



Lesson 135

Exploring the Vows

- **Why do we have vows?**
 - Purpose of the vows
- **Vow 24**
 - What is vow 24 about?
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- **Vow 17**
 - What is vow 17 about?
 - Narcotics in medication
 - Can you drink coffee?

If we wanted one document that lays out much of this Movement's beliefs, it would be our baptismal vows. In this lesson we will study two of these vows and view them through the knowledge that we have today.

Why do we have vows?

Purpose of the vows

One of the things that we learned in this Movement is that we are a new church that comes out of Laodicea, the stone that comes out of the Mountain in Daniel 2. This is one of the reasons that we started baptizing members and why we have baptismal vows. "The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we are buried in the likeness of Christ's death and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ. Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation. Publicly he has declared that he will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. He is no longer to live a careless, indifferent life. He has made a covenant with God. He has died to the world. He is to live to the Lord, to use for Him all his entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that he bears God's signature, that he is a subject of Christ's kingdom, a partaker of the divine nature. He is to surrender to God all that he is and all that he has, employing all his gifts to His name's glory." *6T 98.3.*

Vow 24

What is vow 24 about?

Vow 24 covers three different points. September 11, 2001 (9/11), when the Revelation 18 angel comes down and begins the judgment of the living and the latter rain began to sprinkle. The third woe (Islam) arrived in history. These come from Revelation 7, 9, 18, Ezekiel 9, Acts 3:19-21, and 1 Peter 2:2-10. Those three beliefs were fundamental to the Movement because they were connected to the waymark and what we believed happened at that waymark. For example, the third woe. We've spoken about it in previous lessons; the first two woes were the Ottoman empire, or Islam, therefore we know that the third woe is also Islam. In the past, this Movement believed that according to the Millerite line, the Second angel arrives at the second waymark (the summer of 1844) and 9/11 is the second waymark on the line of the Priests and 144,000, bringing the latter rain. While they did happen, just not at that waymark. These are beliefs that were included in the vows.

When does Revelation 18 angel descend?

Vow 24 states that the Angel of Revelation 18 prophetically descended on September 11, 2001 (9/11), beginning the sealing of the 144,000 and the sprinkling of the latter rain. Since then, this Movement has refined its understanding of the sealing and the latter rain. When we look at the agricultural model and draw a parallel with the line of the 144,000, this becomes more evident. We have the plowing that takes place from 1989 to 2001, the former rain from 2001 to the Sunday Law, the latter rain from the Sunday Law to the Close of Probation, and the Harvest from the Close of Probation to the Second Advent. Based on this model, we understand that the latter rain starts at the Sunday Law, not at 2001 - that's the former rain. What about the sealing? Ellen G. White tells us that based on the Sunday law test, people either receive the mark of the beast (*The Great Controversy* 449.1) or they keep Sabbath and receive the seal of God (*The Great Controversy* 640.1). It is at the Sunday Law where people are sealed if they pass the test, therefore, the sealing begins at the Sunday Law. So, does this mean that vow 24 is incorrect? On a surface level, technically yes, but we have to understand this on a fundamental level. The waymark of 9/11 was discovered because of how closely it resembles the Sunday Law. We call it a harbinger or a sign of the Sunday Law - much of the characteristics we apply to the Sunday Law can also be seen in 2001. Even though it's reading her writings literally, when Ellen G. White spoke of towers falling in *Testimonies* 9 page 11, the Movement initially applied that passage to 9/11 even though she was really speaking about the Sunday Law. So, in the case of vow 24, it's hard to introduce the waymark of 9/11 without also mentioning the Sunday Law, because 9/11's existence almost completely depends on it being a smaller version of the Sunday Law. That's why many of the Sunday Law's attributes were attached to 9/11, because prophetically, they can be.

Vow 17

What is vow 17 about?

Vow number 17 is one of the shorter vows; it is also one of the vows that is talked about more often than not. Vow 17 is about diet and what members of the Movement should not eat. We are not supposed to eat "harmful substances" which are things Ellen G. White talked about: like tobacco, meat, narcotics, and coffee. The basis of this vow is glorifying God through what we eat and/or drink. There are also some verses that are used to support it like "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" and "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 and 10:31. Verses in Proverbs chapter 23 and Isaiah 66 are also referenced, as well as Leviticus chapter 11 (which is about clean and unclean animals). Vow 17 is very straightforward; it is also relevant to everyday life.

Narcotics in medication

As we know, vow 17 focuses on abstaining from eating certain items. These items include narcotics and opiates. Another term often interchanged with these two is the term “opioid”; both opioids and opiates are considered narcotics. The Webster definition of a narcotic is “a drug that in moderate doses dulls the senses, relieves pain, and induces profound sleep but in excessive doses causes stupor, coma, or convulsions.” As we all can agree with, the practice of using narcotics is prohibited in this Movement - but there is an exception. Normally the term “narcotic” carries a bad connotation because people generally agree drugs are bad, but medically it doesn’t carry this connotation. In medicine, narcotics are used to treat acute pain such as from surgery, injuries, or other short term medical problems, as well as being used to treat chronic pain caused from injuries or any other lasting illness. In this case, narcotics are considered safe if they are properly prescribed and used according to the instructions of a medical professional. As a result, this vow shouldn’t be used to stop people from receiving much needed medical assistance because their medicine might technically classify as a narcotic. We are not discouraged from attending to our medical needs.

Can you drink coffee?

Ellen White says that coffee is a narcotic, which is a Greek word that comes from stupor (to make you dull, slow, or stupid). However, most people say that coffee has the opposite effect, that it makes them more awake. Therefore, coffee isn’t a narcotic. She also said that according to the latest research coffee is bad because it is stimulating. Because of Ellen White, coffee is controversial in the Adventist church- because of its caffeine content. According to Science, one gram of caffeine can produce bad side effects or kill you. In some people it can be a lower dosage. It’s also controversial because it is said to be an addictive substance. Coffee is a legume. There are no poisonous legumes after you cook them. So, coffee can’t be poisonous. Does that then mean that we can consume it? Today, we believe that, according to research, coffee is good because it’s stimulating, it’s a polyphenol, makes you live longer, helps with memory and cognitive decline, helps with bowel movements, and it makes you happy. Most of the negative side effects people have with coffee would go away if people drank decaffeinated and drank it earlier in the day. Ellen White wasn’t teaching error; she was teaching the information she had at that time.

In summary:

Why do we have vows?



Baptism

Vow 24



September 11, 2001



Latter Rain

Vow 17



Abstinence



Narcotics



Coffee

Official Youth Prophecy Group website:

youthprophecygroup.org

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us at:

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Find all the YPG lesson videos at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQRL-o2XOq_g

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1st Sunday of the month:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>