ONLY SURE OPTION

It is believed that Siddhartha Gautama (known as Buddha) died in Kushinagar, his body was cremated, and his remains were divided among many tribes of followers. He was powerless to prove that he could save even himself.

Regarding Krishna, it is said that "a huntsman, mistaking him for a deer, shot him . . . killing him." It was centuries later, by the 5th century BC, that he "was deified" by his followers. There is no hope for salvation with him.—*Encyclopaedia Brittanica,* article on Krishna.

Regarding Muhammad, he died in Medina in A.D. 632. His remains are resting at the Green Dome, in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Hopes for salvation die together with him.

The Holy Scriptures declares, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We are assured that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16–18).

Though He died giving his life to save all, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, rose again from the grave and declared: "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). Not only that—He even ascended to Heaven. (Acts 1:9.)

Through John the Revelator, Christ tells us, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:17, 18).

Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" Hebrews 5:9. Together with the apostle Paul we "thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25) and Saviour.

Beloved friend, I assure you that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

You not only need a saviour—you have a Saviour! May God bless you all.



We Need an ANCHOR in Decision-Making

by Caleb Moreno

THE LIBERATING POWER OF TRUTH

In John 8:32, Jesus makes a profound declaration: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This statement is not just a spiritual insight but a practical guide for life. Bible truth, as revealed in the scriptures, is a powerful tool that can shape our decisions and protect us from making poor choices. In a world filled with uncertainty and deception, knowing the truth is essential for making decisions that honor God, leading to a life of fulfillment and peace.

THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL TRUTH IN DECISION-MAKING

The truth of the Bible serves as the compass that guides us through the complexities of life. It provides a framework for making good decisions that align with the will of God for you. Let's explore how knowing the truth helps to influence our decision-making process for the right:

Clarity in confusion:

Life often presents us with situations that are confusing or morally ambiguous. In such



instances, the truth acts as a beacon of light, providing clarity and direction. Psalm 119:105 beautifully captures this idea: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The Bible offers clear guidance on issues of morality, ethics, and behavior, helping us to navigate complex situations with confidence. For example, when faced with a decision that involves a moral dilemma, such as whether to compromise one's integrity for personal gain, the Bible reminds us of the importance of honesty and righteousness (Proverbs 12:22).

Protection against deception: One of the greatest challenges in decision-making is the risk of being deceived—either by others or by our own desires. The world is full of misleading influences, from false teachings to societal pressures that contradict the values of the scriptures. Jesus warned His followers about the dangers of deception in Matthew 24:4, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you." By grounding ourselves in the truth of God's Word, we develop discernment, enabling us to distinguish between



what is true and what is false. This discernment protects us from making decisions based on lies or half-truths that could lead to unfortunate outcomes.

Establishing moral integrity: The making of good decisions is closely tied to moral integrity. The truth in God's Word provides a consistent moral framework that guides our choices, ensuring that we act with honesty, justice, and love. Proverbs 11:3 highlights this connection: "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." When we make decisions based on the knowledge we have of the scriptures, we are more likely to act in ways that reflect God's character and lead to outcomes that are just and righteous.

Empowerment for right action: Knowing the truth is not just about avoiding bad decisions; it's also about empowering us to take the right actions, even when they may be difficult to do. Biblical truth gives us the courage to stand firm in our convictions and make decisions that honor God, even if they go against popular opinion or personal wants. For instance, the story of Daniel refusing the king's food in Daniel 1:8 illustrates how knowing the truth enables us to make decisions that are faithful to God, even when faced with pressure to conform to worldly standards. Daniel's decision ultimately led to God's favor and protection, demonstrating the positive outcomes of adhering to the truth.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD AND BAD DECISION-MAKING

Throughout the Bible, there are examples of individuals who made decisions based on Bible truth and those who did not. These stories provide valuable lessons on the consequences of embracing or ignoring God's truth in our decision-making.

Joseph: A model to follow – Joseph, the son of Jacob, is an exemplary figure in

the Bible who consistently made decisions based on his faith in God and adherence to the truth he had learned. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph remained faithful to God and made decisions that reflected his integrity and trust in God's plan. One of the most notable examples is when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him. Joseph refused her advances, saying, "How . . . can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). His decision to flee from sin, guided by his commitment to God's Word, saved him from falling into moral failure. Although he faced unjust imprisonment as a result, God ultimately elevated Joseph to a position of great power in Egypt, where he was able to save many lives during a seven-year famine. Joseph's story illustrates how making decisions based on the Word of God can lead to long-term blessings, even if it involves short-term hardship.

King David: The consequences of ignoring truth

– David, known as a man after God's own heart, made many decisions that honored God throughout his life. However, his decision to commit adultery with Bathsheba and arrange the death of her husband, Uriah, serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of ignoring the Word of the Lord. David's actions were a direct violation of God's commandments (Exodus



20:13, 14), and they led to a series of tragic events, including the death of the child born to Bathsheba, followed by ongoing strife within David's family (2 Samuel 12:10–12). Although David repented and was forgiven by God, the consequences of his decisions affected him and his family for the rest of his life. This example highlights the dangers of making decisions that contradict the Bible and the enduring impact of such choices.

Esther: A courageous decision based on truth

– Queen Esther provides a powerful example of making a courageous decision based on truth, even at great personal risk. When the Jewish people were threatened with annihilation due to a decree orchestrated by Haman, Esther was faced with a choice: either remain silent and protect her position as queen or risk her life by approaching the king to plead for her people. Guided by her faith and understanding of God's Word, Esther chose to act. She



declared, "I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16, NKJV). Esther's decision, rooted in her commitment to God and her love for her people, resulted in the salvation of the Jews and the downfall of their enemies. Her story demonstrates how making decisions based on faithfulness to God can lead to deliverance and blessing for others.

Judas Iscariot: The tragic result of rejecting truth

– Judas' decision to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver is one of the most tragic examples of ignoring and rejecting the truth. Despite being one of Jesus' disciples and witnessing His teachings and miracles firsthand, Judas allowed greed and disillusionment to cloud his judgment. His decision to betray the Son of God led to his own despair and suicide (Matthew 27:3-5). Judas's story is a sobering reminder of the devastating consequences that can result from rejecting the truth and making decisions based on selfish or misguided motives.

Joshua: trusting in God's command

– Joshua, Moses' successor, made a key decision to trust in God's plan even when it seemed unconventional. When the Israelites were commanded to march around the walls of Jericho for seven days (Joshua 6:1–20), Joshua followed through despite the seemingly impractical nature of the command. His obedience led to the miraculous collapse of Jericho's walls, granting victory to Israel. Joshua's choice shows the blessing of unwavering faith and obedience to God's commands, even when they don't align with human logic or intuition.

The apostle Peter

– Peter's denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:69–75) serves as an example of fear-driven decision-making. When faced with the possibility of arrest, three times Peter denied that he knew Jesus. Although he later repented, his initial decisions were based on fear rather than faith. This incident shows how fear can lead us to make decisions that contradict our values, but

also highlights the possibility of redemption and forgiveness when we return to God.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REVEALING AND APPLYING THE TRUTH

While the Bible is the ultimate source of truth, the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding us to understand and apply this truth is equally crucial. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth, saying, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding of Scripture, convicts us of sin, and empowers us to live according to God's will.

When we are faced with decisions of any kind, it is the Holy Spirit who helps us discern the truth in a world full of noise and confusion. By cultivating a close relationship with God through prayer, meditation on Scripture, and obedience to His Word, we can receive divine wisdom that goes beyond human understanding. This spiritual discernment is essential for making decisions that not only avoid trouble but also lead us into the fullness of life that God intends for us.

In addition to personal discernment, the Holy Spirit also works through the counsel of wise and godly people in our lives. Proverbs 15:22 reminds us, "Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established" (NKJV). Seeking the advice of mature believers who are grounded in the truth can provide additional insight and confirmation when making decisions.

CONCLUSION: EMBRACING THE TRUTH WHOLEHEARTEDLY

In a world where we are constantly faced with choices, some of which have far-reaching consequences, it is essential to be anchored in the Word of God. Proverbs 3:5, 6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." James 1:5 adds, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (NKJV). Furthermore, Jeremiah 29:11 states, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (NKJV). By applying all of this, we can navigate the complexities of life with wisdom, avoid the pitfalls of poor decisions, and experience the freedom and peace that come from living in alignment with God's will. As we internalize these Bible truths to our daily lives, we are not only safeguarded from trouble but are also empowered to make decisions that honor God and contribute to a life of purpose and blessing.



We Need MEN AND WOMEN Who Cannot be Bought and Sold

by Cosmin Paulescu

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by moral relativism, spiritual apathy, and the constant pressure to conform, there is an urgent need for men and women of unshakeable faith. Our world desperately requires believers who cannot be bought or sold—individuals who stand firm when tempted to compromise their convictions or dilute the truth of the gospel. This article explores the biblical mandate for unwavering faith, drawing insights from Scripture and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy to inspire and equip believers to maintain their integrity in the face of opposition.

THE BIBLICAL CALL TO STAND FIRM

The Bible consistently exhorts believers to stand firm in their faith, resisting the temptation to compromise or waver in their commitment to God's truth. This call to steadfastness is not merely a suggestion but a fundamental aspect of the Christian walk.

The scriptural foundation

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

This verse encapsulates the essence of unwavering faith. Paul urges believers to remain immovable in their convictions, fully dedicated to God's work. The assurance that such labor is not in vain provides motivation for perseverance.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men [i.e., be courageous], be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Here, Paul combines the call to stand firm with the need for vigilance, courage, and strength. This holistic approach underscores that maintaining integrity requires both steadfastness and active resistance against opposing forces.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14).

In the context of spiritual warfare, Paul emphasizes the importance of standing firm, equipped with truth and righteousness. This imagery highlights that uncompromising faith is both a defensive and offensive posture in the believer's life.



Further emphasized in the Spirit of Prophecy

"We are to stand firm as a rock to the principles of the Word of God, remembering that God is with us to give us strength to meet each new experience. Let us ever maintain in our lives the principles of righteousness, that we may go forward from strength to strength in the name of the Lord. We are to hold as very sacred the faith that has been substantiated by the instruction and approval of the Spirit of God from our earliest experience until the present time. We are to cherish as very precious the work that the Lord has been carrying forward through His commandment-keeping people, and which, through the power of His grace, will grow stronger and more efficient as time advances. The enemy is seeking to becloud the discernment of God's people, and to weaken their efficiency, but if they will labor as the Spirit of God shall direct, He will open doors of opportunity before them for the work of building up the old waste places. Their experience will be one of constant growth, until the Lord shall descend from heaven with power and great glory to set His seal of final triumph upon His faithful ones."—*Selected Messages,* bk. 2, p. 407.

The Lord's messenger emphasizes that standing firm is not merely a human endeavour, but one empowered by God's strength. This steadfastness is linked to a progressive spiritual growth, suggesting that to maintain integrity leads to increased spiritual vitality.

THE NEED FOR INCORRUPTIBLE CHARACTER



The biblical perspective on integrity

The Bible places a high premium on integrity and incorruptible character. Proverbs 10:9 states, "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known." This verse underscores the safety and assurance that comes from maintaining an upright character.

Jesus Himself emphasized the importance of integrity in the Sermon on the Mount: "Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' Anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:37, NKJV). This teaching calls for straightforward honesty and reliability in one's words and actions.



Further emphasized in the Spirit of Prophecy

The inspired writings for our day contain numerous exhortations regarding the development of incorruptible character. One of the most famous quotes on this topic states:

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."—*Education,* p. 57.

This powerful statement encapsulates the essence of incorruptible character. It calls for individuals who prioritize truth and righteousness above personal gain or social approval. These words challenge believers to cultivate a deep-seated commitment to integrity that remains unshaken by external pressures or potential consequences.

RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO COMPROMISE



Biblical warnings against compromise

Scripture contains numerous warnings against compromising one's faith or values. In Revelation 3:15-16, Jesus admonishes the church in Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

This stern rebuke highlights the danger of spiritual compromise and half-hearted commitment. It serves as a powerful reminder that God desires wholehearted devotion rather than a watered-down faith.

The apostle James also warns against doublemindedness and instability: "Ask in faith, nothing wavering [not doubting]. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6–8).



Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

We frequently read about the dangers of compromise and the importance of maintaining pure faith. The caution is made: There is no safety in placing confidence in human wisdom or strength." *Manuscript Releases,* vol. 17, p. 162.

This vivid imagery compares worldly influence with a toxic atmosphere, emphasizing the need for vigilance in protecting one's

spiritual health. These words underscore the subtle yet pervasive nature of compromising influences.

"We are not to cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth: we should scorn concealment. Unfurl your colors to meet the cause of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise. In your opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of waverings: the world has a right to know what to expect of us."—*Evangelism,* p. 179.

This exhortation calls for boldness and transparency in faith, rejecting any form of compromise or concealment of beliefs.

DEVELOPING UNWAVERING FAITH

Biblical principles for strengthening faith

The Bible offers guidance on how to develop and maintain unwavering faith:

- **Regular study of God's Word:** "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).
- **Continual prayer:** "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- **Fellowship with other believers:** "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
- **Putting faith into action:** "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).

Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

Practical advice is provided for cultivating unwavering faith:

"Faith in God's word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan's power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ."—*Messages to Young People,* p. 61.

Emphasis is made on the importance of both studying and applying God's word, viewing faith as a practical shield against temptation and compromise.

"The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin;



and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"—Steps to Christ, p. 94.

This powerful metaphor of prayer as a key to heaven's storehouse underscores its critical role in maintaining strong, unwavering faith.

THE COST OF UNCOMPROMISING FAITH



Biblical examples of costly faithfulness

Scripture is replete with examples of individuals who paid a high price for their unwavering faith:

a) Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6)
b) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)
c) Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7)
d) Paul's numerous persecutions (2 Corinthians 11:23–28)

These accounts serve as powerful reminders that maintaining integrity often comes at a cost. Yet, they also demonstrate God's faithfulness in sustaining His people through trials.



Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

We need to acknowledge the challenges of maintaining uncompromising faith while emphasizing its ultimate reward:

"The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die daily.' 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his nature."—*The Ministry of Healing,* p. 452.

This passage highlights the ongoing nature of the struggle against compromise, presenting it as a daily choice to prioritize God's will over personal inclinations.

THE IMPACT OF UNCOMPROMISING BELIEVERS



A biblical perspective on influence

Scripture teaches that unwavering believers can have a profound impact on the world around them:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." (Matthew 5:13, 14).

This passage emphasizes the preserving and illuminating influence of faithful believers on society.

Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

There is extensive light regarding the power of a consistent Christian witness:

"The world will be convinced, not by what the pulpit teaches, but by what the church lives. The minister in the desk announces the theory of the gospel; the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power."—*Testimonies to the Church,* vol. 7, p. 16.

This statement underscores the importance of lived faith, suggesting that the most powerful witness is a life of unwavering integrity.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR MAINTAINING INTEGRITY

Biblical guidance for practical application

The Bible offers practical advice for maintaining integrity in daily life:

- **Guard your heart:** "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).
- **Be accountable:** "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).
- **Renew your mind:** "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

Practical counsel is provided for maintaining integrity in everyday situations:

"The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 203.

This passage emphasizes the importance of a vibrant prayer life in maintaining spiritual integrity.



THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN UPHOLDING INTEGRITY

Biblical teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit

Scripture teaches that the Holy



Spirit plays a crucial role in enabling believers to maintain their integrity:

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

This verse highlights the Holy Spirit's role in teaching and reminding believers of God's truth, which is essential for maintaining unwavering faith.

Further emphasis in the Spirit of Prophecy

How important it is to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance:

"We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, unseen by human eyes... He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind"—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 299.

This statement underscores the personal nature of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life, providing constant support and guidance.

CONCLUSION

The call for men and women who cannot be bought or sold—individuals who stand firm when tempted to compromise their faith—is as urgent today as it has ever been. Through the teachings of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, we are reminded of the critical importance of maintaining unwavering integrity in our Christian walk.

As we face the challenges and temptations of our time, may we draw strength from God's word, rely on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and commit ourselves to being the kind of believers who stand firm in their convictions. By doing so, we not only secure our own spiritual well-being but also become powerful witnesses to a world in desperate need of authentic, transformative faith.

Let us heed the words of the apostle Paul: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). In standing firm, we honor God, strengthen our faith, and shine as beacons of hope in a compromising world.

We Need an ARMY of YOUTH



By Adrian Barnea

Greetings to all with grace and peace, and may God's blessings be with each of you—and when you read this article may your heart be full of peace and hope because our God is wonderful and wants to save every one of us!

The topic of this article has great significance for me personally. To work with young people is delightful for me, and I try to do everything possible to be able to see that in our Church, young people are involved in programs and in all church activities. When offered to write on this topic among others on a brief list, I did not need to think twice about choosing this one. Why? Because, perhaps like you, I, too, am the product of a struggle resulting from other people trying to convince me to be part of this wonderful army of young people seeking to take God's message as far and wide as possible.

It is very important to know where to start and when to start—but for all this you need to be guided by the word of God. The Bible identifies the young as being strong. The apostle Paul says, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). Yes, I also write to you, young people, because you are strong—and that's why God needs the most beautiful army, the army of the young. But how can we be part of this team? Let me tell you a real story. Actually, it's my own.

I was born in Romania, in a place far away from the big cities of the country, I could say, in a secluded, pleasant place where nature was closer to us and God was just a step away. In the past, at the time when we were growing up, we had to go on to school to make a future and a profession. I dreamed of being a car mechanic, then I wanted to be a history teacher. After which I thought of being a computer scientist, accountant or pharmacist, so like any other young person I started

on a path to obtain knowledge and growth. I invested in my education and wanted to become the best at what I was doing. As time passed, I reached some of the proposed targets and one day I end up employed in a large, multinational company and slowly become one of the best in the area of sales. During this time I also managed to finish missionary school, a school that I thought helped me personally, but I figured I would never choose to work in that aspect of the church.

Everything was perfect; the colleagues at my job were wonderful, and my regional manager was most helpful and did not give me any problems. I was growing, I was educating the stores and I wanted to become the best in that region. I was attending training classes, spending hours to learn the new sales offers, strategies and everything that was needed. I was a fulfilled young man.

Just at the moment when it seemed that everything was under control, a pastor contacted me to ask me if I would like to officially enter the work of the ministry and help God's church. I didn't even want to hear it—answering that I don't have time and I don't want to. Some time passed, and that pastor talked to me again and insisted louder, this time telling me:

"Please think about what answer you give me, because you should think of this as being between you and God, considering that God is asking you and you have to answer Him." Then I was silent.

A week passed while I kept thinking about what to do and then I decided to work for God. After giving this official answer, not longer afterwards I had an accident on the road. Someone in another car came from the opposite direction and hit me head-on—yet I got out of the car without a single scratch. Satan was not happy; he was not happy with my choice; he wanted to destroy me. Ever since I was born he wanted to do this, but God had and still has a plan for me!

So I continued to work for God, going through many trials, but God was on my side. I visited and worked for the church in different countries, seeing the enormous need for young people to be in the work. The Church needs young people for the mission now more than ever. It needs you, dear young people. Don't go anywhere, stay here, encourage one another to form a strong army in which God's name will be glorified.

What has the Son of God done for you, dear young person? He left comfort, heavenly places for you to offer salvation and eternal life. I know that maybe you think that you are busy, that you don't have time and that you shouldn't do anything for the church—but that the church should do everything for you. Aren't you still waiting for God to do everything for you and you not do anything for God? Maybe you have never

put God to the test; maybe you have never taken the time to stop and talk to Him, saying: "God, I'm here, I need your help! You know my life, you know the struggles I have and you know I don't want to leave You; You know I want to do something great for You, but I feel like I have no strength, I feel so weak; who am I?"

Never forget that you as a young person are a force for God. You are His right hand in His great work, God needs you as you are, even with your problems and defects; He receives you and is ready to transform you and mold you to His liking. Let God make this transformation in your life and then you will be able to help other young people to be transformed. What God does for you today will change others tomorrow, because you as a young person have a strong influence in your area and then you will do nothing but help others to know Jesus and to talk about Jesus.

My dear, Jesus transforms, Jesus changes, let yourself be changed by Him, and He will transform you into His best soldier. . . . Look at what the inspired writer says in the following lines and I want these thoughts here to motivate you. Let's read them together:

"The Lord has appointed the youth to be his helping hand."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 7, p. 64.

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming



Saviour might be carried to the whole world!"—*Education,* p. 271.

"The youth have been bought with an infinite price, even the blood of the Son of God. Consider the sacrifice of the Father in permitting his Son to make this sacrifice. Consider what Christ gave up when he left the courts of heaven and the royal throne to give his life a daily sacrifice for men. He suffered reproach and abuse. He bore all the insult and mockery that wicked men could heap upon him. And when his earthly ministry was accomplished, he suffered the death of the cross. Consider his sufferings on the cross,—the nails driven into his hands and feet, the derision and abuse from those he came to save, the hiding of his Father's face. But it was by all this that Christ made it possible for all who will to have the life that measures with the life of God."—*The Youth's Instructor,* November 21, 1911.

"Let the youth remember that here they are to build characters for eternity, and that God requires

them to do their best. Let those older in experience watch over the younger ones; and when they see them tempted, take them aside, and pray with them and for them. The Lord would have us recognize the great sacrifice of Christ for us by showing an interest in the salvation of those He came to save. If the youth will seek Christ, He will make their efforts effectual.—Ibid.

"In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellowmen."—*Gospel Workers,* p. 67.

"God wants the youth to become men of earnest mind, to be prepared for action in His noble work, and fitted to bear responsibilities. God calls for young men with hearts uncorrupted, strong and brave, and determined to fight manfully in the struggle before them, that they may glorify God and bless humanity. If the youth would but make the Bible their study, would but calm their impetuous desires, and listen to the voice of their Creator and Redeemer, they would not only be at peace with God, but would find themselves ennobled and elevated. It will be for your eternal interest, my young friend, to give heed to the instructions in the Word of God, for they are of inestimable importance."—*Messages to Young People,* p. 21.

"In this closing work of the gospel there is a vast field to be occupied; and, more than ever before, the work is to enlist helpers from the common people. Both the youth and those older in years will be called from the field, from the vineyard, and from the workshop, and sent forth by the Master to give His message.



Many of these have had little opportunity for education; but Christ sees in them qualifications that will enable them to fulfill His purpose. If they put their hearts into the work, and continue to be learners, He will fit them to labor for Him."—*Education,* pp. 269, 270.

"Let not the youth be ignored; let them share in the labor and responsibility. Let them feel that they have a part to act in helping and blessing others. Even the children should be taught to do little errands of love and mercy for those less fortunate than themselves."—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 6, p. 435.

There are so many proofs that God needs you, dear young people! He is waiting for you at every moment. Let's have a personal experience with God; let's see how God works, let's wait for His answer in silence and He will surely answer. He will never leave you alone. He asks you today: "Do you want to be part of My team?"

What a special privilege it is to be part of God's team! This opportunity should never be missed. Invest in yourself, go to missionary schools, open your hearts to be educated and let yourself be guided by God that He may work through you. And at the end, He will be ready to give you that crown that will never fade. Because you, as young people, will have defeated the evil one, offered hope and encouragement to the fallen, helped those who no longer understood where they should go. You were a light for the world.

"Hundreds of young men should have been preparing to act a part in the work of scattering the seeds of truth beside all waters. We want men who will push the triumphs of the cross; men who will persevere under discouragements and privations; who will have the zeal and resolution and faith that are indispensable in the missionary field."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students,* p. 515.

We need you, we know that together we can make the best team and in the end we can build wonderful experiences with God. These experiences will be unforgettable, because when we are in the kingdom of heaven, we will remember with joy all the progress we have made. Choose heaven, choose mission, choose salvation—and God will give you all these things for FREE!

Dear young person, we love and appreciate you as you are; we know that you have special talents and you are very energetic. Maybe you play an instrument, or you are a good computer scientist, a good doctor, or a good professor. We need you, because the profession you have is the most appropriate to use here in the Church for the growth and development of the work.

Don't forget that you are very special and God is with you. We need you now more than ever!

God bless you!





Youth and Family Camp in Tocantins, Brazil

by Flávia Lethícia Silva do Nascimento



The first Youth and Family Camp of the CAMIT (Tocantins Mission Field) took place in Araguaína, Tocantins, bringing together participants from various regions of Brazil. The event featured inspiring messages from Brother Adrian Finaru, Youth Director of the General Conference, and special musical presentations by the ARS Nova Orchestra from Pará and the Súplice Quartet.

The central theme of the camp was "Transformed," focusing on how individuals can experience personal transformation through Jesus. Throughout the event, Bro. Finaru shared his own powerful story of transformation, encouraging attendees to open their hearts to God.

On Sabbath, there were numerous moments of worship and praise, with the evening being dedicated to fun and fellowship for the youth, filled with games and activities. On the final day, Bro. Finaru made a heartfelt appeal for people to turn to God and allow themselves to be transformed by His love.

The natural setting of the camp, featuring a stream and recreational areas, made it an attractive and peaceful environment for all the participants.

It was an event where God's presence was felt, and we are deeply grateful for the opportunity to have hosted such a meaningful experience.



by Oliwia Zajac

International Youth Convention in Poland

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

Is it possible to experience heaven already here on earth? And if so, in what ways? This summer, young people from around the world had the opportunity to explore the answers to these questions. The International Youth Convention 2024 took place in southern Poland in the heart of the Silesian Beskids in a beautiful, picturesque mountain town called Wisla. The location of the hotels and the rented hall allowed participants to enjoy the beauty of God's creation every day. We were surrounded not only by mountains, but also by meadows and forests—and a river flowed nearby. Isolation from the city center helped us better focus on the conference theme "Heaven on Earth."

Among the more than 340 participants, there were young people from 34 different countries. We are grateful to God for each person who was able to attend the conference and study the Word of God with us. We know that many people had to travel a long distance, and to sacrifice their money and free time to participate in the program, so we are sure that with God's help all this effort will be rewarded—and the blessings of participating in this event will be long-lasting. We are also grateful for the dedication of our sisters from Poland and Ukraine, who cooked delicious meals for us throughout the week.

Our main speakers were Brother Pastor Liviu Tudoroiu, John Baer and Adrian Finaru. Each of them presented in a different way how heaven on earth can be an experience for every one of us. We studied the issue in terms of prophecy, history, health and our daily lives. Through this we discovered the way how to represent Jesus in this earthly life. During the Q&A (Questions and Answers) session, conference participants also had the





opportunity to learn the answers to their questions about Christian living, how to prepare for baptism or how to start a relationship. It was a very interesting and inspiring time.

Both morning and evening services were led by young people coming from different countries and continents. However, each of these young people had in common the desire to share the word of God and seek ways to become more like Christ. It was a moment in which the youth could actively participate in the program.

EXCURSIONS

This was the first time such a conference was held in Poland, and it was an opportunity for many people to visit the country and learn about its culture and history. On Wednesday, July 31, there was a trip to Auschwithz-Birkenau and to Krakow. Auschwitz has gone down in history as hell on earth. It is a museum commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust and the mass extermination of other peoples during World War II by the Third Reich. Visiting the largest German Nazi concentration camp could help many young people realize how terrible and cruel the world is when it lacks principles based on love for God and our neighbor. This is because all the rules in the camp were a "reversed decalogue." This sad history lesson could make us realize how grateful to God we can be for our lives and that we should take advantage of the time of peace when we can share and keep our faith with others without danger.

Later in the day, conference participants had the opportunity to visit the former capital of Poland, Krakow. On the way back, our bus drivers asked many spiritual questions about the conference as well as about our denomination. It was another opportunity God gave us to tell about our church and to share the Gospel.

A trip to the mountains took place on Friday, August 2. The youth once again had a chance to get to know each other better, to integrate and have edifying conversations in nature. The beauty of God's creation and the number of young people ready to serve God were extremely

inspiring and made many people better understand what Heaven on Earth means and how this heavenly atmosphere can positively affect our lives.

MUSIC

Each day the platform was filled with instrumentalists who accompanied the songs presented by the congregation.

In many ways it was one of the most musical youth conferences in Europe in recent years. In just a few days we were able to form a string orchestra, a brass orchestra and a choir. Each day, with their singing and playing of instruments, various international groups, duos and ensembles praised God and brought our hearts closer to Him. It is worth mentioning that one of these groups was the female vocal ensemble from Moldova known as Re-Voice, which several times graced the time of lectures and services with its singing.

We decided that we wanted to share the music performed with people outside the church who live in this region of Poland. On Sabbath afternoon we organized a concert to which a great number of visitors came. It was a wonderful time, full of blessings because we were able to share the gospel and our faith with others through music. Among the performers was the international choir prepared by Brother Isaac Terceros. The songs sung by the choir, "People Need the Lord" and "By Faith," are available for viewing on the Church's Polish YouTube channel (Sdarm Poland) and are still a wonderful tool in reaching out to people from other religious communities in Poland.

AN INSPIRING TIME

We believe that every moment spent in the lectures and other parts of the program brought people closer to our Heavenly Father and inspired them to continue creating Heaven here on Earth. We are also glad that this convention strengthened the church in Poland and helped spread the gospel in this part of the world.

We encourage all young people to attend more International Youth Conventions that will take place in other countries in the future. May God bless us and help us to develop His work!









THE TIME HAS COME!

by Henrique Rios Barbosa

A special congress mobilizes young people and teenagers in Brazil for a real encounter with Jesus





The lives of each of us are guided by decisions. Every day our brain leads us to make decisions, whether simple or complex. According to recent studies and research, we make around 35,000 decisions per day. And, it was with decision and delivery in mind that the youth congress "The Time Has Come" took place. A special encounter with God focused on surrender to God and purpose.

The event took place on July 12–14 and was held at the headquarters of União Sul Brasileira, in the city of Itú, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, in Brazil. The meeting was attended by more than 300 people, including young people and teenagers, as well as choirs and musical ensembles.

The entire program was planned and managed so that young people had a unique and special experience. The hymns sung, the messages presented and the interactions planned had one objective, to bring Jesus to the hearts of those who were there. In addition, the entire program was broadcast on the TV channel *Conectados com Deus* on YouTube. More than 5,000 people were reached over the 3 days of the event.

The spiritual messages were under the care of General Conference Youth Director, Pastor Adrian Finaru, who brought very suitable content for everyone.

THE CONGRESS

The opening of the event took place on Friday (12/07) with a very strong theme, "The Time Has Come to Accept the Call." At the beginning of the congress, Pastor Adrian brought an intentional proposal for decision and delivery. There, at the opening it was clear what the tone of the entire program would be.

On Sabbath, the messages continued with great strength, and the action of God's Holy Spirit was evident. The theme chosen was "The Time Has Come to Leave Everything for Jesus." On Sabbath morning, Pastor Adrian invited everyone to leave everything for

God. Appealing to their hearts, he invited young people to come forward and demonstrate their surrender. The moment was remarkable and there was almost no space to fit everybody in the front, as many felt the desire to surrender to Christ.

One of the participants in the event, young João Vitor Cardoso, reported that this moment was very important in his life:

"Pastor Adrian's appeal touched me deeply. God was there, Jesus made an invitation to deliver to everyone that morning. The atmosphere of the environment was unique and I am sure that this was the moving of the Holy Spirit of God," commented João Vitor with deep emotion.

According to João, the event also marked his life and especially his faith. "It was my first youth conference. With every message, every song, every moment I could see God working in hearts. Furthermore, I felt that Jesus is doing a powerful work in everyone's lives," he says.

In the afternoon, the event promoted a different dynamic. With many musical appearances, Sabbath afternoon became a delight. In addition, the program included moments of chat and an interview with pastor Adrian Finaru. Towards the end of the Sabbath, the pastor once again brought an impactful message: "The Time Has Come to Grow Closer to Jesus."

The young people in attendance said: "Today we had an extraordinary Sabbath!"

The last day of the congress was also marked by unforgettable moments. At the beginning of Sunday's program, there was opportunity for young people to express their thoughts and ideas in a program titled *Fala Jovem*, "Speak, Youth!"

Soon after, Pastor Adrian once again brought a profound message: "The Time Has Come to Impact the World for Jesus."

The final message was touching and directed by God; everyone felt that the work of the Holy Spirit was guiding. Young people from various parts of Brazil came together in a unique and decisive commitment. It was there that many understood that the time had come to be together with Jesus once and for all.

The Youth Congress ended with the sound of praises and prayer and with a unique certainty in everyone's hearts: Jesus was present there.

Editor Adrian Finaru, **Layout** Bethany Muresan.
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There Rings a Melody, #51

In Times Like These

by Ruth Caye Jones

In times like these you need a Savior
In times like these you need an anchor
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One
This Rock is Jesus, the only One
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these you need the Bible
In times like these, O be not idle
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One
This Rock is Jesus, the only One
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these I have a Savior
In times like these I have an anchor
I'm very sure, I'm very sure
My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One
This Rock is Jesus, the only One
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!