



#1 - THE ACID TEST

The Word of God as a Saving Agent

Isaiah 40:8: The word of God stands forever

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

John 5:39-40: The Scriptures give eternal life

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

II Timothy 3:14-17: The word of God has practical value for everyday life

*"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

Visit to Germany

In December of 2002 I held a series of meetings in Karlsruhe, Germany. Nine years later, in December of 2011 I was invited to speak once again at the same church. On this occasion I recognized a gentleman who had attended my meetings nine years earlier.

He came up to me on a **Wednesday evening**, pointed to the program and said: *"When are you going to talk about what happens when people die?"* It just so happens that the pastor, without consulting me, had printed a handbill with the general topics that he thought I was going to touch upon during my visit.

I told the gentleman that I was not going to deal with that specific topic but that I would be glad to visit him and study the subject in the privacy of his home. **Two days later** we paid him a visit.

Visit at His Home

When I did my first series of meetings in 2002 both this man and his wife attended every meeting. At the time she had already belonged to the **Jehovah's Witness** Kingdom Hall for **many years**. The gentleman had also attended the Kingdom Hall with his wife but had never become a member. You might wonder how it was that a Jehovah's Witness would come to an Adventist series of meetings. The reason is that she had had a **falling out** with the Kingdom Hall because of a **bad experience** with one of the **leaders of the church**. Being a Jehovah's Witness at heart, she believed in the **state of the dead much like Adventist do**.

It just so happens that about five months before we visited him, he had **lost** his wife to a **painful bout** with cancer. He had been **married** for **22 years** and was **devastated**. He **cried his eyes out** while we **sat at the kitchen table**.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

He told us that after his devastating loss he had **searched for literature** that would help him deal with his **deep grief**. Through the **recommendation of a friend** he came across the works of **Swiss psychiatrist, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross**.

Kubler Ross' extensive work with terminal patients had led her to write her best-selling book, **On Death and Dying** which was published in **1969**. In this work she proposed the now famous **Five Stages of Grief** as a pattern of adjustment to the reality of death. These five stages of grief are **denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance**. In general, she had discovered that terminal patients experience most of these stages, though in no defined sequence, after being faced with the reality of their **impending death**.

I personally remembered Dr. Kubler-Ross because I once **heard her speak** at a **nursing symposium** while I was in the seminary at **Andrews University** in **1972**.

In the **late 1970s** Kübler-Ross became interested in **out-of-body experiences, spiritualism** and **reincarnation**. As a result she began attempting to **contact the dead**. She also came to believe that one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity was reincarnation.

This **72 year old gentleman** described how, as a result of reading Kubler-Ross, he had come to believe that dead people go through a **dark tunnel at the moment of death** and come out on the other side into a **glorious realm of light** where they experience **an indescribable feeling of peace and love**. He also told us that his friend had told him that he had seen this man's dead wife and had talked with her. According to his friend she had the **same physical appearance** and the **same voice** that she was in a better place and that she remembered the good times that she had spent with her husband during her earthly existence.

Our Response

Obviously, we had our work **cut out for us**. I asked him:

“More than anything in the world you would want to see your wife and know that she is happy, right?”

With tears in his eyes he immediately answered “Yes”.

Then I showed him in the Bible God’s truth that if man sinned he would die. We showed him how Satan contradicted God by saying that man would not die. I told him about the witch of Endor experience and how Satan can transform himself into an angel of light and can disguise himself in the form of our departed relatives and friends.

A Hypothetical Case

Then I presented a hypothetical case. I said to him:

“What if your wife appeared to you at this very moment in that doorway? What if she talked to you with the same voice, looked the same, remembered your times together and told you that she was in a better place. Would you believe that it is your wife because you desperately miss her and would like to be with her?”

Again he answered “Yes”.

I suggested that this would obviously be a most trying experience:

“Your eyes, your heart, your mind, your feelings all tell you that this is your wife. Would you go by what the Bible says or would you follow what your heart, your eyes, your ears and your feelings tell you? The Bible says that the ‘living know that they will die but the dead know nothing.’ What would your choice be?”

His eyes opened wide and for what appeared to be an eternity he was speechless. He never answered the question but by his expression I could tell that he was seriously pondering my remarks. We then prayed with him and left. He did not come to church on Friday evening or Sabbath morning or evening. Only eternity will tell what the result of our visit will be.

The Acid Test

The traditional acid test for gold consists in placing a small drop of a strong acid, such as nitric acid, onto a metal's surface. When the acid comes in contact with common metals it fizzes or bubbles, while precious metals remain unaffected. The acid test is thus decisive, immediate, cheap and simple in determining whether the metal is precious or not.

It is not safe to rely on people telling you that a certain metal is real gold. You cannot simply trust that it is gold because it looks like gold or ‘tastes’ like gold. You must apply an external test that will give absolute certainty that the metal is genuine gold. Or else you might just buy fool’s gold!

Satan's Final Plan

The Bible explains that Satan will work with marvelous deceptive power in the last days. He will make it appear that truth is error and that error is truth. Notice the following texts:

Matthew 24:23-25

"Then if anyone says to you, '**Look**, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show **great signs and wonders** to deceive, if possible, **even the elect [notice Satan's target audience]** ²⁵ See, **I have told you** beforehand."

Revelation 16:13, 14

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, **performing signs**, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the **whole world**, to **gather them** to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Matthew 7:21-23: Satan will even **use Christians** to deceive by these means

"Not everyone who says to Me: '**Lord, Lord**,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will** of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, '**Lord, Lord**, have we not **prophesied** in **Your name**, **cast out demons** in **Your name**, and done **many wonders** in **Your name**?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I **never** knew you; depart from Me, you who **practice lawlessness!**' ['transgress the law']

The crucial question is this: How can we keep from being deceived? The answer is that we need a reliable detector of error that is **outside** of our own cognitive and perceptive powers.

Beginning and End

Our only safeguard against deception in the time of the end will be the same safeguard that God gave Adam and Eve at the beginning in the Garden of Eden—unquestioning obedience to His Word.

According to Genesis 3:1-6 Satan used **five methods** to overcome Eve. He performed a **miracle** by making it **appear** that the serpent talked, he **partially** quoted Scripture, he led Eve to follow her own unaided **reasoning powers**, he persuaded her to pay heed to the testimony of her **senses**, and then used her to **tempt her husband**.

What was Eve's only protection against Satan's awesome deceptive power? Her only hope of remaining faithful was to **render strict and unquestioning obedience to God's Word**. She had to lay **aside everything else!**

Scripture tells us that Satan will work at the end as he worked in the beginning. He will use **all manner of stratagems**. He will appeal to our **reason**, our **senses** and our **feelings and emotions**. He will **misquote Scripture** and use **other people to try** and persuade us to embrace error.

Our only protection from Satan's deceptions at the end will be to render God's word unwavering obedience. At the beginning the trial involved a tree and at the time of the end it will involve a day. At the heart of the **Sabbath/Sunday** issue in the end time is the matter of **whose word we will obey**. Will it be the word of the beast which established Sunday as the day of worship or will it be God who established the Sabbath. Thus the core issue is not a matter of **days** but rather of **authority**.

Isaiah 8: 20 affirms that the **acid test** which must be applied to every doctrine and experience in the end time is the word of God. Adventists frequently quote verse 20. But have you noticed the verse that comes immediately before? It is dealing with the issue of the state of the dead:

*"And when they say to you: "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," Should not a people seek their God? Should they **seek the dead** on behalf of the living?²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."*

The Great Detector

The Bible is the **great detector of error**. It is **light** that shines and rebukes the darkness. **To defeat darkness** all we must do is **turn on the light**. Yet **today** people accept **all kinds of authorities** in place of the Bible. They implicitly trust things such as **science, philosophy, feelings, emotions, signs and wonders**, what **others write and say**, etc. Sadly, some of our **own theologians** are saying that the Bible was fine for a **pre-scientific, simplistic society** but that today we have **far more light** and are **far more educated** and **sophisticated** than the Bible writers.

Ellen White wrote the following sobering statement:

*"But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the **Bible only**, as the standard of all doctrines and the **basis** of all reforms. The **opinions** of learned men, the **deductions of science**, the **creeds** or decisions of **ecclesiastical councils**, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the **majority--not one nor all** of these should be regarded as **evidence** for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain **"Thus saith the Lord"** in its support." The Great Controversy, p. 595*

And how did Jesus face Satan's deceptions? We all know the answer to that question. He always said without hesitation: **'it is written'**. Ellen White has warned that Satan's deceptions at the end will be so powerful that we will only be able to detect them by implicitly trusting God's written word:

*"The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. **So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true** that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the **Holy Scriptures**. By their testimony **every statement** and **every miracle** must be **tested**." The Great Controversy, p. 593*

Detecting a Counterfeit

Some years ago I taped a twelve part series titled: 'Misunderstood Texts on the State of the Dead'. The purpose of this series was to offer solid biblical explanations of confusing texts on the subject. I believe that we need to be able to explain these perplexing texts for our own benefit and for others. Some day it will be necessary for us to explain these texts, perhaps to the great men of the earth.

How can we detect a counterfeit? The only way is to **know the genuine**. The only way to detect error is to **know the truth** and truth is found in the word of God.

In the 1980's while I was teaching theology at our Seventh-day Adventist University in Medellin, Colombia, I had an experience that illustrates the importance of knowing the genuine in order to detect the counterfeit. At a certain store, unbeknownst to me, I paid for some merchandise with a counterfeit 5,000 peso note. Two policemen escorted me to a back room and began to interrogate me. At first they were quite convinced that I was a counterfeiter but when I told them that I was a theology teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist University, their manner and tone changed. You see, they had great respect for our school and knew that no counterfeiter would come from there. One of the policemen then took a genuine 5,000 peso note and put it beside the counterfeit. He first showed me the characteristics of the genuine—it had a dark line running through it, the face of Simon Bolivar was clear, the paper was of a certain type, and under a black light there were two circles on the note that shone. He then asked me to carefully look at the counterfeit bill. As I examined it carefully I discovered that it had none of the characteristics of the genuine note even though superficially it looked just like it!

Study the State of the Dead

I learned an important lesson that day. In order to detect a counterfeit we must first know the characteristics of the genuine. In other words, we must know truth thoroughly and then we will be able to detect error. Ellen White admonished God's people to study the state of the dead doctrine in order to detect Satan's counterfeit:

*"I saw that **the saints** must get a **thorough understanding** of present truth, which they will be obliged to **maintain from the Scriptures**. They must understand the **state of the dead**; for the spirits of devils will yet **appear to them**, professing to be beloved friends and relatives, who will declare to them that the **Sabbath has been changed**, also other unscriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to **excite sympathy** and will **work miracles** before them **to confirm** what they declare. The people of God must be prepared to withstand these spirits with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who appear to them are the spirits of devils. Our minds must not be taken up with things around us, but must be occupied with the **present truth** and a preparation to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. We must seek wisdom from on high that we may **stand in this day of error and delusion**." Early Writings, pp. 87, 88*

*"He [Satan] has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The **counterfeit is perfect**: the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with **marvelous***

distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear "to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." The Great Controversy, p. 552

"It is Satan's most **successful and fascinating delusion**--one calculated to take hold of the **sympathies** of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave. Evil angels come in the **form of those loved ones** and relate incidents connected with their lives, and perform acts which they performed while living. In this way they lead persons to believe that their dead friends **are angels**, hovering over them and **communicating with them**. These evil angels, who assume to be the deceased friends, are regarded with a **certain idolatry**, and with many their word has **greater weight** than the Word of God." Signs of the Times, August 26, 1889.

Speaking of the **religious world** at the end of time, Ellen White wrote:

"They declared that they had the truth, that **miracles** were among them, that **angels from heaven talked with them and walked with them**, that **great power, and signs and wonders were performed** among them, and this was the Temporal Millennium, which they had been expecting so long. The whole world was converted and in harmony with the **Sunday law**, and this little feeble people stood out in defiance of the laws of the land and the laws of God, and claimed to be the **only ones right** on the earth." Maranatha, p. 209

Satan's Capstone of Deception: Personation of Christ

The Bible teaches that Satan will attempt to counterfeit the second coming by appealing to **feelings** (I have come to deliver you from the tribulation), by **senses** (glorious and performs miracles) and **twisted Biblical arguments** (Sunday Texts). If we don't know **how** Jesus will come or **what** we believe, how will we be able to detect the counterfeit?

There are two things that the Bible makes absolutely clear concerning the second coming of Christ:

- When Jesus comes the second time He will not touch the earth
- The great issue that will divide the world just before the second coming will be Sabbath/Sunday

Ellen White links these two ideas in her remarks concerning **Matthew 24:23-27**:

"As the **crowning act** in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Savior's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will **make it appear** that Christ has come. In **different parts** of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of **dazzling brightness**, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that **mortal eyes** have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people **prostrate themselves** in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and **pronounces a blessing** upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His **voice is soft and subdued**,

yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Savior uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out." The Great Controversy, p. 625

Thus the manner (touching the earth) of coming and the teachings of Satan will unmask him as the great counterfeiter!

II Thessalonians 2:9-12

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

"Because the children of men reject the plainest teachings of his word, and trample upon his law, God leaves them to choose that which they desire. They spurn the truth, and he permits them to believe a lie. They refuse to yield to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, leads them captive at his will. If men were but conversant with the word of God, and obedient to its teachings, they could not be thus deceived; but they neglect the great detector of fraud, and the mind becomes confused and corrupted by the deceptive arts of men, and the secret power of the father of lies." Signs of the Times, May 18, 1882

More Ellen White Quotes

"Everything in the religious world is to be tried by the Scriptures. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them' (Isaiah 8:20). The claimed enlightenment of the Spirit within is to be tested and tried by the Word of God, which is the detector of the pure wheat. . . ." That I May Know Him, p. 195

"Parents, if you would educate your children to serve God and do good in the world, make the Bible your textbook. It exposes the wiles of Satan. It is the great elevator of the race, the reprover and corrector of moral evils, the detector which enables us to distinguish between the true and the false. Whatever else is taught in the home or at school, the Bible, as the great educator, should stand first." Child Guidance, p. 510

"The Word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. We are to

receive **no one's opinion** without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority, which is **supreme** in matters of faith." Christ Triumphant, p. 331

"It is the Word of the living God that is to **decide all controversies.**" Christ Triumphant, p. 331

Is Science above the Bible?

Some of our theologians and scientists are saying that creation week took millions of years, that the flood was a local event in Mesopotamia, that according to the geologic column there was death long before sin. The critical question is this: Are we to believe science so called or Scripture on the matter of origins? Are science and Scripture at odds with each other or are they in harmony?

This is an important question because it bears directly on the doctrine of the state of the dead. If, as Dr. Kubler-Ross believed, scientific research has proved that there is life after death, then how do we deal with the clear Bible verses which teach that the dead know nothing until the resurrection? Should we accommodate the Bible to the science of parapsychological research?

Would our doubting scientists say: "We know the Bible teaches that the dead know nothing but science has proved otherwise so we must accommodate the Bible to science"?

Ellen White has clearly warned us against this dangerous trend to accommodate Scripture to science, so called:

*"Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to **supposed conflict** between science and revelation; and in the effort to **restore harmony**, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and **in order to accommodate** the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years. Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for. The Bible record **is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature.**" Education, pp. 128, 129*

#2 - SATAN'S ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE CREATION

Introduction

Let's begin our study today by reading **Revelation 14:6, 7**. Verse 7 strongly suggests that God's people toward the end of human history will bring the attention of the world to the Creator and His Sabbath. In contrast to this we are told that the beast will impose His mark upon every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

*"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people⁷ saying with a loud voice: "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and **worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.**"*

The Days of Creation

Do we **have any reason** to believe that the days of creation were each of **24 literal hours in length**?

- Jesus and the **New Testament writers** believed that the creation was a literal event in space and time (for example, Matthew 19:1-6). To question a literal creation account is to impugn the honesty of the New Testament writers, including Jesus Himself!
- **Psalm 33** describes the **immediacy** and **rapidity** of the creation event:

*"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. "...⁹ For He **spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.**"*

- **Genesis 1:4, 5**: The daily cycle contained a day and a night, an **evening and morning**. It would be **absurd** to say that each day had an 'evening and morning' if the days of creation were **millions of years** in length.
- The expression "**and it was so**" used several times in Genesis 1 indicates **immediacy** and **rapidity** (1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24; see Psalm 33:6-9).

- It is a fact that in the Old Testament, **every single time** that the word “day” appears in the **singular** with an **ordinal number** (day one, day two, etc.) it means a 24 hour day. There are **no exceptions** to this rule.
- How could **the plants** which were created the third day survive millions of years of darkness before the sun was put in place on the fourth day?
- **Exodus 20:11**: The Sabbath commandment offers **definitive proof** that the days of creation week were **literal, consecutive and contiguous**. Think about it. God instructed man to **work six** days and **rest the seventh** just **like He had** worked six and rested on the seventh. How could God tell man to work six days as He had worked six days if the **days were millions of years long?**

Satan Hates the Sabbath

Exodus 20:11 provides the **rationale** for the observance of the Sabbath. Ask yourself the question: Why would Satan want us to believe that the world came into existence through a cruel and extended process which took millions of years?

Satan has hated the Sabbath throughout history because it points to **Jesus as the loving Creator and Satan hates Jesus**. In the Old Testament, Satan led Israel to trample on the Sabbath. Then after the Babylonian captivity he led them to idolize it. In the early Christian church he led theologians to despise the Sabbath as a relic of Judaism and then in the Middle Ages he led the bishop of Rome to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday.

The Sabbath ever reminds us that **Jesus is the Creator** of the heavens and the earth. Satan wants us to **forget the Creator** and therefore he does his utmost to **efface the reminder** from the minds of men. This is why the **first angel’s message** is of such vital importance in these last days. It calls human beings to worship the Creator and to keep His commemorative sign—the Sabbath.

Ellen White explains how Satan, through infidel scientists, attempts to eradicate the Sabbath:

*“But the [**infidel**]: **ST, March 20, 1879**] assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years [**seven vast, indefinite periods**]: **ST, March 20, 1879**], **strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment**. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of **vast, indefinite periods**. This is unlike his method of dealing with his creatures. It makes **indefinite and obscure** that which he has made very plain. It is **infidelity** [**worst kind of infidelity**]: **ST March 20, 1879**] **in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form**; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who **profess to believe the Bible** [**many who profess to believe the record of creation**]: **ST, March 20, 1879**].” Counsels on Education, pp. 190*

*“And many who **profess to believe** the Bible are at a loss to account for wonderful things which are found in the earth with the view that creation week was only **seven literal days** and that the world is now only **about six thousand** years old. These, **to free themselves from difficulties thrown in their way by infidel geologists**, adopt the view that the six days of creation were six vast, indefinite periods, and the day of God's rest was another indefinite period; **making senseless the fourth commandment** of God's holy law. Some eagerly receive this position; for it destroys the force of the fourth commandment, and they **feel a freedom from its claims upon them.**” Signs of the Times, March 20, 1879*

Concordists or Accomodationists

Ellen White has warned against the attempt to accommodate the Bible record to the assumptions of science:

*“Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to **supposed conflict** between science and revelation; and in the effort to **restore harmony**, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that **undermine and destroy the force of the word of God**. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to **accommodate** the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are **assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years**. Such a conclusion is wholly **uncalled for**. The Bible record is in harmony with itself and with the teaching of nature.” Education, pp. 128, 129*

Did you notice the word “**accommodate**”? The vast majority of scholars, both Adventist and non-Adventist agree that the **writer of Genesis** wanted us to understand that the days of creation were **literal, consecutive and contiguous** 24 hour days. But they say that **science has proven** that the writer was wrong and therefore we must **reinterpret and accommodate** the Biblical account of creation **to fit** the discoveries of contemporary science. They come up with all sorts of **alternative explanations** of creation such as **pantheism, progressive creation, punctuated equilibrium, theistic evolution** and **intelligent design**.

I once had a conversation with a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who believed that evolution was God’s method of creation and that death existed long before sin. He stated:

“There can be no doubt that the geologic column is accurate.”

I asked him:

“How do you deal with the story of Genesis where death comes as a result of human sin and the days of creation are spoken of as literal 24-hour days?”

Amazingly he answered:

“Moses believed that creation took place in seven literal 24 hour days and that death came in as

a result of sin but Moses was wrong and he must be corrected by modern scientific discovery.”

Throwing out the Spirit of Prophecy

When the Seventh-day Adventist critics question the literal days of creation they must also question the reliability of the writings of Ellen White. She was categorical that the days of creation were literal 24-hour days. In fact, she claims that she was carried back to creation and was shown that the days of creation were just like every other day.

“I was then carried back to the creation, and was shown that the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week. The great God, in his days of creation and day of rest, measured off the first cycle as a sample for successive weeks till the close of time.” Spirit of Prophecy, volume 1, p. 85

In another place she boldly affirms:

“When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun.” Testimonies to Ministers, p. 135

The Geologic Column and Death before Sin

It has been said that if you tell a lie enough times people will eventually come to believe that it is the gospel truth. This is what has happened with belief in the theory of evolution. What began as a theory in the days of Darwin is today accepted as a scientific fact and anyone who disagrees is considered an ignoramus. Concerning the theory of evolution, Ellen G. White once stated:

“The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45

Richard Hammill

Some of our own theologians have jumped on the evolutionary band wagon and teach that the days of creation lasted millions of years, that there was death long before sin entered the world and that the geologic column proves this beyond any doubt. The late Richard Hammill, who for many years was president of Andrews University and also served as one of the vice-presidents of the General Conference once explained how, after examining the geologic column, he had to accommodate the Bible to the discoveries of modern geology:

“I had to recognize that the forms of life that we are acquainted with mostly, like the ungulate hoof animals, the primates, man himself, exist only in the very top little layer of the Holocene, and that many forms of life were extinct before these ever came in, which, of course, is a big step for a Seventh-day Adventist when you are taught that every form of life came into existence in six days. . . I had felt it for many years, but finally there in about 1983 I had to say to

myself 'That's right.' The steadily accumulating evidence in the natural world has forced a **re-evaluation in the way that I look at and understand and interpret parts of the Bible.**"

Ronald Numbers

One-time Seventh-day Adventist, Ronald Numbers, the grandson of a former General Conference president explains in the introduction to his book **The Creationists** how and why he gave up his Adventist views on a literal seven day creation week and became an **agnostic**:

*"Having thus decided to follow **science rather than Scripture** on the subject of origins, I quickly, though not painlessly, slid down the proverbial slippery slope **toward unbelief.**"*

In a **1982** Numbers served as an expert witness in favor of evolution against a creationist lawyer. Numbers affirms:

*"Bird publicly labeled me an 'Agnostic'. The tag still feels foreign and uncomfortable, but rather **accurately reflects** my theological **uncertainty.**"*

Ellen White's Response to Numbers

Ellen White, as if writing personally to Numbers long ago, predicted what would happen if science, falsely so-called, should supplant the Biblical account of creation:

*"I have been shown that without Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of a state of things differing in many respects from the present. But the time of their existence, and how long a period these things have been in the earth, are **only to be understood by Bible history.** It may be innocent to conjecture beyond Bible history, if our suppositions **do not contradict the facts found in the sacred Scriptures.** But when men **leave the word of God** in regard to the history of creation, and seek to account for God's creative works upon natural principles, they are upon a **boundless ocean of uncertainty.**" Spiritual Gifts, Volume, 3, p. 93*

Notably, an agnostic is not the same as an atheist. An atheist **denies** the existence of God but an agnostic is **uncertain** whether God exists. Thus it is notable that Ellen White should use the expression 'boundless ocean of uncertainty' to describe those who are not sure that the Biblical account of creation can be trusted.

In another place Ellen White explains why human knowledge cannot be fully trusted in the matter of origins and what happens when men of science and theologians lose confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible on this subject:

*"Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is **partial and imperfect**; therefore many are unable to **harmonize** their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere **theories and speculations as scientific facts**, and they think that **God's word is to be tested [when it is the other way around]** by the teachings of "science falsely so called." 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by **natural laws**, **Bible history is regarded as unreliable.** Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a **step further** and*

doubt the **existence of God** and attribute infinite power to nature. Having **let go their anchor**, they are left to **beat about upon the rocks of infidelity**.” The Great Controversy, p. 522

Did God use Evolution as His Method of Creation?

The god of evolution and the God of the Bible are totally incompatible. The Scriptures describe God as a loving, kind and good Father who made everything perfect and cares for His creation. In stark contrast, the process of evolution is cruel and merciless. Says one writer:

*“Evolution presents a **bloody, ruthless struggle** for existence from the very beginning, where there is **much waste** of living substance and many false starts and blind alleys.” Here I Stand, p. 277*

The Bible portrays Jesus as the Creator (John 1:1-3). The question is: Would Jesus, who instructed his disciples to pick up all that remained that nothing be lost after he had fed the **4,000 and the 5,000** use such a wasteful method to create?

Evolution functions on the basis of the **survival of the fittest**. The **strong win and survive while the weak** [contrary to the Biblical counsel that we are to help the weak] are wiped out. Evolution is a method of **trial and error**. It is a method that requires significant time to iron **out the glitches in the process**. Does such a method reflect **your view of God?** Is God such that He could not get things right **the first time?**

The idea of **cruelty and death** before sin is an attack on God’s **wisdom, omnipotence** and **goodness**. Would a God whose **eye is on the sparrow** (Luke 12:6), who even has the hairs of our head numbered (Matthew 10:30) use such a **cruel** and wasteful method to create?

Creation and Redemption

The Bible describes an **unbroken chain of events**: [1] Adam and Eve were **created perfect**, [2] they had a **literal fall**, [3] as a result **sin entered** the world and passed it to all men [4] and **death came in** as a consequence of sin. [5] Therefore **we need a Redeemer** from sin in order to have any hope for a [6] **new world** where there is no sin and no death. If there was death before sin then the **link** between **creation and redemption** is broken because redemption is deliverance from death.

Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Schmits-Moorman, is quoted in Creation, Catastrophe and Redemption, p. 112:

*“The notion of the traditional view of redemption as reconciliation and ransom from the consequences of Adam’s fall **is nonsense** for anyone who knows about the evolutionary background to human existence in the modern world.” Further, he states that salvation “cannot mean returning to an original state, but must be conceived as **perfecting through the process of evolution**.”*

Frank L. Marsh, a Seventh-day Adventist creationist scientist stated as much:

“If death and the law of tooth and claw existed long before man, and if man evolved through

these 'natural' processes, then there could not have been a perfect Garden of Eden nor a perfect Adam and Eve. Nor could there have been a real Fall, in which man became subject to sin. If that is so, what is the theological meaning of Jesus' incarnation and atonement? Paul connects the two: 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous' (Romans 5:19). If there was no Garden of Eden with its tree of life, what is the future that Revelation 22 depicts for the redeemed?" Frank L. Marsh, Here I Stand, pp. 278, 279

The question that begs to be asked is this: **How much longer** must creation wait until the **process** of evolution reaches its goal? **Millions** of years? Billions? This certainly doesn't offer us **much hope for an imminent** coming of Jesus to make **all things new!**

Further, **how long** will it take God to create a new heavens and a new earth? Will He use evolution as His method once again? If he does it quickly why didn't he do it that way in the first place? Evolution **impacts our concept of end time** events and the second coming. How many millions of years must we wait for **lambs and wild beasts** to live together in harmony? (Isaiah 11:6; 65:25). For how long must creation cry out for its deliverance? (Romans 8)

Creation and the Flood

It is common for theologians to refer to the stories of Genesis 1-11 as myth, legend or saga. Not only do these theologians (inside and outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church) deny the historicity and literalness of the creation story but they also deny that there was a worldwide flood that destroyed all living things except those who were saved in the ark.

Notice in the following statement how Ellen White links **creation with the flood**. In her mind, if we read the record of creation wrong we will also deny the historicity of the worldwide flood in Noah's day:

*"But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries, have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the flood, or of the **great changes which then took place**. Relics found in the earth **do give evidence** of conditions differing in many respects from the present; but **the time** when these conditions existed can be learned **only from the Inspired Record**. In the **history of the flood**, inspiration has explained that which **geology alone** could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should **establish faith in inspired history**; but men, with their **vain reasoning**, fall into the same error as did the people before the flood,—the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them." Christian Education, pp. 191, 192*

#3 - BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND THE UNIVERSAL FLOOD

Evidence not Demonstration

Hebrews 11:1

NKJV: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

NIV: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”

New Century: “Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.”

The Lord’s servant has warned us that faith rests on evidence, not demonstration:

“If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration [because if I have demonstration I do not need faith].” Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 69

There is no such thing as blind faith because according to Hebrews 11:1 faith sees the invisible. Faith is not irrational. It is not wishful thinking. Is there evidence that there once was a global catastrophic flood or must we accept this idea purely on blind faith? Let’s answer this question by going first of all to the story of creation.

Faith in Creation

Heb 11:3: English Standard Version

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

Two biblical events are especially being denied today in the scientific world and among many theologians: Creation and the Flood. Let’s examine these two events in their order.

Back to the Beginning

“God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith.” Steps to Christ, p. 105

Adam and Eve had no absolute proof that God was the Creator:

- But Eve did not have **absolute proof** that God was the Creator.
- She **did not see** God create anything.
- She had **evidence** but not **demonstration**.

But Adam and Eve did have abundant evidence that God was their loving Creator:

- They existed in a **beautiful world**
- They had a wonderful marriage relationship
- All creation was harmonious and peaceful
- Jesus talked to them face to face
- They had fullness of happiness and joy
- They had **plenty of evidence** upon which to base her faith in God as her Creator.

God’s Version of Creation

God had told Adam and Eve that He was their Creator and He gave them the Sabbath to remind them of this fact.

Satan’s Alternative Explanation

- God had told Eve that it would be better to **not even get close** to the tree because you are placing yourself on **dangerous ground**.
- Yet Eve now asks: **Why** did God forbid us to eat from this tree?
- Did we really come from the **hand of God**?
- Did we actually **see Him** create anything?
- Might there not be **another explanation** for our existence?

Satan's Logic

- Satan used **four methods** to deceive Eve: He performed a counterfeit Miracle, he misquoted the Word and he led Eve to follow the testimony of her senses. But by far Satan's most specious temptation was His attempt to get Eve to follow the counsel of her **unaided reason** instead of the **Word of God**.
- **Genesis 3:1-4** describes how Satan offered an **alternative explanation** that on the surface made perfect **rational sense**
- Eve's only protection was to have a **settled faith** and trust in the Word of God, period. She should have said to the serpent: *"God said it, and I believe it, and that settles it for me."*

The Problem with Science Today

*"God has permitted a **flood of light** [evidence] to be poured upon the world, in both science and art; but when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a **merely human point of view**, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. It may be innocent to speculate beyond what God's word has revealed, if our theories do not contradict facts found in the Scriptures; but those who **leave the word** of God, and seek to account for his created works upon **scientific principles**, are drifting, without chart or **compass**, upon an **unknown ocean**. The greatest minds, if not **guided by the word of God** in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation. Because the Creator and his works are so far beyond their comprehension that they are unable to explain them by **natural laws**, they regard Bible history as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step farther, and **doubt the existence of God**; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to **beat about upon the rocks of infidelity**. **These persons have lost the simplicity of faith**. There should be a **settled belief** in the divine authority of God's holy word." *Counsels on Education*, p. 193*

Dangerous Philosophies Today

*"The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles, men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of **higher criticism**, **evolution**, **spiritualism**, **theosophy**, and **pantheism**, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of **higher criticism** [today it is called the historical-critical method], in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 474*

*“True science and Inspiration are in perfect harmony. False science is a something independent of God. It is **pretentious ignorance**. This deceptive power has captivated and enslaved the minds of many, and they have chosen darkness rather than light. They have taken their position on the side of unbelief, as though it were a virtue and the **sign of a great mind to doubt**, when it is the sign of a mind **too weak and narrow** to perceive God in His created works.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 4, p. 584, 585*

The Flood

The antediluvians had no scientific proof that a global flood was scientifically possible.

They had no proof that it could rain because they had never **seen** it, **heard** it or **felt** it. They were not satisfied with God’s word through Noah; they wanted Noah to provide **proof** or **demonstration**.

But the antediluvians did have evidence

- They had evidence of God’s love because, in spite of sin, the world did not immediately feel the curse.
- They had additional evidence of the story of the fall because of the wickedness of the world.
- They had seven generations of righteous men living simultaneously on the earth who told them the story of creation and the fall.
- They had every reason to trust in God’s word

Noah’s message one of faith in God’s Word

Noah’s message was contrary to **historical** and **scientific** information. The idea of a **universal** flood was **preposterous yet Noah preached God’s Word**:

- At **creation** the planet was **covered** with **water** (Genesis 1:2)
- On the **second day** of creation God put water **above** and **below** the earth (Genesis 1:7)
- The earth was not watered by rain but by a kind of automatic **sprinkler system** (Genesis 2:5, 6)
- At the flood the waters **above** and **below** were brought back to the planet’s surface, the **fountains** of the great deep and the **windows** of heaven (Genesis 7:11)

Noah Ridiculed

The difficulty that Noah faced in preaching in the antediluvian environment is similar to the difficulty faced by Seventh-day Adventists when they preach about a literal creation, flood and second coming. These events appear to be unscientific and contrary to the facts.

*“But the days before the Flood steal silently on as a thief in the night. Noah is now making his last effort in warnings, entreaty, and appeal to the rejecters of God’s message. With tearful eye, trembling lip, and quivering voice he makes his last entreaty for them **to believe** and secure a refuge in the ark. But they turn from him with **impatience** and **contempt** that he should be so **egotistical** [triumphalistic remnant] as to suppose his family are the **only ones right** in the vast population of the earth. They have no patience with his warnings, with his strange work of building an immense boat on dry ground. Noah, they said, **was insane**.” Manuscript Releases, volume 10, p. 374. Emphasis supplied*

*‘They [the great men before the flood] talked of **science** and of the **laws** controlling nature. Then they **held a carnival** over the words of Noah, calling him a **crazy fanatic**.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 1, p. 1090*

*“The preacher of righteousness was proclaimed to be an **ignorant fanatic**, who had **no knowledge** of the **laws of nature**. The wise men of that time argued that it was an impossibility for water to rise high enough to deluge the world. They **reasoned from scientific principles**, that the world could not be destroyed, and that no attention should be paid to the predictions of Noah. This philosophy, or science falsely so called, exalted the law above the Lawgiver, and things created above the Creator.” The Review and Herald, September 25, 1888. Emphasis supplied*

*‘They used the probation so graciously granted them in **ridiculing** Noah. They **caricatured** him and **criticized** him. They **laughed at him** for his peculiar earnestness and intense feeling in regard to the judgments which he declared God would surely fulfill.” Conflict and Courage, p. 33. Emphasis supplied.*

*“The men of Noah’s time, in their **philosophy and worldly wisdom**, thought God could not destroy the world with a flood, for the **waters of the ocean** could not be sufficient for this. But God made the philosophy and science of men foolishness when the time had fully come to execute his word. The inspired pen describes the earth as standing out of the water and in the water. God had his weapons concealed in the bowels of the earth to compass her destruction. And when the **great men** and the **wise men** had reasoned before the world of the impossibility of its destruction by water, and the **fears of the people were quieted**, and all regarded Noah’s prophecy as the **veriest delusion**, and looked upon Noah as a **crazy fanatic**, God’s time had come. {Signs of the Times, January 3, 1878, par. 8}*

Secret of Noah’s Success

*“How **simple and childlike amid the unbelief of the world, was the faith of Noah**. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. His faith was perfected by his works. He gave to the world an example in **believing just what God had said**. He commenced under the directions of God to construct the ark, an immense boat, on dry ground. Multitudes came from every direction to see this strange sight, the ark, and to hear the **earnest, fervent words** of this singular man who **seemed to believe every word he uttered**. His **message was to***

him a reality. A power attended the words of Noah, for it was the voice of God to man through his servant. Some were deeply convicted and would have heeded the words of warning, but there were **so many to jest and ridicule** the message of entreaty and warning to repentance that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, refused to reform, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are as reckless, and will go to such lengths in sin as those who have once had light, who have been convicted and resisted the Spirit of God. Amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, Noah distinguishes himself by his **holy integrity and unwavering obedience**. He is singular indeed. He was one **in** the world, but not one **of** the world. Noah made himself the object of **contempt and ridicule** by his **steadfast adherence to the words of God**. He **obeyed God without a questioning doubt**." *Signs of the Times*, December 20, 1877

Noah could not answer all their arguments

*"Thus it was that the wise men of this world talked of science and the fixed laws of nature, and declared that there could be no variation in these laws, and that this message of Noah could not possibly be true. The talented men of Noah's time set themselves in league against God's will and purpose and scorned the message and the messenger that He had sent. . . . **Noah could not controvert their philosophies, or refute the claims of science so called; but he could proclaim the word of God; for he knew it contained the infinite wisdom of the Creator**, and, as he sounded it everywhere, it lost none of its force and reality because men of the world treated him with ridicule and contempt."* *Reflecting Christ*, p. 323

They had lost the **simplicity of faith**. They did not have a **settled faith** in the Word of God.

II Peter 3

II Peter 3 links the story of **creation** with the **flood**.

Two events are being doubted today even in Seventh-day Adventist circles:

- A divine, supernatural, quick beginning: The creation story
- A divine, supernatural destruction of the world: the Flood story
- But Jesus said that what happened in the days of Noah foreshadows what will happen at the end of the world

God wants us to have a childlike faith. Can you imagine a 6 year old asking if creation or the flood are scientifically feasible?

Rejection of the Message at the End

"The faithful Noah had spoken to them the words of God, assuring them if they would repent of their sins and believe the testimony of warning they might find a shelter in the ark and be saved

from the destructive storm that was soon coming. As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. Water will never destroy the earth again, but the weapons of God are concealed in the bowels of the earth which he will draw forth to unite with the fire from heaven to accomplish his purpose in the destruction of all those who would not receive the message of warning and purify their souls in obeying the truth and being obedient to the laws of God. The voice of warning is now being heard inviting the people to escape and find refuge, not in the ark but in Jesus Christ. How will the warning be treated? **Christ tells us just as it was received in the days of Noah.** Thousands will deride the message of mercy and salvation, and turn aside, one to his merchandise, another to his farm, and give little or no attention to these things. They will be occupied with eating, drinking, and dressing, planting and building as in the days of Noah, as though no sound of alarm had ever saluted their ears. Signs of the Times, January 3, 1878

- The Roman Catholic idea of the City of God
- Terrorism
- Global Warming
- Poverty
- Religious intolerance
- Build an era of peace without recourse to God. Talk about the **anti defamation of religion** that is being talked about by the United Nations.

*“The same reasoning will be heard today from **worldly-wise men**, from the unfaithful **watchmen in the pulpits**, “My Lord delayeth his coming, all things remain as they were from the beginning. You have no need to be alarmed, there is to be a **thousand years of temporal millennium** before Christ will come. All the world will be converted. **Peace, peace**; you should pay no regard to these fanatics, who are only **alarmists**.” The world generally will **despise prophecy** and abuse those who speak to them the words of God, rebuking their sins and calling them to repentance.” Signs of the Times, January 3, 1878*

“Philosophers and men of science will endeavor by their reasoning to show that the world cannot be destroyed by fire. They will plead that it is inconsistent with the laws of nature. But the God of nature, the maker and controller of nature, can use the works of his own hands to serve his purpose. Those who would be loyal to the God of heaven will not allow that interpretation of prophecy which will do away the force of the lesson God designed the prophecy should convey. As the contemporaries of Noah laughed to scorn that which they termed fear and superstition in the preacher of righteousness, so will the solemn messages of warning be ridiculed in our day.” Signs of the Times, January 3, 1878

Those who doubt the accuracy of the biblical record of **creation** will also reject the Biblical account of the flood. If you read the record of **creation** from an **evolutionary perspective** you will also read the **story of the flood** from the same perspective.

Ellen White has warned:

*“But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason **so confidently** upon its discoveries, have **no adequate conception** of the size of men, animals, and trees before the flood, or of the **great changes which then took place**. Relics found in the earth **do give evidence** of conditions differing in many respects from the present; but **the time** when these conditions existed can be learned **only from the Inspired Record**. In the **history of the flood**, inspiration has explained that which **geology alone** could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should **establish faith in inspired history**; but men, with their **vain reasoning**, fall into the same error as did the people before the flood,—the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them.”* Christian Education, pp. 191, 192

Doubts about the Flood

The book of Genesis clearly describes the flood in Noah’s day as a **global cataclysm**. Some theologians in our midst have taught that the flood was rather **some local affair in the valley of Mesopotamia**. Even some of our science teachers at **Pacific Union College** and **La Sierra University** have said as much.

Most reputable scholars, **liberal and conservative** agree that from the **perspective of the writer of Genesis** the flood was universal. That is to say, the **writer of Genesis believed** that it was universal. But these scholars doubt whether the writer was **right in his assessment**.

In this study we will see that there are several **textual, contextual, New Testament, geological** and **historical** reasons why the flood in Noah’s day was a worldwide cataclysm in **space and time**.

Contextual Reasons

Genesis 6-9 cannot be isolated from its previous and succeeding context. Genesis 1-11 is an **indivisible unit**. Imagine a **cone**. The **small part of the cone** is the creation of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve then sin and 1656 years later their **descendants had multiplied and filled the entire world with the virus of sin**. **Global sinfulness**, then, (*‘all flesh had corrupted their way’*) would require a **worldwide judgment**.

After the flood the **cone begins again** with only **8 people**. From these 8, the earth is once again **re-completely repopulated** as the **Tower of Babel** (Genesis 11) and the **table of nations show** (Genesis 10).

In short, the **scope of Genesis 1-11** is global:

- **Creation** contemplated the global population of the earth (where man is told to be **fruitful** and **multiply** and **fill the earth**)
- The **fall** of two individuals

- The global **spread of sin** (till the entire earth was corrupt and filled with violence)
- The **global punishment** for sin which had multiplied to the entire world

Genesis 6:7 *“So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.”*

- After the flood, the global **repopulation** of the earth

Genesis 9:1 *“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”*

Terminological Reasons

Technical Term

There is a **technical term** that is used to describe the flood in Noah’s day, the word *mabul*. Notably, there are many Hebrew words for ‘flood’ in the Old Testament but the global flood in Noah’s day is described with a **unique term** which is used only in Genesis 6-8 (6:17; 7:6, 7, 10, 17; 9:11, 15, 28; 10:1, 32; 11:10; and once in Psalm 29:10) In the **LXX** the word that is used is *kataklysmos* from where we get our word ‘cataclysm’. Certainly a local flood in Mesopotamia could not be described as a cataclysm!

The use of Eretz

When the word *eretz* (‘earth’) appears in the expression, “**heaven and earth**” (**41 times** in the Old Testament) or “**earth and heaven**” (**six times** in the Old Testament) it always means the world in its **totality**.

The combination of ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’ in **Genesis 1:1** (which refers to the entire planet) is the same as in **Genesis 7:11, 12, 18 and 19** where the destruction by the flood is described. Therefore the meaning must be the same in both contexts. Although it is true that the word *eretz* can refer to a **limited geographical locality** when it is used in this way it is **always** followed by a **genitive qualifier**. For example, the word is used over **60 times** to describe the ‘land **of** Canaan.’ The genitive qualifier appears nowhere in the flood narrative.

‘Under the whole heaven’

Outside of the flood narrative, the expression ‘**under the whole heaven**’ is used **6 times** in the Old Testament and in every single case the expression refers to what is ‘**global**’ or ‘**universal**’. Notice the following examples:

Job 28:24:

*“For He [God] looks to the **ends of the earth** and sees **under the whole heavens**”*

Job 41:11:

“Who has preceded Me that I should pay him? Everything under the whole heaven is Mine.”

The identical expression is used in the flood story in **Genesis 7:19, 20**.

‘The face of all the earth’

The flood did not simply cover ‘**the earth**’ or ‘**all the earth**’ but rather ‘the **face of all** the earth’ (Genesis 7:3; 8:9). This is identical to the phrase that is used in **Genesis 1:29** (where God gave man “every seed bearing plant on the **face of the whole earth**”) which is clearly universal in scope.

The last appearance of this phrase in Genesis is in the Tower of Babel episode (11:4, 8 and 9: where after the Tower of Babel God scattered them over the **face of the whole earth**). The table of nations in Genesis 10 indicates that the meaning of this expression is universal in scope because nations from Asia, Africa and Europe are mentioned in the list.

‘All things He had created and made’

In describing the destruction by the flood, we are told that God destroyed **all living things** which **He had created and made**. Did God only create **all** living things in the **Valley of Mesopotamia** or did he create living things **all over the world**?

The expression ‘*living things*’ is used repeatedly in the creation account to describe **everything** that God created—humans, birds, cattle, creeping things and beasts of the earth. The words ‘created’ and ‘made’ are used in the creation account to describe what God made globally at the very beginning (Genesis 2:3). A global creation demands a global destruction.

All Embracing Language

The language of **Genesis 7:17-19** is unmistakable:

*“Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters **increased** and lifted up the ark and it **rose high** above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters **prevailed** and **greatly increased** on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. ¹⁹ And the waters **prevailed exceedingly** on the earth, and **all** the **high** hills under the **whole heaven** were covered.”*

Genesis 7:21:

*“And **all** flesh died that moved on the earth: Birds and cattle and beasts and **every** creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and **every** man.”*

Genesis 7:23-24:

*“So He destroyed **all** living things which were on the face of the ground: Both **man** and **cattle**, **creeping thing** and **bird** of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. **Only** Noah and those who were with him in the ark **remained alive**.” ²⁴ And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.*

This type of language would be meaningless if this was simply a local flood in the Valley of Mesopotamia.

'Be fruitful and multiply'

The identical command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth was given to both Adam and Noah thus linking the creation and flood stories (1:28; 9:1). The command at the beginning was clearly global in nature and therefore the command after the flood was global as well.

Above and Below the Earth

At creation God organized the world (not the valley of Mesopotamia) into three distinct zones—heaven, earth and seas (Genesis 1:6-9). At the flood water from heaven above and water from the deep below filled the middle portion just like before creation (Genesis 1:2).

Destruction in same order as creation

The destruction of all living things took place in the same order as at creation—earth, birds, cattle, wild animals, swarming creatures and finally man (Genesis 7:21-23). The flood undid what God created at the beginning in the exact same order. A local flood cannot undo a universal creation.

Genesis 7:21:

“And all flesh died that moved on the earth: [1] birds and [2] cattle and [3] beasts and [4] every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and [5] every man.”

Reversal of Creation

At the beginning God placed water above and below the earth (Genesis 1:6, 7). Did he only place this water above and below Mesopotamia?

Genesis 7:11 indicates that at the flood God reversed the creation process. God brought water down from above and up from below.

Liberal theologian Gerhard Von Rad stated:

“We must understand the flood, therefore as a catastrophe involving the entire cosmos. When the heavenly ocean breaks forth upon the earth below, and the primeval sea beneath the earth, which is restrained by God, now freed from its bonds, gushes up through yawning chasms onto the earth, then there is destruction of the entire cosmic system, according to biblical cosmology. The two halves of the chaotic primeval sea, separated—the one up, the other below—by God’s creative government (chap. 1:7-9) are again united.” Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis, p. 128

Another theologian affirms:

“The flood was an undoing of creation: the cosmic waters overwhelmed the earth, coming through the windows of the sky and the fountains of the great deep beneath the earth.” Tikva Frymer-Kensky, quoted in Creation, Catastrophe and Calvary, p. 84

The much respected Old Testament theologian, Umberto Cassuto adds his voice to the choir:

*“We see water everywhere, as though the world had reverted to its **primeval state** at the dawn of creation, when the waters of the deep submerged everything.” **Umberto Cassuto**, Creation, Catastrophe and Calvary, p. 84*

So in the flood we see a **reversal of creation**. We know this because the **same terms** are used in connection with the flood as with the creation story: earth, heavens, deep (1:2; 7:11; 8:2), waters, breath of life, birds after their kind, animals after their kind, creeping thing after its kind, male and female, surface of waters (7:18), dry land (7:22), face of all the earth (1:29; 7:4), deep (1:2; 7:11; 8:2)

All the High Mountains

Genesis 7:19 is too clear to be misunderstood: “and **all** the high hills **under the whole heaven** were covered.” The highest peaks in Mesopotamia are some **17,000 feet high** and therefore in order for these peaks to be covered with the waters they must have been at least 17,000 feet high! But at this height the waters would have covered far more than the Valley of Mesopotamia; they would have covered **the whole world**. If the mountains were **formed by the flood** then the flood must have been of **cataclysmic proportions** anyway.

Furthermore, the ark rested on the **mountains of Ararat** which are a **number of miles** from the valley of Mesopotamia. **How did the ark get there** if the flood was in the Valley of Mesopotamia?

Animals in the Ark

If the flood was local, why would it be necessary to take animals into the ark? Why was it necessary for God to preserve the species of plants and animals? The answer is obvious. If this had been a local flood, the animals could have migrated to a safer place and the plants could have survived in other locations (**Genesis 7:13**).

No Resting Place

If the flood was local why did the birds that Noah sent out find no resting place? If this was a mere local flood they could have flown beyond the Valley of Mesopotamia to find a resting place (**Genesis 8:7-10**).

A Gigantic Ship

The ark was of **huge proportions** compared to the boats which were used in that period to **navigate the Tigris and the Euphrates** rivers. The ark that Noah built was comparable to the **Queen Elizabeth**. This was not a **riverboat** but rather a **trans-Atlantic**. Why would such a ship be needed if this was some local flood?

The Rainbow

God's promise in **Genesis 8:21, 22** and His **rainbow** in **Genesis 9:12, 13** would be meaningless at best and **false at worst** if this was some local flood, because there have been many local floods in the course of human history. Remember **Katrina**?

If the flood was local, why did God say he would **never destroy the world by a flood again**? There have been multiple local floods in history after Noah's day so we are left with only two options: Either God did not keep His word or the flood was universal.

New Testament Reasons

The Word Kosmos

The **New Testament authors** understood the flood to be a **historical and worldwide** event. If we question the account of **Moses**, we must question also the integrity of **Jesus, Peter** and **Paul** (Matthew 24:37-39; II Peter 2:5; Hebrews 11:7; II Peter 3:4-6). Peter went so far as to state that those who were skeptical of the flood were also **skeptical of creation**. Peter clearly understood both creation and the flood to be global events.

The New Testament terminology is crystal clear that this was a **universal** flood. When the New Testament refers to the flood in Noah's day it does not use the word **gues** ('earth') but rather **Kosmos** ('world' John 3:16; Hebrews 11:7; II Peter 2:5, 6). The New Testament **has a word for 'earth'** but this is not the word that is used when the New Testament authors refer to the global flood in Noah's day.

Technical terms

Just as in the Old Testament, the New Testament uses a technical term to describe the flood of Noah's day, **kataklysmos**. Matthew 24:38, 39; Luke 17:27; 2 Peter 2:5. The common word for 'flood' is **potamos** (Revelation 12:15, 16; Matthew 7:25, 27) or **plemmura** in Luke 6:48.

The Testimony of Ellen White

Ellen White makes it abundantly clear that an **ordinary boat or ship** could never have **withstood this catastrophe**. Note how she describes the cataclysmic and catastrophic nature of the flood:

*"Water appeared to come from the clouds in **mighty cataracts**. Rivers broke away from their boundaries, and overflowed the valleys. **Jets of water** burst from the earth with **indescribable force**, throwing massive rocks **hundreds of feet** into the air, and these, in falling, buried themselves deep in the ground." Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 99*

*"From the highest peaks men looked abroad upon a **shoreless ocean**." Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 100, 101*

Historical Reasons

According to the book of Genesis **all the nations** of the world **descend** from the survivors of the flood (Genesis 10:32; 11:1). If this is true we would expect all civilizations to harbor memories of such a cataclysmic event.

Memories of a worldwide flood appear in **every culture** and region of the planet. This strongly suggests that these stories all go back to an **original source**. There are over **200 flood stories** from all across the world. Notably, the flood stories **nearest to the dispersion at Babel** have the **closest parallels** to the Biblical story.

Two of the most famous flood stories are **Athrahasis**, **Epic of Gilgamesh** portions of which are in the British Museum. I have personally seen these tablets.

There are certain common elements in the two stories:

- There is a **hero**
- The gods **warn** of a coming flood
- The hero **builds a boat** for family and animals
- The flood lasts **7 days** in *Athrahasis*
- Animals are **sacrificed** after the flood
- The gods regretted their act and **reinstated society**

In the **Epic of Gilgamesh**, the hero, Utnapishti sends out a **dove**, then a **swallow** and finally a **raven** and the tenants of the ark finally disembark when the **raven does not return**.

Three possibilities with regard to the Babylonian flood stories:

- The **Babylonians borrowed** from the Bible. This is not possible because the **Babylonian story was written before** the book of Genesis.
- The **Bible borrowed** from the Babylonian story. This option is not possible because the outlook of the two stories is totally different.
- They both go back to an **original memory** but the Babylonian story became corrupted in the process of transmission from generation to generation.

Geological Reasons

The **fossil record** and the **topography** of the earth indicate that at some time past there was a major worldwide catastrophe.

Rugged mountains, **oil**, **coal** and **fossils** can be found all over the world in **great quantities**. Fossil animals have been found **upright with food still in their mouths**. Other fossils reveal animals which **were crushed and dismembered** before they were buried. Only a **global catastrophe** can satisfactorily explain this.

Also one would expect the **simpler life forms** to be buried deep and the more complex last because the more complex would be able **to make an escape to higher ground**. Remember: The rise of the flood waters did not occur in a moment. The waters **rose for 150 days** so

sedimentation must have taken place gradually.

There are **seismic zones, volcanoes, oil and coal deposits** in **many areas of the planet** and these are the result of the flood. Ellen White explains:

*“At this time **immense forests** were buried. These have since been **changed to coal**, forming the extensive coal beds that now exist, and also yielding **large quantities of oil**. The coal and oil frequently ignite and burn beneath the surface of the earth. Thus rocks are heated, limestone is burned, and iron ore melted. The action of the water upon the lime adds fury to the intense heat, and causes **earthquakes, volcanoes, and fiery issues**. As the fire and water come in contact with ledges of rock and ore, there are heavy explosions underground, which sound like muffled thunder. The air is hot and suffocating. **Volcanic eruptions follow**; and these often failing to give sufficient vent to the heated elements, the earth itself is convulsed, the ground heaves and swells like the waves of the sea, great fissures appear, and sometimes cities, villages, and burning mountains are swallowed up. These wonderful manifestations will be more and more frequent and terrible just before the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, as signs of its speedy destruction.” Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 108, 109*

If, as Genesis clearly states (Genesis 1:2), the waters **covered the earth before creation week**, there was certainly **enough water** to cover the earth again by bringing the water down from above and up from below. One hurricane can drop **25-30 inches of rain in less than a day and this on a local level**.

Imagine how much water would fall when it is raining from above and below **all over the world for forty days and forty nights** (7:12) and the waters actually prevail for **150 days** (7:24). It was only after 150 days that the waters **began to recede** (8:2, 3)

Ellen White describes what happened to the earth after the flood:

*“The **entire surface** of the earth was changed at the Flood. A third dreadful curse rested upon it in consequence of sin. As the water began to subside, the hills and mountains were surrounded by a vast, turbid sea, Everywhere were strewn the dead bodies of men and beasts. The Lord would not permit these to remain to decompose and pollute the air, therefore He made of the earth a vast burial ground. A **violent wind** which was caused to blow for the purpose of drying up the waters moved them with **great force**, in some instances even **carrying away the tops of the mountains** and heaping up trees, rocks, and earth above the bodies of the dead.” PP 107, 108*

The Big Issue: How much authority does God’s Word have for you? Do you trust God’s Word above everything else?

Ellen White describes how the intelligentsia of the antediluvian world looked upon Noah. Notice that her choice of words is reminiscent of what evolutionary scientists are saying today about those who teach a literal seven day creation and a global flood:

*“The preacher of righteousness was proclaimed to be an **ignorant fanatic**, who had **no knowledge** of the **laws of nature**. The **wise men** of that time argued that it was an impossibility*

for water to **rise high enough** to deluge the world. They **reasoned from scientific principles** that the world could not be destroyed, and that no attention should be paid to the predictions of Noah. This philosophy, or science falsely so called, exalted the law above the Lawgiver, and things created above the Creator.” The Review and Herald, September 25, 1888.

Yet notice the simplicity of Noah’s faith in God’s word irrespective of the apparent absurdity of his preaching:

“How simple and childlike amid the unbelief of the world, was the faith of Noah. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. His faith was perfected by his works. He gave to the world an example in believing just what God had said.” SI, December 20, 1877

We are told that Noah was not able to answer all of the objections of the great men of the day and yet he could proclaim the word of God because he knew the Creator:

“Noah could not controvert their philosophies, or refute the claims of science so called; but he could proclaim the word of God; for he knew it contained the infinite wisdom of the Creator, and, as he sounded it everywhere, it lost none of its force and reality because men of the world treated him with ridicule and contempt.” Reflecting Christ, p. 323

Faith and Doubt

We are reminded once again of what the Lord’s servant had to say about faith and doubt:

“If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 69

*“Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step farther, and **doubt the existence of God**; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to **beat about upon the rocks of infidelity**. These persons have lost the simplicity of faith. There should be a **settled belief** in the **divine authority of God's holy word**.”* Counsels on Education, p. 193

*“True science and Inspiration are in perfect harmony. False science is a something independent of God. It is **pretentious ignorance**. This deceptive power has captivated and enslaved the minds of many, and they have chosen darkness rather than light. They have taken their position on the side of unbelief, as though it were a virtue and the **sign of a great mind to doubt**, when it is the sign of a mind **too weak and narrow** to perceive God in His created works.”* Testimonies for the Church, volume 4 pp. 584, 585

#4 - THE EYES OF WISDOM

Abominations

There are several views of **antichrist** in the Bible: The abomination of desolation, the king of the north, the harlot, the beast, the man of sin and the little horn (in Daniel 7 and 8)

I want to focus on one characteristic that all of these portrayals of the antichrist have **in common**—his reliance on the **tradition of men** rather than on the **Word of God**

For some **background** let's begin our study in Ezekiel 8.

Abominations in Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel is describing the spiritual condition of Jerusalem shortly before it was destroyed in the year 586 B. C. Ezekiel 8 is known as the 'abominations chapter' because it lists the abominations that were being committed in the city by the very ones who claimed to be God's people.

Ezekiel 8:15, 16:

*"Then He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater **abominations** than these." ¹⁶ So He brought me into the **inner court of the Lord's house**; and there, at the door of the **temple of the Lord**, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their **backs toward the temple** of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were **worshipping the sun** toward the east."*

Before the **first** destruction of Jerusalem Ezekiel emphasized that these **abominations** would lead to its imminent **desolation (Daniel 9:2, 18)**. Thus we have 'the abomination of desolation.'

In Ezekiel **11:22, 23** the prophet predicted how the Shekinah forsook the temple and lingered for a few moments on the Mount of Olives east of the City:

*"So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. ²³ And the glory of the Lord **went up from the midst of the city** and stood on the mountain, which is on the **east side of the city**."*

The Shekinah then left and the city was desolated by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Abomination in Matthew

Matthew 24:15-16: The word '**Abomination**' is also used in connection with the **second desolation** of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A. D. (it would be well to remember also that the apostasy and destruction of Jerusalem will have another fulfillment globally at the end of time. We will come back to this when we look at Revelation 17):

*"Therefore when you see the '**abomination of desolation**,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the **holy place**" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."*

Ellen White explains the nature of the abomination:

*"When the **idolatrous standards** of the **Romans [which had an eagle and a golden wreath and the Roman armies worshiped them]** should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the **warning sign** should be **seen**, those who would escape must make no delay" THE GREAT CONTROVERSY, p.26*

Abomination during the 1260 Years

Daniel 11:30 affirms that during the **1260 years** the **king of the north** would 'have **intelligence** [be in agreement] with them that **forsake the covenant**'

Deuteronomy 4:12-13: How would a **Jew** have understood the expression '**forsake the covenant**'?

*"And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ So He declared to you **His covenant** which He commanded you to perform, the **Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on **two tablets of stone**."*

Daniel 11:31 explains that during the 1260 years of papal dominion, the **abomination of desolation** would once again set up:

*"And **forces** shall be mustered by him, and **they** [king of the north and the forces] shall defile the **sanctuary fortress**; then **they** [king of the north and forces] shall take away the daily sacrifices [the word 'sacrifices' is not in the original], and place there the **abomination of desolation**."*

Abomination in Revelation 17

Revelation 17:1, 2, 4: describes the great apostasy that will exist in the religious world in the **end time**.

*"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the **great harlot** [an apostate church] who sits on many*

waters [the multitudes], ² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were **made drunk** [fermented or corrupted wine] with the **wine of her fornication**." "...⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a **golden cup full of abominations** [the wine is composed of her abominations] and the filthiness of her **fornication**."

The **wine** of Babylon is composed of her **abominations**. And what is meant by the word 'abominations'? Scripture uses this word to describe several things: **Idol worship**, teaching that it is not necessary to **keep the law**, attempting to **speak with or to the dead**, saying it is alright to eat **unclean foods** and teaching that one can be saved by his/her **own works**. But the greatest of all abominations, as we have seen in Ezekiel, is **worshiping the sun**.

The Beast has a Human Number

Revelation 13:18: The **beast** speaks **blasphemies**, persecutes the **saints**, tramples on the **heavenly sanctuary**, has a **mark** of its authority and rules for **42 months**

"Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the **number of a man** [better: 'the number of man']: His number is **666**." [We will come back to this number at the end of this presentation]

The Man of Sin and Lawlessness

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7: These verses describe the Man of **Sin** who leads out in the **mystery of lawlessness**

"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the **man of sin** is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the **temple of God**, showing himself that **he is God**. . . ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."

The Conniving Little Horn of Daniel 8

Daniel 8:23, 25: Describes the same little horn as Daniel 7. The little horn is described as a king with a fierce countenance. The picture is one of a leader who is a **sly, slithery, cunning** and **crafty politician** who uses crafty **human wisdom** and knowledge to deceive. Let's notice how various versions translate the key phrases of Daniel 8:23, 25:

NKJV: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features who **understands** sinister schemes. . . ²⁵ through his **cunning** he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule."

NIV: ". . . a stern-faced king, a **master of intrigue**. . . He will cause **deceit** to prosper"

NASB: ". . . insolent and **skilled in intrigue**. . . and through his **shrewdness** he will cause **deceit to succeed** by his influence."

ESV: “. . . A king of bold face, one who understands riddles . . . by his cunning he shall make deceit prosper.”

NET: “. . . a rash and deceitful king . . . by his treachery he will succeed through deceit.”

God’s Word: “. . . stern-looking king who understands mysterious things. . . He will cleverly use his power to deceive others successfully.”

NRSV: “. . . a king of bold countenance shall arise, skilled in intrigue . . . by his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand.”

Living Bible: “. . . an angry king shall rise to power with great shrewdness and intelligence . . . he will be a master of deception.”

American Standard Version: “. . . king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences . . . and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.”

Amplified: “. . . a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark trickery and craftiness shall stand up . . . and through his policy he shall cause trickery to prosper in his hand”

Meaning of the Word

The word is used in several places in the Old Testament and it always refers to using crafty intelligence to unlock riddles, mysteries or dark sayings. It is used eight times to describe Samson’s riddles (Judges 14), of the Queen of Sheba who came to test Solomon’s wisdom with her hard questions (I Kings 10:1).

Proverbs 1:5-6

“A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,⁶ to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles.”

But in Daniel 8 we are not dealing with the sanctified use of wisdom and intelligence but rather a corruption of it.

Ezekiel 28:2-5, 12, 17: The word is used of Lucifer who corrupted his wisdom

“Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the midst of the seas,’ yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god³ (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you!⁴ With your wisdom and your understanding you have gained riches for yourself, and gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;⁵ by your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches). . .¹² You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. . .¹⁷ Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.”

Daniel 7:8

Daniel 7 portrays a **sequence of powers**. Let's review them:

- Babylon (605-539 B. C.)
- Medes and Persians (539-331 B. C.)
- Greece (331-168 B. C.)
- Rome (168 B. C. – 476 A. D.)
- Divisions of Rome (476-538 A. D.)
- Little horn (538 A. D. – 1798 A. D. 'eyes like a man')

But the text that especially interests us in this study is **Daniel 7:8** where the little horn is described as having 'eyes like the eyes of a man.'

*"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were **eyes** like the **eyes of a man**, and a mouth speaking pompous words."*

It is important to remember that Daniel 7 contains a **symbolic portrayal**. The four **beasts**, the **heads**, the **wings**, the **sea**, the **winds**, the **ten horns**, the little **horn**, the **mouth**, the **actions** and the **time period** of the little horn are all symbolic and therefore the **eyes** must also represent something beyond the literal.

The **question** is: What do eyes represent, **symbolically speaking**? Let's see.

Symbolic of Wisdom

It is common knowledge that 'eyes' in Scripture are employed to represent '**wisdom**' '**knowledge**' or '**understanding**.'

Many examples of this exist. With relation to God, eyes are employed to depict His **all encompassing knowledge and understanding**, that is, His **omniscience**.

Symbolic Meaning of Eyes

Ezekiel 10:12-13: The four living creatures that are in charge of administrating the universe are full of eyes because they carry on God's work with absolute wisdom.

*"And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, were **full of eyes** all around."*

Revelation 5:6: Seven eyes represent the omniscience of the Holy Spirit

*"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and **seven**"*

eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

Zechariah 4:10

“For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

Proverbs 15:3

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”

Hebrews 4:12, 13

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

With respect to **man**, eyes are also employed to represent **discernment, knowing** or **understanding** but in contrast to God, man’s understanding is **finite**,

Ephesians 1:15-19

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

Proverbs 3:19-21

“The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; ²⁰ By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew. ²¹ My son, let them not depart from your eyes—keep sound wisdom and discretion.”

Acts 26:17-18

“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

Even today the owl is employed as a symbol of intelligence or understanding because of its

large eyes! We use the expression: “**wise as an owl**”. **Graduation cards** use the owl frequently. The eyes of owls are fixed but they can turn their necks up to 270 degrees

Now, if ‘eyes’ represent ‘**wisdom**’ or ‘**understanding**’, then **human** eyes must represent **human** wisdom or knowledge. This must mean that the little horn depends on **human wisdom** or understanding even though it claims to exercise the power and **prerogatives of God!**

And what is its primary objective?

Daniel 7:25:

*“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to **change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”*

Numerical Value of the Greek Alphabet

Alpha	α	1
Beta	β	2
Gamma	γ	3
Delta	δ	4
Épsilon	ε	5
Stigma	ζ	6
Zeta	ζ	7
Eta	η	8
Theta	θ	9
Iota	ι	10
Kappa	κ	20
Lamda	λ	30
Mu	μ	40
Nu	ν	50
Xi	ξ	60
Omicron	ο	70
Pi	π	80
Ro	ρ	100
Sigma	σ ς	200
Tau	τ	300
Upsilon	υ	400
Phi	φ	500
Chi	χ	600
Psi	ψ	700
Omega	ω	800

Jesus (Iesous)

Jesus: I (10) E (8) S (200) O (70) U (400) S (200) = 888

Cross (stauros)

Cross: ST (6) A (1) U (400) R (100) O (70) S (200) = 777

Tradition (*Paradosis*)

P (80) A (1) R (100) A (1) D (4) O (70) S (200) I (10) S (200) = 666

Notice the interesting picture of the priest at the voting in the Colombian presidential election:

- The photographer and newspaper are oblivious to the meaning of the number
- A priest comes to the table
- His sleeve covers up one of the numbers
- The photographer is at that particular table at that particular moment

#5 - THE JEWISH VIEW OF TRADITION

Introduction

Last time we studied one characteristic of the little horn that rarely is touched upon, the eyes like the eyes of man. We saw that in the Bible eyes represent wisdom so this system must base its teachings on human wisdom.

How can the Roman Catholic Church justify teaching doctrines and commanding observances that are not found in the Bible either explicitly or implicitly? Doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of Mary, Mary as the mediator, celibacy of the priesthood, the sacrifice of the Mass, Lent, infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, the Confessional, indulgences, praying to the dead, reciting the Rosary, not eating meat on Fridays, bowing before idols, keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath, etc? The answer is: Because of its concept of tradition.

The Jewish View of Tradition

In order to better comprehend how the Roman Catholic Church can teach these human traditions that have no foundation whatever in the written word of God, we must go back to the times of Christ and examine the Jewish view of divine revelation in the times of Christ, particularly the view of the Scribes and Pharisees. We shall find in our study that the Roman Catholic Church has replicated the Jewish view!

The Jewish view of tradition in the days of Christ was composed of three complimentary elements:

- A deposit of Tradition composed of the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions given orally to Moses
- A transmitting mechanism to pass on in a trustworthy manner from generation to generation the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- A living teaching office in each generation that could, infallibly, explain, apply, amplify and bring forth from the deposit of Tradition the truths that were found in the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- The key words are 'tradition', 'receive', 'pass on' 'hold'

The Deposit of Revelation (written and oral): the word Tradition in singular

The Scribes and Pharisees believed that when God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai, He not only

revealed what Moses **actually wrote in the Pentateuch** but He also revealed **many other oral traditions** which **Moses did not commit to writing**.

Thus, in their view, there was an **original deposit** [singular] of truth revealed by God which was composed of **two sources**: the **[1] written revelation** and the **[2] unwritten traditions**.

Equal Authority

Though **at first** the **written** revelation was given a **position of higher authority** than the unwritten traditions, in the time of Christ as can be clearly seen in the gospels, the **unwritten traditions** had assumed a **position of higher authority** than what Moses actually wrote.

The **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** expresses the Jewish concept of tradition in this way:

*“It [tradition] means, in Jewish theology, the Oral teachings of the elders (distinguished ancestors from Moses on) which were revered by the late Jews **equally** with the written teachings of the Old Testament, and were regarded by them as equally authoritative on matters of belief and conduct.”*

A Trustworthy Transmitting Agent

It was necessary to have some mechanism whereby the **written** traditions in the **deposit of tradition** could be **preserved** and **passed on** from generation to generation in a **trustworthy manner**.

Passing on the written word was not a major problem. But **how could** the oral traditions that were passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation be **kept pure**? As is well known, with the **passing of time**, things that are passed on **orally** become **distorted** and are therefore **untrustworthy**.

The scholars came up with the idea that it was necessary to have an **accurate and faithful transmitting agent** that would keep the oral traditions **pure and unadulterated** as they were passed along from **generation to generation**.

And so the **Pharisees** believed and taught that the written and unwritten revelation was reliably **passed on from generation to generation** by an **unbroken succession** of highly educated **spiritual leaders** beginning with Moses and culminating with the **rabbis** in the days of Christ.

The **Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary** captures well this Jewish concept of tradition:

*“The Talmud [a compilation of the oral traditions] which was at first mainly oral, grew out of the conviction that **besides the written Torah** (Law)--the Bible--there had been from the first, from the divine communications to Moses at Sinai onward, an **oral Torah handed down** from **generation to generation**, which lawgiver and prophets sought to engrave on the hearts of the people. As teacher **succeeded** teacher in the synagogue and school, their teachings and often conflicting opinions, all based on the Bible, were treasured. Through long practice the power of*

memorizing had been greatly strengthened, but the accumulated mass of oral traditions and teachings became so unwieldy that the best memory could not be trusted [therefore they were written in the Talmud].” (The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, volume 4, p. 511)

Josephus, who was himself a Pharisee and who was born in the year 37 A. D. described this transmission process:

‘. . . The Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the law of Moses.’ (Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 13.10.6, emphasis supplied)

Marcel Simon, in his excellent book, Jewish Sects, offers a helpful explanation of the words of Josephus. After stating that the Pharisees went beyond the written text of the Scriptures and qualified and expanded it, Simon remarks:

“In their eyes [of the Pharisees], the tradition that they invoked in doing this [of going beyond the text], far from opposing the Torah [the five books of Moses], was the natural prolongation and explication of it. This tradition went back to Moses himself, just as did the Torah. An oral law was revealed to Moses along with the written law, and this oral law was faithfully transmitted from generation to generation.” (Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 34-35)

Process of Transmission

Simon then quotes the famous words in the Talmud found in Aboth [“the Fathers”] 1:1-2:

“[1] Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to [2] Joshua, and Joshua to the [3] elders, and the elders to the [4] Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the [5] Great Synagogue [after the Captivity].”

Simon remarks that after describing this process of transmission in verses 1, 2 the Talmud provides (in verses 2-13) an “. . . enumeration of several pairs of teachers (‘Antigonus of Soko received the Law from Simeon the Just, etc.’) whose historical existence is more or less certain. The list finally ends with Hillel and Shammai, famous leaders of schools [in the days of Christ] (Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai).” (Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), p. 35)

It is obvious that the Talmud is attempting to prove that oral tradition was transmitted in an unbroken succession of scholars from the time of Moses till the days of the Scribes and Pharisees in the days of Christ.

George Foot Moore, in his monumental work, Judaism, concurs with Simon:

‘The Book of the Law of Moses might be a final law, but it was not a finished law. Many things which had . . . been generally observed and were regarded as necessary and binding were not contained in it at all. Some of these figure in later times as ‘traditions of Moses from Sinai’; others as ordinances of Ezra, or of the prophets of his time, or the men of the Great Synagogue, or more indefinitely of the Soferim, or the Early Elders.’ (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1 (New York:

Schocken Books, 1974), p. 30

*“In tracing the **continuous tradition** of the Law from **Moses** to the days of **Shammai and Hillel**—[1] Moses, [2] Joshua, the [3] elders, the prophets,—the Pirke Abot has, [4] The prophets **transmitted** it to the men of the [5] Great Synagogue.’ The last in the prophetic **succession** were **Haggai and Zechariah**, who had a leading part in the rebuilding of the temple, and **Malachi**, whom the Jews made a contemporary of the other two. These **were the link** between their predecessors in the prophetic tradition and the **Great Synagogue**. . . . ‘Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi **received the tradition** from the prophets; the men of the Great Synagogue received it from Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.’” (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 31)*

The question is, **how** did the men of the **Great Synagogue pass on** these traditions to the succeeding generations? Moore answers:

*“Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue were believed to have introduced these institutions and regulations by ordinances having the force of law, as their **successors**, the Soferim, and the Rabbis who **succeeded** them did.”* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 33)

Thus, in the minds of the compilers of the *Talmud*, the process of unbroken transmission was complete: [1] **Moses**, [2] **Joshua**, [3] **Elders, Prophets, the men of the Great Synagogue** [of which Ezra was the originator, according to the Jewish interpretation of Ezra 7:11-12], **Soferim or later elders** and finally the **Rabbis**.

Moore underlines the fact that *‘to be of any use such a **chain of tradition** must possess **unbroken continuity**.’* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, p. 35)

A Living Teaching Office

But there was one more element in the view of Tradition that was upheld by the Scribes and the Pharisees. It was not sufficient to have a deposit of tradition and a transmitting agent. It was also necessary, according to the Pharisees, to have a **living voice** or **teaching office** (the word ‘rabbi’ means ‘teacher’) **in each generation** to **authoritatively interpret, explain, draw forth** and **apply** the Tradition to contemporary life.

Thus it was not sufficient to have a [1] **deposit of written and oral tradition** and for this tradition to [2] have been passed on **authentically** from generation to generation. Also needed was a [3] **living interpreter** who could define what was a genuine tradition and what was not.

According to **Simon** this idea of the transmission of oral tradition:

*“. . . made Pharisaism the **living element** of official Judaism. It was the **tradition** that allowed the Pharisees to justify all the **elaborations** that they introduced regarding the scriptural precepts, on the level of **observances** as well as on the level of **doctrine**.”* (Simon, pp. 35-36)

Thus the Scribes and the Pharisees became the authoritative **living interpreter** of both the **written** Torah and the **oral** traditions which had been **handed down** from previous generations.

Oral Tradition More Reliable

Moore also points out that these regulations of oral law came to be **venerated even more than the written** Revelation:

*“The **distinction** between the ordinances and decrees of the **Scribes** (Soferim) and the **biblical law** is constantly made in the juristic literature but the authority of the Scribes or the Learned to make such regulations was not questioned, nor was the transgression or neglect of their rules a venial offense. On the contrary, a **more serious matter** is made of the words of the Scribes than of the words of the (written) law.”* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, pp. 33-34)

The Voice of God

In the same vein, **Dr. Geike** in his excellent work, Life and Words of Jesus, states:

*“From their pupils the rabbis demanded the most profound **reverence**. ‘The honor,’ says the Talmud, ‘due to a teacher **borders on that due to God** [very similar to Roman Catholicism]’ The common discourse of a rabbi was to be revered **as much as the law**. To dispute with one, or to murmur against him, was a crime **as great** as to do the same toward the **Almighty**. Their **WORDS** must be received as **WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD**.”* (Quoted in, E. J. Hibbard, The Two Laws: Object Function and Duration of Each (Mountain View, California, reprinted in 1989 by Leaves of Autumn), p. 46.

The teachings of the rabbis were also reckoned **practically infallible** as we can see from the following quotation also from Dr. Geike:

*“It was a principle universally accepted that ‘the sayings of the scribes were **weightier** than those of the law.’ The **transmission** of the as-yet-unwritten opinions of former rabbis--forming an ever-growing **mass of tradition**--was the special aim of the rabbis of each age. . . . Once uttered, a rabbi’s words remained **LAW FOREVER** [unchangeable and infallible], though they might be **explained away** and **virtually ignored** while affected to be followed.”* (Quoted in, E. J. Hibbard, The Two Laws: Object, Function and Duration of Each (Mountain View, California, reprinted in 1989 by Leaves of Autumn), p. 46

The role of this teaching office, however, went **far beyond** just **explaining** and **applying** the oral and written revelation to everyday life.

The rabbis frequently **brought forth religious practices and beliefs** which were **not implicitly** and **much less explicitly** contained in the written revelation. When they did this, were they claiming to bring forth **new truth not previously revealed** by God? Not at all! They taught that these truths were **part of the deposit of unwritten traditions** which God had previously revealed to Moses. They believed that though these traditions had not previously been brought to light, they **had been**

preserved in the deposit Tradition which had been **handed down** from generation to generation. In other words, the rabbis believed that they were merely bringing these truths to light or **discovering them in the deposit** of oral tradition.

The Issue of Authority to Teach

This brings us to the issue of **authority**. The Pharisees believed that only an **elite cadre** of carefully **trained theological experts** guided by God could **bring to light, explain, interpret and apply** the **written** Scriptures as well as the **unwritten** traditions.

This was what Jesus was speaking to when He remarked in **Matthew 23:2** that the Pharisees ‘sit on Moses’ **cathedra**.’ Concerning the meaning of this expression, the Roman Catholic **Jerome Bible Commentary** states:

*“The phrase is most probably a **metaphor** for the **authority** of the scribes to teach. In rabbinical tradition the interpretation of the Law was carried on in a scribal tradition that theoretically went back through an **unbroken chain** of scribes to Moses. This view is, of course, **entirely unhistorical**.”* (The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 2 (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 102)

When the Pharisees and Scribes **spoke ex-cathedra**, that is, ‘**from (Moses’) the throne**,’ their word was to be accepted as **final**. The **general populace** was required **to accept** these rabbinical views and interpretations and to **obey them without question**. Thus the **genuine meaning** of both the written Scriptures and the unwritten traditions could **only be determined by the rabbis** and the general populace had **no say in the matter**! Concerning this, George Foot Moore remarks:

*“Learning is the privilege of leisure. Husbandmen and artisans are the support of the social structure, but, wholly occupied as they must be in their several callings and often highly expert in them, they have **no time** for the wide-ranging studies that make the **scholar**. They are therefore **not qualified** to be called to the council or to take the lead in the assembly; they cannot sit on the judge’s bench, for they **do not understand the principles of the law**, and cannot bring out the rights of the case and a just judgment. Different is the case of the man who gives his whole mind to it, and concentrates his thought on the law of the Most High. He will seek out the **wisdom of all the ancients** and occupy himself with the study of the prophecies, and pay attention to **expositions of famous men**, and will penetrate into the elusive turns of parables. He will search out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and will be versed in the enigmas of parables.”* (George Foot Moore, **Judaism**, volume 1, pp. 40-41)

In this way the religious leaders had **absolute control** over **every person** and **sphere of public and private life**. Whoever **questioned the opinion or authority** of the rabbis was in danger of being **cast out of the synagogue**, as we can see from the story of the man who was **born blind** (John 9:22)

Jesus spoke to this problem in **Matthew 23:13** when He accused the Scribes and Pharisees of **closing the kingdom** of heaven to men as well as to themselves:

*"But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **shut up the kingdom** of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."*

What Jesus meant by this is found in the parallel passage of **Luke 11:52** where He accused the doctors of the law of **taking away** the **key of knowledge** which would have opened the door to the kingdom of heaven both to them and to the people:

*"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the **key of knowledge**. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."*

Stranglehold on the People

Jesus' rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees in **Matthew 23** had the intention of **breaking the stranglehold** which they had over the people. George Foot Moore writes about the **influence** which the Scribes and Pharisees had **on the people**:

*"The **Scribes**, on the other hand, had the support of the **Pharisaean** party, to which many of them belonged. The Pharisees in turn had **the people behind them**, and with the growing importance of the synagogue, the **professionally educated class** gained increasing influence as the teachers of the people." (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 43)*

Flavius Josephus adds this testimony:

*"The Pharisees have delivered to the **common people** by **tradition** from a **continuous succession of fathers** certain legal regulations which are **not written** in the Law of Moses, on which account the Sadducean sort rejects them, affirming that what is written is to be regarded as law, but what comes from the **tradition of the fathers** is not to be observed. On this point the Pharisees **have the mass of the people on their side**, and they have **so much influence that anything they say, even against a king or a high priest, finds ready credence.**" (Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, xvii.2.4., paragraph 41)*

Ellen White concurs with this in the following words:

*"The interest of the people in Christ and His work had steadily increased. They were charmed with His teaching, but they were also **greatly perplexed**. They had **respected** the priests and rabbis for their intelligence and apparent piety. In all religious matters they had ever **yielded implicit obedience to their authority**. Yet they now saw these men trying to cast discredit upon Jesus, a teacher whose virtue and knowledge shone forth the brighter from every assault. . . . Through their reverence for **tradition** and their **blind faith in a corrupt priesthood, the people were enslaved.**" (The Desire of Ages, p. 611, 612)*

Scholarship in Christ's Day

From the extant sources we know that **much of the scholarship** in Christ's day **consisted in quoting**

from what previous **rabbis and fathers** had said about Scripture and tradition rather than from the **Scripture itself**. Thus the **opinions of men** took the place of the **Word of God**. Regarding the teaching method of the rabbis Ellen White makes this telling statement:

*“The teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees was a continuous repetition of **fables and childish traditions**. Their opinions and ceremonies rested on the authority of **ancient maxims and rabbinical sayings** which were frivolous and worthless. Christ did not dwell on weak and insipid saying and **theories of men**.”* (The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, ‘The Word of God,’ August 22, 1907)

She states further:

*“The teaching of the scribes and elders was **cold and formal**, like a lesson learned by rote. They explained the law as a matter of custom, but no authority from God sanctified their utterances, no holy inspiration stirred their own hearts and those of their hearers.”* (The Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, p. 176)

#6 - A CASE STUDY: MARK 7:1-13

Review

In our last study together I read a series of quotations from Flavius Josephus, Marcel Simon and George Foot Moore on the Jewish concept of tradition in the times of Jesus. The Jews in the days of Christ believed in:

- A deposit of Tradition which was composed of the writings of Moses and the unwritten oral traditions
- A transmitting mechanism to pass on in a trustworthy manner from generation to generation the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions. This required an unbroken succession of religious scholars who kept the Tradition pure.
- An authoritative, authentic living teaching office in each generation composed of professional scholars who could, infallibly explain, apply, amplify and bring forth from the deposit of Tradition the truths that were found in the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- The key words are ‘tradition’, ‘receive’, ‘pass on’ ‘hold’
- Talmud in *Aboth* [“the Fathers”] 1:1-2 describes the process of transmission:

“[1] Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to [2] Joshua, and Joshua to the [3] elders, and the elders to the [4] Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the [5] Great Synagogue [after the Captivity].”

Verses 3-13 then affirm that the men of the Great Synagogue passed the Tradition by an unbroken succession of scholars from Simeon the Just in the days of Ezra to Shammai and Hillel in the days of Christ

Today we will study a passage in the gospel of Mark where this view of tradition is vividly described.—Mark 7:1-13. Here is the passage with certain key expression emphasized:

Mark 7:1-13

“Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. ² Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat

unless they wash. And there are **many other things** which they have **received** and **hold**, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not **walk** according to the **tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"⁶ He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.'⁷ And in vain they worship teaching as **doctrines the commandments of men.**'⁸ For laying aside the **commandment of God**, you **hold** the **tradition of men** — the washing of pitchers and cups, and **many other such things** you do."⁹ He said to them, "All too well you reject the **commandment of God**, that you may keep **your tradition.**"¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'¹¹ But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother: "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—'(that is, a gift to God dedicated to the temple),¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,¹³ making the **word of God of no effect** through your **tradition** which you have **handed down**. And **many such things** you do."

Technical Terminology

We are immediately struck by the technical terminology we have already found in rabbinical sources:

- '**Hold**ing to the **Tradition of the elders**' (7:3)
- 'Which they have **received** to **hold**' (7:4)
- '**Tradition of the elders**' (7: 5)
- 'hold the **tradition** of men (7:8)
- 'your **tradition**' (7:9)
- '**tradition** which you have **handed down**' (7:13)

The word 'received' indicates a process of transmission from previous generations as does the word 'tradition'. In fact, the word 'tradition' is used only in the singular in this passage indicating that we are dealing here with a single body or deposit of tradition of which the ceremonial washing of hands is only one element.

The word 'hold' also indicates the existence of a deposit which they preserved in their day from previous generations.

A Group of Spies

Verse 1:

"Then the **Pharisees** and some of the **scribes** came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem."

Why did these religious leaders come from Jerusalem to where Christ was teaching?

RH March 8, 1898:

*“This deputation was sent from Jerusalem for the express purpose of **watching Jesus**, that something might be found with which to **accuse** him.”*

It is important to identify **who** these religious leaders were and what their **motivation** was.

Jesus made it clear that these religious leaders relished the **recognition their position** accorded them. Their religion consisted mainly of **externals**—with the intention of **impressing the populace**. According to Jesus they enjoyed being **called ‘rabbi’** (Matthew 23:7) and **‘father.’** Regarding this, Jesus warned that the people should call no one on earth their ‘father.’ (Matthew 23:9). Jesus also accused them of **devouring the material possessions** of the widows (Matthew 23:14) and of reciting **long repetitious prayers learned by rote** (Matthew 6:5, 6; 23:14). He also rebuked them for **showing off their piety** and generosity in giving **alms to the poor** (Matthew 6:1-2).

The Issue: Ritual Cleansing

Verse 2:

*“Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with **defiled**, that is, with **unwashed hands**, they found fault.”*

The issue here is **not hygiene**. It is obvious that for health reasons, people should wash their hands before they eat. The point of conflict here is over ritual or ceremonial cleansing which required a tedious process of multiple ablutions. Were these washings required by the **written Torah**? No! The next verse tells us where the practice came from.

Regarding the nature of the conflict in Mark 7 we are told in The Desire of Ages, p. 395:

*“As before, the ground of complaint was His disregard of the traditional precepts that **encumbered** the law of God. These were professedly designed to guard the observance of the law, but they were regarded as **more sacred than the law itself**. When they came in collision with the commandments given from Sinai, **preference was given to the rabbinical precepts**.”*

Verse 3:

*“For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, **holding** the **tradition of the elders**.”*

We see clearly that the practice did not come from the **written Scriptures** but rather from the **tradition of the elders**.

Verse 4:

*“When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are **many other things** which they have **received** and **hold** [grasp firmly or to hold fast so as not to let go], like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.”*

The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament explains the perceived source of these regulations:

*“The absolute authority of the tradition is guaranteed primarily by its **unbroken derivation** from Moses and even from God himself (°Abot 1.1)”*

Three times in the passage we are told that the issue is **much broader** than just ritual cleansing. It really involves ‘many other such like things’ (7:4, 8, 13). In other words, this specific conflict is only the **tip of the iceberg**.

Rigorous Casuistry

Not only from Mark 7 but also from passages such as **Matthew 23** we know that the rabbis had developed a system of **rigorous casuistry** which became so **burdensome and oppressive** that no one could obey it. Regarding this Ellen White remarks:

*‘The requirements had become **so complicated** that it was **impossible** for them to be fulfilled.’ (The Desire of Ages, p. 617)*

No dimension of life escaped their **prescriptions** and **proscriptions**. Most often the rabbinical regulations **majored in minors** and **minored in the ‘weightier matters** of the law.’ (Matthew 5:20; 23:23; 23:16-22). Jesus spoke of these burdens too heavy to bear in **Matthew 23:4**.

Marcel Simon remarks about this oppressive casuistry:

*“. . . the code of the Torah [writings of Moses], which regulated both the individual and the collective life of the Jews, did not make provision for every possible situation. This was the task of the doctors of the law and their students. In the light of sacred Scripture, they were to **fix the conduct** to be followed in **each individual case**. The Pharisees’ casuistry balanced on the edge of **formalism**, and sometimes fell over into it. It seems to us to have been overly **meticulous and hairsplitting** in the extreme. When we read of discussion on **minute points**, of quibbles, and of distinctions bordering on the **ludicrous**, we sometimes feel that we are in the presence of a **sterile form of mental gymnastics**.” Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects, p. 32*

Ellen White is in agreement with Simon:

*“They occupied men’s minds with **trifling distinctions** and turned their attention from essential truths. Among other things the people were required to strain all the water used, lest it should contain the smallest insect, which might be classed with the unclean animals. Jesus, contrasting these **trivial exactions** with the magnitude of their actual sins, said to the Pharisees, ‘Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.’” (The Desire of Ages, p. 617)*

Verse 5:

“Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the

tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

Regarding the meaning of the expression 'tradition of the elders', the Roman Catholic **Jerome Bible Commentary** says:

*"A rabbinical term for the body of **unwritten laws** that the Pharisees considered as **equally binding** as the **written Torah**" (The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 1, 'The Gospel According Mark', 42:42, p. 36)*

*"When Christ came to this world He found the Jewish people burdened with a heavy weight of traditions and ceremonies which the religious teachers had **handed down** from **generation to generation**. So great was the **mass of tradition** brought in that the commandments of God were made of none effect." Manuscript Releases, volume 20, p. 338*

*"Many of the Jewish traditions were of so **trifling** and **worthless** a character as to **cheapen** their whole religion, and these traditions were **handed down** from **generation to generation**, and were regarded by many **as the word of God**. Human inventions, which were constantly becoming more foolish and inconsistent, were placed **on an equality with the moral law**, until at the time of Christ's first advent, **pure doctrine** had given place to **false ideas**." Signs of the Times, January 3, 1900*

The fact that the Scribes and Pharisees **expected Jesus to compel His disciples** to obey the tradition of the elders indicates that this tradition had **the force of law** (Mark 7:5). The rabbis were expected to compel their disciples to obey this tradition by **precept and example**.

Jesus Confronts the Leaders

The way **Jesus faced** this conflict is significant. He quoted the **written Word** of God **three times**.

The **first quotation** comes from **Isaiah 29:13**. Here Jesus provides a vivid description of religion of the scribes and Pharisees:

Verse 6:

*"He answered and said to them, 'Well did **Isaiah prophecy** [Isaiah 29:13] of you hypocrites, as **it is written**: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.'"*

The text in Isaiah 29:13 continues:

*"... and their **fear** toward Me is taught by the commandment of men. . ."*

Jesus interprets this text in an interesting way. He links the idea of fear with **worship**. In Revelation 14:6, 7 the words 'fear' and 'worship' are linked together. The word 'fear' refers to a deep and reverent respect that leads us to worship God.

Verse 7:

*“**And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”***

- The issue in the passage is crystal clear. The battle is between the written word of God and the unwritten tradition of men.
- Even more specifically the conflict is between the commandments of God and the traditions of men.
- Finally, the conflict is over true worship and vain worship
- Are these the very issues that will divide the world into two groups at the end of time? The book of Revelation indicates clearly that the final conflict will revolve around the commandments and worship (Revelation 12:17; 14:6, 7, 9-11). We will further pursue this thought in a future lecture in this series.

According to Jesus, to teach the commandments of men in place of the word of God constitutes vain worship. In other words, when we follow the commandments of men instead of the word of God our worship is empty, useless and pointless.

Though Jesus did not quote Isaiah 29:14 it is loaded with meaning because it reveals that the traditions of men came from the so called wise men and prudent men of Israel, in other words, from the scholars:

“Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”

Verse 8:

*“**For [your worship is vain because] laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”***

Notice the contrast is between the commandment of God and the tradition of men which contradicts the commandment of God

Verse 9:

“He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition”

Once again the contrast is between the commandment [singular] of God and your tradition.

A Living Example

Ellen White explained the law of Corban (which means, ‘dedicated’)

“An undutiful child had only to pronounce the word “Corban” over his property, thus devoting it to”

God, and he could retain it for his own use during his lifetime, and after his death it was to be appropriated to the temple service. Thus he was at liberty, both in life and in death, to **dishonor and defraud** his parents, under cover of a **pretended devotion to God.**" *The Desire of Ages*, p. 396

Verse 10:

"For **Moses** [by whose authority they claimed to teach while sitting on the Cathedra of Moses] **said** [written Scripture], 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. [Exodus 21:17]"

This **second quotation** that Jesus used comes from **Exodus 20:12**: "Honor your father and your mother."

Here Jesus actually quotes the **fifth commandment** of God's holy Ten Commandment Law. Thus their tradition of Corban contradicted the Law of God.

The third quotation is from Exodus **21:17** where Moses said:

"And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."

The **purpose** of the second and third quotations is to prove that the commandments of men which come from the deposit of **unwritten Tradition** really **conflict** with the written **commandments of God** which come from the deposit of the **written** Word of God. The Scribes and Pharisees claimed to teach by the **authority of Moses** and yet they **contradict what Moses wrote!**

Jesus, in unmistakable language, shows that the tradition of **Corban** which is found in the **body of unwritten tradition**, not only **conflicts** with the **fifth commandment** of the **written law** of God but actually **abolishes it!!**

Verses 11-12:

*"But **you say** [notice the contrast], 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God dedicated to the temple), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother."*

Closing Argument

Mark 7:13

*". . . making the **word of God** of no effect through **your tradition** [not God's word] which you have **handed down**. And **many such things** you do."*

Reaction of the Religious Leaders

The logic of Jesus was impeccable and could **not be refuted**. They hated Jesus because he came at them with the **written word** and with the **Ten Commandments** and showed that their traditions

contradicted the word of God and the Ten Commandments (will this happen at the end as well?). Notice that because Jesus stood upon the written word of God and not upon tradition he was despised by the religious leaders. (Does this sound familiar?):

*“The deputies from Jerusalem were **filled with rage**. They could not accuse Christ as a violator of the law given from Sinai, for He spoke as its **defender against their traditions**. The great precepts of the law, which He had presented, appeared in striking contrast to the petty rules that men had devised.” The Desire of Ages, p. 397*

Because Jesus required **proof from Scripture**, the religious leaders turned the people against Him and eventually led them to **seek His destruction**. In a very real sense, what led the Jews to reject Christ was their view of tradition. This will happen at the end of time as well.

*“The law of God **unmixed with human tradition** was presented by Christ as the great standard of obedience. This **aroused the enmity** of the rabbis. They had set **human teaching** above God's word, and had turned the people away from His precepts. They would not give up their **man-made commandments** in order to obey the requirements of the **word of God**. They would not, for the truth's sake, sacrifice the pride of reason and the praise of men. When Christ came, presenting to the nation the claims of God, the priests and elders denied His right to interpose between them and the people. They would not accept His rebukes and warnings, and they set themselves to turn the people against Him and to compass His destruction. Christ Object Lessons, pp. 304, 305*

*“They [the Pharisees] presumed to make **nice distinctions** as to the **comparative guilt** of various sins, passing over some lightly, and treating others of perhaps less consequence as unpardonable. For a **money consideration**, they excused persons from their vows. And for **large sums of money** they sometimes passed over aggravated crimes. At the same time these priests and rulers would in other cases pronounce severe judgment for trivial offenses.” The Desire of Ages, p. 616*

#7 - JESUS AND THEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

Introduction

This morning we sang *A Mighty Fortress is our God* which has come to be known as the **Battle Hymn** of the **Protestant Reformation**. Every time I sing this hymn (which is a **paraphrase of Psalm 46**) I can almost see Martin Luther standing before **Emperor Charles V** and the **luminaries** of the Roman Catholic Church at the **Diet of Worms** with a **face like flint** and refusing to recant his teachings. In his own words:

*"... my conscience is captive by the **Word of God**. Therefore I cannot and will not recant, since it is difficult, unprofitable and dangerous indeed to do anything against one's conscience. So help me God. Amen."*

Protestantism and Catholicism

If there is **one word** that **epitomized** the Protestant Reformation it is the word: **SOLA**

- Sola **Gracia** (grace alone)
- Solo **Christo** (Christ alone)
- Sola **Fide** (faith alone)
- Sola **Scriptura** (Scripture alone)
- **Soli Deo Gloria** (God's glory alone)

In **contrast** to the motto of the Protestant reformers, the Catholic Church **was and is** characterized by the **three-letter** word **AND**:

- Grace **and** human effort
- Christ **and** Mary
- Faith **and** works
- Glory to God **and** to the holy ones who achieved sainthood by their good works
- Scripture **and** tradition

Ellen White has explained the meaning of *Sola Scriptura*:

The Great Controversy, p. 595: “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the **Bible only**, as the standard of **all doctrines** and the basis of **all reforms**. The opinions of **learned men**, the deductions of **science**, the **creeds** or decisions of **ecclesiastical councils**, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the **majority**--not **one nor all** of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of **religious faith**. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should **demand** a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support.”

Immediately after this statement Ellen White explains how religious leaders are able to control their members:

The Great Controversy, p. 595: “Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention **to man** in the place of God. He leads the people to look to **bishops**, to **pastors**, to **professors of theology**, as their guides, instead of **searching the Scriptures** to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can **influence the multitudes** according to his will.”

The **truth** of these statements is confirmed by our **great exemplar**, Jesus Christ. If the religious leaders of Christ’s day had not interposed the world would have seen the greatest revival ever:

The Desire of Ages, p. 205: “If the priests and rabbis had not interposed, His teaching would have wrought such a reformation as this world has never witnessed.”

How did **Jesus face** and settle **theological controversies** that he had with the **ministers** and **theologians** of His day? Did he ever appeal to **tradition** or quote the great **scholars**?

The Authority of Jesus

As far as we know, **not even once** did Jesus ever quote a **rabbi or scholar as an authority**. It is a well known fact that Jesus **did not attend** the schools of the rabbis. He was **home schooled**. In this way He **remained undefiled** by the traditions of the scholars.

Concerning His childhood education we are told in *The Story of Jesus*, p. 30:

“**God Himself** by His Holy Spirit instructed Mary **how** to bring up His Son. **Mary taught Jesus** from the Holy Scriptures and He learned to **read and study** them for Himself.”

The **Spirit of Prophecy explains** that His **mother**, in order to **prevent controversy**, attempted to **convince Jesus** to follow the traditions of the elders but Jesus would have none of it. He always appealed to the clear statements of written Scripture:

Signs of the Times, August 6, 1896: “When the priests and rulers came to Mary to persuade her to **force Jesus** to give allegiance to their ceremonies and traditions, she felt **much troubled**. But peace

and confidence came to her troubled heart as her Son presented the **clear statements of the Scriptures** in upholding His practices.”

Thus, whenever Jesus defended his **teachings** or his **actions**, He always appealed to the **written words** of the **Old Testament**. Though He was aware of the traditions of the rabbis, He **never approvingly quoted** any of these supposed **oral sayings** of Moses or the fathers.

Counsels to Parents, pp. 446, 447: “Jesus and John were represented by the educators of that day as **ignorant** because they had not learned in the **schools of the rabbis**; but the God of heaven was their Teacher and all who heard were astonished at their knowledge of the **Scriptures**.”

From the time of his **first visit** to the temple, Jesus appealed to the **written word** of God. Regarding this incident, Ellen White remarks:

The Desire of Ages, p. 85: “In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact. Because He was so gentle and unobtrusive, the scribes and elders supposed that He would be **easily influenced** by their teaching. They urged Him to receive the **maxims and traditions** that had been **handed down** from the **ancient rabbis**, but He asked for their authority in **Holy writ**. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the **inventions of men**. Jesus seemed to **know the Scriptures** from beginning to end and He presented them in their true import. The rabbis were **ashamed** to be instructed by a child. They claimed that it was **their office to explain** the Scriptures and that it was His place to accept **their interpretation**. They were **indignant** that He should stand in opposition to **their word**.”

The Temptation

Jesus **set the tone** at the **very beginning** of His ministry. When Jesus was **tempted** of the devil, **four times** His defense was, ‘it is **written**’

Matthew 4:3-10: God had **just said** that Jesus was His beloved Son at the **baptism** and now **Satan came with doubt** and Jesus **detected him** right away!

Temptation # 1:

“Now when the tempter came to Him [as an angel of light], he said: “**If** You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”⁴ But He answered and said, “**It is written**, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the **mouth of God**”

Temptation # 2:

“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,⁶ and said to Him, “**If** You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For **it is written**: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, [he omitted the words: ‘to keep Thee in all Thy ways’. Satan quoted the promise without the condition upon which God could fulfill the promise] ‘and, ‘In their hands they shall bear

you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "**It is written again:** 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God [God had said that Jesus was His Son and to demand proof would show a lack of faith] (verses 5-7)

Temptation # 3: Satan now reveals his **true identity**

"Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For **it is written**, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (verses 8-10)

Beginning of His Ministry

When Jesus **began His public ministry** He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, turned to the book of Isaiah, chapter 61:1, 2, read the passage and then said:

Luke 4:21 (KJV):

*'This day is this **scripture** fulfilled in your ears'*

The Writings of Moses

John 5:45-47: Jesus affirmed that Moses **wrote** about Him

"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Mark 7

In my last sermon we studied Mark 7 and found that Jesus quoted **three Scriptures** to contradict their tradition:

- **Isaiah 29:13:** *"These people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me" and "In vain do they worship me teaching as precepts the commandments of men."*
- **Exodus 20:12** *"Honor your father and your mother"*
- **Exodus 21:17** *"He who curses father or mother, shall surely be put to death"*

The Great Commandment in the Law

A certain young scholar came to **test** Jesus by asking what he needed to do to **inherit eternal life**. Jesus answered:

Luke 10:26: 'What is written in the law [this would be the Torah]? How do you read?' The young man quoted **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Leviticus 19:18** to which Jesus said:

"You have answered correctly, do this and you will live."

Two Witnesses

The enemies of Jesus came to Him and said: "Your testimony is not valid because you are your own witness and the testimony of one witness cannot confirm any word."

Jesus answered their objection with the written word:

John 8:17, 18: "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

Sabbath Conflict

Matthew 12:3-5: Jesus used the example of David in the written word to defend His style of Sabbath observance

"But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"

Dispute over Marriage

Matthew 19:4-6: When a dispute over divorce surfaced, Jesus resolved the issue by referring to the written Scriptures

"And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:16: When the Pharisees commanded Jesus to rebuke those who were praising Him at the Triumphal Entry, Jesus justified their behavior by quoting Scripture:

"And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise'?"

Cleansing the Temple

His cleansing of the temple was justified by the written Word:

Matthew 21:13:

*"And He said to them, "**It is written**, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

When any religious dispute was to be settled, Jesus quoted from the written Word, never from tradition!

The Vineyard Workers

After telling the parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus asked the religious leaders:

"What will the father do to those who threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him?"

They answered:

"He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

Then Jesus quoted Scripture to prove that they were the vinedressers:

Matthew 21:42 (KJV):

'Did ye never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'

Dispute over the Resurrection

Jesus had a dispute with the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They presented to Him an imaginary scenario: There were seven brothers and one of them married a certain woman. He died and his brother married his wife. All seven of them died after having married the same woman. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection?

Mark 12:24-27

"Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God [the Scriptures teach the resurrection and God has the power to resurrect dead people]? ²⁵ For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶ But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead [because he will resurrect Abraham, Isaac and Jacob], but the God of the living. You are therefore

greatly mistaken."

The Son of David

While Jesus was in the temple for the last time he had several discussions with the religious leaders:

Matt 22:41-45: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² saying, "What do you think about the Christ [Messiah]? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." ⁴³ He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying [quoting Psalm 110:1]: ⁴⁴ 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? ⁴⁵ If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"

If David calls his son Lord, then the son has to be greater than David and cannot be David's literal son.

After the Resurrection

After His resurrection Jesus explained His mission to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus by quoting from the written Scriptures

Luke 24:25-27: The Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

"Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Luke 24:44-47: The apostles in the Upper Room

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

People Wonder at Jesus' Teaching

The people were constantly wondering where Jesus had gotten His knowledge, not having studied under any of the great rabbis:

Matthew 13:54:

"When He had come to His own country [Nazareth], He taught them in their synagogue, so that

they were astonished and said, "**Where did this Man get this wisdom** and these mighty works?"

John 7:14-15:

"Now about the middle of the feast [of Tabernacles] Jesus went up into the temple and taught. ¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, "**How does this Man know letters, having never studied?**"

John 7:45, 46:

"Then the **officers** came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered: "**No man ever spoke like this Man!**"

Authority of Jesus Questioned

The **right or authority** of Jesus to act and speak was **constantly questioned** by the Scribes and Pharisees:

Mark 11:27, 28 (KJV):

'And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, ²⁸ and say unto him: By **what authority** doest thou these things? And **who gave thee this authority** to do these things?'

It is clear here that the religious leaders believed that **the right to teach was an authority which belonged to them alone** and which they alone could delegate.

After telling the Story of the man who built his house on the **rock** and the man who built his house on the **sand** we find the following words:

Matthew 7:28, 29 (KJV): 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were **astonished** at his doctrine; ²⁹ for He taught them as one having **authority**, and **not as the scribes.**'

#8 - THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW OF TRADITION (PART 1)

Review

In our study of the rabbinical concept of divine revelation we have noticed that there were certain key concepts and terms:

- 'Tradition'
- 'handed down'
- 'passed on'
- 'received'
- 'hold'
- 'unbroken succession'
- Implicit obedience of the people
- Religious leaders sat on Moses' Cathedra

In our study today we are going to see that there is a striking similarity between the rabbinical view of tradition in the apostate Jewish church in the days of Christ and that of the apostate Roman Catholic Church of today.

Unbiblical Doctrines and Practices

Have you ever wondered how the Roman Catholic Church can justify beliefs and practices which do not have even one iota of support in the written Scriptures?

Where, for example, is the written Biblical evidence for infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, prayers for the dead and to the dead, the canonization of saints, purgatory, limbo, the celibacy of the priesthood, the sale of indulgences, the worship of images, the rosary, the immaculate conception, Mary as mediatrix, Mary as the mother of God, the assumption of Mary, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the observance of Sunday, Lent, auricular confession, among other things? The answer is found in the Roman Catholic view of tradition.

Things not Written

The Roman Catholic view of Tradition is virtually identical with that of the Jews in the time of Christ. However, instead of God giving the information to Moses the Roman Catholic Church says that Christ gave the oral information to Peter who presided over the college of the apostles.

Roman Catholic scholars underline the fact there were many teachings and actions of Jesus which were never recorded in the Gospels. This much is true for we are told explicitly told in John 21:25 and 20:30-31 that Jesus said and did many things which were not written in the Gospel of John.

But nowhere are we told in the New Testament that God intended to pass on orally from generation to generation the things that were not written. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Peter and the apostles preserved these oral traditions absolutely pure and passed them on orally and infallibly to their successors.

These successors in turn preserved all of these oral traditions and transmitted them with 100% inerrancy to the next generation and the next to the next in unbroken succession to our very day.

The Roman Catholic Church employs Matthew 16:18, 19 to support this view. They say that Christ built His church upon Peter, the rock, and then gave him the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose.

What this means in Roman Catholic theology, is that Peter presiding over the college of the apostles, was given the authority to preserve, define and explain, not only the written Word of God but also the unwritten Tradition.

Unbroken Chain of Successors

Notably, according to Roman Catholic theology, when the Pope in union with the college of bishops, speaks on faith and morals, he speaks ex-cathedra, that is, from Peter's throne and thus his teachings have infallible apostolic authority.

How it Works

Let's put this in practical terms. The Roman Catholic Church believes that there is a [1] deposit of revelation which is contained in the written Scriptures of the New Testament and in the unwritten Tradition that was given orally to Peter. They also believe that there is a [2] transmitting element to pass on divine revelation from generation to generation in an authoritative and trustworthy way. This transmitting mechanism is known as apostolic succession where one generation of bishops places their hands in ordination upon the next generation of bishops in unbroken succession from the time of Peter till our day.

The Teaching Office or Magisterium

But, according to Roman Catholic theology, there must also be an authoritative **living voice** in the church in **every generation** to **bring forth, define, explain, interpret** and **amplify** Tradition both in its written and unwritten form. This is done by the **Magisterium** or **teaching office** of the church, an **elite cadre of scholars especially trained** for the task.

We can immediately see the **striking similarity** between this Roman Catholic view and the Jewish concept in Christ's day. They are **virtually identical**.

Implicit and Unquestioning Obedience

According to Roman Catholic theology, when the Pope speaks **ex-cathedra**, that is, from **Peter's throne**, his pronouncements must be accepted as **final and infallible**. That is to say, the faithful must render **implicit obedience** to the will of the Pope and the **Magisterium** under pain of being **anathema or excommunicated!**

This is, as we have seen, precisely what was **expected of the populace** in the days of Christ. This is the way in which the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church **exerts full and total control** over the masses and governs them according to its will.

You say: "Where is the evidence that the Roman Catholic Church believes this?"

The clear evidence is found in the official declaration of the Roman Catholic Church on divine revelation at **Vatican Council II** and also in **The Catechism of the Catholic Church**. But before we turn to these sources let's examine what was taught at the **Council of Trent**.

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent was celebrated from 1545-1563 and had the express purpose of arresting the growing Protestant Reformation. The Council had some very definite things to say about divine revelation:

*"The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of **Trent**,--lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost,--seeing clearly that this truth and discipline [of the gospel] are contained in the written books, and the **unwritten** traditions which, **received** by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have **come down** even unto us, **transmitted as it were from hand to hand**; [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, **receives** and venerates with an **equal affection** of piety and reverence, all the books of the Old and New Testament--seeing that one God is the **author of both**--as also the said **traditions**, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a **continuous succession**."*
Council of Trent, Session IV (April 8, 1546) Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures, translated

by, Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom (4th ed., revised, New York: Harper, 1919), volume 2, pp. 79, 80.

The **Profession of Faith** of the Council of Trent states:

*“The apostolic and ecclesiastical **traditions** and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I most firmly admit and embrace. I likewise accept Holy Scripture **according to that sense which our holy Mother Church has held and does hold**, whose [office] is to judge of the **true meaning and interpretation** of the Sacred Scriptures; I shall never accept nor interpret it otherwise than in accordance with the **unanimous consent** of the **Fathers**.”* Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle or Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 82

Dei Verbum (“The Word of God”)

Now let’s examine the declaration on the **Word of God** that was drafted at **Vatican Council II** and promulgated by **Pope Paul VI** on **November 18, 1965**. This is not the **personal opinion** of the pope but rather the declaration of an **ecumenical council** which gives it **apostolic authority**. Please notice how the key expressions mirror the Jewish view of tradition in the days of Christ:

*“But in order to keep the gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles **left bishops** as their **successors**; **handing over** their own **teaching office** to them and so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by a **continuous succession** of preachers until the end of time. Therefore, the apostles **handing on** what they themselves had **received**, warn the faithful to **hold fast** to the traditions which they have learned either by **word of mouth** or by **letter** (cf. 2 Th. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith **handed on** once and for all (cf. Jude 3). Now what was **handed on** by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life, and the increase in faith of the People of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and **hands on** to **all generations** all that she herself is, all that she believes.*

*“This **tradition** which comes from the apostles **develops** in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a **growth in understanding** of the realities and the words which have been **handed down**. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51), through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have **received** through **episcopal succession** the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the **fullness of divine truth** until the words of God reach their **complete fulfillment** in her. . . .*

*“Hence there exist a close connection and communication between **sacred tradition** and **sacred Scripture**. For **both of them**, flowing from the **same divine wellspring**; in a certain way **merge into a unity** and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is*

consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the **successors of the apostles**, sacred tradition **hands on** in its **full purity** God's word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, these **successors** can in their preaching **preserve** this word of God faithfully, **explain** it, and make it more **widely known**. Consequently, it is **not from sacred Scripture alone** that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both **sacred tradition** and **sacred Scripture** are to be accepted and venerated with the **same sense** of devotion and reverence.

“Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form **one sacred deposit** of the word of God, which is committed to the Church. **Holding fast** to this **deposit**, the entire holy people **united with their shepherds** remain always steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers (cf. Acts 2:42, Greek text), so that in **holding to**, practicing, and professing the heritage of the faith, there results on the part of the bishops and faithful a remarkable common effort.

“This task of **authentically interpreting** the word of God whether written or **handed on**, has been entrusted **exclusively** to the **living teaching office** of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This **teaching office** is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been **handed down**, **listening** to it devoutly, **guarding** it scrupulously, and **explaining** it faithfully by divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this **one deposit of faith** everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

“It is clear, therefore, that **sacred tradition**, **sacred Scripture**, and the **teaching authority** of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that **one cannot stand without the others**, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.” (Walter M. Abbott., general editor, The Documents of Vatican II, ‘Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,’ (The America Press, 1966), pp. 115-118

Roman Catholic Catechism

We will now turn to **article #2** of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which deals with ‘the transmission of divine revelation’:

76 “In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was **handed on** in two ways:

--**orally** ‘by the apostles who **handed on**, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves **received**--whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit,’

--**in writing** ‘by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the

inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing’.

. . . continued in apostolic succession

77 In order that the full and living Gospel might always be **preserved** in the Church the apostles **left bishops** as their **successors**. They gave them ‘their own position of teaching authority.’ Indeed, ‘the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a **continuous line of succession** until the end of time.’

78 This living **transmission**, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called **Tradition** since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through **Tradition**, ‘the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and **transmits** to **every generation** all that she herself is, all that she believes.’ ‘The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this **Tradition**, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer.’

One common source. . . .

80 ‘Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound **closely together** and communicate one with the other. For both of them **flowing out from the same divine well-spring**, come together in some fashion to form **one thing** and move towards the same goal.’ Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own ‘always, to the close of the age.’

. . . . two distinct modes of transmission

81 ‘Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in **writing** under the breath of the Holy Spirit.’

‘And [Holy] Tradition **transmits** in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles of Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It **transmits** it to the **successors** of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may **faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it** abroad by their preaching.’

82 As a result the Church, to whom the **transmission** and **interpretation** of Revelation is entrusted, ‘**does not derive her certainty** about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures **alone**. **Both** Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with **equal sentiments** of devotion and reverence.’

Apostolic Tradition and ecclesial traditions

83 The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus teaching and example what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition

The heritage of faith entrusted to the whole of the Church

84 The apostles entrusted the 'Sacred deposit' of the faith (the depositum fidei), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. 'By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing, and professing the faith that has been handed on there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful.'

The Magisterium of the Church

85 'The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.' This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.'

86 'Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication, and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.'

Significant Words of Pius XII

Concerning this Magisterium, Pope Pius XII once stated:

"Together with these sacred sources of Scripture and tradition, God has given a living magisterium to His Church, to illumine and clarify what is contained in the deposits of faith obscurely and implicitly." Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 83.

Additional Quotations

"Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition contain the Word of

God, the precious gems of revealed truths.

“Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of **equal sacredness**, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, **Tradition is to us more clear and safe.**” Joseph Faa di Bruno, Catholic Belief, revised by Louis A. Lambert (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1884), p. 45

“Some of the truths which God has revealed and which have always been taught by the Catholic Church are **not contained in the Bible**. These truths have **come down** to us by what is called **oral tradition**; that is, they have been **handed down** by word of mouth. By Catholic Tradition, therefore, we understand all those truths which the Church **received** from Jesus Christ and the Apostles, but which are **not found in the Bible**. These truths we firmly believe, because they were revealed by God and are proposed to us **by the Church**.

“Some of the truths that have been **handed down** to us by **Tradition** and are **not recorded** in the Sacred Scripture, are the following: that there are just seven Sacraments; that there is a Purgatory; that, in the New Law, Sunday should be kept holy instead of the Sabbath; that infants should be baptized, and that there are precisely seventy-two books in the Bible.

“The truths of Catholic Tradition have been **handed down** in the Church by means of the writings of the **‘Fathers of the Church,’** as well as by the **decrees of Councils**, by approved Creeds and by **the prayers and ceremonies** of the Church. These ancient writings and institutions show plainly what has been the faith of the Church from the earliest times.

“However, it is only the **infallible teaching office** of the Church that **secures us** against error as to the truth contained in Tradition as well as in the Holy Scripture. **The voice of the Church is the voice of God.**” Francis J. Butler, Holy Family Series of Catholic Catechisms (Boston: Thomas J. Flynn & Co., 1904), p. 63.

“From all of which it must be abundantly clear that **the Bible alone is not a safe and competent guide** because it is not now and has never been accessible to all, because it is **not clear and intelligible to all**, and because it does **not contain all the truths** of the Christian religion.

“The simple fact is that the Bible, like all **dead letters**, calls for a **living interpreter [yes, the Holy Spirit does this, not the Magisterium]**. . . . Just as the Supreme Court is the authorized **living interpreter** of the constitution, so the Catholic Church is the **living authoritative interpreter** of the Bible. She has been the **preserver and custodian** of the Bible through the centuries, and she **interprets it for us** in the name and with the authority of Jesus Christ.” (John O’Brien, The Faith of Millions (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), pp. 137, 138)

“By **TRADITION** we do not mean a mere report, a hearsay, wanting sufficient evidence to deserve belief; or a local tradition started by men, and therefore merely human, as were those traditions of

the Pharisees condemned by our Lord; but we mean a Tradition first coming from God, continually taught, recorded, and in all desirable ways kept alive by a **body of trustworthy men successively chosen** in a divine, or divinely appointed manner, well instructed, and who are, **as a body**, protected by God **from teaching what is wrong**, or **handing down** unfaithfully to others the doctrine committed to them.” Joseph Faa di Bruno, Catholic Belief, revised by Louis A. Lambert (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1884), pp. 39, 40

“Since the truths contained in Scripture and those **handed down** by Tradition both come from God, Scripture and Tradition are of **equal value** as sources of faith. Both deserve the same reverence and respect. **Each alone** is sufficient to establish a truth of our holy faith. . . .

“Scripture and Tradition are called the **remote rule of faith**, because the Catholic **does not base his faith directly on these sources**. The **proximate rule of faith** is for him [**the Catholic**] the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which **alone** has received from God the authority to **interpret infallibly** the doctrines He has revealed, whether these be contained in Scripture or in Tradition.” John Laux, A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies, part 1 (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1936), pp. 50, 51

“Because the origin of our faith is **not the Bible alone**, but the **Church** which gives us both the written and the unwritten word. . .

“So in the New Law, Catholics believe **some things not in the Scriptures**, although wholly **in accord with them**, because of the **infallible** witness of the Church as to their divine or apostolic origin. Why do Protestants accept the Scriptures as inspired? Why do they honor the first day of the week instead of the seventh? Why do they baptize children? Contrary to their principles, they must **look outside the Bible** to the voice of tradition, which is not human, but **divine**, because guaranteed by the divine, **infallible** witness of the Catholic Church.” Bertrand L. Conway, The Question Box Answers (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 75, 76.

Thus the Roman Catholic Church claims that the Bible is **subservient** to her rather than **she to the Bible**. Regarding this, **Keith Fournier** states:

“I believe the Bible is the Book of the church, not that the church is the church of the book.” (Keith Fournier, Evangelical Catholics, p. 17)

Regarding this supremacy of the **church over the Bible**, John A. O’Brien—for many years a professor of theology at the University of **Notre Dame**, has stated:

“She [the Church] is not the child of the Bible, as many non-Catholics imagine, but **its mother**. She derives neither her existence nor her teaching authority from the New Testament. She **had both before the New Testament was born**: she secured her being, her teachings, her authority directly

from Jesus Christ.

“If all the books of the Bible and all the copies thereof were **blotted out**, she would still be in possession of all the truths of Christ and could **still continue to preach** them as she did before a single word of the New Testament was written; for those truths are **deep in her mind, heart and memory**, in her liturgical and sacramental life, in the traditions, written and unwritten, which go directly back to Christ.” (John A. O’Brien, The Faith of Millions (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), p. 129.

Important Conclusions

From the foregoing **quotations** and from the **empirical observation** of contemporary Roman Catholicism, we can reach the following conclusions:

Roman Catholicism has a virtually **identical view** of divine revelation as did **apostate Judaism** in the days of Christ. The three elements of a [1] **sacred deposit written and oral**, a [2] **transmitting mechanism** and an [3] authoritative **living interpreter** are all present in both systems. Strikingly, the **terminology is virtually identical** as well:

- ‘Tradition’
- ‘handed down’
- ‘passed on’
- ‘received’
- ‘hold’
- ‘unbroken succession’

In both systems the oral traditions supposedly go back to an **original source**. In the case of the Jews, that source was **God through Moses**; in the case of the Roman Catholic Church it was **Christ through Peter**.

Amazingly when the Pope speaks **ex-cathedra** his word is considered infallible and final. When the rabbis spoke from **Moses’ cathedra** their word was considered **infallible** and final as well.

In both systems the oral tradition and the written word were in theory given **equal authority** but in **actual practice** oral tradition transcended the authority of the written word and frequently contradicted it.

In Judaism, the people were expected to **render implicit and unquestioning submission** to the theological views of the scholars. It was believed that the common man could not correctly interpret the Scriptures so he must depend upon the interpretation of the ‘experts’. Any divergence was swiftly punished with **expulsion from the synagogue**.

In Roman Catholicism the same is true. Any disagreement with the theological *cadre* is punished with threats of **excommunication**. In fact, **even theologians** who disagree with the *magisterium* are defrocked from their teaching positions, as can be seen, for example, in the case of **Hans Kung**.



#9 - The Roman Catholic View of Tradition (Part 2)

Review from previous lectures

From three main sources, the Roman Catholic Catechism, Dei Verbum and numerous scholars we have noticed that Roman Catholicism has a virtually identical view of divine revelation as did apostate Judaism in the days of Christ. The three elements of a [1] sacred deposit written and oral, a [2] transmitting mechanism and an authoritative [3] living interpreter are all present in both systems.

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When the rabbis spoke from Moses' kathedra their word was considered infallible and final. When the Pope speaks ex-cathedra his word is considered infallible and final.

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How to Control the Masses

In the times of Christ the **people were captivated** by the **teachings** of Jesus. In fact, **multitudes followed Him**. But through the **influence** and **pressure** of the religious leaders, the multitude **eventually clamored** for the blood of Jesus (Matthew 27:20)

Trust in the Preachers

To blindly trust in the opinions of religious leaders is dangerous. If Satan can control the religious leaders, he can control the masses. In fact, by controlling the teachings of the *Magisterium*, Satan can **control the masses**.

Notice this amazing statement by Ellen G. White:

*“Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to **bishops**, to **pastors**, to **professors of theology**, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty **for themselves**. Then, by **controlling the minds of these leaders**, he can influence the multitudes according to his will.”* (The Great Controversy, p. 595)

Interestingly, Ellen White then compares the plight of the populace in **Christ’s day** with the condition of the people who belong to the **Roman Catholic system today**. Regarding the control the Jewish leaders exerted over **the populace** in Christ’s day, she states:

*“When Christ came to speak the words of life, the common people heard Him gladly; and many, even of the priests and rulers, believed on Him. But the **chief of the priesthood** [the equivalent of the pope] and the **leading men** [the equivalent of the magisterium] of the nation were determined to condemn and repudiate His teachings. . . . These opponents of Jesus were men whom the people had been **taught from infancy to reverence**, to whose authority they had been accustomed **implicitly to bow**. ‘How is it,’ they asked, ‘that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these **pious men** receive Him if He were the Christ?’ It was the **influence of such teachers** that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.”*

Protestant Leaders

And regarding the control of the **Roman Catholic** and **Protestant clergy** over their masses, Ellen White says:

*“Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would **not cease** with the dispersion of the Jews. . . . The Roman Church **reserves to the clergy** the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics **alone are competent to explain God’s***

word, it is **withheld** from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the **selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome** prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teaching **as interpreted by the church**; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established doctrine of **their church**. . . .

“There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so **instructed by their religious leaders**. They pass by the Savior’s teachings almost unnoticed, and place **implicit confidence** in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we **know from God’s word** that they are light bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world leads many to follow **in the steps of learned men**; and by their reluctance to **investigate for themselves**, they are becoming **hopelessly fastened in the chains of error**. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible; and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the **opposition of the clergy** to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls **dare not think differently from the minister**; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, **of another**.” (The Great Controversy, pp. 595-597)

Lipstick

Like in Judaism, Roman Catholicism is caught up in a system of **oppressive casuistry**. In fact, **Canon Law** would be equivalent to the Jewish **Talmud** where the rules and regulations are codified. Notice the following two examples from canon law (there are **1752** canon laws):

“Question 1: Is there any reason to fear that lip-stick will break the eucharistic fast?”

“Question 2: If the lips of a woman who is receiving Extreme Unction are coated with lip-stick, is there any danger that the anointing of the mouth will not be valid?”

“Answer 1: It is not conformable with theological teaching to warn women against the use of lip-stick before receiving Holy Communion on the ground that they are likely to break their fast.”

“Answer 2: If there is a thick coating of lip-stick on the lips, there would be grave danger that the anointing of the mouth performed on the lips would not be valid; and in that event the validity of the sacrament would be doubtful. . . .” (Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 87)

Commenting on this **prescription of canon law**, Pelikan remarks on the same page:

“The penitent can never be certain of whether he has been obedient to **every detailed prescription of the law**, and yet he must be certain in order to find salvation and peace.”

This is the same problem which existed in the days of Christ. The Jews had developed so many **prescriptions and proscriptions** that not even the most pious believer could obey them all. Thus the Jewish laws contained in the **Talmud** are paralleled by the laws contained in Roman Catholic **canon law**. And there are **thousands** of casuistic regulations in Roman Catholic canon law!!

The **1983** Code of Canon Law contains **7 books** with **1752 canons**, or laws, most of which are **subdivided into multiple paragraphs**

Canon Law and Marriage

Now let's take a look at the second example from the sphere of **marriage**:

***"Divorce is forbidden.** But this general principle is subject to **all sorts of qualifications**: separation 'from bed and board' is permitted under certain circumstances and may become permanent; a marriage may be declared null and void if upon investigation it is determined that it was not valid; a convert may, after baptism, avail himself of the 'Pauline privilege' of separation from his unbaptized spouse and may obtain permission to remarry."* (Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 89.

Does this sound like the problem of **Mark 7**? A **mockery is made of marriage** when **qualifications** and **exceptions** (traditions of men) are added to the commandment of God.

Many times the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church **contradict** the clear Word of God. For example, one of the declarations of the Council of Trent stated:

*"If anyone saith that the marriage state is to be placed above the state of virginity or of celibacy, and that it is **not better** and **more blessed** to remain in virginity or in celibacy than to be united in matrimony; let him be **anathema**."* (Council of Trent, Session XXIV (November 11, 1563), Canons of the Sacrament of Matrimony, canon 10, in Dogmatic Canons and Decrees (New York: Devin Adair Company, 1912), p. 164.

In the background of this view is the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, beginning primarily with **St. Augustine**, teaches that original sin was sexual sin. This is the **real reason for the celibacy** of priests and nuns.

The fact is that this statement from the Council of Trent is a **blatant contradiction** of **Genesis 1:28** where God blessed marriage and commanded man to be fruitful and multiply. **Jesus sanctioned marriage** by performing His first miracle at a **wedding in Cana** of Galilee. It is also in flat contradiction to the fact that all the **bishops, elders, deacons and pastors of the early church were married**, even the **apostle Peter** who supposedly was the first Pope!!! This is a clear example of making of none effect the Word of God by tradition.

Reading Scripture

The same could be said about **Bible study**. Even though the Roman Catholic Church in this **age of enlightenment** allows, and in some cases even encourages, reading the Bible, it was not always so.

In **Canon 14** of the **Council of Toulouse** (France) which was celebrated in the year **1229 A. D.** we find the following prohibition:

*"We forbid **the laity** to have in their possession **any copy** of the books of the Old and New Testament, except the Psalter, and such portions of them as are contained in the Breviary, or the Hours of the Blessed Virgin; and we most **strictly forbid** even these works in the **vulgar tongue**."*

Around this same time, William Tyndale was burned at the stake for translating the New Testament into English contrary to the will of the church. Roman Catholic theologian John Gilmary Shea admits that the Catholic Church forbade the reading of the Scriptures in the common tongue:

*"In early times, the Bible was read freely by the lay people, and the **Fathers constantly encourage them to do so**, although they also insist on the **obscurity** of the sacred text. No prohibitions were issued against the popular reading of the Bible. **New dangers** came during the middle ages. When the heresy of the Albigenses arose there was a danger from corrupt translations, and also from the fact that the heretics tried to make the faithful judge the Church **by their own interpretation** of the Bible. To meet these evils, the Council of Toulouse (1229) and Tarragona (1234) **forbade the laity to read the vernacular translations of the Bible**. Pius IV required the bishops to refuse lay persons leave to read **even Catholic versions of the Scripture**, unless their confessors or parish priests judged that such readings was likely to prove beneficial." Shea John **Gilmary** Ed, *The Catholic Educator: A Library of Catholic Devotion and Instruction*, New York, Peter J. Ryan, p 61)*

The **Council of Trent** reaffirmed the same position. **Rules on Prohibited Books** was approved by **Pope Pius IV**, in **1564**:

*"Since it is clear from experience that if the Sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the **vernacular**, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise therefrom **more harm than good**, the matter is in this respect left to the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor, who may with the advice of the pastor or confessor **permit** the reading of the Sacred Books translated into the vernacular **by Catholic authors** to those **who they know** will derive from such reading no harm but rather an increase of faith and piety, which **permission they must have in writing**. Those, however, who presume to read or possess them **without such permission**, may not receive absolution from their sins till they have **handed them over to the ordinary**. Book dealers who sell or in any other way supply Bibles written in the vernacular to anyone who has not this permission, **shall lose the price of the books**, which is to be applied by the bishop to pious purposes, and in keeping with the nature of the crime they shall be subject to other penalties which are left to the judgment of the same bishop. Regulars who have not the permission of their superiors **may not***

read or purchase them."

How is it that the Roman Catholic system, in its church councils can condemn the reading of the Bible by the common lay person when Jesus said, 'search the Scriptures' and Paul said that they are able to make one 'wise unto salvation?' Once again, tradition has made of none effect the Word of God!

Mariology

St. Alphonsus di Liguori

- St. Alphonsus di Liguori lived in the 17th century
- 22 volumes of his work have been published
- He was canonized as a saint by Pope Gregory XIV in 1839 and was declared a doctor of the church by Pope Pius IX. He is one of only 32 doctors of the church whose writings are especially trustworthy and of authority
- Liguori wrote The Glories of Mary, a book which is greatly venerated by Roman Catholics
- Lest you think that this volume contains only one man's opinion about Mary, I would mention that the book is actually a collection of the patristic wisdom of the Roman Catholic Church from the Early Church Fathers till this day. Thus the book does not reflect Liguori's view of Mary but rather what has been taught by Roman Catholic theologians, doctors and saints throughout the course of the centuries.
- Liguori himself expresses the reason for preparing his book:

"I endeavored to collect, from as many authors as I could lay my hands on, the choicest passages, extracted from Fathers and theologians, and those which seemed to me to be the most to the point, and have put them together in this book, in order that the devout may with little trouble and expense be able to inflamm themselves with the love of Mary, and more particularly to furnish the priests with matter for their sermons, wherewith to excite others to devotion towards this divine Mother." The Glories of Mary, p. 30. (Note: This book is available at Secrets Unsealed. Quantities limited.)

- The work consists of several chapters. In each, Liguori seeks to prove a certain point about Mary. At the end of each chapter, he gives an illustration of the point and ends with a prayer to Mary based on the content of the chapter.
- The edition I am using was published by the Redemptorist Fathers in 1931 and bears the imprimatur by Patrick (Cardinal) Hayes on April 16, 1931.
- The preponderance of Liguori's quotations come from the church fathers, the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon and the Old Testament books of Proverbs and Song of Solomon. Most of these quotations in their original context apply to wisdom

personified (Jesus) or to **Solomon's bride** (the church) and yet Liguori applies them to Mary simply because the Church has said so.

- **Liguori persistently tears texts out of their contexts.** Texts are extracted from the Old Testament and applied to Mary when there is not any New Testament warrant to do so. Many times, verses that **originally applied to Jesus**, Liguori applies to Mary.

Notice the following misuse of texts:

- *"If Mary is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) Glories of Mary, p. 101*
- *"Mary was prefigured by the dove which returned to Noah in the Ark with an olive branch in its beak, as a pledge of the peace which God granted to men." Glories of Mary, p. 202*
- *"Glorious things are said of you, O city of God" Glories of Mary, p. 244*
- *"Correctly, then, can we here say with St. Paul, Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are His; that is to say, whoever carries with him the mark of devotion to Mary is recognized by God as his." Glories of Mary, pp. 244, 245*

The high regard which the Roman Catholic Church has for Liguori can be seen by the fact that sometime after his death, his **grave in Nocera was opened** and his Three writing fingers were cut off and sent to Rome by wish of Pope Pius VII who said:

"Let those three fingers that have written so well for the honor of God, of the Blessed Virgin and of religion, be carefully preserved and sent to Rome." Cited in, The Glories of Mary, p. 20

Fundamental Flaw

*"But God was pleased that Mary should in **all things resemble** Jesus; and as her Son died, it was becoming that the mother should also die." Glories of Mary, p. 407. (Note: This book is available at *Secrets Unsealed*).*

This is the fundamental **leap of logic** that the Roman Catholic Church employs to exalt Mary. They use expressions such as ***"it was fitting," "it was necessary," "it was befitting"*** for Mary to be equal with Jesus. Where to we find that in all things Mary was to resemble Jesus? In Roman Catholic theology Mary actually becomes a **rival of Jesus** and **overshadows** him.

A Perpetual Virgin?

According to the Roman Catholic Church, Mary was **perpetually a virgin**. In other words, Mary **never had sexual relations** with Joseph either before or after Jesus was born. How does this square with the written Scriptures?

- The affirmation in **Luke 2:7**: that Jesus was the **first-born** of Mary strongly suggests that she had other children after Jesus: *“And she brought forth her **firstborn Son**, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”*
- The statement in **Matthew 1:18** that Mary was with child before she and Joseph **came together** strongly hints at the idea that they came together after marriage: *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”*
- **Matthew 1:24-25** explicitly states: *“Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and **did not know her till** she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.”*
- **Psalm 69:8** seems to indicate that Jesus was only one of Mary’s children. Several verses in this Psalm clearly indicate that the Messiah was in view: *“Zeal for your house has eaten me up” (verse 9) “gall for food and vinegar to drink” (verse 21) “I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to **my mother’s children**.”* Mary was conceived without **original sin**.

What the Fathers said about Mary

In his book Liguori gathers a mass of information that has been handed down by previous generations about Mary. I summarize the Roman Catholic ‘wisdom’ that has been handed down from generation to generation according to Liguori:

- Mary was the **mother of God**
- Mary was taken **bodily to heaven**

Roman Catholic theologian, Karl Keating, states: *“Still, Fundamentalists ask, where is the proof from Scripture? Strictly, there is none. It was the Catholic Church that was commissioned by Christ to teach all nations and to teach them infallibly. The **mere fact** that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Assumption as something definitely true is a guarantee that it is true.”* Karl Keating, **Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on ‘Romanism’ by ‘Bible Christians’**, p. 275.

- The **world was created** by God and Mary
- She was born **immaculate and holy**
- She **never sinned**
- She is the **incarnation of the Holy Spirit**
- She is **full of grace** and can dispense it to human beings at will
- She is a **priest**
- She is our **advocate or mediatrix**

Regarding this, the conciliar declaration *Lumen Gentium* states: “Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her **manifold intercession** continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. . . Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and **Mediatrix**.” *Lumen Gentium*, section 62

- Mary **loved the world** that she **gave her only-begotten Son**
- Mary is our **ladder**
- We are to **pray to Mary** to ask for favors
- We can **only know God through Mary**
- Mary **helps us when we are tempted**
- Mary is **the way to the Father**
- She is the **door**
- She is the **rod out of the root of Jesse**
- She is **co-redemptrix**

“If the drive [to declare Mary co-redemptrix] succeeds, Catholics would be obliged as a matter of faith to accept three extraordinary doctrines: that Mary participates in the redemption achieved by her son, that all graces that flow from the suffering and death of Jesus Christ are granted **only through Mary’s intercession with her son**, and that all prayers and petitions from the faithful on earth **must likewise flow through Mary**, who then brings them to the attention of Jesus.” Kenneth L. Woodward, *Newsweek*, “Hail Mary”, August 25, 1997, p. 49

“In place of the Holy Trinity, it would appear, there would be a kind of **Holy Quartet**, with Mary playing the multiple roles of **daughter of the Father**, **mother of the Son** and **spouse of the Holy Spirit**.” Kenneth L. Woodward, *Newsweek*, “Hail Mary”, August 25, 1997, p. 49.

Regarding the position of Mary, Roman Catholic theologian Mark Miravalle has stated: “The union between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible, yet so perfect, that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Most Blessed Virgin, **his Spouse**. This is why she is the **mediatrix of all graces** given by the Holy Spirit.” Mark Miravalle, p. 54.

- She is our **refuge**
- She is our **throne of grace**
- She is the **light of the sun**
- She is **our life**
- She **changes and transforms our lives**
- She **protects us from the power of Satan**
- She is **our propitiation**
- She has a name that is **above all names**
- **If we die we have assurance of life** in her
- **All power** is given to her in heaven and on earth

- She is **all-powerful**
- She is the **morning star**
- She is the **mercy seat**
- She **crushes the serpent's head**
- She is the **pillar of cloud and fire**
- We can **cast out devils in her name**
- She is the **water of life**
- She is the **peacemaker**
- She is the **tower of refuge**
- She **draws all men** to herself
- She **gives eternal life**
- She is **worthy of being praised**
- She is **our hope**
- We can be **saved by Mary's merits**
- She is the **rainbow of promise**
- She died, her body saw no corruption, she resurrected and **ascended on the third day**

The final issue in the great controversy will be: What is your source of authority for your beliefs and practices? Is it the church or is it the Bible?

#10 - Sabbath Controversies and Tradition

The Rabbis and Oral Tradition

The **most revered** institution in Judaism is the Seventh-day Sabbath. For the **rabbis** the Sabbath **was equal in importance** to all the other precepts of the Torah **combined**. **One Rabbi stated:** “He who observes the Sabbath, is kept from sin.” Another stated: “If Israel were to keep two Sabbaths according to the laws thereof, they would be redeemed immediately.” It is said that **Rabbi Levi** once affirmed: “If Israel kept the Sabbath properly even for one day, the son of David would come. Why? Because it is equivalent to all the commandments.”

But, were these rabbis referring to the Sabbath as it is found in the **written Scriptures?** Robert Johnston responds:

*“One of the distinguishing features of Pharisaism had been its high regard for **oral tradition**. The Pharisees claimed to be heirs of Ezra the scribe and his court known as the Great Assembly, the beginning of the Sanhedrin. Indeed, Ezra and the Great Assembly were regarded as **transmitters of oral laws** that could be traced **all the way back to Moses**.” Robert Johnston, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, p. 70*

Regarding the mass of oral tradition in Judaism, Johnston explains:

*“For a long time the oral law was indeed oral; there was an inhibition against writing it down for fear that it might be treated as Scripture. Instead, it was **stored up in the heads of the rabbis and their disciples**. However, as scholars continually added to the **body of tradition**, it grew **so massive** that memories were too severely taxed.” *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, p. 70*

This is the reason why **oral tradition was codified** in the Babylonian and Palestinian **Talmuds**.

Sabbath Prohibitions

The **Old Testament** has relatively **few Sabbath prohibitions**. Among those prohibited activities are **[1] Work, [2] kindling a fire, [3] trading and [4] cooking**. But the rabbis **expanded** these simple

prohibitions into an **entire system** of rules and regulations. On the basis of **Deuteronomy 25:3** **thirty nine major** activities were forbidden on the Sabbath but each of these was **subdivided** into an **almost endless** list of specific prohibitions:

“The main classes of work are forty save one: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying, loosening, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer and taking anything from one domain to another. These are the main classes of work: forty save one.”

Some of the rules that the rabbis had **added** to the Sabbath to ‘protect it’ from being broken were:

- A fruit on the ground under a tree could not be picked up and **eaten** on the Sabbath because it might have fallen on that very day
- An egg **could not be removed** from a nest on the Sabbath but it could be protected until after the Sabbath when it could be eaten
- **Instrumental music** was forbidden on the Sabbath
- If a **house caught fire** on the Sabbath **life** could be saved but not any **property** that was in the house
- All **sacred books** could be saved from the fire and **enough food** and drink for the remaining Sabbath meals
- It was a cardinal offense to **tilt a lamp** in order to make more oil run toward the wick because this would make it burn brighter which was the sin of kindling
- A person could not **read by the light of a lamp** on the Sabbath
- A person could not **touch money** or any of the **tools** of his trade even if he did not intend to work with them
- **Climbing** a tree, **swimming**, **clapping** the hands, **slapping** the thighs and **stamping** the feet were forbidden
- **Burials** and **weddings** could not take place on the Sabbath
- **Writing** was forbidden on the Sabbath
- A chair could not be **dragged** across the floor with the intention of making a furrow with it but if the furrow was unintended it was allowed
- Persons could not directly **carry a stone** but they were permitted to lift up a child even if he had a stone in his hand
- Treatment of **non-mortal ailments** and handicaps could not be treated on the Sabbath but an **eye salve** could be placed on the eye **before sundown** of Friday or a plaster could be placed on the wound so that the healing continued on the Sabbath
- If a **deer wandered** into your house on the Sabbath **one man** could not trap it but two could

do so

- It was forbidden **to tithe** on the Sabbath
- No Jew was allowed to **travel more** than two thousand cubits beyond the city limits where he lived
- To mitigate the 2000 cubit limit one need **only deposit enough food** for two meals at 2000 cubits distance and declare the place his **temporary abode** and then from there he could travel an additional 2000 cubits

Sabbath Controversies

Of all the controversies that Jesus faced, **none was greater** than those over the Sabbath. He was in **constant conflict** with the **denominations** of his day and was **despised by them** because He did not keep **their** sabbath.

Most of these controversies dealt with the issue of **healing** people with **chronic illnesses** [a man born blind, a paralytic for 38 years, a woman who could not straighten out for 18 years, a man with a withered hand, a case of the flu] on the Sabbath.

Some **evangelical scholars** have said that Jesus actually broke the Sabbath by healing people on it. But, **did he** break the Bible Sabbath?

Actually, Jesus said it was **lawful** to do so (for example, Matthew 12:12) while the scribes and Pharisees said it was **unlawful**.

The critical question to be answered is this: **On what basis** did Jesus say it was **lawful** and on what basis did the scribes and Pharisees say it was **unlawful**? In other words, what **source of authority** did the scribes and Pharisees use to prove that it was unlawful and **which authority** did Jesus use to prove that it was lawful?

Nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures do we find that it is wrong to **alleviate suffering** or to **heal the sick** on the Sabbath. In fact, in **Isaiah 58** we are told that the Sabbath is the **special day to alleviate** the suffering of the oppressed.

Where, then, did the scribes and Pharisees get the idea that it was unlawful to heal on the Sabbath? Not from the written Scriptures but rather from the **deposit of unwritten tradition!**

Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

Let's take the case of the disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger. Nowhere are we told that it is **wrong** for a person to **pluck grain** to satisfy hunger on the Sabbath [though it was wrong to harvest your crop for commercial purposes on the Sabbath].

Samuele Bacchiocchi has shown that Jesus broke at least **four rabbinical rules** when He allowed His disciples to satisfy their hunger on the Sabbath. These rules were: **[1] reaping, [2] threshing, [3] winnowing and [4] preparing a meal** (see, Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977, p. 49)

In other words, Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath commandment as found in the **written Scriptures**. He was breaking the **rabbinical sabbath** that had been **created** by **oral tradition**.

The question is: How did Jesus **answer the rabbis on this issue**? The answer is simple. On several occasions Jesus referred to **written Scripture** to **justify his behavior** on the Sabbath:

- Mark 2:25-27 [I Samuel 21:6; Genesis 2:1-3]
- Luke 13:15 [Deuteronomy 5:14]
- John 7:22-23 [Leviticus 12:3]

Jesus made it clear that by **not helping the needy**, the Pharisees were actually **breaking the Sabbath** while He was keeping it. In other words, their Tradition had made of **none effect the written Word of God**. Their rules which had the intention of **protecting the Sabbath** from being broken actually **led them to break it!**

So in a very real sense, the Sabbath of the Pharisees was:

- A **counterfeit sabbath**
- A **man made** sabbath
- A **Sabbath based on tradition**
- A sabbath of **their creation**

The Sabbath Issue in the End Time

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe that the **great issue** in the **final controversy** will involve the **commandments of God** versus the **commandments of men** and **true worship** to God versus **false worship** to the beast!

Will the **final conflict** involve a **false Sabbath** and a **true Sabbath**? Yes. The **only difference** between the times of Jesus and ours is that in those days the ones who claimed to be the people of God kept the Sabbath in the **wrong way** while in the end-time the Christian world will keep the **wrong day**. But the **principle is the same**. In both cases it is a Sabbath **created by man** based on **tradition** and **not the Sabbath which God made at creation**.

The conflict in Christ's day was actually over the **Sabbath made by God** versus the **Sabbath made by human tradition**, and to keep a Sabbath made by man is to practice **false worship!!**

Intention to Kill

It must be underlined that the **Pharisees** not only broke God's Sabbath by abstaining from doing good on the Sabbath but they also broke the Sabbath by **intending to kill Jesus** on it (Mark 3:6; Matthew 12:14; John 5:14).

Irony of ironies, they **condemned Jesus for healing** on the Sabbath but they **wanted to kill** on it because he did not keep it as **they thought He should!!** Certainly their rules of Sabbath observance had made of **none effect** the commandment which says: 'You shall not kill.'

Does this also ring a bell? Is there a time coming when the **Christian world** will **want to kill** those who do not keep **their Sabbath**, that is, a Sabbath of **human invention**? **Revelation 13:15** says that this is just what will happen.

Is Sabbath Keeping Legalism?

It has always been an **enigma** to me how the Christian world can accuse Seventh-day Adventists of being **legalists** for keeping the Sabbath and then **turn right around** some day and say, 'You either keep the Sunday or we will **kill you!**' What worse legalism could exist than to keep the **Sunday for fear of death** rather than out of love for God?

We also know that the Christian world will teach that the **increasing natural disasters** in the world are **due to God's wrath** because of the **desecration of Sunday** as the day of worship. They will say: 'Let us return to God, keep Sunday, and then God will bless America once again.' This is legalism—**attempting to earn God's favor** or **turning away His disfavor** by keeping Sunday!

Roman Catholics and the Sabbath

A challenge to **Protestants by John Eck, the enemy of Luther**:

*"The **Scripture teaches** 'Remember that you sanctify the day of the Sabbath; six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God', etc. But the **Church** has **changed** the Sabbath into the Lord's [day] by **its own authority**, concerning which you have **no scripture**. . . The Sabbath is commanded many times by God; neither in the Gospels nor in Paul is it declared that the Sabbath has ceased; nevertheless the **Church** has instituted the Lord's Day through the **tradition** of the apostles **without Scripture**." (Johann Eck, *Enchiridion Locorum Communium . . . Adversus Lutheranos [Handbook of Common Places against the Lutherans]*. Venice: Ioan. Antonius & Fratres de Sabio, 1533, fols. 4v, 5r, 42v. Latin. Trans. by Frank H. Yost. Used by permission of Mrs. Frank Yost. [FRS No. 127])*

The following Roman Catholic scholar **refers to all of the texts** we commonly use to **defend the Sabbath** but he then says that we are supposed to **keep Sunday**. Why?

*“The first precept in the Bible is that of sanctifying the seventh day: ‘God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it’ (Gen. 2:3). This precept was confirmed by God in the Ten Commandments: ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God’ (Exodus 20). On the other hand, Christ declares that He is not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). He Himself observed the Sabbath: ‘and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day’ (Luke 4:16). His disciples likewise observed it after His death: ‘They rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment’ (Luke 23:56). Yet with all this **weight of Scripture authority** for keeping the Sabbath, or seventh day, holy, **Protestants of all denominations** make this a profane day, and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week, or the Sunday. Now **what authority have they for doing this?** None, whatever, except the **unwritten word, or tradition of the Catholic Church** which **declares** that the apostles made the change in honor of Christ’s resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on that day of the week.” John Milner, *End of Religious Controversy*, (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1897), p. 89*

Notice this **indictment** of Protestants by another Roman Catholic Scholar:

*“**Protestants** often deride the authority of **Church tradition**, and claim to be directed by the **Bible only**; yet they, too, have been guided by the customs of the ancient Church, which find **no warrant in the Bible**, but rest on **Church tradition only!** A striking instance of this is the following: The first positive command in the Decalogue is to ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy’, and this precept was enforced by the Jews for thousands of years. But the Sabbath day, the observance of which God commanded, was our Saturday. Yet who among either Catholics or Protestants, except a sect or two, like the ‘Seventh Day Baptists’, ever keep that commandment now? None. Why is this? The Bible which Protestants claim to obey exclusively, gives **no authorization** for the **substitution** of the first day of the week for the seventh. On what authority, therefore, have they done so? Plainly on the **authority of that very Catholic Church** which they abandoned and whose **traditions** they condemn.” John L. Stoddard, *Rebuilding a Lost Faith* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1922), p. 80*

*“Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the **tradition of the Church?**” Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box Answers*, (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 254, 255*

Notice this **candid** and **unapologetic** admission:

*“So in the New Law, Catholics believe some things **not in the Scriptures**, although wholly in accord with them, because of the infallible witness of **the Church** as to their divine or apostolic origin. Why do Protestants accept the Scriptures as inspired? Why do they honor the first day of the week instead of the seventh? Why do they baptize children? Contrary to their principles, they must look **outside the Bible to the voice of tradition**, which is not human, but divine, because guaranteed by the divine, **infallible witness of the Catholic Church.**” Bertrand Conway, *The Question Box Answers* (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 75, 76*

*“Now the **Scriptures alone do not contain** all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obliged to practice. Not to mention other examples, is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will **not find a single line** authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The **Scriptures enforce** the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [Catholics] never sanctify.” James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers (Baltimore: James Murphy Company, 110th edition revised and enlarged) p. 80*

*“**Nothing is said in the Bible** about the **change** of the Lord’s day from Saturday to Sunday. We know of the **change** only from the **tradition of the Church**—a fact **handed down** to us from the earliest times by the **living voice** of the **Church**. That is why we find so illogical the attitude of many non-Catholics, who say that they will believe nothing unless they can find it in the Bible and yet will continue to keep Sunday as the Lord’s day on the **say-so of the Catholic Church**.” Rev. Leo J. Trese and John J. Castletot, S. S., Salvation History and the Commandments (1963 edition), p. 294*

*“The **Catholic Church** for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, **changed** the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because he who called himself the ‘Lord of the Sabbath,’ endowed her with his own power to teach, ‘he that heareth you, heareth me;’ commanded all who believe in him to hear her under penalty of being placed with the ‘heathen and publican;’ and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from him—a charter as **infallible** as perpetual. The Protestant world at its birth [in the Reformation of the sixteenth century] found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the **church’s right to change the day**, for over three hundred years. The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day, the acknowledged **offspring** [interesting in the light of Ellen White’s remark that the Sunday is the child of the papacy—Counsels to the Church, p. 317; [The Great Controversy, p. 54] **of the Catholic Church** as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.” The Catholic Mirror (Baltimore, September 23, 1893)*

“Q. (a) The Bible says ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,’ and we read in your literature that it is the only Bible Sabbath there is. Will you please explain how the Sunday observance originated? (b) Do you think the Seventh Day Adventists keep the right day?”

A. If you follow the **Bible alone** there can be **no question** that you are obliged to keep Saturday holy, since that is the day especially prescribed by Almighty God to be kept holy to the Lord. In keeping Sunday, non-Catholics are simply following the practice of the **Catholic Church** for 1800 years, a **tradition**, and **not a Bible ordinance**. What we would like to know is: Since they deny the authority of the Church, on what grounds can they base their faith of keeping Sunday. Those who keep Saturday, like the Seventh Day Adventists, unquestionably have them by the hip in this practice. And they cannot give them any sufficient answer which would satisfy an unprejudiced mind. With the Catholics there is no difficulty about the matter. For, since we **deny that the Bible is the sole rule of faith**, we can fall back upon the constant practice and **tradition of the Church** which, long before the reign of Constantine, even in the very days of the apostles themselves, were accustomed to keep the first day of the week instead of the last." F. G. Lentz, **The Question Box** (New York: Christian Press Association, 1900), pp. 98, 99

Protestants and the Sabbath

"God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, sanctifying this day, and setting it apart from all others as holy **to Himself**, to be observed by His people throughout their generations. But the man of sin, exalting himself above God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God, thought to change times and laws. This power, thinking to prove that it was not only equal to God, but above God, changed the rest day, placing the first day of the week where the seventh should be. And the **Protestant world** has taken this **child of the papacy** to be regarded as sacred. In the Word of God this is called her fornication [Revelation 14:8]." **Last Day Events**, p. 123

"The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, has exalted himself above God by presenting this spurious sabbath to the world; the Christian world has accepted this **child** of the Papacy, and **cradled** and **nourished** it, thus defying God by removing His memorial and setting up a rival sabbath." **Selected Messages**, volume 3, p. 406

"The Protestant world have set up an **idol sabbath** in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy." Letter 90, 1897

The Idol Sabbath

"The Sabbath question is one that will demand great care and wisdom in its presentation. Much of the grace and power of God will be needed to **cast down the idol** that has been erected in the **shape of a false sabbath**." **Testimonies for the Church**, volume 9, p. 211

"Satan has taken the world captive. He has introduced an **idol sabbath**, apparently giving to it great importance. He has stolen the homage of the Christian world away from the Sabbath of the Lord for this **idol sabbath**. The world bows to a tradition, a **man-made commandment**." **The Review and Herald**, March 8, 1898

The Final Issue

The final issue will be **one of authority**: Is it **God and the Bible** or the **papacy and tradition**? Is **homage paid to God** by worshiping him **on the day that He created** or is homage **paid to the papacy** by **worshiping on the day that it established**?

Thus **worship** to God and **keeping his commandments** will distinguish one group and **worship** to the beast and **keeping his commandments** will be on the other side.

*“Among professed Christians there are **idolaters**, men and women who are not sealed by God. Many have subverted the Christian faith into **idolatry**, giving to a **man-made** institution the glory and honor that God requires for His Sabbath day, and compelling others to **worship this idol**. Such ones will surely be visited with God's retributive judgments, which are to be poured out without mixture of mercy upon the unrepentant despisers of God's law.” *Manuscript Releases*, volume 19, p. 244*

The Bible, in terms **too clear to be misunderstood**, repeatedly tells us that the **SEVENTH** day is the Sabbath of the Lord! And yet the Roman Catholic Church and Protestants inform us that **Sunday is the Sabbath**. On what ground can they do this? Certainly not on Biblical grounds!

But the Roman Catholic Church has become **craftier**. **John Paul II**, in his recent pastoral letter, *Dies Domini* made a valiant effort to defend Sunday sacredness from a **Biblical perspective**. He appeals to **philosophical arguments** based on **human reason**. Yet none of his arguments are persuasive to those who take the **Bible as their only reliable standard** of truth. Nowhere in the Bible are we told that Sunday is **holy**, or that we are to keep it in **honor of Christ's resurrection** or that we are required to **attend church** regularly on that day.

It is a telling fact that John Paul II quotes **212 scholars**, church **councils**, **creeds** and **church fathers** to bolster his **weak Biblical case**! Once again, tradition has made of **none effect** the clear Word of God!

What should we do as Seventh-day Adventists?

*“We are to give to the world a manifestation of the pure, noble, holy principles that are to distinguish the people of God from the world. Instead of the people of God becoming less and less definitely distinguished from those who do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath, they are to make the observance of the Sabbath **so prominent** that the world cannot fail to recognize them as Seventh-day Adventist.” *Manuscript 162*, 1903 [found in *Evangelism*, p. 233].*

#11 - Dies Domini

The Horn that Attempted to Change God's Law

Introduction

Daniel 7:25: This verse describes how the Roman Catholic Papacy would attempt to change God's law:

"He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

Until his recent death, the **most respected and admired** man on the planet, **hands down**, was **Pope John Paul II**. On **May 31, 1998 (on the Solemnity of Pentecost)** he published the **Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*** which was written primarily for the **religious leaders** of the Roman Catholic Church. What did the pope have to say about Sabbath and Sunday?

What I am going to share with you in this study has **nothing to do with John Paul II as a person**. I am simply going to **compare** what he says in his **Apostolic Letter** with what the **Bible** says. We will keep the discussion on a **theological level**, not a **personal one**.

1: According to the Bible, which day did of the week did God bless and sanctify and which day is the Lord's Day?

The Bible says that God **blessed** the **seventh-day Sabbath** and made it **holy**. It also says that Jesus is the **Lord of the seventh-day** Sabbath. The book of Genesis also makes it crystal clear that the Sabbath was established before there was any **Jew** and before there was any **sin**. It is part of God's **original plan** for the human race.

Genesis 2:2, 3:

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Exodus 20:8-11:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Mark 2:27-28:

"And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Isa 58:13-14:

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, ¹⁴ Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord."

1: According to *Dies Domini*, which day of the week did God bless and sanctify and which day is the Lord's Day?

Paragraph # 14:

"In the first place, therefore, Sunday is the day of rest because it is the day 'blessed' by God and 'made holy' by him, set apart from the other days to be, among all of them, 'the Lord's Day.'"

Samuel Bacchiocchi, who dedicated many years to study the manner in which the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, explained what would have happened if the apostles had taught the abandonment of Sabbath observance:

". . . if Paul or any other apostle had attempted to promote the abandonment of the Sabbath, a millenarian institution deeply rooted in the religious consciousness of the people, and the adoption instead of Sunday observance, there would have been considerable opposition on the part of Jewish-Christians, as was the case with reference to the circumcision. The absence of any echo of Sabbath/Sunday controversy in the NT is a most telling evidence that the introduction of Sunday observance is a post-apostolic phenomenon." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Pope's Call for Observance of Sunday" Issues, Friday, August 7, 1998.

2: According to the Bible, which day stands at the heart of all worship? Which day distinguishes the Creator from His creatures?

Revelation 14:6-7:

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—⁷ saying with a loud voice: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and **worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.**”*

The language of Revelation 14:6, 7 comes directly from the fourth commandment of God’s holy law in **Exodus 20:11** where God is identified as the Creator and His **sign is the Sabbath**.

Exodus 20:11:

*“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord **blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.**”*

2: According to *Dies Domini* which day stands at the very heart of all worship?

Paragraph # 19:

*“The intimate bond between Sunday and the Resurrection of the Lord is strongly emphasized by all the **Churches** of East and West. In the tradition of the Eastern Churches in particular, **every Sunday** is the **anastasimos hemera**, the **day of Resurrection**, and this is why it stands **at the heart of all worship.**”*

3: According to the Bible, what is the distinguishing mark of God’s people?

Ezekiel 20:12:

*“Moreover I also gave them **My Sabbaths**, to be **a sign between them and Me** that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.”*

Ezekiel 20:20:

*“... hallow **My Sabbaths**, and **they will be a sign between Me and you** that you may know that I am the Lord your God.”*

3: According to *Dies Domini* which is the sign that identifies God’s true people?

Paragraph # 21:

*“The book of Revelation gives evidence of the practice of calling the **first day** of the week ‘the Lord’s Day’ (1:10). This [Sunday observance] would now be a characteristic **distinguishing Christians** from the world around them.”*

John Paul II believed that the expression “Lord’s day” in Revelation refers to Sunday even though this name is never applied to Sunday until the end of the second century in the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter. The meaning of this expression as it was used at the end of the second century cannot be read back into a text that was written at the end of the first century. The Bible must tell us which day is truly the Lord’s Day and every other text in the Bible clearly states that the Seventh day Sabbath is the Lord’s Day.

According to scholars the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation were written by the same person at about the same time, that is, at the end of the first century. Neither of these books refers to Sunday as the [1] Lord’s Day or as a [2] memorial of the resurrection. Neither book attributes [3] any holiness to Sunday. It is not called a [4] day of rest nor are believers encouraged to go [5] to church on it. Neither book states that Sunday [6] must be kept in honor of the resurrection of Jesus.

It is a well documented fact that for more than one hundred years after the resurrection the church did not keep the weekly Sunday in honor of the resurrection but rather commemorated it once a year on the date of the Passover on the 14th day of Nissan no matter which day the Passover fell on. It was only in the second century that Bishop Victor excommunicated the Christians in Asia for not commemorating the resurrection on the weekly Sunday.

Paragraph # 30:

“Given its many meanings and aspects, and its link to the very foundations of the faith, the celebration of the Christian Sunday remains, on the threshold of the Third Millennium, an indispensible element of our Christian identity.”

Paragraph # 7:

“Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life.”

4: According to the Bible, which of the Ten Commandments is the only one that has the necessary elements of a seal? According to the Bible, which is the day above all days?

The Bible teaches that God’s seal is related to God’s law (Isaiah 8:16). The only commandment in God’s law that has the three necessary elements of a seal is the fourth. This commandment identifies the lawgiver, his title and the territory over which He rules. Notably God placed His seal also on creation week when on the seventh day he rested and set the Sabbath apart as a reminder of His creative power.

In the Bible the Sabbath stands apart from all other days. It is the day that is over and above every other day of the week. It is the only day that has a name and a number and it’s the only day that God calls His. **Not only did God set the Sabbath apart from all other days at creation but He also set it apart by making it the only day on which He did not send manna**

Exodus 20:11:

*“For in six days the [1] **Lord** [2] **made** the [3] **heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them**, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”*

In an archeological dig in **Ugarit, tablets** were unearthed that parallel Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments have the following characteristics:

- **They are a covenant:** Deuteronomy 4:13
- **They were written on tables:** Deuteronomy 4:13
- **They were written on both sides of the tablets:** Exodus 32:15, 16
- **The Seal was placed in the middle:** Exodus 20:8-11
- **The seal contains three elements:** The name of the lawgiver, His position and His territory

4: According to *Dies Domini* upon which day has God placed His seal?

Paragraph # 23:

*“Saint Augustine notes in turn: ‘Therefore the Lord too has placed **his seal** on this day [Sunday], which is the third day after the Passion.’”*

4: According to *Dies Domini* which is the day above all other days?

Paragraph # 25:

*“In effect, Sunday is the **day above all other days** which summons Christians to remember the salvation which was given to them in baptism and which has made them new in Christ.”*

Paragraph 55:

*“Blessed be he who has raised the great day of **Sunday above all other days.**”*

5: How does God look upon the ancient practice of sun worship?

Ezekiel 8:16, 17:

*“So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their **backs toward the temple of the Lord** and their faces **toward the east**, and they were **worshipping the sun toward the east.** ¹⁷ And He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger.”*

5: According to *Dies Domini* what relationship exists between the pagan practice of sun worship and the Christian practice of worship on the day of the sun?

Paragraph # 27:

*“Wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the **Christianization of the notion of Sunday as ‘the day of the sun’**, which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages. This was in order to draw the faithful away from the seduction of the cults which **worshiped the sun**, and to direct the celebration of the **day to Christ**, humanity’s true ‘sun’.”*

Is it the same thing to **worship the sun** as it is to worship on the **day of the sun**? In **principle** it is the same thing. In fact it can be **historically proven** that Sunday came into the Christian Church **from paganism** as did many other church observances. In fact, **Constantine** called it ***“The Venerable Day of the Sun.”***

The Catholic Catechism quotes St. Justin:

*“We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish Sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, **made the world**; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior **rose from the dead**.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph # 2174**

The Roman Catholic Church is **obsessed with the sun**. In almost every single case when the **priest faces the altar** he is **facing east** with his back toward the congregation. Roman Catholic **churches, museums** and other buildings are filled with suns and sun bursts. There are suns on **chalices**, suns on **vestments**, suns on **altars**, suns on **glass stained windows** (for example in St. Peter’s Basilica) and suns on works of art. The **host** is yellow and round and the priests have a round **tonsure** on their heads which was an ancient practice of the priests of the sun god.

6: According to the Bible should religious observances be guaranteed by civil legislation?

The **first table** of the law we should render only to God. According to the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Congress should neither **establish** the observance of a rest day nor **forbid** the free exercise thereof.

Matt 22:21-22: Jesus separated the civil power from the religious power

*“And He said to them, “Render therefore to **Caesar** the things that are Caesar’s, and to **God** the things that are God’s.”*

6: According to *Dies Domini*, should the state guarantee the right of citizens to observe Sunday as a religious day of rest?

Paragraph 64:

“Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognize the weekly recurrence, determining that on ‘the day of the sun’ the judges, the people of the cities and the various trade corporations would not work. Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made observance of the Lord’s Day heroic. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common without hindrance.”

This **civil law** was given by **Constantine the Great** on **March 7** in the year 321. **Canon 29** of the **Synod of Laodicea** held in the year **336**, made Sunday observance a religious law. Constantine’s law read as follows:

*“Let all the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades rest on the **venerable day of the sun.**”*

The law of the **Synod of Laodicea** (which was approved in the ecumenical council of Chalcedon in the year **451**) stated:

“Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.”

Paragraph 66:

*“Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical **Rerum Novarum** spoke of Sunday rest as a worker’s right which **the State must guarantee.**”*

Paragraph 67:

*“Christians will naturally strive to ensure that **civil legislation** respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.”*

Benedict XVI’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, paragraph 74:

*“Finally, it is particularly urgent nowadays to remember that the day of the Lord is also a day of rest from work. It is greatly to be hoped that this fact will also be **recognized by civil society**, so that individuals can be permitted to **refrain from work** without being penalized.”*

In recent years the papacy has been **putting pressure** on the parliament of the **European Community** to pass a secular Sunday law. But history proves that secular Sunday laws eventually morph into religious Sunday laws.

7: According to the Bible on which day of the week did Jesus especially alleviate the suffering and

pain of His fellow human beings?

Isaiah 58 clearly describes how the Sabbath should be the special day to alleviate the suffering of the less fortunate in society. Jesus also chose the Sabbath as the special day to alleviate human suffering.

Miracles Jesus performed on Sabbath:

- A man with a **withered hand** (Matthew 12:12-13)
- Cast out **demons** (Mark 1:21-25)
- Peter's **mother-in-law** (Mark 1:30-31)
- A woman who could not straighten out for **18 years** (Luke 13:10-17)
- A man with **dropsy** [a disease where liquid is retained in the joints causing great pain and suffering (Luke 14:1-6)]
- A man **paralyzed** for 38 years (John 5)
- A man who was **born blind** (John 9)

7: According to *Dies Domini* which should be the special day to alleviate the suffering of our fellow human beings?

*"If Sunday is a day of joy, Christians should declare by their actual behavior that we cannot be happy "on our own". They look around to find people who **may need their help**. It may be that in their neighborhood or among those they know there are **sick people, elderly people, children or immigrants** who precisely on Sundays feel more keenly their **isolation, needs and suffering**. It is true that commitment to these people cannot be restricted to occasional Sunday gestures. But presuming a wider sense of commitment, why not make **the Lord's Day a more intense time of sharing**, encouraging all the inventiveness of which Christian charity is capable? Inviting to a meal people who are alone, **visiting the sick**, providing food for needy families, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity: these would certainly be ways of bringing into people's lives the love of Christ received at the Eucharistic table."*

8: According to the Bible, which day will be kept when God creates a new heaven and a new earth?

Isaiah 66:22, 23:

*"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³ And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from **one Sabbath to another**, all flesh shall come to **worship before Me**," says the Lord."*

8: According to *Dies Domini* which day will be kept when history as we know it comes to an end?

Paragraph 84:

*"From Sunday to Sunday, enlightened by Christ, she goes forward towards the **unending Sunday of the heavenly Jerusalem**, which "has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its*

light and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23)."

9: According to the Bible, which day of the week was kept holy by the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus?

Luke 23:55, 56:

*"And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they **rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.**"*

9: According to *Dies Domini*, which day of the week did the Blessed Virgin Mary venerate and keep?

*"I entrust this Apostolic Letter to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, that it may be received and put into practice by the Christian community. Without in any way detracting from the centrality of Christ and his Spirit, **Mary is always present in the Church's Sunday.** It is the mystery of Christ itself which demands this: indeed, how could she who is Mater Domini [Lord's mother] and Mater Ecclesiae [mother of the church] fail to be **uniquely present on the day** which is both dies Domini [Lord's Day] and dies Ecclesiae? [Church's Day]"*

10: According to the Bible, of how much value are the traditions of men that contradict the written word of God?

*"And **in vain** they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the **commandments of men.**" (Mark 7:7)*

10: According to *Dies Domini*, by whose authority was the day of worship changed from Sabbath to Sunday?

In *Dies Domini* John Paul (presumably in order to **build bridges** with Protestants) made a valiant effort to prove that the **New Testament already contemplated** the change from Sabbath to Sunday.

In **paragraphs 20, 21** John Paul II provides a seemingly impressive list of things that occurred on Sunday. This is the very list that is provided by Protestants to defend the observance of Sunday:

- Jesus **resurrected** on the first day of the week
- The same day Jesus talked with **two disciples** on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:11-30)
- He appeared to the **eleven apostles** on the first day of the week (John 20:19)
- A **week later** he appeared to the apostles again on a Sunday (John 20:24-28)
- If you count (inclusive reckoning) **50 days after** the first-fruits you have **another first day** of the week. Thus the **church** was **established on the first day** of the week and the **Holy Spirit** was poured out on Sunday
- The **first proclamation** of the gospel took place on Sunday

- The **first baptisms** took place on Sunday
- This long list is superfluous. The fact is that Jesus did not resurrect on Sunday to make Sunday holy but rather He resurrected on Sunday because He had to rest in the tomb on the Sabbath. The Manna episode clearly pointed out that the body of Jesus would see no corruption on the Sabbath as the Manna did not breed worms or stink on the Sabbath.

John Paul also refers to three other additional texts that Protestants use to try and prove that the change of the Sabbath was an apostolic phenomenon:

- **I Corinthians 16:1, 2**
- **Acts 20:7-9**
- **Revelation 1:10**
- The reason why he quotes these verses is because he wants to give the appearance that Sunday was the day of worship **even in the New Testament**.

But the bottom line is that nowhere does the New Testament state that Sunday was] [1] **made holy and blessed** by God, that [2] **we must keep it** in honor of the resurrection or [3] that we are to go **to church** on that day.

A careful reading of *Dies Domini* reveals where John Paul II claims that the change came from:

Paragraph # 6:

*"It seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying **the Church's precept** . . . [In keeping it] "we follow in the footsteps of the **age-old tradition of the Church.**"*

Paragraph # 18:

*"**Christians** . . . made [not God] the first day after the Sabbath a festive day, for that was the day on which the Lord rose from the dead."*

Paragraph # 27:

*"**Christian reflection**" and "**pastoral practice**" changed it*

Paragraph # 63:

*"**Christians**, called as they are to proclaim the liberation won by the blood of Christ, **felt that they had the authority to transfer** the meaning of the Sabbath to the day of the resurrection."*

Paragraph # 81:

*"The spiritual and pastoral riches of Sunday, as it has been **handed on to us by tradition**, are truly*

great.”

The amazing thing is that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the **Sabbath has been changed in the new dispensation** but they continue to practice most of the things of the **old dispensation**. They have temples, altars, incense, vestments, chalices, literal sacrifice of the Mass, etc. They have all the remnants from Judaism but they refuse to keep the Sabbath.

The pope states in *Dies Domini* that the Sabbath was the day of the **old covenant** and calls it the **Jewish Sabbath**. The problem with this argument is that the Sabbath was established in Genesis **before sin, before an old covenant and before there was any Jew.**

Ellen G. White in The Great Controversy describes the process whereby the apostate Christian church got rid of the Sabbath:

*“The arch-deceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the **Christian world** under his banner and to exercise his power through his vice-regent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ [Vicarius Filii Dei]. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. **In nearly every council the Sabbath which God instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted.** Thus the **pagan festival came finally to be honored as a divine institution**, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced **a relic of Judaism**, and its observers were declared to be accursed.” The Great Controversy, p. 53.*

#12 - BUILDING FOR THE CRISIS

Introduction

The parables of Jesus are certainly relevant for all people at all times. But some of His parables have special relevance for the last remnant of time. Among others, this is true of the parable of the Ten Virgins (the closing of the door of probation), the parable of the Lost Sheep (when Jesus brings the lost world back to the fold and the universe celebrates) the parable of the Talents (where we will all have to render an account in the investigative judgment) and the parable of the persistent widow (God's remnant not letting go of the hand of God in the final tribulation).

One parable which has special relevance for the time of the end is the parable of the men who built their houses on the rock and on the sand. Let's read the passage highlighting the key words and expressions:

Matthew 7:24-27

*"Therefore whoever **hears these** [demonstrative adjective] sayings of Mine, and **does them**, I will **liken** him to a **wise man** who **built his house** on the **rock**:²⁵ and the **rain** descended, the **floods** came, and the **winds** blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was **founded** on the rock.²⁶ Now everyone who **hears** these sayings of Mine, and **does not do them**, will be like a **foolish man** who **built his house** on the **sand**:²⁷ and the **rain** descended, the **floods** came, and the **winds** blew and beat on that house; and it **fell**. And **great** was its **fall**."*

Well do I remember singing "The Wise Man Built His House upon the Rock" in the kindergarten division. I especially liked the part about when the **house fell flat**. And yet, strangely enough, I don't ever remember any of my Sabbath School teachers explaining what the story meant. What did Jesus want us to learn from this well-known parable?

Before we examine its meaning a word must be said about the proper interpretation of parable. A parable is a story where the teller intends to convey one central truth. The individual details of the parable are important insofar as they are related to this central truth.

The Geographical Location

Ellen White provides some helpful geographical background that will help us visualize the story that Jesus told:

*“Among the crowds that thronged about the Savior were many who had spent their lives about the Sea of Galilee. As they **sat upon the hillside**, listening to the words of Christ, **they could see** valleys and ravines through which the **mountain streams** found their way to the sea. In **summer** these streams often **wholly disappeared**, leaving only a **dry and dusty channel** [like the washes in Arizona and New Mexico]. But when the **wintry storms** burst upon the hills, the rivers became fierce, **raging torrents**, at times overspreading the valleys and **bearing everything away** on their resistless flood. Often, then, the hovels reared by the peasants on the grassy plain, apparently beyond the reach of danger, were swept away. But **high upon the hills** were houses built upon the rock. In some parts of the land were dwellings built **wholly of rock**, and many of them had withstood the **tempests of a thousand years.**” Thoughts from The Mount of Blessings, pp. 147, 148*

The Context

What does Jesus mean by “**these** sayings of mine?” The **demonstrative adjective** “these” shows that He is referring to the **eternal implications** of putting the **Sermon on the Mount** into practice because this parable is the **conclusion** to that sermon.

What are **some of the teachings** in the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7) A careful examination of the details of the sermon reveals that each teaching is really an expansion and broadening of the Ten Commandments. The sayings of Jesus are actually far more demanding than the Ten Commandments.

- **The Beatitudes:** (the **do’s** and **don’ts** of the **kingdom** or the **lifestyle** of the **citizens** of the kingdom) - the **poor** in spirit, those who **mourn**, the **meek**, those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, the **merciful**, **pure** in heart, **peacemakers**, being **persecuted** and reviled for righteousness sake
- Be the **salt** of the earth and the **light** of the world
- **Don’t break** the commandments or **teach others** to break them
- Don’t get **angry** against your **brother** which is equivalent to **murder**
- Don’t even **look upon a woman** to covet her
- Don’t **get divorced** and remarried except for adultery
- Don’t bear false witness by being devious in your speech. Speak **yes, yes** and **no, no** and don’t make false oaths or promises
- Turn the **other cheek**
- Go the **second mile**
- Give up your **coat** and **cloak** to him who sues you

- Love your **enemies**
- **Bless** those who **curse you**
- **Pray** for those who spitefully use you and persecute you
- Be **perfect** as your Father in heaven is perfect
- Don't do works of **charity** to be **seen by others**
- Don't **pray** to put on a **show of piety**
- **Forgive others** their trespasses against you
- Don't **fast** for a **show**
- Do not **lay up treasures** for yourself on earth
- Don't allow **anything evil** to come into your **eye** lest **darkness overtake you**
- Don't try to **serve God and riches** at the same time—in other words, don't covet
- Don't worry about **material things** but **seek first** the kingdom of God and its righteousness
- **Don't judge** lest you be judged
- Enter by the **narrow gate** and follow the **narrow road**
- Produce the **fruit of the Spirit** because one is known by his fruits
- Don't merely be **hearers** of the word but rather **doers**
- **Jesus was in person what he preached in this sermon**

Symbols in the Parable

- The **wise** man and the **foolish** man
- The **act of building**
- The **House**
- The **Rock**
- The **Sand**
- The **Winds** and the **floods**
- The **Collapse** of the **Foolish Man's House**

What is represented by the rock?

I Peter 2:6

*"Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a **chief cornerstone**, elect, precious, and he who **believes on Him** will by no means be put to shame."*

Ephesians 2:20

*". . . having been built on the **foundation** of the apostles and prophets, **Jesus Christ Himself** being the **chief cornerstone**."*

1 Corinthians 3:11

“...For no other **foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ**.”

1 Corinthians 10:4

“...For they drank of that **spiritual Rock** that followed them, and that Rock was **Christ**.”

Matthew 16:18

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on **this rock** [Jesus] I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

This is **no common, ordinary** stone. Christ is a **living stone** and when we are built upon him his **life** fuses with ours:

“Christ, the true foundation, is a **living** stone; **His life is imparted** to all that are **built upon Him**. “Ye also, as **living stones**, are built up a spiritual house.” “Each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.” 1 Peter 2:5, R.V.; Ephesians 2:21, R.V. The stones became **one with the foundation**; for a **common life** dwells in all. That building no tempest can overthrow.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 150

But what does it mean to build on Christ, the Rock?

Notice the answer to this question in **Luke 6:47, 48**:

“Whoever [1] **comes** to Me and [2] **hears** My sayings and [3] **does them**, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is **like** a man building a house, who **dug deep** and laid the foundation on the rock.”

The word for “sayings” is **logoi** which is the very word that is used to describe Christ in John 1. The Bible is a **written portrait** of Jesus. Thus, to build upon Jesus is not some mystical concept but rather it means to **build upon His Word**.

Ellen White amplifies this concept:

“The great **principles of the law**, of the very **nature of God**, are **embodied in the words of Christ** on the mount. Whoever builds **upon them** is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. In **receiving the word**, we receive Christ. And **only those who thus receive His words** are building upon Him.” *MB* 148, 149

The immediately preceding context illustrates the central lesson of the parable

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

What is the Father's Will?

Matthew 21:28-32: The parable of the two sons helps us understand what Father's will is:

*"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the **first** and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'²⁹ "He answered and said, 'I **will not,**' but afterward he regretted [repented is better] it and went.³⁰ Then he came to the **second** and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he **did not go.**³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father [here is the same expression as in our parable and it means to work in the Lord's vineyard]?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him [this is the first rejection when the Jews heard]; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it [second rejection when they saw the publicans and harlots believe], you did not afterward relent and believe him."*

John 4:34: Jesus worked for the **salvation of the Samaritans**. In this He was doing the Father's will. **Talents, time, strength and money** for this one purpose is to fulfill God's will

"Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

Acts 22:14-15: Notice the sequence here: "**know. . . see. . . hear. . . witness.**"

*"Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.'¹⁵ For you will be His witness to **all men** of what you have **seen and heard**. [Saul **saw and heard** and then he was to share what he **saw and heard**. This is the will of God]*

Jesus prayed to His Father in **Gethsemane** that if it were possible, the cup **might pass** from Him, nevertheless He was willing to do the Father's will rather than His own. And the Father gave Jesus the cup to that He could save **the human race**. This is what Jesus meant when He stated that He must **finish the Father's work**. He was going to finish His Father's work of saving the human race.

Matthew 7:22, 23: At the time of the end some will exhibit what appear to be **the gifts** of the Spirit but Jesus will refuse to acknowledge them because they did not do the will of the Father.

*"Many will **say** to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not **prophesied** in Your name, cast out*

demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

*"When persons will **speak lightly** of the word of God, and set their **impressions, feelings, and exercises** above the divine standard, we may know that they have no light in them." Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 146*

The House: Three Meanings

I Timothy 3:14-15: The house represents the church

*"These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;¹⁵ but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the **house of God**, which **is the church** of the living God, the pillar and **ground** [foundation] of the truth."*

Psalms 127:1, 3 (NAS): The house represents the family

*"Unless the LORD **builds the house** [same words as in the parable], they labor in vain who build it;³ Behold, **children** are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward."*

Mt. 12:43, 44: The house represents the individual person

*"When an unclean spirit goes **out of a man**, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to **my house** from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order."*

*"The word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah added, "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The word of God is the **only steadfast thing** our world knows. It is the **sure foundation**. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but My words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 148*

What is represented by the sand?

Isaiah 28:16-18

*"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion **a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation**; whoever believes will not act hastily.¹⁷ Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the **refuge of lies**, and the **waters** will overflow the hiding place."*

"Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive me, build on My words." Desire of Ages, p. 314

"He who, like the Jews in Christ's day, builds on the foundation of human ideas and opinions of forms and ceremonies of man's invention, or on any work that he can do independently of the grace of Christ, is erecting his structure of character upon the shifting sand. The fierce tempests of temptation will sweep away the sandy foundation, and leave his house a wreck on the shores of time." Signs of the Times, September 8, 1909

The **contrast** between building our house on the rock versus building it on the sand can be seen in the **last verse** of this passage. Jesus taught as one who had **authority** and not at the **scribes** or **theologians**:

Matthew 7:28-29

"And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at **His teaching**,²⁹ for He taught them as one having **authority**, and not as the **scribes**."

The Work of Building

We are the Builders:

"To a great extent everyone is the architect of his own character. Every day the structure more nearly approaches completion. The Word of God warns us to take heed how we build, to see that our building is founded upon the Eternal Rock. The time is coming when our work will stand revealed just as it is. Now is the time for all to cultivate the powers that God has given them, that they may form characters for usefulness here and for a higher life hereafter." Child Guidance, p. 164

The house upon the rock was built with **great difficulty**:

"These houses were reared with toil and difficulty. They were not easy of access, and their location appeared less inviting than the grassy plain. But they were founded upon the rock, and wind and flood and tempest beat upon them in vain." Thought from the Mount of Blessing, pp. 147, 148

"Character does not come by chance. It is not determined by one outburst of temper, one step in the wrong direction. It is the repetition of the act that causes it to become habit, and molds the character either for good or for evil. Right characters can be formed only by persevering, untiring effort, by improving every entrusted talent and capability to the glory of God. Instead of doing this, many allow themselves to drift wherever impulse or circumstances may carry them. This is not because they are lacking in good material, but because they do not realize that in their youth God

wants them to do **their very best.**" Child Guidance, p. 164

"Characters formed by **circumstance** are **changeable** and **discordant**--a mass of **contraries**. Their possessors have no high aim or purpose in life. They have no ennobling influence upon the characters of others. They are purposeless and powerless." Child Guidance, p. 165

To build a house you need an **architectural plan**—the plan is Jesus as found in the Bible:

"Those who build the temple of the Lord are to build according to the pattern shown in the mount--the **divine similitude**. God is dishonored and the gospel is betrayed when His servants depend on the **counsel of men** who are not under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Worldly wisdom** is foolishness with God. Those who rely upon it will **surely err.**" The Desire of Ages, p. 354

"He who would grow into a **beautiful** building for the Lord must **cultivate** every power of the being. It is only by the **right use of the talents** that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is represented in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones--material that will stand the test of God's purifying fires. In our character building **Christ is our example.**" Child Guidance, p. 166

The Winds

"In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure foundation--a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of **temptation and trial** cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock." Child Guidance, p. 166

Ephesians 4:14-15:

". . . that we should no longer be **children**, tossed to and fro and carried about with every **wind of doctrine**, by the **trickery** of men, in the **cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting**,¹⁵ but, speaking the **truth** in love, may **grow up** in all things into Him who is the head—Christ."

James 1:6: He who **doubts** is **tossed** about by waves and wind. It is the **Bible that takes away doubt** for faith comes by hearing and **hearing by the word of God**

"But let him **ask in faith**, with **no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the **wind.**"

Revelation 7:1:

"After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the **four winds** of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree."

*“Men cannot discern the sentinel angels **restraining the four winds** that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a **scene of strife** as no pen can picture.” Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 408.*

The Floods

Revelation 12:15: During the dark ages the persecution of God’s people is compared to a devastating flood

*“So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth **like a flood** after the woman that he might cause her to be **carried away** by the flood.”*

Revelation 17:1, 2: At the very end of human history the harlot will once again sit upon the many waters and will attempt to overwhelm God’s people like a devastating flood

Daniel 11:40-45: The final onslaught of the papacy upon the world at the end of time is compared with a devastating flood

Isaiah 8:7, 8: The invasion of Israel by the Assyrian Empire is compared to the flooding of the Euphrates River

*“Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the **waters of the River**, strong and mighty-- the king of Assyria and all his glory; he will go up **over all his channels** and go over **all his banks**.⁸ He will pass through Judah, he will **overflow** and **pass over**, he will reach up to the **neck**; and the stretching out of his wings **will fill** the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.”*

The fall of the House

Revelation 18:1-4 describes the time when the religion of Babylon will come crashing down

*“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great **is fallen, is fallen**, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!³ **For [because]** all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “**Come out of her**, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.”*

She falls because she gives the wine of human tradition to the nations.

*“None but those who have **fortified the mind** with the **truths of the Bible** will stand through the last*

*great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet **planted on the rock** of God's immutable word? Are we prepared **to stand firm in defense** of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? The Great Controversy, pp. 593, 594*

Note: The entire worldwide system of **politics, economics, religion, arts, sciences** and **entertainment** based on human wisdom and greatness is going to come crashing down. Then only those who have built a character according to the divine similitude as found in Scripture will be able to stand.

*“You who are resting your hope on self are building on the sand. But it is not yet too late to escape the impending ruin. **Before the tempest breaks**, flee to the sure foundation.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 152*

#13 - Moses and the Prophets

The Foundational Role of Moses: The Torah (Law): Every fundamental truth of Scripture is found in seminal form in the writings of Moses

- Creation (Genesis 1, 2; Job 38-40)
- Sin and death (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:19; the entire book of Leviticus)
- Atonement by blood (Genesis 3:21; Genesis 4:1, 2; Genesis 22; the book of Leviticus)
- Stewardship (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 14:18-20; Genesis 28:20-22; Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:20, 21)
- Angels (Genesis 3:24; 19:1; 28:12; 32:1; Exodus 25:18-22; 36:8, 35)
- Marriage: Heterosexual and monogamous (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:22-24)
- Sexual deviations: Incest (Genesis 19); homosexuality (Genesis 19); adultery (Genesis 39), fornication (Genesis 34), polygamy (Jacob, Esau, Abraham, etc.), prostitution (Genesis 38)
- Law and grace (Exodus 1:14; 2:23-25; Preamble to the Ten Commandments; Leviticus 4, 5)
- Trinity (Genesis 1:26-28; 3:22-24; Genesis 11:7)
- The hope of the resurrection (Job 14:7-15; 19:25-27)
- Translation of the righteous (Genesis 5:22-24 in the light of Hebrews 11:5)
- The gift of tongues and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 11:1-9 in the light of Acts 1; Exodus 17:1-7 in the light of John 7:37-39)
- Final destruction of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Job 41)
- Second coming (Genesis 6-9 in the light of Matthew 24:37-39)
- Importance of the word of God (Showbread, Deuteronomy 8:3, 4; Exodus 16)
- Jesus the once for all sacrifice (Exodus 17:1-7 in the light of Isaiah 53)
- Jesus as our intercessor (Exodus 32:31-33; Genesis 28:12-15 in the light of John 1:51; the veil embroidered with angels)
- Church organization (twelve tribes and the seventy)
- Standards (Genesis 6:1-4; 35:4; Exodus 32:1-3; 33:3-6; 35:22)
- Satan and the origin of evil (Genesis 3)
- Healthful diet (Genesis 1:29, 30; Leviticus 3:17; Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). Actually the eight laws of health were created by God in the creation story of Genesis 1, 2.
- Law (Exodus 20)
- Sabbath (Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 16; Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 31:12-18; Deuteronomy 5:12-

15)

- Heavenly Sanctuary (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5)
- State of the dead (Genesis 2:7; Genesis 3:4, 5, 19, 22-24)
- Investigative judgment (Leviticus 16; Genesis 3:9-13; 4:9; Genesis 11:5; Genesis 18:21; cities of refuge; the entire book of Job is an investigative judgment scene)
- Hell (Genesis 19:24-28 in the light of Jude 7)
- Three angels' messages (Genesis 18:1, 2, 22; 19:1, 14, 24)
- Great controversy (Genesis 3:15)
- Armageddon and the issue of obedience and worship in the final conflict (the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4)
- The 144,000 from the twelve tribes (Genesis 49)
- History of salvation, Christ's salvation calendar (Leviticus 23)
- Revelation's Babylon and the call to come out (Genesis 11:1-9; Genesis 12:1-3)
- Rest of Jesus in the tomb on Sabbath (Exodus 16)
- Spirit of Prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Numbers 12:6; 13:1-5 [characteristics of false prophets])

1400 BC: Joshua Appeals to Moses (58 times in the book of Joshua)

The book of Joshua refers back to the writings of Moses 58 times. That is to say, he appeals to the immediately preceding revelation but **does not add to it**. He **confirms, amplifies, explains** and **applies** the foundational writings of Moses to the **generation of his day** but does not add to or contradict previous truth.

Joshua 1:1-3, 5, 7, 12, 17: Moses is referred to repeatedly in the first chapter of Joshua

*"After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ² "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them — the children of Israel. ³ Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, **as I said to Moses.** ⁵ No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; **as I was with Moses,** so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the **law which Moses My servant commanded you;** do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. ¹² And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, ¹³ "**Remember the word which Moses** the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' ¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which **Moses gave you** on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, ¹⁵ until the Lord has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which **Moses the Lord's servant gave you** on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise. ¹⁶ So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you*

command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we **heeded Moses in all things**, so we will heed you. Only the Lord your God be with you, as **He was with Moses.**”

Joshua 4:10, 12: The priests bore the Ark of the Covenant as Moses had commanded

*“So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, **according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua**; and the people hurried and crossed over. . . ¹² And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as **Moses had spoken to them.**”*

Joshua 8:30-35: When Israel gathered at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim they followed the instructions of Moses to a T.

*“Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, ³¹ **as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded** the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the **law of Moses**, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. . . ³² And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a **copy of the law of Moses**, which he had written. ³³ Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, **as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before**, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he **read all the words of the law**, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is **written in the Book of the Law**. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that **Moses had commanded** which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.”*

Joshua 11:12, 15, 20, 23: The nations of Canaan were destroyed just as Moses had commanded

*“So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as **Moses the servant of the Lord had commande**. ¹⁵ As the Lord had **commanded Moses his servant**, so **Moses commanded Joshua**, and so Joshua did. He **left nothing undone** of all that the Lord had **commanded Moses**. ²⁰ For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, **as the Lord had commanded Moses**. ²³ So Joshua took the whole land, according to **all that the Lord had said to Moses**; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.”*

Joshua 14:5: The land was divided just as Moses had commanded

“As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.”

Joshua 22:4, 5 Joshua admonished Israel to be **faithful to the teachings of Moses**

*“And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which **Moses the servant of the LORD** gave you on the other side Jordan. ⁵ But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which **Moses the servant of the LORD** charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”*

Joshua 23:5-7: Before his death, Joshua admonished Israel to follow the writings of Moses

Words of Joshua to Israel before his death: *“And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the Lord your God promised you. ⁶ Therefore be very courageous to keep and to **do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses**, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷ and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you.”*

1300-1100 BC: The Judges Appeal to Moses

Although the period of the Judges was a time during which there was **little revelation from God**, nevertheless, God expected Israel to live according to what **Moses had written**. The trials that Israel suffered during this period were due to the fact that they did not follow the instructions that God had given through Moses. We find in Judges a few references that appeal to the immediately preceding revelation. The book of Judges confirms what Moses said but does not add to it.

Judges 1:20

*“And they gave Hebron to Caleb, **as Moses had said**. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak.”*

Judges 2:20-22

*“Then the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and He said, “Because this nation has transgressed **My covenant which I commanded their fathers**, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²² so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will **keep the ways of the Lord, to walk in them as their fathers kept them**, or not.”*

Judges 3:4-7 (KJV):

*“And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by **the hand of Moses**.⁵ Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.⁶ And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.⁷ So **the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord**. They forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.”*

1 Samuel 3:1 (KJV):

*“And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was **precious** [rare] in those days; there was no open vision.”*

Judges 14:3: Samson’s parents knew that Moses had commanded the Israelites not to marry unbelievers:

“Then his father and mother said to him [to Samson]: “Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?”

1000-605 BC: The Hebrew Monarchy

The righteous Kings of Israel offered **sacrifices**, brought **tithes** and **offerings** and **taught the people** according to the writings of Moses. And we are told that Israel and Judah were **taken into captivity** because they **disobeyed the writings of Moses**

1 Kings 2:3 (KJV): David admonished Solomon to be faithful to the Law of Moses

*“And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, **as it is written in the law of Moses**, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.”*

2 Chronicles 8:12, 13 (KJV): Solomon’s **Sacrifices** were according to the specifications of Moses

*“Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch even after a certain rate every day, offering¹³ **according to the commandment of Moses**, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.”*

1 Kings 8:53, 56: Solomon’s **prayer to God** and **speech to Israel** hearkens back to Moses

*"For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You **spoke by Your servant Moses**, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God." ⁵⁶ "Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised **through His servant Moses**."*

2 Kings 14:6: King **Amaziah** refused to follow the counsel of Moses

*"But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to **what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses**, in which the Lord commanded, saying: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin."*

2 Kings 18:6: King **Hezekiah was faithful** to the instructions of Moses

"For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses."

2 Kings 18:11, 12: The **Assyrian Captivity** came because Israel did not obey Moses

*"And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: ¹² Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and **all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded**, and would not hear them, nor do them. . ."*

2 Kings 21:7, 8: **Manasseh** was particularly **wicked** because he did not follow the Law of Moses

*"He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the Lord had said to David and to Solomon his son: "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; ⁸ and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers — only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and **according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them**."*

2 Kings 22:11-13: **Josiah** discovered the book of the law and was alarmed because Israel deserved the covenant curses

*"Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the **Book of the Law**, that he tore his clothes. ¹² Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, ¹³ "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the **words of this book** that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us, because our fathers have **not obeyed the words of this book**, to do according to all that is written concerning us."*

2 Kings 23:25 (KJV): Josiah ruled according to the specifications given by God through Moses

*“And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all **the law of Moses**; neither after him arose there any like him.”*

1 Chronicles 15:15: The Levites **bore the ark** as God commanded Moses

*“And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, **as Moses had commanded** according to the word of the Lord.”*

1 Chronicles 22:13: Words of David to his son Solomon

*“Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with **which the Lord charged Moses** concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed.”*

2 Chronicles 17:9 (KJV): The **Levites** taught God’s people from the **book of the Law** given through Moses

*“And they taught in Judah, and had the **book of the law of the LORD with them**, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.”*

2 Chronicles 23:18: The Levites **offered sacrifices** according to Moses

*“Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the Lord to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is **written in the Law of Moses**, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David.”*

2 Chronicles 24:9: Offerings were given according to the specifications of Moses

*“And they [the Levites] made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the Lord the **collection that Moses** the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness.”*

850-587 BC: The Major and Minor Prophets Sought to Bring the People Back to the Writings of Moses

The prophets were actually God’s **attorneys in divorce court**. They were **not innovators** but rather **restorers**. They **added details** (for example, Isaiah 53) and **expanded** upon the writings of Moses but did not add **new truths** that were not already contained in the writings of Moses. They corrected Israel for **going astray** from Moses and **called them to come back** to the foundational truths. The prophet **Jeremiah** repeatedly appeals to the book of Deuteronomy in rebuking Judah for her unfaithfulness.

2 Chronicles 36:16 (KJV): Israel disobeyed the Prophets

“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

Daniel appealed to Moses and the Prophets because when Daniel wrote the former prophets had already prophesied. Notice that Daniel was studying the book of Jeremiah before his intercessory prayer (Daniel 9:1, 2).

Daniel 9:11(KJV), 13(NKJV): The Babylonian captivity came about because Israel disobeyed Moses:

“Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. . . ¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.”

Daniel 9:6 (KJV): Daniel complained that Israel refused to listen to the Prophets who sought to bring people back to the writings of Moses:

“Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.”

Zachariah 7:7, 12 (KJV): The Babylonian captivity came about because Israel disobeyed the Former Prophets

“Should you not have obeyed the words which the Lord proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?”. . . “Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.”

The former and latter prophets added nothing of substance to what Moses taught. Their role was to comfort, encourage, rebuke, confirm, explain, amplify and invite the people to come back to the old landmarks established by Moses. The prophets constantly use the word “**return**” (Jeremiah 3:22; 4:1; 5:3; 8:5; 15:7; 18:11; 24:7; 35:15; 36:3, 7; Malachi 3:7, 18; Hosea 6:1; 7:10; 14:1). For example, Jeremiah did not give any new truth concerning the Sabbath but rather called Israel to return to its proper observance in order to prevent the destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 17:19-27).

Notice **2 Chronicles 24:18, 19 (KJV)**:

*“And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. ¹⁹ Yet **he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord**; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.”*

539–425: After the Babylonian Captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah Continued to Appeal to the Writings of Moses

Ezra 3:2: They built an altar as **Moses had commanded**

Ezra 6:18: The priests and Levites **organized** as Moses had commanded

Ezra 9:12: Ezra forbids **mixed marriages** based on the writings of Moses

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8, 9, 13-15: **Feast of Tabernacles** celebrated as Moses commanded

Nehemiah 10:28-29: The people **promised to obey** the law of God given by Moses

Ezra 5:2 (KJV): The Prophets of God helped in the reestablishment of Israel after the captivity:

“Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God [Haggai and Zachariah] helping them.”

Nehemiah 1:7-9: Nehemiah complained that Israel had not kept the commandments that God gave through Moses:

*“We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which **You commanded Your servant Moses**. ⁸ Remember, I pray, the word that **You commanded Your servant Moses**, saying: ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; ⁹ but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’*

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8, 9, 13-15: After the Jerusalem wall was rebuilt, the religion of Israel was reestablished by the reading of the writings of Moses

*“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the **Book of the Law of Moses**, which the Lord had commanded Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. ³ Then he*

read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to **the Book of the Law**. . . So they read distinctly **from the book, in the Law of God**; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. ⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people: "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when **they heard the words of the Law**. . . Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand **the words of the Law**. ¹⁴ And they **found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses**, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, ¹⁵ and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, **as it is written**."

Nehemiah 10:28, 29

"Now the rest of the people — the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands **to the Law of God**, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding — ²⁹ these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in **God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God**, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes."

Nehemiah 13:1-3: The **mixed multitude** was banished from Israel as Moses had commanded

"On that day they read from the **Book of Moses** in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, ² because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. ³ So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they **separated all the mixed multitude from Israel**."

Nehemiah 13:17-19: The **Sabbath** was restored as Moses had commanded

"Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? ¹⁸ Did not **your fathers do thus** and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you **bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath**." ¹⁹ So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day."

Malachi 4:4-6: An appeal was made to Moses even in the time of John the Baptist and before the Second Coming of Jesus

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. ⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ 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.”

In the Old Testament, Elijah was called to restore the religion of his fathers. This is why he mentioned the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in his prayer on Mt. Carmel. This is also the reason why he rebuilt the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. Elijah was not an innovator. He was called to restore the covenant that had been broken by God’s people. He was to call the people back to the religion of the fathers (see I Kings 18:30; Matthew 17:11; Luke 1:16, 17; I Kings 19:10).

The New Testament: Christ’s Life and Mission (27-31)

The New Testament writers amplify, confirm, unfold and explain the writings of Moses and the Prophets. The New Testament does not add or contradict any of the previous revelation but rather explains, expands and magnifies it. In fact, there is scarcely anything in the life of Christ that was not choreographed in the Old Testament by Moses and the Prophets (as examples, the Hebrew Feasts and the Sanctuary)

1 Peter 1:10-12: The Old Testament prophets searched to find out when and how the Messiah would come

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.”

Matthew 17:1-2 (alluding to Malachi 4:4, 5)

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. ³ And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.”

Luke 16:16: Two categories of Revelation in the Old Testament

“The law and the prophets were until John.”

Matthew 22:40: Two categories of Revelation in the Old Testament

"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Luke 16:29-31: Two categories of Revelation in the Old Testament

*"Abraham said to him: 'They have **Moses and the prophets**; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ But he said to him: 'If they do not hear **Moses and the prophets**, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"*

John 1:45 (KJV): Nathanael testified to Christ in Moses and the Prophets:

*"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom **Moses in the law, and the prophets**, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

John 5:45-47: Moses wrote about Jesus

*"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ For if you believed **Moses**, you would believe Me; for **he wrote about Me**. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

Luke 24:25-27 (KJV): Jesus directed the thoughts of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus to the writings of Moses and the Prophets

*"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that **the prophets** have spoken: ²⁶ Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷ And beginning at **Moses and all the prophets**, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."*

Luke 24:44, 45: Moses and the Prophets

*"Then He said to them: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the **Law of Moses and the Prophets** and the Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures."*

Old Testament Prophecies that Pointed to Christ

- John the Baptist's Mission (Matthew 3:3; Isaiah 40:1-3)
- John the Baptist's call to be the Messenger (Matthew 11:10; Malachi 3:1)
- Birth of Jesus announced by a star (Numbers 24:17; Matthew 2:2)

- Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)
- Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5)
- Circumcised on the eighth day as Moses commanded (Leviticus 12:3; Luke 2:21-24)
- Fled to Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15)
- Infants slain when born (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:17)
- Beginning of His ministry (Isaiah 9:1, 2; Matthew 4:14-16)
- Reading of Scripture at Nazareth (Isaiah 49:8, 9; 61:1, 2; Luke 4:21)
- He bore our diseases (Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:17)
- Leper to do as Moses had commanded (Leviticus 13:1-3; Luke 5:14)
- Servant of the Lord prophecy (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:3; Matthew 12:17)
- The sign of Jonah (Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:40)
- One greater than Solomon's temple (Matthew 12:42)
- Why He spoke in parables (Isaiah 6:9, 10; Matthew 13:14, 15)
- The people honored Him only with their lips (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8, 9)
- Entered Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4, 5)
- Words at the Triumphal Entry (Zechariah 9:9; John 12:15)
- Cleansed the temple (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; Matthew 21:13)
- Songs of the children at the Triumphal Entry (Psalm 8:2; Matthew 21:16)
- The stone that was rejected (Psalm 118:22, 23; Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42)
- The two great commandments (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37, 39)
- To sit at the Father's right hand (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44)
- Abomination of desolation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15)
- Strike the shepherd and the sheep are scattered (Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 26:31)
- All done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (Matthew 26:56)
- Sold for 30 pieces of silver and the Potter's Field (Zechariah 11:12; Jeremiah 32:6-9; Matthew 27:9, 10)
- Cast lots on His garments (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35)
- "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46)
- Numbered with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12; Mark 15:28)
- Zeal for God's house consumed Him (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17)
- Serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21; John 3:14)
- The living Manna (Exodus 16; John 6)
- The water from the rock (Exodus 17:1-7; John 4:13, 14; 7:37-39)
- Judas' betrayal (Psalm 41:9; John 13:18)
- They hated Him without cause (Psalm 35:19; John 15:25)
- The Son of Perdition prophecy (Psalm 109:6-8; John 17:12)
- The words "I thirst" (Psalm 22:15; John 19:28)
- No bones broken (Exodus 12:46; John 19:36)
- They shall look on Him whom they pierced (Psalm 22:16; John 19:37)

The Book of Acts and the Writings of the Apostles: 31-95

Acts 1:16-17: The apostasy of Judas was predicted (Psalm 41:9; 69:25; Psalm 109:6-8)

"Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; ¹⁷ for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

Acts 2:16:

"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. . ." Peter then goes on to quote Joel 2:28-32

Acts 2:25:

"For David says concerning Him. . ." Peter then goes on to quote Psalm 16:8-11

Acts 2:30:

According to this text, God had promised David that a descendant from his flesh would occupy the throne. This promise was made to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16

Acts 2:34-35:

"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

Acts 3:24-26: All the prophets pointed to Jesus

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

Acts 7:51-53:

"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

Acts 15:15-17: Mission the Gentiles was prophesied in the Old Testament

*“And with this **the words of the prophets agree**, just as it is written: ¹⁶ ‘After! this I will return and will **rebuild** the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will **rebuild** its ruins, and I will set it up; ¹⁷ So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are **called by My name**, says the Lord who does all these things.”*

Romans 3:21 (KJV): Paul and Righteousness by Faith in Moses and the prophets

*“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by **the law and the prophets**.”*

I Corinthians 5:7

Paul identifies Christ as **our Passover**, clearly alluding to Exodus 12

I Corinthians 15:20

Paul identifies Christ as the first-fruits, clearly alluding to the feast of **first-fruits in Leviticus 23**.

Acts 24:14 (KJV): Paul Testifies Before Felix:

*“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written **in the law and in the prophets**.”*

Acts 26:22: Paul Returns to Moses

*“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which **the prophets and Moses** did say should come.”*

Acts 28:23, 24 (KJV): Paul Returns to Moses

*“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of **the law of Moses**, and **out of the prophets**, from morning till evening.”*

Galatians 3:16 is a clear allusion to Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 22:18

The **book of Hebrews** reveals how the entire Old Testament cultus was fulfilled in Christ

Revelation 5:5 clearly alludes to the prophecy of Genesis 49:9-12

Crucial Questions for the Last Days

In the light of what we have studied, let's ask a few questions:

- If God were to call an end time prophet, what would that **prophet's role** be?
- What would that **prophet speak**?
- Would the prophet bring to light **new truths** not already contained in Moses, the prophets and the New Testament?
- Or would that prophet **confirm, explain, expand, amplify and develop** the truths that had already been given?
- Would that prophet **correct those who err** from Bible truth?

*"In every age there is a **new development** of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The **old truths** are all essential; **new truth** is not independent of the old, but an **unfolding of it**. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began "at Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh **unfolding of truth** that glorifies the old. He who **rejects or neglects** the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form." Christ Object Lessons, pp. 127, 128*

Ellen White is like a microscope. She does not add to the Bible, she just amplifies and magnifies what is already contained in the Bible

Ellen White confirms, explains, amplifies, expands upon, exalts and unfolds the revelation already contained in Scripture. She adds **nothing of substance**. She brings to light no new doctrines. She is not another Bible or an addition to the Bible. She does not contradict the Bible but she does correct those who err from Bible truth:

*"God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the "last days"; **not for a new rule** of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to **correct** those who err from Bible truth." Early Writings, p. 78*

Ellen White always leads back to the Bible. She does exactly what the New Testament writers did with Moses and the prophets. Each generation **makes explicit** that which is **already implicit** in earlier revelations. She amplifies and magnifies that which is already contained in the Bible. This is called **progressive revelation**. When she is called a 'lesser light' we are not to understand that she is an '**inferior** light' or that she has **lesser authority** than the Bible writers. It is just that her

function, like that of all the Bible writers is to lead men and women to Christ, the greater light. The **source of light** is the same but their **function** is different. In fact, the terminology ‘lesser light’ and ‘greater light’ comes from Genesis 1:16 where the roles of the sun and moon are described. The moon exalts the glory of the sun and leads men to it. So, the glory of the writings of Ellen White (and the Bible, for that matter) comes from Christ.

Like some in the Seventh-day Adventist church today, the Sadducees believed the prophets were of **lesser inspiration** and therefore of **lesser authority** than the writings of Moses. They did not believe in the resurrection or angels because they claimed that they could not find these ideas explicitly in the writings of Moses. If they had studied Scripture they would have clearly found the resurrection in the writings of Moses. You see, some today are committing the same mistake as the Sadducees. They are saying: “*Why do we need Ellen White when we have the Bible?*” The Sadducees said as much when they said: “*Why do we need the prophets when we have Moses?*”

As the prophets were meant to bring people back to the foundational truths in the writings of Moses, so, Ellen White was called to bring people back to the Scriptures. You see, people today have a tendency of rationalizing and explaining away some of the teachings of the Bible that cramp their lifestyle. If people studied the Bible with a sincere desire to practice the truths there contained, the writings of Ellen White would not be necessary. As Ellen White once stated:

*“The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the Word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women **without excuse**, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, **bringing them back** to the word that they have neglected to follow. The word of God abounds in **general principles** for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention **more especially to these principles.**” *Counsels to the Church, p. 92**

Would God leave His people without any guidance in the most dangerous period of this world’s history when Christians are ignoring and twisting the Scriptures? I rather doubt it.

Some things that Ellen White amplifies and clarifies:

- The Garden of Eden in heaven before Creation
- The Little Book is Daniel 8-12
- God had warned Adam and Eve about the fall of Lucifer
- The serpent in Eden could fly
- Jesus will change his garments when probation closes
- The expression “knowledge shall be increased” refers to knowledge of the book of Daniel
- We must guard the edges of the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:19)
- Ellen White clearly identifies all of the beings in Revelation 4-5

#14 - THE END TIME GIFT

False Prophets in the End Time

Mathew 7:15: There will be false prophets in the end time

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing [looks like a lamb], but inwardly they are ravenous wolves [speaks like a dragon]."

Matthew 24:24: False prophets in the time of the end

"For false christs and false prophets [Revelation 16:13] will rise and show great signs and wonders [Revelation 13:13] to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

How can we distinguish a true prophet from a false one?

I Thessalonians 5:19, 21: Prophets must be tested

*"Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ **Do not despise** prophecies. ²¹ **Test** all things; **hold fast** what is good."*

One way of testing whether a prophet is true or false is to determine when and where the gift of prophecy could be expected to appear in the course of history.

The books of Daniel and Revelation tell us **where** and **when** the gift of prophecy would be restored in the time of the end and **to whom**.

Daniel Seven's Perspective

First Three Beasts

- Lion: Babylon
- Bear: Medo-Persia
- Leopard: Greece

Daniel 7:23-24: The fourth beast is Rome and Rome has three clear stages in Daniel 7:

- Dragon: The Roman Empire as a political entity
- Ten horns: The Roman Empire fragmented or divided
- Little horn: The Roman Catholic Papacy

"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a [1] fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. ²⁴ The [2] ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And [3] another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings."

Daniel 7:25: The time period of the little horn

"He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

Historical Sequence of events in Revelation 12

- Flashbacks to heaven
- Israel in the Old Testament period denoted by the 12 stars on the woman's crown
- The dragon attempts to kill the man child when He is born
- Ascension of the man child to heaven
- Victory celebration in heaven upon the arrival of the man child
- Wrath of the dragon against the woman who bore the man child
- Persecution of the woman by the dragon for 1260 years
- The earth (the territory that later became the United States) helps the woman
- Final war of the dragon against the remnant when the deadly wound heals

Let's review the sequence beginning with the birth of the man child:

Revelation 12:1-5: Period of the fourth beast with the ten horns

"Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Revelation 12:6, 13-15: Time, times and half a time

*“Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**.¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he **persecuted the woman** who gave birth to the male Child.¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent.¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.”*

Revelation 12:16: The **earth dries up the waters** of persecution toward the end of the 1260 years. The **territory of the United States** provided a refuge for those who were being persecuted in the Old World. Persecution ceases for a season.

*“But the **earth helped** the woman, and **the earth opened its mouth** and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.”*

In Revelation 12:13-15 we find a description of the persecution of the woman by the dragon for 1260 years. Then in verse 16 we have the earth helping the woman. The earth actually helps the woman before the 1260 years come to an end. How do we know this? Because of the sequence of events as they appear in The Great Controversy.

- In The Great Controversy, p. 265 Ellen White begins the chapter on the **French Revolution** (“The Bible and the French Revolution”) which culminates the 1260 year period from 1789-1798.
- In the very next chapter (p. 289: “The Pilgrim Fathers”) Ellen White goes back in time and describes how the territory of the United States provided refuge for those who were persecuted in Europe.
- This is very similar to the order of Revelation 12 where in verse 14 the woman is persecuted for 1260 years and then in verse 16 we see the earth helping the woman.

Revelation 12:17: The **dragon** is enraged with the woman and unleashes a final desperate persecution to try and wipe out the Remnant of the woman’s Seed. The woman’s Seed has already been identified as **Christ** so the Remnant of the Seed is the **Remnant of Jesus**.

*“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the **remnant of her Seed**, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

Which are the Commandments of God?

Matthew 19:17-22: “So He said to him: “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, **keep the commandments**.”¹⁸ He said to Him, “**Which ones?**”

Jesus said, "You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'¹⁹ 'Honor your father and your mother,' and: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁰ The young man said to Him, "All these things **I have kept from my youth**. What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

The women who came to the tomb rested on the Sabbath (the fourth) according to **the commandment**:

Luke 23:56:

*"Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath **according to the commandment**."*

The expression "**commandment of God**" is used to refer to the fifth commandment:

Mark 7:9, 10: The words 'commandment' and 'keep' refer to one of the Ten Commandments

*"He said to them, "All too well you reject the **commandment of God**, that you may **keep** your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*

The word 'commandment' is a reference to the **tenth commandment**:

Romans 7:7-12:

*"What shall we say then? Is the **law** sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known **sin** except through the **law**. For I would not have known covetousness unless the **law** had said, "You shall not covet." ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the **commandment**, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the **law** **sin** was dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the **law**, but when the **commandment** came, **sin** revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the **commandment**, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For **sin**, taking occasion by the **commandment**, deceived me, and by it killed me. ¹² Therefore the **law** is holy, and the **commandment** holy and just and good."*

Paul wrote that we must **keep** the **commandments** of God"

I Corinthians 7:19:

*"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but **keeping the commandments of God** is what matters."*

Are the words "**law**" and "**commandments**" used interchangeably in Scripture?

Exodus 16:28:

"And the Lord said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?"

Exodus 24:12:

"Then the Lord said to Moses: "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

In Deuteronomy we are told that God wrote the Ten Commandments but in Deuteronomy we are told that God gave them a fiery law so the words 'commandments' and 'law' are interchangeable:

Deuteronomy 4:13 (Amplified):

"So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone."

Deuteronomy 33:2:

"The Lord came from Sinai and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand came a fiery law for them."

Romans 7:7-12:

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

Romans 13:8-10:

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

James 2:10-12:

"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who

said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a **transgressor of the law**.¹² So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the **law** of liberty."

Mark 7:9, 10:

"He said to them, "All too well you reject the **commandment of God**, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

I John 5:2, 3

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His **commandments**. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His **commandments**. And His **commandments** are not burdensome."

What is the Testimony of Jesus?

Revelation 19:10: The testimony of Jesus is the **spirit of prophecy**

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me: "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is **the spirit of prophecy**."

Revelation 22:8, 9: The **prophets** have the testimony of Jesus

"Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me: "See that you do not do that for I am your fellow servant and of your **brethren the prophets** and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

The historical sequence of Revelation 12 clearly reveals that Ellen White was the true prophet whom God called at the end of the 1260 years to correct the change that the papacy attempted to make in God's times. She was called to clearly point out the **true prophetic scenario** of the end times. The issues in the final conflict run far deeper than Sabbath versus Sunday. At the center of the end-time controversy are **two rival systems** of prophetic interpretation. One denies that the papacy changed the Law and the other affirms it. One turns everyone's eyes to the Middle East for the fulfillment of prophecy while the other points the eyes to Rome and the United States.

You see, Protestantism has not only embraced the **wrong day** of worship from the Papacy but it has also borrowed the **wrong way** of interpreting prophecy. In this way, Protestantism has made a prophetic image of the beast and has become the spokesperson for her mother from whom she received the change in the times and in the Law.

The change in the times and the change in the Law are intimately related. When the Papacy succeeded in getting Protestants to abandon Historicism as a method, it also succeeded in hiding the Roman Catholic system as the Antichrist. And because Protestants no longer saw the Papacy as the predicted Antichrist, they could not discern the role of the Papacy in the change of the Sabbath. Simply put, if the little horn does not symbolize the Papacy, then the Papacy did not change the Sabbath commandment.

The change in the times, then, hides the culprit who changed the Law!!

No wonder Protestants are blind to the central issues in the final conflict. No wonder they are oblivious to the fact that the final controversy will be between Sabbath observance as a sign of loyalty to God's authority and Sunday observance as the sign of loyalty to the Papacy's authority!! It should not surprise us that Protestants are looking to the Middle East for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy when prophecy is fulfilling right before their eyes in the west!

Let's summarize the relationship between Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:17:

The little horn system during the 1260 years attempted to change:

- The times
- The Law

God counteracted these two changes at the end of the 1260 years by raising a people who:

- Have the testimony of Jesus
- Keep the Commandments of God

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands alone in the world as the bulwark of the historicist method. This is the only church in the world that can detect and unveil the Antichrist of Scripture along with all its allies because this church alone has preserved the proper prophetic hermeneutic. Those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who are tampering with the historicist method and attempting to change God's times would do well to remove the shoes from their feet and bow before the One who knows the end from the beginning!

Satan knows that in order to destroy the **message and mission** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he must first destroy its **method**. The claim of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the Remnant is based on the historicist method of interpreting Bible Prophecy. We have employed the historicist method to identify the papacy as the Antichrist, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. The historicist method has also been used to prove that the Remnant Church would arise shortly after 1798 with a prophet in its midst (Revelation 12:17). Our explanation of the Messianic prophecy of the seventy weeks, the prophecy of the 2300 days, the bittersweet book of Revelation 10, the churches, the seals, the trumpets, the beasts, the three angels' message, the role of the United

States in prophecy, etc., is based on the governing principle of historicism as a method. Frank B. Holbrook stated it well in 1983:

“The real distinctive frame holding together the picture of truth as perceived by Seventh-day Adventists is their understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. In these apocalyptic prophecies Adventists have found their times, their identity, and their task.”

Satan’s success against the Seventh-day Adventist Church can be far greater if he zeroes in on the **method** of Adventism rather than only on its **message**. You see, when the method is destroyed, the message goes with it!! The method of the Protestant Reformers became the catalyst for their message. In fact, if it had not been for the method, there would have been no message and so it is with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today finds itself at a hermeneutical crossroads. Some theologians within the church are even now questioning the soundness of the historicist hermeneutical methodology. Some are offering preterist interpretations of prophecy and others are proposing futurist interpretations of passages that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has traditionally understood in a historicist manner.¹ Others are making dual applications of prophecies that clearly have only one fulfillment. Is it any wonder that some of these same theologians in our church are committed to political correctness when it comes to preaching about the little horn, the sea beast and the earth beast with lamblike horns? Is it any surprise that some of these scholars within God’s remnant church are even encouraging the Seventh-day Adventist Church to build bridges of understanding with Rome?

The book of Revelation tells us that Satan is not going to stay with his arms crossed while God’s remnant church restores the times and the Law. Revelation 13:11-18 describes a future period when Protestants in the United States will do **two things** just like the Papacy did during the 1260 years: First, they will enforce the mark of the beast (worship on Sunday) eventually on pain of death. This will be the future enforcement of the Papacy’s change in the Law. Second, they will become the beast’s false prophet by teaching the Papacy’s counterfeit prophetic scenario, that is, the change in the times.

For most conservative Protestants today the United States is the ‘good guy’ and Islam is the deadly enemy. After 9/11 all eyes have turned to the terrorists in the Middle East. The government, the media and even many Evangelical churches see militant Islam as the deadly enemy of the west. Many right wing talk show hosts consider any criticism of the policies of the United States as unpatriotic and unchristian. What an overwhelming surprise it will be when they finally discover that the United States, by joining hands with the Papacy, will commit national apostasy that will lead to national ruin. What a shock it will be when they realize that prophecy was being fulfilled right before their eyes in Rome and in the United States while they were looking for the enemy in the Middle East!

Satan is a master at smokescreens and diversions. He does not want the world to know what the true issues are in the final conflict and therefore he has changed the meaning of Bible prophecy. He

has deceived the religious world into thinking that the Antichrist will be a nasty individual who will arise and sit in a rebuilt Jerusalem temple for three and a half literal years after the church has been snatched away to heaven.

What importance do futurist preachers give to the book of Revelation? On the surface it might appear that they are very much interested in it because they talk and write about it all the time. But let's take a closer look at their view of the book of Revelation.

According to most, if not all, futurists when John was told by a voice from heaven to 'come up hither' (Revelation 4:1) this was a reference to the rapture of the church. Futurists believe that the rest of the book of Revelation from that point on will be fulfilled with the literal Jews in the Middle East after the Church is gone from planet earth.

Think about the implications of this. Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally believed that the origin and destiny of our movement is clearly portrayed in the little book episode of Revelation 10. We also believe that our divinely appointed origin is portrayed in Revelation 12:17 and that our distinctive message and mission to the world is found in Revelation 14:6-12. But if Revelation 4-22 applies only to the literal Jews during the future tribulation after the church is in heaven, then our divine origin, message and mission are gone. We have no reason to exist!

Furthermore, according to the futurist scenario the enemies of God's people will not even come on the scene until after the rapture so why worry about them now. If we are going to be gone, why even bother to speak about the beast, his image and his mark? Why bother to call people out of Babylon? Focusing on literal Israel in the future in the Middle East hides the true identity of the beast and the false prophet. People will be looking for these powers at the wrong time and in the wrong place! And so the Papacy and the United States will be fulfilling prophecy right before peoples' eyes and they will not be able to see it because they will be looking in the wrong place at the wrong time for the wrong Antichrist!

The very message, mission and identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church depend on our method of interpreting Revelation. If the fulfillment of Revelation 10 is yet future like some in our own church are suggesting, then it has nothing to do with the origin and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If the fulfillment of Revelation 12:17 is still in the future then it has nothing to do with the origin and identification of the Remnant church that arose shortly after 1844!

Ellen White once warned one of our school teachers about the dangers of his futuristic and preteristic views concerning the prophecies that have made us what we are as a people:

*"We have a sleepless adversary, and he is constantly at work upon human minds that **have not had a personal experience in the teachings of the people of God for the past fifty years**. Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and **place it in the future**. Events in the **train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future**, and thus by these theories the faith of some is undermined." Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 102*

The Historical Sequence of Revelation 13

Revelation 12:3: A dragon with ten horns: The Roman Empire and divided Rome

“And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.”

Revelation 13:2: The dragon gives his authority and throne to the beast: The Papacy

“Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”

Revelation 13:7: The beast, just like the little horn, persecutes the saints

“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”

Revelation 13:5: The beast speaks blasphemies and rules for 42 months

“And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.”

Revelation 13:10: The beast receives a deadly wound at the conclusion of the 42 months

“He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

Revelation 13:14: The wound was given to the papacy with the sword

“And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”

Romans 13:1-4: The sword that wounded the beast was the civil power of France

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

Revelation 13:11: When the first beast received its deadly wound another beast arose from the earth. The earth represents the territory of the United States that provided refuge to the persecuted ones in the Old World and the beast from the earth represents the nation that arose in that territory.

Revelation 12:

The earth helps the woman and then the dragon is enraged with the remnant of the woman's Seed

Revelation 13:

A beast rises from the earth with two horns like a lamb and ends up speaking like a dragon

"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon."

Revelation 13:12-18: This beast speaks like a dragon, it imposes the change in the law by force

Revelation 16:13: The beast from the earth is also called the false prophet

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

Deuteronomy 13:1-5: How to detect a false prophet in ancient Israel

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,'³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.⁴ You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst."

Jeremiah 26:4-6: The law and the gift of prophecy are linked together

"And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord: "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you,⁵ to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending them (but you have not heeded),⁶ then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.'"

Isaiah 8:20: The way to detect a counterfeit is by the law and the testimony.

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

I Corinthians 14:32: The prophets must be subject to the prophets

"And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

Matthew 7:15, 21-23: False prophets are detected by their attitude toward the law of God

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing [looks like a lamb], but inwardly they are ravenous wolves [speaks like a dragon] ." ²¹ Not everyone who says to Me: 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness! [The same word that is used in I John 3:4 and is translated 'transgression of the law]'"

#15 - PROPHETS AND TIME PROPHECIES

Introduction

The apostle Paul compares the **church to a body**. The body is one but it is composed of many members and each member of the body was created to fulfill a different function. In the same way the church should be in unity but each member has been called to fulfill a different function for the good of the body. For example, the feet represent the act of preaching the gospel of peace. The mouth represents the act of teaching. The hands that touch represent the kindness and caring of the church for others.

What do the eyes of the body represent? We catch a glimpse of their meaning in 1 Samuel 9:9 and Isaiah 29:10:

*"(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the **seer**"; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a **seer**.)"*

*"For the LORD has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has **closed your eyes, namely, the prophets**; and He has covered your heads, namely, the **seers**."*

For this reason we are told that *"where there is no vision the people perish"* (Proverbs 29:18 KJV).

Is it just possible that the blindness of the Laodicean Church is due to her rejection of the prophetic voice that God has given in the person of Ellen G. White?

Certainly God has given a precious message to the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the ministry of Ellen G. White. But how can we be certain that she was called of God to be the eyes of the Remnant Church? In this study we will pursue only one avenue that will help us see that she was raised up at just the **right time** with the **right message** for the right people!

God's Modus Operandi

In this study we are going to analyze several time prophecies of the Bible. All of these time prophecies are found in the Old Testament. The first three point to events that transpired in Old

Testament times. The last two point to events that occurred in New Testament times. In each of these time prophecies we will find that there is a common *modus operandi* that God uses to convey the reliability of His message. His method of operation is as follows:

- God calls a **prophet**
- God imparts a **message** to that prophet
- The message is one of **judgment**
- Linked with the message is as **time prophecy**
- The message is **not present truth** for that time

When the time period is about to (or has) come to an end, God operates in the following fashion:

- He calls **another prophet**
- He imparts the **same message** to this prophet as he gave to the first one
- The message is one of **judgment**
- The message explains that the **time prophecy** is coming (or has come) to an end
- The message becomes **Present Truth**
- A **remnant** is always drawn out and guided by the mission of this prophet

No Measly Events

We will find that these time prophecies do not point to insignificant events in human history. We will find that they relate to the **great events of salvation history**:

- The calling of the first prophet
- The global flood in the day of Noah
- The call of Abraham
- The Exodus of Israel from Egypt
- The Babylonian captivity
- The baptism and death of the Messiah and the close of probation for the Jewish theocracy
- The beginning of the final judgment

Enoch and Noah

The first prophet that who is explicitly mentioned in the Bible was Enoch. We are told in Jude 14, 15:

*"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, **prophesied** about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, ¹⁵ to **execute judgment** on all, **to convict** all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

Notice that Enoch was the **first prophet** and he was given a message of **judgment**. The question is: To what event did this message of judgment apply? The answer is two-fold. In Matthew 24:37-39 Jesus compared two great events—the flood and His coming:

*“But as the **days of Noah** were, **so also** will the **coming of the Son of Man** be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

Concerning the wickedness of the world we are told in Genesis 6:5, 11-13:

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

So Enoch was describing Christ’s coming to destroy the world for its wickedness at the second coming but he was also describing the destruction of the world for its wickedness by the flood in the days of Noah. Neither of these events took place during the time of Enoch so this message was **not Present Truth** for his generation.

Now, where is the **time prophecy** that pointed to the destruction of the world by a flood? In order to answer this question we must look beneath the surface of Scripture—we must appeal to the significance of names. More than 75 times in the book of Genesis the significance of names is underlined. The question is: What does the name of Enoch’s son Methuselah mean?

The book of Genesis tells us that Enoch had a son called Methuselah:

“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah.” (Genesis 5:21)

This name is composed of two Hebrew words: *muwth* (Strong’s # 4191) and *shalach* (Strong’s # 7971). The word *muwth* means “to die” and the word *shalach* means “to send”. Thus the name Methuselah means “*when he dies it will be sent.*” The question begs to be asked: When he dies, **what** will be sent? The answer is: The flood.

Jewish tradition affirms that Methuselah died just ten days before the flood. We cannot prove from the Bible that Methuselah died just ten days before the flood but we can confirm that he died the **very year of the flood**.

Let's do a little bit of math. From the time that Methuselah was born till the time that his son Lamech was born **187 years** passed (Genesis 5:22). Then from the time that Lamech was born until his son Noah was born, **182 years** transpired (Genesis 5:28). And Noah was **600 years** old when the flood came (Genesis 7:11). Now let's add up the figures:

$$187 + 182 + 600 = 969$$

So, from the time that Methuselah was born till the flood came a period of **969 years** transpired. And how old was Methuselah when he died? The answer is in Genesis 5:27—he was 969.

“So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.” (Genesis 5:27)

Unequivocally, Methuselah died the **very year of the flood**. Thus his name was prophetic—it announced the very year the world would be destroyed by the flood!

In summary: God called His **prophet**, Enoch, and gave him a message of **judgment**. Connected with the message of judgment was a **time prophecy** but the message was **not present truth** for Enoch's generation.

Significantly, when the time prophecy was about to reach its end, God called another prophet to make the message of Enoch Present Truth. Of course we know that the name of that prophet was Noah. Notice what we are told about Noah in II Peter 2:5 and Hebrews 11:7:

*“. . . and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a **preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly. . .”*

*“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he **condemned the world** and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”*

Was Noah a **prophet**? Yes. Was the message of Noah a message of **judgment**? Yes. Did the message of Noah culminate when the **time prophecy** came to an end? Yes. Did Noah make Enoch's message **Present Truth** for his generation? Again, yes! And was a **remnant saved** as a result of the message of Noah? Yes, he and his family were saved from the destruction.

Abraham and Moses

In Genesis 20:7 we are told that when Abraham went to the city of Gerar, fearing for his life, he told king Abimelech the half truth that Sarah was his sister. That very evening, God gave Abimelech a dream where He revealed to him the complete truth. God explained that Sarah was also Abraham's wife and that Abraham was a **prophet** and commanded him to return Sarah to her husband:

“Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

The question is: Did God give Abraham a message of **judgment** linked with a **time prophecy**? The answer is yes. In Genesis 15:13, 14 we find the prophecy about the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt for 400 years:

*“Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them **four hundred years**.¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve **I will judge**; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.”*

This prophecy was **not Present Truth** for the days of Abraham for the patriarch was promised in Genesis 15:15, 16:

“Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

In summary: God called His **prophet**, Abraham, and gave him a **message of judgment**. Linked with the message of judgment was a **time prophecy** but the message was **not present truth** for his generation.

When the 400 years were about to end, God raised up **another prophet** who spoke to the **same issue** as did Abraham. In fact, we are told that on the very day that the **time prophecy** came to an end, God delivered His people from bondage to the Egyptians.

“Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.⁴¹ And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years--on that very same day--it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:40, 41)

Thus the message of Abraham became **Present Truth** in the generation of Moses. In Hosea 12:13 Moses is specifically called a prophet:

“By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet he was preserved.”

Did God use Moses to save and **lead a remnant** out of bondage? The answer again is yes—the children of Israel.

Jeremiah and Daniel

In Jeremiah 1:5 we are told that Jeremiah was called to be a **prophet** while he was still in the womb. Was Jeremiah given a specific **time prophecy** along with a message of **judgment**? Yes indeed! Notice Jeremiah 25:11, 12:

“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.’”

Here Jeremiah was told that the captivity of Judah in Babylon would last a period of seventy years after God would intervene to deliver Judah and take her back to the land of Israel. This message was **not Present Truth** for the days of Jeremiah for he died before the captivity began and ended.

But near the conclusion of the seventy years God called **another prophet** to make the message of Jeremiah **Present Truth**, and that prophet was Daniel. God had just judged Babylon the year before as he had promised and now Daniel wondered whether God’s people would go back to their land as promised. Notice Daniel 9:1, 2:

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. “

Notably, Daniel was studying **the very prophecy** that God had given Jeremiah. When Daniel showed Cyrus the prophecies of Isaiah concerning himself (Isaiah 45:1), Cyrus gave the decree **exactly seventy years** after the captivity began (see Ezra 1:1-4). Thus Daniel made the prophecy of Jeremiah **Present Truth** and under the leadership of Daniel **God’s remnant people** were able to go back to their land to rebuild the temple and eventually the walls and the city.

Daniel and John the Baptist

God gave Daniel the prophecy of the **seventy weeks**. This prophecy contemplated **three great events** that would transpire during the final seven years: The **anointing** of Messiah, **His death** and the **close of probation** for the nation that rejected him. Here is the prophecy:

Daniel 9:24-27:

*“**Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.***

²⁵ *“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until **Messiah the Prince**, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. ²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks **Messiah shall be cut off**, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are*

determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the **middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering**. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is **poured out on the desolate**."

Notably, at the very beginning of the last seven years, John the Baptist made the message of Daniel Present Truth by addressing the exact same issues. First of all, John the Baptist baptized and introduced Jesus. It was at his baptism that Jesus was anointed as the Messiah:

Shortly after His baptism when He began His public ministry in Nazareth Jesus announced that He had been anointed by the Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:16). In the same manner Peter affirmed on the Day of Pentecost that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and it was at His baptism that the Holy Spirit fell upon Jesus (Matthew 3:16)

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. . . ¹⁶ When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:15-17)

John also announced that Jesus was the **Lamb of God**. It was universally known among the Jews that lambs died in the sacrificial service of the Temple:

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! . . . ³⁵ Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29, 36)

But John also announced the third event—the judgment that would fall upon the Jewish nation if they rejected the Messiah:

*"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the **wrath to come**? ⁸ Therefore **bear fruits** worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up **children to Abraham from these stones**. ¹⁰ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the **trees**. Therefore every **tree** which does not bear good fruit is **cut down** and **thrown into the fire**. ¹¹ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His **winnowing fan** is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather ¹² His **wheat** into the barn; but He will burn up the **chaff** with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:7-12)*

In this passage, John the Baptist compares the Jewish nation to a tree and he affirmed that if the tree did not produce fruit it would be cut down and thrown into the fire. This was a message of judgment.

It is worthy of note that three years after John the Baptist began preaching (and two and a half years after Jesus began His ministry), Jesus told the following parable:

"He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years [six months of John's message and two and a half years of Jesus' message] I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' ⁸ But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also [only one year remained in the ministry of Jesus], until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' " (Luke 13:6-9)

At the end of the final year, Jesus saw a fig tree in the distance and invited His disciples to go with Him to eat fruit from it but when he got there the tree had no fruit and therefore He cursed it:

"And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." (Matthew 21:19 KJV)

The very next day Jesus and His disciples passed by the site where the tree was and discovered that it had dried up at the roots:

"Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." (Mark 11:20, 21)

As a result of the work of John the Baptist a **remnant** was prepared to receive Jesus. Most of the disciples of Jesus were previously disciples of John the Baptist. Paul spoke about this remnant when he said:

"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Romans 11:5)

Summary: John the Baptist, who was **more than a prophet** preached a message of **judgment** and made the **time prophecy** of the seventy weeks **present truth** in his generation. He also prepared the **nucleus** of those who would become the disciples of Jesus and the founders of the Christian Church

Daniel and Ellen G. White

The **time prophecy** of the seventy weeks that was given to Daniel **the prophet** was merely the **first portion** of a larger prophecy—the 2300 days/years. This prophecy announces the beginning of the **final judgment** in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844:

Daniel 8:14: "And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'

According to Daniel 12:4, 9, this prophecy was **not present truth** in the days of Daniel:

Daniel 12:4, 9, 13

*"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and **seal the book** until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." . . . ⁹ And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the **words are closed up and sealed** till the time of the end. . . ¹³ But you, go your way till the end; for **you shall rest**, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*

At the end of the **time prophecy** of the 2300 days an intercontinental and interdenominational movement arose to proclaim that the hour of **God's judgment** had come. Thus the message of Daniel 8:14 became **Present Truth**. The central text they used was Daniel 8:14 and though they were wrong about the event they were correct about the timing of the event.

After the Great Disappointment God called and commissioned **Ellen G. White** to fully explain this prophecy. In her early visions her burden was to explain the prophecy of the 2300 days and the reason for the Great Disappointment. **She could have written about many subjects**. Why did she have a burden to explain the prophecy of the 2300 days? Simply because she was making **Present Truth** the time prophecy that God had given 2300 years before. And Ellen White was instrumental in the establishment of the **Remnant Church**.

Many Movements around 1844

New England during the Second Great Advent Awakening came to be know as "*the burned over district*" because of the many movements that arose during this time. The following are some of the movements and their champions that arose around this period both in the **United States** and in **Europe**:

- **Mormonism:** Joseph Smith
- **Christian Science:** Mary Baker Eddy
- **Theosophy, New Age:** Helena Blavatski
- **Bahai:** Abdul Baha
- **Spiritualism:** Fox sisters, Andrew Jackson Davis
- **Pentecostalism:** Margaret McDonald
- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** Charles Taze Russell
- **Futurism:** John Nelson Darby, Edward Irving
- **Evolutionism:** Charles Darwin
- **Marxism:** Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

And how can we be sure that none of these movements were the genuine manifestation of God's remnant? Simply because none of them addressed or even showed any interest in the prophecy of the 2300 days. They all had a central message but it had nothing to do with the 2300 days and 1844. In contrast, the Millerites and Ellen White centered their message on this prophecy. Ellen White thus became the founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—God's remnant with a special judgment message for the last days.

Attitudes toward Ellen G. White

- **Openly attack** her ministry and writings
- **Ignore her** by not reading her counsels
- **Undermine her** through **selective use** of her writings
- Using her to **pound people** over the head
- **Love, read and obey** the counsels God gave through her

#16 - GUIDANCE FOR THE LAST DAYS

Explain how a microscope works. It does not create reality but rather magnifies reality. It does not bring things into existence; it helps us see what the naked eye cannot see.

One Foundational Principle

The foundational principle of the universe is love for we are told that God is love:

I John 4:8:

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

But the question might be asked: What is love? Many things that people do today are done in the name of love when the opposite is true. So we need a broader explanation of what love is so God gave us the Ten Commandments to further magnify the foundational principle of love.

Two-dimensional Love

Deuteronomy 4:12-13

“And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

Leviticus 19:18

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

Matthew 22:35-39: Bi-directional love

"Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Love moves in two directions, **vertical and horizontal**, toward God and toward our fellow human beings. But **what does it mean** to love God and to love our fellow human beings?

Bi-Dimensional Love Amplified

Exodus 20:1-17: The two principles are enlarged in the Ten Commandments

Vertical love toward God is defined and amplified in the **first four commandments** (describe). **Horizontal** love toward our fellow human beings is defined and amplified in the **last six commandments** (describe).

The Ten Commandments are **apodictic** law rather than **casuistic** law. That is to say, the Ten Commandments deal in **general principles** which must be applied to **specific circumstances** in everyday life. In the Ten Commandments there is no description of the **consequences** of violating the various commands. Furthermore, actions like killing and adultery are not clearly defined. Exodus 21-23 further amplifies the Ten Commandments and applies them to everyday situations.

The Ten Commandments are like a **Constitution**—they are what scholars call **apodictic law**. They express **absolute** and **basic general principles** for a stable society.

Take for example the **sixth** commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." Does this forbid killing in **war**, killing **animals**, **accidental** killing or manslaughter, performing **abortions**, killing in **self-defense**, killing of **tyrants** like Adolph Hitler?

The sixth commandment does not define **what killing** is, what **kind of killing** is wrong, **why** killing is wrong, the **baleful consequences** of killing or the **penalty** for killing. It simply states a **general principle**: "Thou shalt not kill."

Amplification in the Holiness Code

The Ten Commandments are further amplified in what has come to be known as the Holiness Code. In Exodus 21-23 the Ten Commandments are applied to specific real life situations.

The Entire Bible

Matthew 22:40: The law is amplified in the **entire Bible**.

"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

The entire **Bible** is actually a **commentary** and **amplification** of the Ten Commandments. The **Bible** is what scholars have called **casuistic law** because it gives specific **real life examples** of the violation of the Ten Commandments, the **baleful results** of transgressing them and the **punishment** which follows their transgression.

This is why sometimes we are told that we will be **judged by the law** and at other times we are told that we will be judged by the **Word of God** (James 2:10-12; Hebrews 4:12-13). The Word of God **defines, amplifies and applies** the principles of the law to specific real life situations.

Let's take, for example, the seventh commandment: '**Thou shalt not commit adultery.**' This is a brief statement but it has broad implications which are amplified elsewhere in Scripture.

As we look at the entirety of Scripture we see that the prohibition includes lusting after a woman in the **mind** (Mt. 5:27-28). It includes getting **divorced** for the wrong reason (Mt. 19:9). The story of David shows the **horrendous consequences** of violating this commandment (II Samuel 11). It also includes **incest** (I Cor. 5:1-5), **prostitution** (Lev. 19:29; I Cor. 6:15, 16), **homosexuality** (Genesis 19:5-8; I Cor. 6:9), **fornication** (I Cor. 6:18), **lasciviousness**—sexual recklessness-- aberrations (I Pet. 4:3). Clearly, the Bible greatly amplifies this commandment.

The Spirit of Prophecy

Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9

There are certain real life situations that the Bible does not address directly. Does the Bible directly address issues such as **pornography and masturbation**? Not in detail but yes in principle. Does this mean that we are allowed to view pornography and practice masturbation with no compunction of conscience? The answer would be no. The fact is that God has given a **further amplification** of the Bible for these last days in the Spirit of Prophecy.

The question is frequently asked: why does the last day church need these writings if they have the Bible? Doesn't Ellen White say that the Bible is our **only rule** of faith and practice? Yes she does. But does this mean that we do not need her writings? Why did God give the Spirit of Prophecy if all of God's will is revealed in the Bible? Let's see what Ellen White said about the relationship between the Bible and her writings:

'Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a clearer understanding of it.' The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow.' The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles." (Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pp. 663-664)

'I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the "last days"; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.' (Early Writings, p. 78)

Let's take a few **controversial issues** that are addressed by Ellen G. White to see if she is in harmony with biblical principles.

The Sabbath

Isaiah 58:13, 14 contains the general principles that we are not supposed to do our ways or pleasure or speak our own words.

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, ¹⁴ Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken."

But how do these principles apply to specific real life situations? Does breaking the Sabbath affect our love relationship with God? What specific activities are forbidden on the Sabbath?

*"Let every family of Seventh-day Adventists honor God by a strict regard for his law. The children should be taught to respect the Sabbath. On the day of preparation, **clothing** should be put in proper repair, **shoes** polished, **baths** taken. Then around the family altar all should wait to **welcome God's holy day**, as they would watch for the coming of a dear friend." Signs of the Times, May 25, 1882*

Nehemiah 13:17-19: Contains the principle that we are to guard the edges of the Sabbath:

*"Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?"¹⁸ Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."¹⁹ So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark **before** the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they **must not be opened till after the Sabbath**. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day."*

Ellen White amplifies this principle:

*"We should jealously **guard the edges** of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time. Whenever it is possible, employers should give their workers the hours from **Friday noon until the beginning of the Sabbath**. Give them time for preparation that they may welcome the Lord's Day with **quietness of mind**. By such a course you will suffer no loss even in temporal things." Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, p. 356*

Is Ellen White really adding anything to Scripture in these statements? No. She is simply amplifying the principles that are found in Scripture.

The Use of Bicycles

Much has been made of the fact that Ellen White condemned the use of bicycles. People ask: How can anyone believe she had the prophetic gift when she said such a seemingly **ridiculous thing**? After all, does riding a bicycle affect our love relationship with God and our fellow human beings? Let's see **what** she said, **when** she said it and **why**. After all, she has said herself:

*'Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside, but **time** and **place** must be considered.'* (Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 57)

*"Turn to another scene. In the streets of the city is a party gathered for a bicycle race. [See Appendix.] In this company also are those who profess to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. But who that looks upon the exciting race would think that those who were thus **exhibiting themselves** were the followers of Christ? Who would suppose that any of that party felt their need of Christ? Who would think they realized the **value of their time** and their **physical powers** as gifts from God, to be preserved for His service? Who thinks of the **danger of accident**, or that **death** may be the result of their **wild chase**? Who have prayed for the presence of Jesus, and the **protection of the ministering angels**? **Is God glorified** by these performances? Satan is playing the game of life for these souls and he is well pleased with that which he sees and hears. Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 83, 84*

*“In view of the terrible crisis before us what are those doing who profess to believe the truth? I was called by my Guide, who said, “Follow Me,” and I was shown things among our people that were not in accordance with their faith. There seemed to be a bicycle **craze**. **Money** was spent to gratify an enthusiasm in this direction that might better, far better, have been invested in building houses of worship where they are greatly needed There were presented before me some strange things in Battle Creek. A **bewitching** influence seemed to be passing as a **wave** over our people there, and I saw that this would be followed by other temptations. Satan works with intensity of purpose to induce our people to invest their **time and money** in gratifying supposed wants. This is a species of **idolatry**. . . . While you have been gratifying your inclination in the appropriation of money—God’s money—for which you must give an account, **missionary work** has been hindered and bound about for want of means and workers to plant the banner of truth in places where the people have never heard the message of warning. . . . There were some who were striving for the **mastery**, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of **strife and contention** among them as to which should be the greatest. The spirit was similar to that manifested in the baseball games on the college ground. . . .”* (Testimonies to the Church, volume 8, pp. 51-52).

*“You would not be purchasing bicycles, which you could do without, but would be receiving the blessing of God in exercising your physical powers in a **less expensive way**. Instead of investing **one hundred dollars** [a small fortune at that time] in a bicycle, you would consider the matter well, lest it might be at the **price of souls** for whom Christ died, and for whom he has made you responsible.”* Review and Herald, August 21, 1894

In Testimonies to Ministers, p. 84 (written in 1895) Ellen White states that the students were **injuring themselves**, putting their **lives in danger** and struggling for the **supremacy** in their bicycle races.

A careful reading of Ellen White’s counsel concerning bicycles clearly reveals that she would today condemn the recreational use of a bicycle or its use for personal transportation. In her day, Adventists were mortgaging homes and tapping into life savings in order to gain the supremacy over others. I wonder if Ellen White would have something to say today about NASCAR and motorcycle races and even events such as the *Tour de France* where great sums of money are spent, lives are put in danger and the struggle for supremacy can be clearly seen.

Was Ellen White correct when she wrote about other dangerous amusements where the same principles apply?

*“Some of the most popular amusements, such as **football and boxing**, have become schools **of brutality**. They are developing the same characteristics as did the games of **ancient Rome**. The **love of domination**, the **pride in mere brute force**, the **reckless disregard of life**, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling.”* Education, p. 210

Today Ellen White might apply her counsel to the luxurious and expensive **cars we drive or houses we live in or expensive 'toys' we indulge in.**

Although her specific counsel regarding bicycles does not apply today because times have changed, the **principles she enunciates are universal and timeless!!** Ellen White herself said:

'Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside, but time and place must be considered.' (Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 57)

If circumstances change, the principles remain but their specific application changes. For Ellen White there are several universal principles: **1)** The wise use of time, **2)** the proper use of money for the saving of souls, **3)** the protection of health and life, **4)** subduing the spirit of pride and supremacy. Any practice which promotes a wrongful use of time, money and health and which promotes a spirit of supremacy is wrong!!

Theater Attendance

Obviously, there is no direct Biblical injunction which says: 'You shall not go to the movies,' because there were no movies in biblical times. But are there **Biblical principles** that would lead us to abstain from such a practice? Notice the following texts:

Philippians 4:8-9

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things."

Romans 12:1, 2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Isaiah 33:14, 15

"...Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil."

2 Corinthians 3:18

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

II Corinthians 6:14-18?

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Do the movies enhance our love for God and our fellow human beings? Do they encourage us to embrace and practice the truth? Do they lead us to use pure language? Do they encourage us to respect the sanctity of marriage? Do they teach us to respect human life and property? Do they teach us to respect and honor our parents? I think you know the answers to all of these questions.

A growing number of Adventist youth (and, sad to say, youth pastors and adults) today enjoy going to the movies. In biblical times and in the days of Ellen White motion pictures did not exist. But both in Bible times and in the days of Ellen White live dramatic presentations did exist. Please read the following description given by Ellen White and tell me honestly if she is adding to Scripture or simply amplifying Scripture and applying it to a contemporary practice:

*“Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school for morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very **hotbed of immorality**. Vicious habits and **sinful propensities** are **strengthened** and **confirmed** by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes **deprave the imagination** and **debase the morals**. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be **corrupted in principle**. There is no influence in our land more powerful to **poison the imagination**, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence as the desire for **intoxicating drink** strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.” (The Adventist Home, p. 516)*

Competitive Sports in our Schools

There is a strong trend toward competitive intramural sports in our denominational schools today. Is this trend in harmony with the Bible? The fact is that the Bible does not address this particular issue but Ellen White does:

*"I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be **overdone**. I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an **outlay of means** that should be expended in bringing **the light of truth to souls** that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for **self-pleasing** which lead on step by step to **self-glorifying**, and the educating in these games for pleasure produce a love and passion for such things that is not favorable to the perfection of Christian character.*

***The way** that they have been conducted at the college does not bear the impress of heaven. It does not **strengthen the intellect**. It does not refine and **purify the character**. There are threads leading out through the habits and customs and worldly practices, and the actors become so **engrossed and infatuated** that they are pronounced in heaven lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. In the place of the intellect becoming strengthened to do better work as students, to be better qualified as Christians to perform the Christian duties, the exercise in these games is filling their brains with thoughts that **distract the mind from their studies**. . . .*

*Is the eye single to the **glory of God** in these games? I know that this is not so. There is a losing sight of God's way and His purpose. The employment of intelligent beings, in probationary time, is superseding God's revealed will and substituting for it the speculations and inventions of the human agent, with Satan by his side to imbue with his spirit. . . . The Lord God of heaven protests against the burning passion **cultivated for supremacy** in the games that are so **engrossing**." (The Adventist Home, pp. 499-500)*

The question is: Is Ellen White adding to the Bible when she frowns on competitive sports in our schools? The answer is that in principle she is adding nothing. She is simply taking biblical principles and applying them to a practice that did not exist in biblical times. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have circumstances changed?
- Are players still maimed for life?
- Is there still a spirit of supremacy?
- Is there still an unnecessary outlay of means?
- Are competitive sports a wise outlay of precious time?
- Are there things which will better develop the intellect and the physical nature?
- Do competitive sports make you more useful in life?

- Do competitive sports better prepare me to preach the gospel to those who are lost in sin?

Personal Adornment

The Bible is clear that adornment should not be external but rather internal of the heart. Yet many in the Adventist church today say that this counsel does not apply today. In the preparation of people for baptism the issue of jewelry is seldom brought up anymore. Yet both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter are clear on this point:

I Tim. 2:9-10

“. . . in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”

I Pet. 3:1-4

“Wives, likewise be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel —⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

*“There are many whose hearts have been so hardened by prosperity that they forget God, and forget the **wants of their fellow man**. Professed Christians adorn themselves with jewelry, laces, costly apparel, while the **Lord's poor suffer** for the necessities of life. Men and women who claim redemption through a Savior's blood will squander the means entrusted to them for the **saving of other souls**, and then grudgingly dole out their offerings for religion, giving liberally only when it will bring honor to themselves. These are idolaters.” (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 2, p. 1012; Signs of the Times, January 26, 1882)*

*“Elder Simpson explains the prophecies by the means of charts, and makes it very plain that the end of all things is at hand. In some cases entire families have taken their stand to obey God, as in 1844. All are brought over the ground from the beginning, and many believe as the prophecies relating to the past, present, and future are explained. Jewelry which cost many hundreds of dollars has been given to Elder Simpson to be **sold for the cause**. There is no spirit of excitement in this movement. No fanaticism attends it. The truth takes hold of hearts; and men and women give their rings and bracelets although no call has been made for them to strip themselves of **these idols**. The work is earnest and quiet. The people take off their jewelry of*

their own freewill, and bring it to Elder Simpson as an offering up of their idols.” (Manuscript Releases, volume 14, pp. 250-251)

Did you notice in these statements that the use of jewelry negatively impacts our love for our fellow human beings? Should not our money be invested in the necessary things of life and in the salvation of souls rather than on ornaments that attract attention to ourselves?

Eating Clean Flesh Foods

It is clear that the Bible permits the eating of certain kinds of flesh foods (Deuteronomy 14; Leviticus 11). If this is the case, why does Ellen White write that we should not eat even clean flesh foods in the last days? Is she contradicting the Bible or is there a deeper issue involved? First, let's read a few of her categorical statements:

*“Flesh was **never the best** food [Genesis 1:29]; but its use is now **doubly** objectionable, **since disease in animals is so rapidly increasing**. Those who use flesh foods little know what they are eating. Often if they could see the animals when living and know the quality of the meat they eat, they would turn from it with loathing. People are continually eating flesh that is filled with tuberculous and cancerous germs. Tuberculosis, cancer, and other fatal diseases are thus communicated.” Child Guidance, p. 382*

*“Is it not time that **all** should aim to dispense with flesh foods? How can those who are seeking to become pure, refined, and holy, that they may have the companionship of heavenly angels, continue to use as food anything that has **so harmful an effect** on soul and body? How can they take the life of God's creatures that they may consume the flesh as a luxury? Let them, rather, return to the wholesome and delicious food given to man **in the beginning**, and themselves practice, and teach their children to practice, mercy toward the dumb creatures that God has made and has placed under our dominion?” (The Ministry of Healing, p. 317)*

*“The **moral evils** of a flesh diet are not less marked than are the physical ills. Flesh food is injurious to health, and whatever affects the body has a corresponding effect on the mind and the soul.” Counsels to the Church, p. 230*

*“The intellectual, the moral, and the physical powers are depreciated by the **habitual use** of flesh meats. Meat eating **deranges** the system, **beclouds** the intellect, and **blunts** the moral sensibilities. We say to you, dear brother and sister, your safest course is to **let meat alone**.” Counsels to the Church, pp., 231, 232*

Why would Ellen White give us such counsel when she knew full well that the Bible allows the eating of clean meats? It must be underlined that the Bible does allow for the consumption of clean meats but the fat and the blood must be first removed. This is something which meat eaters today (except for Orthodox Jews) do not do.

Objectionable features:

- Diseased blood and flesh transmits deadly maladies such as Mad Cow Disease and cancer
- High cholesterol levels leads to heart attacks and strokes
- Saturated fat leads to heart attacks and strokes
- Growth hormones ingested by the animals causes disease
- Purines that are contained in the meat act as a stimulant upon the body. Though Ellen White did not understand the reason why meat stimulates the system, hormonal studies have proved that she was right:

“When the use of flesh food is discontinued, there is often a sense of weakness, a lack of vigor. Many urge this as evidence that flesh food is essential; but it is because foods of this class are stimulating, because they fever the blood and excite the nerves, that they are so missed. Some will find it as difficult to leave off flesh eating as it is for the drunkard to give up his dram; but they will be the better for the change.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 396

- The moral and spiritual sensibilities are blunted when bloody and fatty meat is consumed

So, why did God allow the consumption of clean meats (minus the fat and blood) in biblical times while he forbids them today? An illustration will help us understand the reason.

I grew up in the city of Caracas, Venezuela. Running through the city is the Guaire River which is basically the sewer for the city. The government has posted signs everywhere warning people not to use the water from this river. Yet one hundred and fifty years ago there was no prohibition to swim in the river, fish in it and use the water to drink. So why did the government permit its citizens to use the water then and not now? I think the answer is obvious. What was safe then is not safe now. Circumstances have changed and the change in circumstances demands a change in counsel.

God did allow the eating of clean flesh foods in biblical times. Back then the animal world was less diseased and growth hormones were not injected into the animals and they were not fed food that was not made for them. Have things changed? Of course they have. What was safe then is not safe now! Would you expect God to say: “In the past I said that clean flesh foods could be eaten and I change not so go right ahead and continue eating these foods even though I know that they will make you sick?” Notice that God does not change the principle but rather takes into account the circumstances in order to be in harmony with His own principle?

Smoking Tobacco

I was once holding a series of evangelistic meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As I was driving to an appointment one day, I was listening to a religious call in program where people could call the host and ask biblical questions. As I was listening, a caller came on the air and asked: "Sir, I have two questions: First of all, is it a sin to smoke? and the second question is: Will God send me to hell for smoking?"

I was intrigued by the question and wondered how the host would answer. The answer came quickly: "The answer to your first question is 'no' because you can't find anywhere in the Bible where God says: 'Thou shalt not smoke.' And with regards to your question whether God will send you to hell for smoking, to the contrary, you will probably make it to heaven a lot faster."

In the 19th century physicians were prescribing tobacco for ailments such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema. Until 1940 the American Medical Society affirmed that there was no hard evidence to indicate that smoking tobacco had any relationship to lung and other types of cancer. How times have changed!

It is a known fact that the Bible does not address the issue of smoking. Does the silence of the Bible on this specific topic allow us to smoke? Ellen White has written:

*"God has written His law upon every nerve and muscle, every fiber and function of the human body. The indulgence of unnatural appetite, whether for tea, coffee, tobacco, or liquor, is intemperance, and is at war with the laws of life and health. By using these forbidden articles a condition of things is created in the system which the Creator never designed. **This indulgence in any of the members of the human family is sin.** . . . The eating of food that does not make good blood is working against the laws of our physical organism, and is a violation of the law of God. The cause produces the effect. Suffering, disease, and death are the sure penalty of indulgence"*
Evangelism, pp. 265-266

Is not Ellen White adding to the Bible here by saying that smoking is a sin? Is she not going beyond Scripture in forbidding this practice? Of course not! She is simply applying biblical principles to real life situations that did not exist in biblical times.

What **Biblical principles** stand behind Ellen White's counsel? Let's see:

- Exodus 20:13: 'Do not kill' and it has been proven that tobacco kills
- I Cor. 3:16-17: Our body is the temple of the holy Spirit and we must not defile it
- I Cor. 10:31: If we eat or drink or whatever we do we must do to the glory of God
- Deut. 6:5: We must honor God with all of our strength
- I Pet. 2:11: The Bible forbids sinful lusts that war against the soul

Masturbation

It is called the secret vice, solitary vice and self-abuse. Ellen White affirms that the mind and the body are weakened by this habit. She says it diminishes the energy of the brain and as a result the brilliance of the young mind is clouded. She states that if a person continues this habit they will eventually develop dementia.

Some Adventists have made fun of Ellen White's counsel on this matter saying that masturbation can actually be a good thing to relieve stress. Notice Ellen White's counsel:

*"Their [some students at Battle Creek College] **thoughts** were upon demoralizing matters, and both mind and body were enfeebled through the habit of **self-abuse**. It was this **vile practice**, not over-study that caused the frequent illness of these children and prevented them from making the advancement which the parents desired." Testimonies to the Church, volume 5, p. 91*

*"Your children have practiced **self-abuse** until the draft upon the brain has been so great, especially in the case of your eldest son, that their minds have been **seriously injured**. The brilliancy of youthful intellect is **dimmed**. The moral and intellectual powers have become **weakened**, while the baser part of their nature has been gaining the **ascendancy**. For this reason your son turns with loathing from religious things. He has been **losing his power of self-restraint**, and has less and **less reverence** for sacred things, and **less respect** for anything of a spiritual character." Testimonies to the Church, volume 2, p. 392*

*"What little intellect he has left is of a low order. If he continues in this **vicious practice** he will eventually become **idiotic**. Every indulgence of children who have attained their growth is a terrible evil and will produce terrible results, enervating the system and **weakening the intellect**. But in those who indulge this corrupting vice before attaining their growth, the evil effects are more plainly marked, and recovery from its effects is more nearly hopeless. The frame is weak and stunted; the muscles are flabby; the eyes become small, and appear at times swollen; the memory is treacherous, and becomes sievelike; and inability to concentrate the thoughts upon study increases." Testimonies to the Church, volume 2, p. 402*

Was Ellen White right when she said that masturbation affects the mental powers even to the point of leading someone to be idiotic? Let's see what two prominent physicians say:

Oxford University teacher, Dr. David Horrobin, M. D., Ph. D., Zinc, Vitabooks, Inc., 1981, p. 8:

"The effect of zinc deficiency has particularly profound effects on the male, because extraordinary amounts of zinc are found in the testicles and the prostate gland. . . The amount

of zinc in semen is such that one ejaculation may get rid of all the zinc that can be absorbed from the intestines in one day."

*"In humans, among the most consistent effects of zinc deficiency are changes in mood and behavior. There is **depression**, extreme irritability, apathy and even in some circumstances, behavior which looks like **schizophrenia**. . . It is even possible, given the importance of zinc to the brain, that **19th century moralists were correct** when they said that repeated masturbation could **make one mad!** Similarly, the high livers were also correct when they said that a diet rich in oysters was necessary to compensate for **excessive sexual indulgence**."*

Dr. Carl Pfeiffer of Harvard University:

*"We hate to say it but in a zinc-deficient adolescent, sexual excitement and excessive masturbation might **precipitate insanity**." Carl Pfeiffer, Ph. D., M. D., Zinc and other Micro-Nutrients, Keats Publishing, Inc. 1978, p. 45.*



#17 - THE LESSER LIGHT

Satan's Rage against the Remnant

Revelation 12:17: *"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

Revelation 19:10:

*"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me: "See that you do not do that! I am your **fellow servant**, and of your brethren who have the **testimony of Jesus**. Worship God! For the **testimony of Jesus** is the **spirit of prophecy.**"*

Revelation 22:8, 9:

*"Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me: "See that you do not do that for I am your **fellow servant** and of your **brethren the prophets** and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*

When and Where

Revelation 12:16, 17 explains the rise of the prophetic gift in the end time:

Among whom: The remnant

Where: On the earth

When: At the end of the 1260 years

Characteristics: Keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ

Meaning of Terms

In the writings of John, the word for 'have' (*exoo*) expresses the idea of possession (for examples see Revelation 1:18; John 5:26; Revelation 3:1). This means that at the end of time

the remnant of Jesus will **possess** the testimony of Jesus.

The gift is called 'the **spirit** of prophecy' because prophecy is one of the gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit (I Peter 1:10-12; Zachariah 7:12; II Peter 1:21; Revelation 2:11)

Ellen White's use of the expression 'spirit of prophecy':

The four-volume precursor of the five volume set of the Conflict of the Ages series was called 'Spirit of Prophecy'

*"It was Christ that spoke to His people through the **prophets**. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the **prophets** "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. "The **testimony of Jesus** is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10." Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 366, 367*

*"Through **holy angels** God revealed to Enoch His purpose to destroy the world by a flood, and He also opened more fully to him the plan of redemption. By the **spirit of prophecy** He carried him down through the generations that should live after the Flood, and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world." Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 85*

Regarding Simeon: *"The **spirit of prophecy** was upon this man of God, and while Joseph and Mary stood by, wondering at his words, he blessed them, and said unto Mary, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'" The Desire of Ages, p. 55*

*"Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the **Spirit of God**. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the **spirit of prophecy**. Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?" Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pp. 64, 65*

In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul compares the gifts of the Spirit with different parts of the body. The gift of prophecy is the 'eyes' of the church:

- I Corinthians 12:14, 18, 27, 28: Church is compared to a **body**
- I Samuel 9:9: Prophets were called '**seers**'
- Proverbs 29:18: Where there is no **vision** the people perish
- Isaiah 29:10: When the gift is ignored the people are **blind**
- Revelation 3:18: Laodicea is **blind**

The gift of prophecy is for God's people and is generally rejected by them: I Corinthians 14:22; II Chronicles 36:15, 16; Isaiah 30:8-11; Matthew 23:29, 30

Some **will be martyred** at the end for hanging on to the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 20:4)

During the last several years I have had the privilege of preaching in several evangelistic meetings at the church I pastor in Fresno California. Having been the pastor of the church for the better part of sixteen years I have had to find new ways of presenting the same good old time message each time. A few years ago I decided to present a series titled '*What Jesus Said*'. The objective of this series was to present the full message of the Bible from the perspective of the four Gospels and the book of Acts. It was actually quite easy to find abundant information on all the doctrines of the Bible in these five books—that is, except one doctrine.

As I prayed and meditated on how best to present the gift of prophecy I kept on coming to a dead end. Don't get me wrong. As I researched the four Gospels and the book of Acts I found much information about prophets, both false and true. But I was particularly interested in presenting the subject matter from the perspective of the **end time gift** as it would exist in the **remnant church**.

I struggled with this for several weeks and then one day as the deadline for the meetings was drawing ever closer, I was sitting in my office, praying and reflecting upon this, when suddenly a thought came across my mind. It was almost like I heard a voice saying: 'Study the life, message and mission of John the Baptist.' So I went to *Strong's Concordance* and looked up each and every reference to John the Baptist. As I studied along I discovered a striking parallel between John the Baptist and another prophet that God raised up to guide the end time remnant church. This book draws that parallel.

The Message and Mission of John the Baptist

Great Advent Revival

It was the spring and summer of the year 27 A. D. and momentous events were taking place in and around Jerusalem. A great religious revival was transpiring among God's people. They were aware of the fact that significant events were about to take place. The final week of the seventy

week prophecy was about to begin and there was a great revival and expectancy among the people. Multitudes flocked to John the Baptist in the wilderness, confessing their sins and being baptized by him. This is how Matthew described it:

“Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him ⁶ and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins” Matthew 3:5, 6

There can be little doubt that one reason for the excitement was that the final week of the seventy week prophecy was about to begin (see Daniel 9:24-27). Furthermore, the Old Testament ended with the promise that God would send Elijah before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. John the Baptist seemed to fit the description of Elijah. He lived in the desert like Elijah, he ate what Elijah ate, he dressed like Elijah and he called the people to repentance like Elijah. Immediately before beginning His ministry in Galilee, Jesus alluded to the prophecy of the seventy weeks when He said:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."
(Mark 1:15)

The reason why Jesus stated that the time was fulfilled is because his anointing at His baptism had just taken place in harmony with the prophecy of the seventy weeks and the kingdom of God was at hand because he was about to officially begin His ministry public ministry.

Not the Prophet

John the Baptist was a humble and modest man. He did not seek to attract attention to himself. As we shall see, his main function was to give testimony to Jesus. When the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him if he was the Christ or Elijah or the prophet His answer was: “I am not.” (John 1:19-21). Notably, though John stated that he was not Elijah or the prophet, Jesus identified him as the greatest of the prophets and as Elijah. Jesus said that he was Elijah. The fact is that he did not claim to be Elijah.

Messenger of the Lord

If not the prophet, then who was he? He was the **messenger of the Lord** (see also, **Malachi 3:1**). His mission had already been predicted in Bible prophecy.

Luke 7:27:

*“This is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send **My messenger** before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.’”*

Prepare a people to receive Jesus at His first coming

John 1:23: "He said: 'I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said."

Matthew 3:1-3: "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.'"

Luke 1:16, 17: "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Restore all things: Elijah is the great restorer

Matthew 17:11-13: "Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. ¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise [if you reject the Lord's messenger you will end up rejecting the Lord as well] the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist."

More than a Prophet

Jesus not only said that John the Baptist was a prophet but he said that John was the greatest of the prophets. John the Baptist was more than a prophet (Luke 7:26). He was the link between the two dispensations.

"Aside from the joy that John found in his mission, his life had been one of sorrow. His voice had been seldom heard except in the wilderness. His was a lonely lot. And he was not permitted to see the result of his own labors. It was not his privilege to be with Christ and witness the manifestation of divine power attending the greater light. It was not for him to see the blind restored to sight, the sick healed, and the dead raised to life. He did not behold the light that shone through every word of Christ, shedding glory upon the promises of prophecy. The least disciple who saw Christ's mighty works and heard His words was in this sense more highly privileged than John the Baptist, and therefore is said to have been greater than he."
The Desire of Ages, p. 220

Luke 7:26:

*“But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and **more than a prophet.**”*

No Miracles but what he said about Jesus was true

John the Baptist was not a **miracle worker**: The Jews were impressed with signs and wonders. They were always asking for a sign and thought that the sign would prove whether a messenger was from God or not (Matthew 12:38, 39; 16:4; John 2:18; 4:48; 6:30; 12:18). Notably we are told that John performed no sign:

John 10:41, 42: *“Then many came to Him and said, “John performed **no sign**, but all the things that **John spoke** about this Man were true.”⁴² And many believed in Him there.”*

It was the truthfulness of John’s words that authenticated him as the Lord’s messenger, not the miracles that he performed.

Testimony of Jesus

John the Baptist had the **testimony of Jesus** (John 5:31-33; 1:15; see also John 1:7, 8, 15; 21:24, 25; Acts 10:43; 22:15-18; 23:11; I Corinthians 1:4-8)

John 5:31-33:

*“If I bear **witness** of Myself, My witness is not true. ³² There is another who bears **witness** of Me, and I know that the **witness** which He **witnesses** of Me is true. ³³ You have sent to John, and he has borne **witness** to the truth.”*

John was not the light

John denied that he was **the** light

John 1:6-8:

*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to **bear witness of the Light** that all through him might believe. ⁸ **He was not that Light**, but was sent to **bear witness** of that Light.”*

A Lesser Light

John’s purpose was to bear witness (in Greek the words that are translated ‘testimony’ and

‘witness’ are the same word) to the light. Yet Jesus called John a **bright and shining light** (*luchnos*: portable lamp or candle; John 5:35).

John 5:35, 36:

*“He was the **burning and shining lamp** [*luchnos*], and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. ³⁶ But I have a **greater witness** than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”*

In other words, John was a **lesser light** which was to lead men and women to the **greater light—Jesus Christ** (see John 5:36 where Jesus actually uses the word ‘greater’ to refer to Himself)

Scriptures also a Lesser Light

But notice that the **Scriptures also** gave witness to Jesus. Thus there are **two sources** which testify of Jesus: John the Baptist and the written Scriptures of the Old Testament. There was a **canonical** and a **non-canonical** source to give witness to Jesus.

No book can fully reveal Jesus Christ in all of His glory. Compared to Jesus, the Bible is only a pale reflection of who Jesus is in His person. The greater light is the sun and the lesser light is the moon. The light of the moon has the purpose of reflecting the light of the sun to the earth in the darkness of the night.

John 5:39:

*“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which **testify of Me.**”*

Why Two Lesser Lights?

So we have two lesser lights, the Old Testament Scriptures and John the Baptist. The **question** immediately suggests itself: **Why** did the people need a non-canonical source if they had the written Scriptures of the Old Testament? Or, even further, why would they even need a lesser light if they would soon have the **greater light** in their midst?

Let me ask another question: Could the Jews have discerned Jesus as the Messiah simply by studying the written Scriptures? The answer is a resounding yes. The Old Testament was saturated with Messianic prophecies:

Every event of the life of Jesus was previously **choreographed** in the Scriptures:

- He would enter Jerusalem on a **donkey** in the midst of **great acclamation**: Zechariah 9:9
- He would **cast the money changers** out of the temple: Jeremiah 7:11
- **Zeal for God's house** would consume him: Psalm 69:9
- He would be sold for **30 pieces** of silver: Zechariah 11:13
- His **disciples** would all **forsake** Him: Zechariah 13:7
- He would die a **vicarious death**: Isaiah 53:3-6
- He would say on the cross: '**My God, My God**, why have you forsaken Me': Psalm 22:1
- His **hands and feet** would be **pierced**: Psalm 22:16
- **Lots** would be cast upon His **garments**: Psalm 22:18
- His **heart** would be **poured out like water**: Psalm 22:14
- His enemies would **spit in His face**: Isaiah 50:6
- His enemies would **dare Him to come down** from the cross: Psalm 22:8
- None of His **bones** would be broken: Exodus 12:46
- On the cross He would say: '**I thirst**': Psalm 22:15; 69:21
- His passion would last for **three days and three nights**: Jonah 2:1
- His **burial** would be with the **rich**: Isaiah 53:9
- He would **resurrect** from the dead on the **third day**: Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:9-11
- He would **ascend to heaven**: Psalm 24
- He would **sit on the Father's right hand**: Psalm 110:1, 4

I ask once again: **Could the Jews have been ready** to receive Jesus as the Messiah simply by studying the **written Scriptures**? The answer is a **resounding yes!**

The People were in darkness

The answer is actually quite simple: The people had fallen into **gross darkness** and gone astray because of their **neglect of the Scriptures** during the **period between the Testaments**. All kinds of **false teachings and practices** came in during this period (John 1:5; Isaiah 60:1-2) therefore they needed a lesser light to draw attention to the greater light.

Matt 4:16: "*The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.*"

Luke 1:78-79: "*Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; ⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*"

Give the illustration of the **light switch** in the tape room. A flashlight led to the light switch

No New Light

The role of John was not to bring in **new light** but rather to turn the attention of the people to the **light already given**. He was to **awaken interest** in the study of Old Testament prophecy. In other words, the role of John was **complementary** to Scripture, not **supplementary**. After all, John fit perfectly with the description of the forerunner who would prepare the way for the Messiah. People should then have gone to the written Scriptures to find the details about how the Messiah would come.

You see, those who **claimed to be God's people** and boasted at **having the Old Testament** were **violating every principle** of the Word of God. They professed to be **waiting** for the Messiah. They **professed** to love God. They **claimed to have a close relationship** with Him and yet they crucified Christ because they misunderstood the Old Testament and rejected the clarification given by the lesser light. Because they rejected the message of John they ended up rejecting Jesus.

We can imagine the Jews saying, '**We have Moses,**' but they did not understand or practice the teachings of Moses. They **boasted** of their knowledge of the **Scriptures** and yet did not **understand nor obey** them at all. John was called to attract attention to the Word already given.

John 5:39-40, 45-47:

*"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which **testify of Me**.⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.⁴⁵ Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust.⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for **he wrote about Me**.⁴⁷ But if you do not **believe his writings**, how will you **believe My words**?"*

I am of the firm belief that ***If the Jews had understood and obeyed the writings of Moses, John would never have been raised up by God!!!***

John **lighted up the Old Testament prophecies** about the Messiah. He presented Jesus as the **Lamb** of God, a clear reference to the **sanctuary** sacrifice and **Isaiah 53**. He took from the Old Testament and showed how it was being fulfilled in Jesus. He exalted the Old Testament and made it vivid, alive and **present truth**. He rebuked, reprovved. Even baptism was known in the times of John. Certainly they knew that in the sanctuary things were cleansed by water. They knew the story of Naaman. They knew that leprosy as a symbol of sin and that Naaman had been cleansed by submerging himself in the Jordan seven times.

Pain in the Neck

He was a **fly** in the ointment, a **pain** in the neck, a **speck** in the eye. He was **no pushover** (see Matthew 11:7-8). He was not politically correct. He told it like it is. He rebuked sin fearlessly and played no favorites. Of course this is what won him enemies.

Matthew 11:7, 8: *He rebuked Herod for committing adultery with his brother's wife and lost his head as a result. He was totally unafraid of speaking the truth.*

"As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses."

Restorer and Preparer

The role of John was to **prepare** a people for the first coming of Jesus (Luke 1:17; Matthew 3:1-3; Malachi 3:1). By **revival** (repentance) and **reformation** (bearing fruit) the people were to wait expectantly for their **bridegroom**. John was the **liaison** or **go-between**, between Jesus Christ (the groom) and Israel (the bride). He was to prepare the way for the wedding (**John 3:28-30**)

Jesus stated that John the Baptist was Elijah so we must understand the role of Elijah in the Old Testament. Elijah was the great restorer. Elijah did not introduce any new truths. He simply called Israel to repent and return to the religion of the fathers. This is why he rebuilt the altar of the Lord and invoked the God of the covenant founders of the Old Testament—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Malachi 4 we are once again told that the end time Elijah would be a great restorer. In Matthew 17:12 we are told that John the Baptist came to restore all things.

In New Testament times, the friend of the bridegroom was responsible for making all the **preparations** for the wedding so that all was **ready** when the groom should come. The friend of the bridegroom was not to take the glory for himself. The **glory was for the groom** who was marrying the bride. The best man does not want all eyes centered on himself at the wedding. **He decreases so that the bridegroom can increase!** In other words, he blends into the woodwork so that all can see the bridegroom.

The Old Testament had **prophecies** about the coming of the bridegroom to marry his bride. The **matchmaker** (John the Baptist) has come to set up all the arrangements. Yet the bride rejected her husband. By rejecting the work of the **matchmaker**, they rejected the bridegroom as well. Let's see how John the Baptist was treated.

Despised and Rejected by the leaders

He was accused of being demon possessed.

Matthew 11:18:

*“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, **‘He has a demon.’**”*

Jesus to the chief priests and elders Matthew 21:32:

“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.”

Luke 7:29-30: He was **rejected by the leaders**, especially.

*“And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and lawyers **rejected the will of God** for themselves, not having been baptized by him.”*

They **knew Him not** (same expression as John 1:10-11). Because they did with John as they pleased, they **also did with Jesus** as they pleased. And these were the people who claimed to go by the Scriptures!! By rejecting the lesser light, they rejected the greater light!!

Matthew 17:11-13:

*“Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. ¹² But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they **did not know him** but did to him **whatever they wished**. **Likewise** the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”*

It is a simple fact that true prophets have never been particularly loved by the people to whom they are sent. In fact, they were hated by those who professed to be God’s chosen people. Before the Babylonian captivity God told Israel:

“And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.” (II Chronicles 36, :15, 16)

And Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)

Jeremiah was thrown into the dungeon, Elijah was hunted like a wild beast, Isaiah was sawn asunder, John was beheaded, Jesus was crucified, Stephen was stoned and the list goes on and on.

John grew in Understanding

Prophets are not **omniscient** or **infallible**. They were **human**. They **grew** in their understanding of truth. At first they might not understand fully the message that God is trying to convey through them. John, for example, at the beginning of his ministry thought that there would be only one coming of the Messiah (**Matthew 3:7, 10, 12**). When he preached in the wilderness of Judea in a thundering voice predicted concerning the Messiah:

"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:12)

Ellen White makes these incisive remarks about John's incomplete knowledge of the Messiah's coming:

"John did not fully understand the nature of the Messiah's kingdom. He looked for Israel to be delivered from her national foes; but the coming of a King in righteousness, and the establishment of Israel as a holy nation, was the great object of his hope." The Desire of Ages, p. 103

"During the weeks that followed [the baptism of Jesus], John with new interest studied the prophecies and the teaching of the sacrificial service. He did not distinguish clearly the two phases of Christ's work,--as a suffering sacrifice and a conquering king,--but he saw that His coming had a deeper significance than priests or people had discerned." The Desire of Ages, p. 136

When Jesus did not appear to measure up to his preaching, he sent a message to Jesus asking whether He was the one to come or whether they should expect another (**Matthew 11:1-3**). Was **John a false prophet** because he did not fully understand the work of the Messiah? Was his work as a prophet any less trustworthy because his knowledge and understanding were limited? After Jesus healed the sick, etc., John finally understood!!

Chapter Two: The Life, Message and Mission of Ellen G. White

A great revival

Toward the conclusion of the 2300 day prophecy there was a great revival (Daniel 8:14; Revelation 10; 14:6, 7)

Ellen White performed no miracles

Ellen White was not a miracle worker:

*"Some declare their unbelief in the work that the Lord has given me to do because, as they say, "Mrs. E. G. White **works no miracles**." But those who look for miracles as a sign of divine guidance are in grave danger of deception." Selected Messages, volume 2, pp. 53, 54*

No Claim to be a Prophet

Ellen White preferred not to be called a prophet:

"During the discourse [given in Battle Creek on October 2, 1904], I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself." Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 36

*'When I was last in Battle Creek, I said before a large congregation that I did **not claim to be a prophetess**. Twice I referred to this matter, intending each time to make the statement, "**I do not claim to be a prophetess**." If I spoke otherwise than this, let all now understand that what I had in mind to say was that I **do not claim the title of prophet** or prophetess.' Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 35*

The Lord's Messenger

What, then, was the title that Ellen White claimed? She repeatedly stated that God had called her to be His Messenger

*'Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's **messenger**. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Savior declared me to be **His messenger**.' Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 32.*

*'I have had no claims to make, only that I am instructed that I am the **Lord's messenger**; that He called me in my youth to be **His messenger**, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus.'* Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 32.

*'To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a **messenger**, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out.'* Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 34

More than a Conventional Prophet

The work of Ellen White was far **greater than that of a conventional prophet** (Selected Messages, volume 1, pp. 32, 34, 36). She is more in the line of Moses who had a long trajectory in leading a people out of bondage in Egypt. God chose her to restore the truth in all of its dimensions and areas of life.

*'My work includes **much more** than this name [prophetess] signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people. . . . My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces **much more** than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.'* Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 36, 37

*"Why have I not claimed to be a prophet? Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes **much more** than the word 'prophet' signifies."* Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 32

Ellen White wrote on a broad range of subjects. Our institutions and our personal lives would be far better if we followed her counsel in the following books:

- Medical (MH, CH, CDF, MM)
- Educational (ED, FCE)
- Publishing (CM)
- Administration of the work (TM)
- Ministerial (GW)
- Evangelism (EV)
- Theology (Conflict Series)
- Home and Marriage (AH)
- Devotional life (DA)
- Children (CG)
- Finances (CS)
- Health (MH, CH, CDF)

Ellen White had the Testimony of Jesus

Ellen White had the **Testimony of Jesus** (Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:9)

*“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the **testimony of Jesus Christ**.”*

*“And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me: “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of **your brethren** who have the **testimony of Jesus**. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the **spirit of prophecy**.”*

*“Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me: “See that you do not do that for I am your fellow servant, and of **your brethren the prophets** and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

*“This prophecy [Revelation 12:17] points out clearly that the **remnant church** will acknowledge God in His law and will have **the prophetic gift**. Obedience to the law of God and the **spirit of prophecy** has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.” *Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33*

Lesser Light

Ellen White was a **lesser light** to lead men and women to the greater light, Jesus Christ

*‘Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a **lesser light** to lead men and women to the **greater light**.’ (Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 30)*

*“The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. As God's representative he stood forth to show the relation of the law and the prophets to the Christian dispensation. He was the **lesser light**, which was to be **followed by a greater**. The mind of John was illuminated by the Holy Spirit that he might shed light upon his people; but **no other light ever has shone or ever will shine so clearly** upon fallen man as that which **emanated from the teaching and example of Jesus**. Christ and His mission had been but dimly understood as typified in the shadowy sacrifices. Even John had not fully comprehended the future, immortal life through the Savior.” *The Desire of Ages*, p. 220*

*‘The religion of the Jews, in consequence of their departure from God, consisted mostly in ceremony. John was the **lesser light**, which was to be followed by a **greater light**. He was to shake the confidence of the people in their traditions, and call their sins to remembrance, and lead them to repentance; that they might be prepared to appreciate **the work of Christ**.’ (Review and Herald, volume 41, number 17, April 8, 1873)*

"It was not his [John's] privilege to be with Christ and witness the manifestation of divine power attending the greater light." Conflict and Courage, p. 279

"With the first advent of Christ there was ushered in an era of greater light and glory; but it would indeed be sinful ingratitude to despise and ridicule the lesser light because a fuller and more glorious light had dawned. Those who despise the blessings and glory of the Jewish age are not prepared to be benefited by the preaching of the gospel. The brightness of the Father's glory, and the excellence and perfection of His sacred law, are only understood through the atonement made upon Calvary by His dear Son; but even the atonement loses its significance when the law of God is rejected." This Day With God, p. 246

Traditionally it has been taught that the Bible is the greater light and the writings of Ellen White are the lesser light. Some have taken the word 'lesser' to mean 'inferior'. That is, they believe that Ellen White was less inspired than the Biblical prophets and that therefore she had less authority. But those who believe this miss the point. As we have shown, both the Bible and Ellen White are lesser lights that lead to Jesus Christ the Greater Light. Ellen White's inspiration and authority is equal to that of the Biblical prophets but she was called for a different function. She was not called to bring forth new truth but rather to amplify the truths already revealed and to correct those who go astray from the truth to bring them back to the truth.

Two Lesser Lights with different functions

As with John, two sources give witness to Jesus, **one canonical** (the Bible) and the other **non-canonical** (the writings of Ellen G. White). As with John, the purpose of her writings is to bring attention to the **written Scriptures** which had been trampled upon and misinterpreted during the **dark ages**. If God's people had studied the Word of God with the sincere desire to obey it, Ellen White would never have been called by God. Christians today who claim to follow the Bible keep Sunday as the day of rest, eat pork, believe that the dead aren't dead, that the wicked will burn in hell forever, that we should baptize babies by sprinkling, etc. God has called Ellen White to set the record straight.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 2, pp. 663-66:

*"Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people **to His word**, to give them a clearer understanding of it. The **word of God is sufficient** to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, **some who profess** to make the word of God their study are*

found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, **bringing them back to the word** that they have neglected to follow. **The word of God** abounds in **general principles** for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to **call their attention more especially to these principles.**"

"If you had made **God's word your study**, with a **desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection**, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, **calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey**, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings.

"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the **importance of the truth of His word**. The written testimonies are **not to give new light**, but to impress vividly upon the heart the **truths of inspiration already revealed**. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. **Additional truth is not brought out**; but God has through the Testimonies **simplified** the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left **without excuse.**"

"Above all other books, the Word of God must be our study, the great textbook, the basis of all education." *The Faith I Live By*, p. 295

The Testimonies are not to belittle the Word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all. *The Faith I Live By*, p. 295.3

God called Ellen White to be a restorer of the truths of Scripture that had been lost during the dark ages. It is significant that John the Baptist is called Elijah on three separate occasions in the Gospels. In the Old Testament, Elijah did not present any new truths. He was called to call the people back to the true worship of Jehovah and to restore the teachings that they had gone astray from. This is the reason why he built the altar of the LORD that had been broken down. That is why he invoked the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in his prayer. John the Baptist also called the people to repentance. He did not bring any new truths but sought to restore the truth. This is what is explicitly said in Matthew 17:11. He came to bring people back to the faith of the fathers in order to prepare a people for the first coming of Jesus. Likewise Ellen White was chosen to restore the truth and thus prepare a people for the second coming of Jesus.

Isn't Scripture Sufficient?

Why Ellen White if we have the Bible? For the same reason that the Jews needed John even though they had the Old Testament. They did not **understand or obey it so God, in His mercy, gave them a helping hand by simplifying and amplifying the truths already given.** Ellen White is not a source of new light but rather one who amplifies and simplifies the old light. Ellen White amplifies, magnifies, explains, clarifies, corrects, enlightens and simplifies. Example of the **talk show in Albuquerque.**

An Example

Around the same time and place that God raised up Ellen White, another person also arose who claimed to be a prophet. He purportedly found some gold plates in **Palmyra, New York** written in ancient **Egyptian** which he translated into English. This document is known as **The Book of Mormon**. This book is referred to as 'another Testament of Jesus Christ.' [why not in contemporary English and why no manuscript trail?] It is considered a **supplement** to the Word of God (along with the **Pearl of Great Price** and **Doctrine and Covenants**). In other words, they unapologetically affirm that these books contain truths which cannot be found in the Bible.

When the Latter Day Saints pay a visit, their **first task** is to try and convince the prospective student that **Joseph Smith** was a true prophet. As the studies continue, the **Book of Mormon** and the Bible are used together.

Ellen White and the Bible

With Seventh-day Adventist the process is **reversed**. The student is taught the truth from Scripture alone and once all the doctrines have been clearly presented from Scripture, then the Spirit of Prophecy is presented last as a **complement** (not **supplement**) of the Bible. This is not done because the Spirit of Prophecy is of secondary importance but rather because the function of the writings of Ellen White is not to supplement Scripture but rather to complement it! Ellen White magnifies and enlarges the great truths of Scripture but she does not add any new truth! She is like a telescope. The telescope does not create stars but rather helps people see them more clearly.

“The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried **to the front**. God's Word is the unerring standard. The Testimonies are **not to take the place** of the Word. Great care should be exercised by all believers to advance these questions carefully, and always stop when you have said enough. Let all **prove their positions from the Scriptures** and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God.--Letter 12, 1890. {Evangelism, p. 256.2}

*“The more we look at the promises of the Word of God, the brighter they grow. The more we practice them, the deeper will be our understanding of them. Our position and faith is in the Bible. And never do we want any soul to bring in the Testimonies **ahead of the Bible.**”* Manuscript 7, 1894. Evangelism, p. 256

“If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth.” Testimonies for the Church, p. 674

“Besides the instruction in His Word, the Lord has given special testimonies to His people, not as a new revelation, but that He may set before us the plain lessons of His Word, that errors may be corrected, that the right way may be pointed out, that every soul may be without excuse.” Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 31

“The Bible must be your counselor. Study it and the testimonies God has given; for they never contradict His Word.” Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 32

Ellen White **magnifies, explains, amplifies simplifies** and **highlights** the great truths of Scripture but does not add any new truth!! Ellen White is like a **telescope** or a microscope. The telescope does not create stars but rather helps us see them more clearly.

Despised and Rejected

Accused of being demon possessed (mesmerism) or of having epileptic seizures

Is it just possible that many persons in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today who say: **‘I don’t need Ellen G. White, because I have the Bible,’** are really violating every principle of God’s holy Word? The fact is that Ellen G. White is despised by many within the church as much as was John the Baptist. In some churches, when Ellen White is quoted, certain members cringe but they don’t mind if Max Lucado or Martin Luther is quoted.

Former pastors write books such as **The White Lie** and **Ellen G. White: Prophetess of Health** and certain **internet sites** (for example **amalgamation**) sites lambast Ellen White with vitriolic hatred, all under the pretense that because we have the Bible, we do not need Ellen G. White!! Sounds familiar, doesn’t it? Ellen White foresaw all of this. Satan’s last deception will be to annul the effect of the testimonies. If this is Satan’s very **last deception**, then we must be close to the end because we are seeing this hatred now!!

*“The **very last deception** of Satan will be to make of **none effect** the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work*

ingeniously, in **different ways** and through **different agencies**, to **unsettle the confidence** of God's remnant people in the true testimony." Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 48

I found out something long ago and it is this: I never form an opinion of a person or a church on the basis of what its **enemies say** (because the enemies **distort** what they believe) or even on the basis of what their **friends say** (because they often **embellish** the truth). For example, many say we teach that Satan is our Savior because of the scapegoat theology. But any impartial and fair observer will see that Azazel bears sins which have previously been forgiven in the sanctuary. Others teach that EGW believed that we are saved because we keep the Sabbath, clearly a false statement!! If you want to know the truth about Ellen White, **go directly to the source, read her writings for yourself**. Get your information first hand!!

Preparer and Restorer

The fact is that God has called Ellen White to **prepare God's people for the Second Coming** as John as to prepare a people for the first coming. Will there be as few faithful ones prepared for the Second Coming as there were for the first coming? The book **The Great Controversy** is meant to map out all the dangers we must face as we prepare to enter the heavenly Canaan. Ellen White describes a group of Adventist who are found without shelter in the time of trouble. Notice, in her own words, the reason why:

*"There will be a **hatred** kindled against the testimonies which is **satanic**. The workings of Satan will be to **unsettle the faith** of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan **cannot have so clear a track** to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded." Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 48*

"Those who have most to say against the testimonies are generally those who have not read them, just as those who boast of their disbelief of the Bible are those who have little knowledge of its teachings. They know that it condemns them, and their rejection of it gives them a feeling of security in their sinful course. Selected Messages, volume 1, pp. 45, 46

Not Omniscient or Infallible

Ellen White was **not perfect**, nor **omniscient** nor **infallible**. She made **mistakes** (for example, the shut door). She **grew in her understanding** of truth as she progressed in her ministry (Spiritual Gifts, Spirit of Prophecy, **Conflict Series**). Does this make her less than a trustworthy prophet? If it does, then John the Baptist was in the same boat!

Questions that are Asked

Can a woman be a prophet?

Wasn't John the last prophet? (John 11:13)

Ellen White's profound comprehension of Scripture:

- When did God sanctify the Sabbath?
- Jesus changing His garments
- The identity of the little book
- What knowledge is to be increased? (Evangelists)
- Iron and Clay
- **Order of Events of Daniel 11**
- **Garden of Eden**
- **Serpent could speak**
- **Was Adam with Eve at the temptation?**

How she matter of fact explains the **beast**, the **false prophet**, the **wine**, the **mark**, the **seal**, etc.



#18 - JOHN AND ELLEN'S VISIONARY EXPERIENCE

John had the Testimony of Jesus

Revelation 1:2 (KJV):

*"[John] Who bare record of the word of God, and of the **testimony** of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." See also 1:9; 21:16*

The Testimony was for the Churches

Revelation 22:16; Revelation 2:7 (KJV):

*"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the **churches**. . . ⁷ He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the **churches**. . ."*

John Fell as Dead

Revelation 1:17 (KJV):

*"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet **as dead**. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last. . ."*

Expressions such as "I saw" and "I will show" (1:1; 4:1; 17:1; 21:9; 22:6)

More than **50 times** in his book John uses the expression "**I saw**" "**I will show you**". John was shown vivid **panoramic views of heavenly realities** and of the conflict between good and evil

The Message was Imparted to John by the Holy Spirit through the Ministration of an Angel

Revelation 2:11; 22:16 (KJV):

*“He that hath an ear let him hear what the **Spirit** saith unto the churches. . . I Jesus have sent mine **angel** to testify unto you these things in the churches.”*

This is true of the **book of Daniel** as well. The angel **Gabriel** was the angel who gave the visions to Daniel.

Ordered to Write While in Vision

Revelation 1:11 (also 1:19; 19:9; 21:5 KJV):

*“I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, **write** in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”*

Daniel and John Spoke with their Angel

Daniel 7:16 (KJV):

*“I came near unto one of them that stood by, and **asked him** the truth of all this. So **he told me**, and made me know the interpretation of the things.”*

Revelation 10:9 (KJV):

*“And I went unto the angel, and **said unto him**, Give me the little book. And **he said unto me**, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.”*

John Spoke With Heavenly Beings Other than Common Angels

Revelation 7:13, 14 (KJV):

*“And one of the **elders** answered, **saying unto me**: What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? ¹⁴ And **I said unto him**, Sir, thou knowest. And **he said to me**: These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

Significantly the elder here is speaking to John about future events which have not yet transpired.

John also Converses with Jesus

Revelation 1:12, 13 (KJV):

*“And I turned to see the **voice that spake with me**. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man. . .”*

John was transported by his Angel to Far Away Places (1:10; 4:2; 17:1, 3; 21:9, 10)

Revelation 21:9, 10 (KJV):

*“And there came unto me **one of the seven angels** which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. **10** And **he carried me away in the spirit** to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”*

The Visionary Experience was so very real that the Prophet thought he was there

Though the body of John remained on earth, his thoughts were transported by the angel to heaven and the scene was so real that the prophet actually thought he was in heaven. This is described as caught up by the Spirit and also caught up by the angel. In other words, the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work through the ministrations of the angels:

Revelation 17:3 (KJV):

*“So he [the angel] **carried me away in the spirit** into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”*

Revelation 21:10 (KJV):

*“And he [the angel] **carried me away in the spirit** to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”*

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 (KJV): The apostle Paul had a similar experience

*“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether **in the body**, I cannot tell; or whether **out of the body**, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third***

heaven. ³ *And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)* ⁴ *How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”*

John Struggled for Words to describe what he Saw

Revelation 21:10, 11 (KJV) - (see also Revelation 15:2; 21:18, 21)

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. ¹¹ Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. . .”

John’s Literary Sources

No doubt the book of Revelation was inspired by the Holy Spirit. But **what sources** did the Spirit employ to impart the information to **John**? The book of Revelation seems to have **three** sources of information:

- John borrowed **words, phrases, and sentences** from previously **inspired** sources. There are **hundreds** of allusions to the **Old Testament** (for example, Revelation 14:7). Many ideas also come from other inspired **New Testament** sources (for example, Revelation 1:7 with Matthew 24:30)
- John also borrowed words, phrases and sentences from other **non-inspired** sources that existed in his day. It seems like John occasionally used the language of **Enoch and Tobit**.
- Does this mean that the books of Enoch and Tobit **were inspired**? No! It simply means that the language of these books was **common jargon** in John’s day and God **gave him permission** to use the language that was common in his day, a language with which his readers were undoubtedly acquainted. Of many examples that could be cited, let’s notice just three:
- **Enoch 40:1** “After that [Revelation 7:9] I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand [Revelation 5:11], I saw a multitude beyond number and reckoning [Revelation 7:9] who stood before the Lord of spirits.”
- **Enoch 91:16** “And the first heaven shall depart and pass away, and a new heaven shall appear” [Revelation 21:1]
- **Enoch 90:26** “. . . They were judged and found guilty and cast into the fiery abyss” [Revelation 20:15].

- Finally, John received much information in **visions and dreams** which was original and was not available in any other **extant source** of his day.
- **John's Literary Ethics**
- Believe it or not, John did not directly quote any of the sources that he used. He generally **paraphrased** his sources and **alluded** to them.
- John never provided any **source credit** in the book of Revelation though he **borrowed prolifically** from other inspired sources and less frequently from **non-inspired** sources.
- Might we say that John was a **plagiarist** because he did not credit his sources? Someone might argue: "But the **literary ethics of John's day** did not require authors to credit their sources." This is not necessarily true because **Matthew**, in contrast to John, is very careful to give credit to his sources (1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 22:31; 24:15; 27:9, 35). Other New Testament writers also commonly affirmed that they borrowed from the Scriptures.
- Though John **borrowed** material from other sources, his book is a **totally new literary production**. In fact, those who have carefully studied the **literary structure** of this book have concluded that it is a **literary masterpiece**. It is a book that was **meticulously structured** around the **Hebrew sanctuary**. In fact, it follows the precise order of the sanctuary service. Like a **mosaic**, each part of the book is **linked beautifully** with every other part.
- We could use the following example: Suppose that **ten** different contractors go to **Home Depot** and each of them buys the necessary materials to build a house. They all buy **nails, lumber, concrete, sand, drywall, tile, shingles, doors, windows, electrical wiring, light fixtures, etc.** But when each of them finishes his house, there are **ten totally different** houses. They all used the **same materials** but they all put them together differently.

Revelation's Symbolic Character

The book of Revelation presents God's end time message in **symbolic, coded** language and therefore the language must be **deciphered**. For example, the book describes the **dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the harlot, the wine, the twelve stars, the waters, the earth, the two witnesses, the seal of God, the mark of the beast, the 1260 days, the seven horns, the seven eyes, etc.** But what do these symbols mean? In order to comprehend the book it is necessary to **decode** or **decipher** this symbolic language.

The Central Thesis and Theme of Revelation

Even a cursory look at the book of Revelation reveals that its central theme is the **great controversy between Christ and Satan with Christ being the final victor!** (Notice this victory theme in Revelation 14:1; 15:2-4; 17:14; 19:11-21; 20:1-3, 7-9) Every earthly event is seen as a manifestation of the invisible conflict between Christ and Satan. This theme is clearly revealed in chapters **12 and 13** where Christ and Satan are in a death struggle. Satan first attacks the man child, then the woman and finally the remnant of the woman's Seed. In Revelation 13 the dragon gives his power, throne and authority to the beast from the sea which in turn influences the beast from the earth to speak as the dragon. This battle is constantly in the **background of this book**. That is to say, the book of Revelation removes the veil from the history which is being written **behind history**.

Revelation's Two Halves

The book of Revelation is divided into two main parts. The **first half** of Revelation is of **historical** emphasis. The **churches, the seals and the trumpets** all begin in the days of the apostles and climax with end time events (chapters 1-9).

The **second half** of Revelation (chapters 12-22) deals primarily with events at the **very end of history** including the powers which will **oppose God's people** (chapters 12, 13), the **warning against these powers** (chapter 14) the **close of human probation** (chapter 15), the **plagues** (chapters 16-18), the **second coming** (chapter 19), the **millennium** (chapter 20) and the **earth made new** (chapters 21, 22).

In the **heart or center of the book** is the episode about the **little book** (Revelation 10) and the opening of the **Most Holy Place** for the investigative judgment (Revelation 11:1, 2, 19).

Satan Attempted to Kill John

Christian tradition has it that during the reign of the emperor **Domitian**, John was thrown into a **cauldron** of boiling oil but was miraculously preserved as were the **three young men** in the fiery furnace in the days of Daniel. Ellen White supports this tradition:

"John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace." Acts of the Apostles, p. 569

Ellen G. White's Visionary Experience

Ellen White had the Testimony of Jesus

Revelation 12:17, KJV: God predicted that at the very end God's people would have the testimony of Jesus:

*"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the **testimony of Jesus Christ.**" (19:10; 22:8, 9)*

Ellen White frequently called her messages "**the testimonies**" because she had the Testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17)

Ellen White's Visions were given primarily for the Church

Ellen White's message, like that of John the Baptist, was primarily for the church. She wrote an entire series of nine volumes called, **Testimonies for the Church.**

1 Corinthians 14:22:

"Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe."

Ellen White was as dead when she was in Vision

When Ellen White entered a visionary state she did not breathe. For this reason those who stood by as witnesses thought that she was dead.

"They thought that I was dead, and there they watched and cried and prayed so long, but to me it was heaven, it was life." Manuscript 16, 1894

'I Saw' and 'I Was Shown'

The book The Great Controversy had a process of development. Ellen White received her first vision on this subject in 1848. Ten years later on March 14, 1858 she received her famous "Great Controversy Vision" at a funeral service in Lovett's Grove, Ohio where God expanded what he had shown her in the 1848 vision.

In the earliest edition of the great controversy story (in Spiritual Gifts), Ellen White used the expression "***I saw***" or "***I was shown***" an average of about **once every page**. Later, in the book

The Great Controversy, these expressions were **not included** because the book was used for the general public and Ellen White did not want to create unnecessary **prejudice** against the book.

Ellen White's Angel

Though Ellen White's message was given to her by inspiration of the **Holy Spirit** just like the biblical prophets, it was through the instrumentality of an angel that the Holy Spirit imparted the information. She frequently referred to this angel as "**my guide**", "**my instructor**" or "**my accompanying angel**."

Ordered to Write While in Vision

"While in vision, I was commanded by an angel to write the vision. I obeyed, and wrote readily." (Testimonies, volume 1, p. 73)

Ellen White Asked her Angel Questions

"I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God." Early Writings, p. 40.

In the famous "**train vision**," she asked her angel who the conductor was to which the angel replied that it was Satan disguised as an angel of light. (Early Writings, p. 88)

Spoke with Inhabitants of other Planets

God took her in vision to another world where she asked **one of the inhabitants** why they were so much lovelier than those on the earth to which he replied:

"We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth." (Christian Experience and Teaching, p. 98)

Ellen White once saw **Enoch** on a planet with seven moons. She asked Enoch if this was the place to which he was translated from the earth to which he said:

"It is not, the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place." (Christian Experience and Teaching, p. 98)

Is this really so **preposterous**? The Bible says that Enoch was **translated to heaven** from among the living. Hebrews 11 says that the Old Testament heroes **looked forward to a city** whose

builder and maker is God.

Ellen White also spoke with Jesus

Ellen White once asked Jesus if the Father had a **form** such as Himself. Jesus answered that He did and then added:

“If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.” (Early Writings, p. 54)

She Witnessed Future Events as if they were Transpiring in the Present

Ellen White was sometimes **transported to the future** where she witnessed events as if they were transpiring in the present. For example, she once carried on a conversation with brothers **Fitch and Stockman** under the tree of life:

“We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us, that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, “Alleluia! Heaven is cheap enough!” and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven’s arches ring.” Christian Experience and Teaching, p. 61

Transported by her Angel to Distant Places

“Soon I was lost to earthly things and was wrapped in a vision of God’s glory. I saw an angel flying swiftly to me. He quickly carried me from the earth to the Holy City. In the city I saw a temple, which I entered.” (Early Writings, p. 32)

Her Experience While in Vision

Frequently people asked Ellen White what it was like to be in vision to which she responded:

*“As inquiries are frequently made as to my state in vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely **lost to earthly things**. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to **scenes transpiring upon earth**.” Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 36.*

Inadequate Language for her to describe what she saw

"The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world." (Early Writings, p. 19)

"Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendor and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, "Oh, what love! what wondrous love!" The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Savior's love." Early Writings, p. 289.

Literary Sources

For those who have studied the writings of Ellen White with an open mind, there is no doubt that she was inspired of God. But the question that begs to be asked is this: How did the Holy Spirit impart the information to His servant? Did God dictate the information? Did all of her information come directly from visions and dreams? The answer is threefold:

1. A significant part of The Great Controversy consists of **words, phrases and sentences** from the **Old and New Testaments**. The Scripture references at the **end of the book** reveal her profound knowledge and use of Scripture.
2. Ellen White also borrowed some material from **non-inspired sources**. In the **first editions** (Spiritual Gifts and Spirit of Prophecy) of what is now The Great Controversy, she used quotations from **other authors** but did **not give them credit**. She used the writings of church historians D'Aubigne and Wylie. She also used the writings of some of the Adventist pioneers such as J. N. Andrews, James White and Uriah Smith. Some ask: Did she consider that these writers were inspired? The answer is no. God directed her to select from other writers what was trustworthy. Originality is not a test of inspiration. Some say that what Ellen White did was **literary piracy** or **plagiarism**. The fact is that the literary ethics of the **19th century** were different than they are today.

Ellen White did not try to hide the fact that she used non-canonical sources. She readily announced this in the **introduction** to The Great Controversy:

"In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been

made of their published works.” The Great Controversy, p. xi.

3. Much of the material in The Great Controversy is **original** with Ellen White. Chapters such as “**God’s People Delivered**,” “**The Desolation of the Earth**” and “**The Controversy Ended**” came to her directly in visions and dreams.

In short, Ellen White took what she **found in Scripture**, what she researched in **non-inspired sources** and what God showed her in visions and she **wove them** into a **literary masterpiece** totally **unlike anything** which has ever been written! What John developed in **22 chapters**, Ellen White amplified in **678 pages**.

A Decoded Book of Revelation

While the book of Revelation is written in coded symbolic language, Ellen White consistently decodes the symbols and gives their literal meaning. She **decodes** the meaning of the **dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the harlot, the wine, the twelve stars, the waters, the earth, the two witnesses, the seal of God, the mark of the beast, the 1260 days, the seven horns, the seven eyes, etc.** The book The Great Controversy is a decoded book of Revelation.

The Central Theme

The Great Controversy is **not an ordinary history book**. It is not a history book or a book about history. It is actually a **philosophy of history**. In it she sees the history which is being **written behind history**. She discerns the **real causes** of visible historical events. She is allowed **to look behind the veil** into the invisible world to see the battle between **two supernatural forces** vying for world dominion. She sees what the **most able historian** is not able to see. This is what makes her **book unique** and unrivalled.

For example, she wrote about **natural disasters** occurring more frequently and each time more terrible. The historian would simply describe that these events **occurred, where they occurred** and **how many people** were killed. Ellen White explains the **real reason** for them—who caused them and why. Satan wants to blame God’s people (see The Great Controversy, pp. 589, 590).

Some get all hung up because Ellen White said the **bell of the palace** in Paris was the signal for the beginning of the **St. Bartholomew Massacre**. Many historians (though not all) think it was the **bell of the Cathedral** which gave the signal. Those who get hung up on this fail to realize that Ellen White’s role was **not to define which bell** tolled but rather who was behind the massacre and why—**Satan wanted to stomp out the Reformation in France**. So don’t get all hung up over a bell!!

The Book's Two Halves

1. The **first half** of The Great Controversy is of **historical** emphasis (pp. 17-316). These pages cover basically what is described in the **churches, the seals and the trumpets** (Revelation 1-9)
2. The **second half** of the book deals primarily with **end time events** (pp. 419-612) including the role of the **kings** of the earth, the **papacy** and apostate **Protestantism** in end time events. She describes the trial over **Sabbath** and **Sunday** and how the **three angels' messages** reveal to the world the real issues in the controversy. She then describes the **close of probation**, the **plagues**, the time of **Jacob's trouble**, the **second coming** of Jesus, the **millennium** and the **earth made new**. Even a cursory glance reveals that she is expounding upon the events of Revelation **in their proper order**.
3. At the **center** of the book (pp. 317-408) is a description of the **Millerite movement**, their **bittersweet experience** and Christ's opening of the **heavenly temple** to begin the investigative judgment. It will be remembered that this is also at the very center of the book of Revelation.

Satan Attempted to Kill Ellen G. White

On **March 14, 1858**, Ellen White received her great controversy vision at **Lovett's Grove, Ohio**. On the way back home James and Ellen laid plans to publish what she had seen. They decided to stop over at the **Palmer home** in **Jackson, Michigan**. Ellen White describes what happened next:

"After I came out of vision, the afflicted friends and a portion of the congregation bore the body to its resting-place, and great solemnity rested upon those who remained. Two days after this occurrence, we took the cars at Fremont for Jackson, Mich. While on the cars we arranged our plans for writing and publishing the book called 'The Great Controversy' immediately on our return home. I was then as well as usual. On the arrival of the train at Jackson, we went to Bro. Palmer's. We had been in the house but a short time, when, as I was conversing with Sister Palmer, my tongue refused to utter what I wished to say, and seemed large and numb. A strange, cold sensation struck my heart, passed over my head, and down my right side. For a time I was insensible, but was aroused by the voice of earnest prayer. I tried to use my left limbs, but they were perfectly useless. For a short time I did not expect to live. It was my third shock of paralysis, and although within fifty miles of home, I did not expect to see my children again. I called to mind the triumphant season I had enjoyed at Lovett's Grove, and thought it was my last testimony, and felt reconciled to die." Life Sketches, p. 338.

Was this just a common ordinary stroke?

"At the time of the Conference at Battle Creek, in June, 1858, Sister Hutchins, who now sleeps in Jesus, was sorely afflicted with sickness, and we all felt that she would go down to the grave unless the Lord should raise her up. While praying for her, the power of God rested upon us all, and as it came upon me, I was taken off in vision. In that vision it was shown that in the sudden attack at Jackson, Satan intended to take my life, in order to hinder the work I was about to write; but angels of God were sent to my rescue. I also saw, among other things, that I should be blest with better health than before the attack at Jackson." Life Sketches, p. 339.



#19 - HOW TO TEST A TRUE PROPHET

Jesus warned that in the last remnant of time false prophets would arise and would deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:23, 24). For this reason we must be able to distinguish between the false and true. The question is: Who can we distinguish between a true prophet and a counterfeit? In other words, what are the tests of a true prophet?

The teachings of a true prophet will be in harmony with the previously revealed Scriptures. That is, a true prophet will speak and write 'to the law and to the testimony (Isaiah 8:20). True prophets are not innovators but restorers. They take old truths and they amplify them and make them applicable in a new context. They do not change or revoke previous revelations given by God. As it was expressed by the apostle Paul, prophets must be subject to the prophets (I Corinthians 14:32, 33).

True prophets will call God's people to be obedient to the Law. False prophets will perform signs and wonders but at the same time they will encourage people to be disobedient to God's Law (see Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Matthew 7:21-23)

The personal life of a true prophet will reveal the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 5:22-26). The ministry of a true prophet must bring glory to God (Matthew 5:14-16) and bear good fruit (John 15:8)

A true prophet will be categorical that Jesus came to this world and became flesh of our flesh, bone of our bones and blood of our blood (I John 4:1-3; Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 24:36-43; John 1:14). That is to say, a true prophet will teach that Jesus was a real man.

The predictions of a person who claims to be a prophet must come true (Jeremiah 28:9; Deuteronomy 18:22) unless there is some element of conditionality in the prediction (for example, the preaching of Jonah at Niniveh). True prophets do not predict mere curiosities. They deal with real life and death issues. Their perspective is purely spiritual and never merely secular (Amos 3:7).

True prophets will exalt Jesus Christ and give Him all the glory. Self will be hidden behind the

Man of Calvary. They will be **humble** and will not attract attention to themselves. True prophets will bear witness to Christ (John 20:31). See the example of John the Baptist in John 1:8, 9, 26-29. See also John 5:39, 46; Luke 24:25-27, 44 and 45.

True prophets will **tear the mask off of Satan** and identify him as the great deceiver and destroyer (Mark 3:24-26). They will unveil Satan's wiles and methods and reveal him for who he truly is (II Corinthians 11:3, 12, 13)

True prophets will be certain of their call and will **openly rebuke sin** without fearing the consequences. They will even be **willing to die** in order to remain true to God's message. Examples of this are many. Daniel who faced the lion's den, Nathan who rebuked David for adultery and murder; Elijah who rebuked Ahab and Jezebel; Jeremiah who rebuked Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; Isaiah who rebuked Ahaz and Hezekiah; John the Baptist who rebuked Herod; John the apostle who rebuked Emperor Domitian and as a result was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil and then exiled to Patmos.

True prophets will often experience certain **supernatural physical phenomena** while they are in vision such as not breathing, receiving supernatural strength, being transported to far-away places, being totally unconscious of their surroundings, having their eyes open while in vision and being lost to earthly things and falling as dead (see Daniel 10:5-8, 10, 17-19; Numbers 24:4; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4; Revelation 1:17)

True prophets will be **hated and persecuted** by those to whom they deliver God's message. The prophetic office is a **difficult task** (see as examples, Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jonah, John the Baptist, Elisha and John the Apostle). Jesus warned that the **false prophets** would be loved: *"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets."* (Luke 6:26) He also warned that **true prophets** would be hated (Matthew 5:12; 23:29-31, 34-37). True prophets do not seek the office nor will they pride themselves because they have the office. In fact, true prophets will frequently shun the call (as examples, Moses and Jeremiah). Generally true prophets would rather not be prophets. True prophets are usually considered strange and eccentric. They do not seek money, popularity or fame for themselves.

True prophets do not take a **course of study** to become prophets. They are called and chosen by God and inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21). Quite frequently prophets have **little or no formal education** because in this way they allow themselves to be used of God instead of leaning on their own learning and wisdom.

The prophetic office **crosses the gender line**. God has chosen many women for the prophetic office including Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Hulda (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36) and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

A prophet **does not need to contribute a book to the Biblical canon** to be true prophet. Many

of the prophets never wrote a Bible book such as Abraham (Genesis 20:7); Gad (2 Samuel 24:11) Nathan (2 Samuel 12:25), Elijah (I Kings 18:36), Oded (2 Chronicles 15:8), Jehu (1 Kings 16:7), Elisha (1 Kings 19:16), Ahijah (1 Kings 14:2), Shemaiah (2 Chronicles 12:5) Iddo (2 Chronicles 13:22) and John the Baptist (Matthew 11:9).

Although prophets are not scientists, their writings must be **in harmony with sound scientific information**. Notice the following biblical examples:

- The earth is round (Isaiah 40:22)
- The earth hangs upon nothing (Job 26:7)
- The universal law of gravity (Job 38:8-11; Colossians 1:17)
- Wind has weight (Job 28:25)
- The heavens cannot be measured (Jeremiah 31:37)
- The water cycle (Ecclesiastes 1:7)
- The cycles of the wind (Ecclesiastes 1:6)
- The crucial importance of blood for the sustenance of life (Leviticus 17:11)
- The danger of eating the fat and blood of animals (Leviticus 3:17)

True prophets will help people face the **perils and dangers of life** in a sinful, rebellious world and will prepare them for a life in the world to come. The true prophet will **warn of the judgment to come** and the need to prepare a life that will successfully pass the judgment (note especially the roles of **Moses** in leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan, **Elijah** in bringing the people back to the Lord, **John the Baptist** who was to prepare a people to receive the Messiah and the **final Elijah** movement whose role will be to prepare a people for the second coming of Jesus)

It is a **very serious matter** to reject the message of a true prophet. To reject the message means **to reject Jesus Christ** because the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9). In this context it might be well to remember the stories of **Korah's rebellion**, the children who made fun of **Elisha** and **Miriam** and **Aaron** who were critical of **Moses**. God takes personally the rejection of the message He sends through His prophets. It is a serious matter indeed to question the authority of a true prophet.

True prophets will **not employ forbidden methods** to acquire their information. Crystal ball gazing, palm reading, astrology and necromancy (channeling) are strictly forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Revelation 21:8; 22:15)

True prophets will **edify, comfort and exhort the faithful** (I Corinthians 14:3). They will keep God's people from becoming lawless. Where there is no vision the people 'cast off restraint' (NIV), 'are unrestrained' (NASB), 'they run wild' (NLT), 'are uncontrolled' (New Century)

(Proverbs 29:18) as can be seen during the period of the Judges when everyone did was right in their own eyes because the word of God was precious or scarce in those days. The results of not having the prophetic voice can also be seen during the **dark ages** when revelation was scarce and as a result people wallowed in sickness and ignorance.

God will rise up prophets at **critical crossroads** in the historical flow of time (examples are Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zechariah and Haggai, John the Baptist).

#20 - THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

The Morning Stars and the Sons of God

Job 38:4-7 (NKJV):

*"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the **morning stars** sang together, and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?"*

Conclusions: There were **two groups** that sang at creation: The **morning stars** and the **sons of God**. Thus it is clear that the two groups of beings **already existed** before God created this world.

Identity of the Morning Stars

Revelation 12:3, 4, 9 identifies the stars as **angels**. But who are the sons of God?

The Sons of God

Job 1:6, 7:

*"Now there was a day when the sons of God **came** to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also **came among** them. ⁷ And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you **come**?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the **earth**, and from walking back and forth on it."*

Some very **interesting details** emerge from these verses:

- The sons of God **do not always dwell** in the presence of God. They **came** to present themselves on a **certain day**. This contrasts with the previous verse where we are told that Job offered sacrifices **always** (Job 1:7).

- Satan came **among** the sons of God. Notice that the text does not say that he came **with** them. Evidently Satan claimed the right to belong to this select group. What made him feel like **he had the right** to appear among this select group?
- Satan came representing **a planet**, the earth. Where, then, must the other sons of God have come from? Is it just possible that they also came from other planets?

Job 2:1, 2:

*“Again there was a day when the sons of God **came** to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan **came** also among them to present himself before the Lord. ² And the Lord said to Satan, “From **where** do you **come**?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the **earth**, and from walking back and forth on it.”*

Note: The same remarks about Job 1:6, 7 apply to Job 2:1, 2. The word “**again**” is important. If the sons of God came **again**, then they must have left the presence of God and gone back to where they came from for the first meeting.

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, the 24 elders are **powerful angels** to whom God has delegated the responsibility of being **representatives of the worlds** that never sinned. Notice the following statements:

*“This roll was written within and without. John says: “I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon” [verse 4]. The vision as presented to John made its impression upon his mind. The destiny of every nation was contained in that book. John was distressed at the utter inability of any human being or angelic intelligence to read the words, or even to look thereon. His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that **one of the strong angels** had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly, said, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” [verse 5].” Manuscript Releases, volume 12, pp. 296, 297*

In its original Biblical context the words of verse 5 are spoken by one of the twenty-four elders but Ellen White identifies the elder as ‘*one of the strong angels.*’

*“John beholds an innumerable company, precious, refined, purified, around the throne of the Majesty of Heaven. **The angel inquires** of John, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” and John answers, “Sir, thou knowest.” Then **the angel declares**: “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Signs of the Times, December 22, 1887*

In its original Biblical context it is one of the elders who asks these questions but Ellen White identifies the asker as **the angel**. The inevitable conclusion is that the elder who is speaking is a powerful angel.

*“John saw a company standing around the throne of God, and **the angel asked him**, Who are these in white robes? He answered, thou knowest. And **the angel** said, “These are they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (See Revelation 7:13, 14). There is a fountain in which we may wash from every stain of impurity. And says the angel, “He shall lead them to fountains of living waters, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (See v. 17.) This will be the happy privilege of those that have kept the commandments of God in the earth.” Sermons and Talks, volume 1, p. 20*

*“As John saw the multitude standing around the throne of God, the question was asked, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?”--“These are they which came out of great tribulation,” **the angel** answered, “and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Signs of the Times, November 22, 1905*

On **Revelation 5:8** Ellen White remarks:

*“Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The **very highest angels** in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place. If he should leave, the powers of darkness would gain an advantage. . .” Lift Him Up, p. 370*

Why Was Satan Among the Sons of God?

Why did Satan claim the right to belong to this select group? The answer is found in **Luke 4:5, 6** where Jesus was tempted by the devil:

*“Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the **kingdoms** of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, “All this authority **I will give You**, and their glory; for this **has been delivered to me**, and I give it to **whomever I wish**. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be **Yours**.”*

Conclusion: Satan stole the position which rightfully belonged to Adam who was the legitimate representative of the planet. He usurped **Adam’s rightful throne**. This is the reason why Jesus called Satan “*the ruler of this world*” (John 12:31). When Adam **chose to obey Satan**, he became **Satan’s subject** for we are subjects of the master whom we choose to obey (**Romans 6:16**)

For additional evidence that the universe is governed by a heavenly council see **2 Chronicles 18:18-22**.

Adam: The Original Son of God

God’s original plan for the human race:

“All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human

beings were a **new and distinct order**. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives." Sons and Daughters of God, p. 7

"Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit and he urges his accusations against them, declaring, that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. "Are these," he says, "the people who are to **take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels** who united with me? They profess to obey the law of God; but have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than lovers of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins that have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred of one another. Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them." Prophet and Kings, pp. 588, 589

"God created man for His own glory that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to **repopulate heaven** with the human family." The Truth about Angels, pp. 48, 49

"The **vacancies made in heaven** by the fall of Satan and his angels will be **filled by the redeemed** of the Lord." Review and Herald May 29, 1900. The Truth about Angels, p. 49

Luke 3:38: The Son of God

*"... the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the **son of God**."*

Regarding Adam's status as the son of God we have this from **Ellen White**:

*"The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was **"the son of God."** He was placed, as God's representative, over the lower orders of being." Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45.*

Conclusion: The original "son of God" was Adam. But he was the **son of God** in a special and different sense than we are—he was the son of God by creation, not **procreation**.

Adam Crowned at Creation

Psalm 8:3-8: At creation Adam was **crowned** and given his **realm of dominion** (see also Genesis 1:26-28)

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You

have ordained, ⁴ what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? ⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have **crowned him** with glory and honor. ⁶ You have made him to have **dominion** over the works of Your hands; you have put **all things under his feet**, ⁷ all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.”

Note: When the Bible uses the expression ‘beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas’ it is referring to the entire planet. Thus the Psalmist is saying that the entire planet was under the dominion of Adam who was the king. Ellen White amplifies this thought:

*“Adam was **crowned as king** in Eden. To him was given **dominion** over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as he had not given to the animal creation. He made Adam the **rightful sovereign** over all the works of his hands.”* Review and Herald, February 24, 1874.

Conclusion: Adam was **crowned as king** and the **realm** of his kingdom was planet earth.

Adam and Eve’s Garments

Genesis 2:25 explains that Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed. A closer look reveals that they were covered with glorious **garments of light**.

Psalms 104:1-2:

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, ² who cover Yourself with **light as with a garment**, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.”*

In **Revelation 12: 1** the true church is garbed with the glorious light of the sun. In **Matthew 17** the raiment of Jesus is spoken of as being **white as the light**.

Notice the following incisive comment by Ellen G. White:

*“The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a **covering of light and glory**, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this **robe of light** continued to enshroud them.”* Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 45.

Conclusion: Adam and Eve were clothed with white **garments of light**.

Adam was the Father and Representative of Planet Earth

*“In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the **father and representative** of the **whole human family**.”* Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 48.

This point is also made clear in the Bible. Even though Eve sinned first, Adam was held accountable by God. Thus, Jesus is the second Adam, not the second Eve!

The Context of Revelation Four and Five

Revelation 4 describes **four orders of beings**: One who is seated on the throne, God the **Father** (4:2); the **seven Spirits** before the throne (4:5); the **four living creatures** or seraphim (4:6-8; Isaiah 6:1-3); and the **24 elders** (4:4). **Missing** in chapter four are the angelic hosts and Christ. It is important to realize that the twenty-four elders were around the throne before the arrival of Jesus in chapter 5. This means that the 24 elders cannot be those who resurrected with Jesus because when Jesus arrived in heaven they were already there!

Revelation 5 depicts two other additional orders of being: The **angels** who arrived with the **Lamb** who had just been slain and resurrected.

Who are the Twenty-four Elders?

Ellen White in the book The Great Controversy indicates that the sons of God in Job were angels. This harmonizes with Ellen White's view elsewhere that the representatives of the worlds are powerful angels to whom God has delegated the responsibility of representing these worlds. We need to understand that in Revelation 5 the angelic host is distinguished from the 24 Elders:

*"The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the **angels of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God" The Great Controversy, p. 518*

Revelation 4:4 (KJV):

*"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders **sitting**, clothed in **white raiment**; and they had on their heads **crowns** of gold."*

- They are seated on **thrones**, therefore they are **rulers**. But where are they rulers?
- They have **crowns** on their heads, they are **kings** (Though generally the word *stefanos* is used to describe the crown one who has gained a victory, there are exceptions. See for example Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2; Revelation 14:14)
- They are **robed** in **white** garments of **light**
- They are **creatures** (Revelation 4:10, 11)

Ellen White Identifies the 24 Elders

"All heaven was waiting to welcome the Savior to the celestial courts. As **He ascended**, He led the way, and the **multitude of captives** [notice that these arrive in heaven with Jesus while the 24 elders were already there] set free at His resurrection followed. The **heavenly host**, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

As they drew near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond:

⁸ "Who is this King of glory?"

This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise:

"The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle!
⁹ Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Again is heard the challenge, ¹⁰ "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply:

"The Lord of hosts;
He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10 (KJV).

Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the **angelic throng sweep through the gates** amid a burst of rapturous music.

There is the **throne** [Revelation 4:2], and around it the **rainbow** of promise [Revelation 4:3]. There are **cherubim and seraphim** [Revelation 4:6-8]. The commanders of the angel hosts, **the sons of God**, the **representatives of the unfallen worlds** [Revelation 4:4], are assembled. The **heavenly council** before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the **representatives** of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to **welcome** the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.

But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father [the one seated on the throne]. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails

[the lamb as though it had been slain]. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father [the one seated on the throne], with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." [the sealed book will reveal who will inherit with Jesus] John 19:30; 17:24.

The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6.

With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 5:12.

Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13. The Desire of Ages, pp. 833-835

Satan Missing in Heaven

But there is one who is **missing** in this heavenly celebration: Satan. Normally Satan would have been there representing planet earth. Why wasn't Satan present on this occasion? In **John 12:31-33** Jesus predicted that the ruler of this world would be cast out at the cross:

"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die."

And the inhabitants of heaven, many years later described the victory celebration that took place in heaven when Jesus died on the cross:

Revelation 12:10-12:

*“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been **cast down**.¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.¹² Therefore rejoice O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has **come down to you**, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”*

Satan was cast out of heaven at the cross as the representative of this world. His place was taken by the second Adam who defeated him on the battlefield where Adam lost. Jesus recovered what the first Adam lost.

Jesus is the Son of God

Luke 1:35 (KJV): Jesus is the Son of God in a new sense at His incarnation

*“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the **Son of God**.”*

Jesus is the Last Adam

1 Corinthians 15:22 (KJV): Jesus took the place of the first Adam

*“For as in **Adam** all die, even so in **Christ** shall all be made alive.”*

1 Corinthians 15:45 (KJV):

*“And so it is written: The **first man Adam** was made a living soul; the **last Adam** was made a quickening spirit.”*

Romans 5:18 (KJV):

*“Therefore as by the offence of **one** judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of **one** the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*

Jesus is the King and Representative of Planet Earth

Psalms 8:3-5 in its original context is referring to the first Adam. But **Hebrews 2:5-9** applies this Psalm to Jesus who took the place of the original Adam

“For He has not put the world to come of which we speak, in subjection to angels.⁶ But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man

that You take care of him? ⁷ You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. ⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste **death for everyone.** "

"The human race does not stand in the righteousness of character which Adam possessed at his creation. Although neglect to keep the requirements of God is sin, and the wages of sin is death, yet there is no claim made that man may have eternal life except through the obedience and righteousness of Jesus Christ, who is the **representative and head** of all humanity." Signs of the Times, June 11, 1894.

"Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the **head and representative** of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges." Signs of the Times, January 16, 1896.

"As representative of the fallen race, Christ passed over the same ground on which Adam stumbled and fell. By a life of perfect obedience to God's law, Christ redeemed man from the penalty of Adam's disgraceful fall." Manuscript 126, 1901.

"Christ was to suffer in our behalf, standing at the head of humanity as representative of the race. He was to work out the character which every follower of His is to work out, through the provision He has made,--His infinite sacrifice, His life and death on earth." The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901.

Will Adam Ever be placed on the Throne Again?

"As the ransomed ones are welcomed to the City of God, there rings out upon the air an exultant cry of adoration. The two Adams are about to meet. The Son of God is standing with outstretched arms to receive the father of our race--the being whom He created, who sinned against his Maker, and for whose sin the marks of the crucifixion are borne upon the Savior's form. As Adam discerns the prints of the cruel nails, he does not fall upon the bosom of his Lord, but in humiliation casts himself at His feet, crying: "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" Tenderly the Savior lifts him up and bids him look once more upon the Eden home from which he has so long been exiled.

After his expulsion from Eden, Adam's life on earth was filled with sorrow. Every dying leaf, every victim of sacrifice, every blight upon the fair face of nature, every stain upon man's purity, was a fresh reminder of his sin. Terrible was the agony of remorse as he beheld iniquity abounding, and, in answer to his warnings, met the reproaches cast upon himself as the cause of sin. With patient humility he bore, for nearly a thousand years, the penalty of transgression. Faithfully did he repent of his sin and trust in the merits of the promised Savior, and he died in the hope of a resurrection. The Son of God redeemed man's failure and fall; and now, through

the work of the atonement, **Adam is reinstated in his first dominion.**" The Great Controversy, p. 647.

A Process of Elimination (who the 24 elders are not)

- The 24 elders are not **cherubim** nor **seraphim** because these two groups are distinguished from the 24 elders (Revelation 4:4, 10)
- They are not part of the **angelic hosts** because the angelic hosts are clearly distinguished from them (Revelation 5:12). As we have seen, the 24 elders were present in heaven (Revelation 4:4) before the angelic hosts arrived with Jesus.
- They are not members of the **unnumbered host of the redeemed**. This is made evident by the fact that one of the elders asked John about the identity of the great multitude that no man could number 'from every nation, kindred, people and tongue' (Revelation 7:13). It is rather obvious that the elder would not ask about the identity of the great multitude if he belonged to it.
- Revelation 5:9, 10 seems to indicate that the elders sing the song of their redemption "*from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" But Revelation 7:13 distinguishes one of the elders from the great multitude that was redeemed from "*all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues.*" (Revelation 7:9). This clearly proves that the translation of Revelation 5:9, 10 in the King James Version is incorrect.
- The 24 elders are not part of the **144,000** because the 144,000 are distinguished from them (Revelation 14:3)
- The 24 elders are not those who will resurrect in the **special resurrection** (Daniel 12:2) just before the second coming because the 24 elders were already in heaven when Jesus ascended (Revelation 4:4)
- The 24 elders are not those who will resurrect in the **general resurrection** because they were in heaven when Jesus ascended (I Thessalonians 4:15-17)
- The 24 elders are not those who **resurrected with Jesus** because the 24 elders were already there before Jesus arrived (Revelation 4:4)
- **Conclusion:** They are neither **angelic** nor **human**. They must be some other order of being.

A Problem in Translation

How, then, do we explain Revelation 5:8-10 where the 24 elders (in the KJV and NKJV) appear to be singing the song of their redemption from "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

nation?" Let's take a look at the passage as it appears in the King James Version:

Revelation 5:8-10:

*"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts **and** four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. 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; and hast made **us** unto our God kings and priests: and **we** shall reign on the earth."*

Doesn't this passage explicitly state that the elders were redeemed **from the earth**, that they were made kings and priests and that they shall rule upon the earth? How then could they be representatives from other worlds?

Before I answer this question I would like to share a word about the King James Version. I personally believe that the KJV is an excellent translation. It is a reverent version which is written in beautiful Victorian English. Having said this however, some people revere the KJV so much that they practically give the impression that it was verbally dictated by God! Anyone attempting to amend or change anything in the King James Version is accused of being an agent of the Jesuits. But the KJV translation is by no means perfect. For example, the much maligned NIV is much more accurate than the KJV when it translates texts that deal with the state of the dead.

The simple fact is that the King James Version has mistranslated Revelation 5:9, 10 and every modern translation has corrected the error. Notice the following translations:

This mistranslation is corrected in all reputable modern versions:

Revelation 5:9-10 (***New International Version***)

*"And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased **men** for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made **them** to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and **they** will reign on the earth."*

Revelation 5:9-10 (***New American Standard***)

*"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood **men** from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.' ¹⁰ 'You have made **them** to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they** will reign upon the earth.'"*

Revelation 5:9-10 (**Revised Standard Version**)

*“. . . and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom **men** for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made **them** a kingdom and priests to our God, and **they** shall reign on earth."*

Revelation 5:9-10 (**New English Bible**)

*“. . . and they were singing a new song: 'Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst purchase for God **men** of every tribe and language, people and nation; thou hast made of **them** a royal house, to serve our God as priests; and **they** shall reign upon earth.'*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**Weymouth Bible**)

*"And now they sing a new song, saying, 'Worthy art Thou to take the book and break its seals; because Thou hast been slain, and hast purchased for God with Thine own blood **men** out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast formed **them** into a kingdom to be priests to our God, and **they** shall reign over the earth.'*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**Phillips translation**)

*"They sang a new song and these are the words they sang: 'Worthy art thou to take the book and break its seals, for thou hast been slain and by thy blood hast purchased for God **men** from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation! Thou hast made **them** a kingdom of priests for our God, and **they** shall reign as kings upon the earth.'*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**Jerusalem Bible, Catholic**)

*"They sang a new hymn: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and break the seals of it, because you were sacrificed, and with your blood you bought **men** for God of every race, language, people and nation and made **them** a line of kings and priests, to serve our God and to rule the world.'*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**The New American Bible, Catholic**)

*"This is the new hymn they sang: 'Worthy are you to receive the scroll and break open its seals, for you were slain. With your blood you purchased for God **men** of every race and tongue, of every people and nation, you made of **them** a kingdom, and priests to serve our God, and **they** shall reign upon the earth.'*

Revelation 5:9, 10 (**The Jewish New Testament**)

*“. . . and they sang a new song, 'You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals; because you were slaughtered; at the cost of blood you ransomed for God **persons** from every tribe, language, people and nation. You made **them** into a kingdom for God to rule, cohanim [priests]*

to serve him; and **they** will rule over the earth.”

Why the elders cannot be human:

- First, the elders were **already present** in the Father’s heavenly throne room before Jesus arrived so they cannot be those who resurrected with Him.
- Second, this song was sung by **both** the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (Revelation 4:8). It is absolutely clear that the four living creatures (which we will shortly identify as seraphim) **were not redeemed** from among men and **will not reign** upon the earth.
- Finally, the same group who were redeemed by the Lamb from every nation, tribe, tongue and people is **distinguished** from the elder who asked about their identity (Revelation 7:9, 11, 12)

The Elders in the Rest of Revelation

Revelation 5:12, 13 points to a **future celebration** in heaven when the redeemed will be present because every creature on earth was not present there when the song was first sung.

The 24 elders are mentioned in four other passages in the book of Revelation. In each of these, with the exception of 11:16, the redeemed are present.

- **Revelation 7:13:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [7:9], Lamb [7:9], four living creatures [7:11], 24 elders [7:11], angels [7:11] the redeemed [7:9])
- **Revelation 11:16:** The elders in the context of future victory (Lord [11:15], Christ [11:15], elders [11:16], angelic hosts [11:15]).
- **Revelation 14:3:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [14:3], Lamb [14:1], four living creatures [14:3], 24 elders [14:3], 144, 000 redeemed from the earth [14:1])
- **Revelation 19:1, 2:** The elders in the context of future victory (throne [19:4], Christ [Lamb [19:9], four living creatures [19:4], 24 elders [19:4], angels [19:1], multitude of the redeemed [19:6])

Notice the following chart that describes the beings that are present in Revelation 4, 5, 7 and 19:

Parallels between Revelation 4, 5, 7, 19

Revelation 4

Father (4:2)
24 Elders (4:4)
4 Living Creatures (4:6-7)
Seven Spirits before the throne (4:5)

Revelation 5

Father (5:1)
24 Elders (5:6)
4 Living Creatures (5:6)
Seven Spirits sent to the earth (5:6)
Lamb (5:6)
Angelic Hosts (5:11)

Revelation 7

Father (7:10)
24 Elders (7:11)
4 Living Creatures (7:11)
Work finished
Lamb (7:10, 17)
Angels (7:11)
Great multitude (7:9)

Revelation 19

God (19:4)
24 Elders (19:4)
4 Living Creatures (19:4)
Work finished
Lamb (19:7, 9)
Angels (19:6)
Great Multitude (19:1, 6)

Words of Explanation:

It will be noticed that in Revelation 4 the Father, the elders, the four living creatures and the seven Spirits are present but Jesus, the angels and the great multitude are absent. In Revelation 5 the angelic hosts and the Lamb are added and the seven Spirits are sent to the earth. The great multitude is missing in chapter 5. Finally, in Revelation 7 and 19 the great multitude of the redeemed join the scene. A careful analysis of the hymns reveals that in chapter 4 the motivation for singing is **creation**. In chapter 5 the motivation is **redemption**. But in chapters 7 and 19 the motivation is **deliverance** in the final crisis. This can be seen in Revelation 7:10 where salvation from annihilation in the great tribulation is the motivation and in Revelation 19:1, 2 where God's people have been delivered from the great harlot and are rejoicing because the marriage of the Lamb has come. The songs by the elders, the four living creatures have faded from view and now the redeemed are the singers.

The Final Celebration

Luke 15:4-7: The final celebration spoken of in Revelation 5:12, 13 is described in the parable of the lost sheep:

*"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them [this sinful world], does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness [the sinless worlds], and go after [Jesus coming down to this earth] the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home [the final celebration in heaven], he calls together his friends and neighbors [the angels and the representatives of the sinless worlds], saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' ⁷ I say to you that likewise there **will be** more **joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."*

Ellen White has made it crystal clear that this parable has a broader meaning than is generally understood:

*"By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin. **This world** is but an atom in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet **this little fallen world--the one lost sheep--is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly***

*courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He **might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost.***
Christ's Object Lessons, p. 190, 191



#21 - LESSONS FROM THE INDIANA CAMP MEETING

Conflict over Worship Styles

One of the most controversial and potentially explosive topics of discussion in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is music. There is no more divisive issue in the Church than this one. Many churches have two worship services on Sabbath.

The first is a traditional one for the "older members" of the Church and the other is a contemporary one for the younger generation. While the contemporary service uses praise songs that were composed mainly by evangelical and Pentecostal composers, the traditional service uses the old time hymns that fall into the Protestant Reformation tradition.

The question is: Which of these two worship styles fits best with the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

Concert in Medellín

About four years ago I was invited to speak at the Youth Congress of the Inter-American Division. Though the congress ended on Sabbath morning, a concert was organized by a group of youth for Saturday night and was held in Medellin's bull ring. Although the concert was not organized or sponsored by the Inter-American Division, many of those who attended the congress also went to the concert.

The program was presented by a renowned soloist and a very well-known singing group, both Seventh-day Adventist. I did not attend the concert because I already knew the style of music that the artists were going to perform. However, two of my wife's nephews, who enjoy Contemporary Christian Music, attended the concert and brought back a report.

As they told it, even they were amazed at the irreverent attitude of those who attended. They told me that girls attended whose attire left very little to the imagination. They said that the

volume was deafening, the youth **danced** in the aisles, **whistled**, **shouted**, **clapped** and **jumped on the chairs**. The music was a **mixture** of **rock, jazz, and pop** but with Christian lyrics.

My question is: Does a **holy God condone** and accept this style of worship?

Youth Congress in Chile

Recently I received an invitation to preach at a youth congress that was organized by **two conferences in Chile**. They had asked me to present a series on the **prophetic message** of the Bible. I prepared a special series that I felt would engage the attention of the youth and made the **nine hour trip** from Fresno to Santiago.

The congress was on a **long weekend in a sporting arena**. On **Thursday** evening I arrived at the arena early with **high expectations**. The youth began arriving **in droves** and soon the building was **totally maxed out** with over **one thousand** youth. It appeared that this was going to be a wonderful spiritual weekend.

But soon my **expectations were blasted** and I was **deeply disappointed**. Perhaps **distressed** would more properly describe my feelings.

To begin the program a **group of young people** came onto the **highly elevated** platform to lead out in contemporary praise songs. They were dressed in **blue jeans and t-shirts**. On the platform there was a **keyboard** and **electric guitars**. With a **deafening volume** the band began to play its **praise songs** as the **singers shouted** out the words. The music was **syncopated** and **rhythmic** and was accompanied by different **colored lights** that **undulated** across the ceiling, the walls and the crowd. On the platform was a machine that **spewed out a vapor** that **enveloped** the platform **in a mist**.

The youth in the stands **danced**, **swayed**, **stomped**, **laughed**, **shouted** and **whistled**. Most of the young people were **not even singing** but were rather **talking, hugging each other and swaying** to the music. Lest anyone think that I am stretching the truth about what went on, **I still have a video** that I took at this event.

The praise service lasted for a **little more than an hour**. The young people were **whipped up into a frenzy** that would not allow them **to concentrate** on an in-depth study of God's word. Finally just before **nine o'clock** the pastor who organized the event told me that it was **my turn** but that I had to **abbreviate** my talk because **it was late**. At that point I asked myself, **how can I preach** in an environment where the youth are in such a **state of frenzy**? It was obvious that their **hearts were not ready** to receive the word so I decided to change my topic and preached a **twenty minute sermon**.

It was extremely **difficult** to preach in such an environment because the **youth had little interest** and there was no spirit of **reverence**. In fact, it took **several minutes** just to calm them down and even then while I was preaching **they talked and were distracted**.

Preliminaries

It has become common in many Adventist worship services to dedicate the **majority of the time** to preliminaries and praise, leaving very **little time** for the preaching of the word of God.

Regarding this tendency, Ellen White remarks:

*“Let not your efforts be to follow the **world's way** but to follow God's way. Outward display will not do the work the Lord desires to have done to arouse the higher classes to a conviction that they have heard the truth. Do not **divest the truth of its dignity and impressiveness by preliminaries** that are more after the order of the world than after the order of heaven. Let your hearers understand that you do not hold Sunday evening meetings to **charm their senses with music** and other things, but **to preach the truth** in all its solemnity, that it may come to them as a warning, arousing them from their deathlike sleep of self-indulgence. It is the naked truth that, like a sharp, two-edged sword, cuts both ways. . . .” *Evangelism*, p. 148*

During the **entire weekend** I did not hear a **single sermon** where the **distinctive message** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was presented. The congress could well have been organized by the **Baptists, Pentecostals or any other protestant denomination**.

What concerned me most was that the **young pastors** not only **permitted** this style of worship but actually **encouraged** it and **participated** in it. The entire service reminded me of the **Golden Calf** episode at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Questions

When I returned to my hotel that night I asked myself:

- Is this the type of worship service that **pleases God**?
- Is this the **way that the angels** worship a holy God?
- Was **Ellen White wrong** when she stated that heavenly music is **melodious and harmonious** and sounds like the songs of birds?
- Is this the type of music that should **accompany** our **precious present truth** message for these last days?

A Silver Lining

But there was one positive thing that happened at the meeting. A **young pastor**, who **had taught** his youth the proper way to worship God stood up with all his youth and **walked out of**

the arena. It made me think of the Levites who at the foot of Mt. Sinai stood faithfully on the Lord's side.

Indiana Camp Meeting

This worship service brought vividly to mind a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting that was held in Muncie, Indiana from September 13-23 of the year 1900. The heresy was introduced by Indiana Conference pastor/evangelist S. S. Davis between 1898 and 1899.

It appears that beginning around the year 1898 the conference leaders—including the conference evangelist, S. S. Davis and the conference president, R. S. Donnell—and most of the ministers of the Indiana Conference began teaching a heresy which is known as “holy flesh”. We don't really have time to discuss the heresy itself but we do want to take a look at the worship style and music that was used at this Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting.

Pastors Haskell and Breed

The General Conference was concerned about what was happening in Indiana and they sent pastors, A. J. Breed and Stephen Haskell to find out what was being taught so that they could render a report to the brethren. Pastor Haskell, after attending the meetings, wrote about the instruments that were used at the camp meeting:

“We have a big drum, two tambourines, a big bass fiddle, two small fiddles, a flute and two cornets, and an organ and a few voices. They have Garden of Spices as the song book and play dance tunes to sacred words.” (Ella Robinson, S. N. Haskell Man of Action, p. 168.

Hymnals

It is important to underline the fact that at this time the Seventh-day Adventist Church had published two of its own hymnals and there was another that was about to be published. The first of these had been published in 1869 and was very appropriately named, Hymns and Tunes for Those Who Keep the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus. The second hymnal had been published in 1.886 and bore the title, The Seventh-day Adventist Hymn and Tune Book. In 1.900, Frank Belden, the notable Seventh-day Adventist hymnologist was about to publish the much loved Christ in Song.

Perhaps the leaders of the Indiana Conference felt that the old time hymns were out of style and boring and the church needed to get caught up with the times! Or perhaps the message of the holy flesh movement did not fit with the good old time hymns.

The Salvation Army

Elder Haskell sent Ellen White a letter (dated September 25, 1900) where he described what he had observed at the Indiana camp meeting. In a telling statement he wrote:

*"In fact, their revival effort is simply **a complete copy** of the Salvation Army method and when they get on a high key, you cannot hear a word from the congregation in their singing, nor hear anything, unless it be shrieks of those who are half insane. I do not think I overdraw it at all."*

It is very significant that Haskell affirmed that the worship style was a **complete copy** of the revival methods of the Salvation Army.

This leads us to ask: **What kind of music style** was used by the Salvation Army in their **revival meetings**? The answer is found on the Salvation Army's website:

*"The Army tradition in music is to use the **popular idiom of the day** to reach people for Jesus."*

Salvation Army Bands

The Army's **Joy Strings** were a hit pop group in the 1960s and early 1970s in the UK and beyond, reaching the charts and being featured on national television. Another popular band is **The Insyderz**, an American ska-core group popular in the 1990s and early 2000s. **Hundreds of current bands** carry on this Salvation Army tradition, such as New Zealand's **Moped**, **Chamberlain**, **Vatic**, **Agent C**, and **The Lads**; England's **Electralyte**; Australia's **Soteria Music Ministries** and **Escape**; and America's **transMission**, **The Singing Company**, **HAB**, **BurN**, and **CJD – Cookies, Juice, & Donuts**. **Saytunes** is a website designed to encourage and promote these contemporary Salvation Army bands.

Attracted a Crowd

In **1887 E. J. Waggoner** wrote admitted that the music of the Salvation Army attracted a crowd but notice what else he said:

*"It is true that the **hand-organ tunes** that have become so popular as "Gospel" hymns, **take with the people**, and awaken **a great deal of enthusiasm**. But the enthusiasm is of the same nature as that inspired by a lively waltz, and is **not real religious fervor**. It is that sort of **good feeling** that characterizes the members of the **Salvation Army**, and which the devil would fain have **men believe is religious**. We know that the sentiment of the age is against the standard music by which people may worship the Lord; but we think that in the matter of music, as well as in other things, it would be **far better to educate the people**, both young and old, to an appreciation of that which is **sacred**, than to **pander to their natural fancy**. E. J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, November 3, 1887*

Ellen White adds her testimony:

*"Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues and **noisy exercises** have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here. The fruits of all this have not been good. 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.' **Fanaticism and noise** have been considered special evidences of faith. Some are not satisfied with a meeting unless they have a **powerful and happy time**. They work for this and get up an **excitement of feeling**. But the influence of such meetings is not beneficial. When **the happy flight of feeling is gone** they **sink lower** than before the meeting because their happiness did not come from the right source."*
Last Day Events, 159, 160

The Founder William Booth

But there is something **even more worrisome** than the **music style** of the Salvation Army. What most people don't know is that the founder of the Salvation Army, **William Booth** (who for several years was a Methodist pastor) was **deeply involved in spiritualism**. On more than one occasion he said that the **spirits of the dead** came to talk to him.

Mr. Booth from the **War Cry** of Oct. 2, 1897:

*"I have a spiritual communion with the **departed saints** that is not without both satisfaction and service, and specially of late the memories of those with whom my heart has had the choicest communion in the past, if not the very beings themselves, have come in upon me as I have sat at my desk, or lain wakeful in the night season. Amongst these, one form, true to her mission, comes more frequently than all besides, assuring me of her continued partnership in my struggle for the temporal and eternal salvation of the multitudes-and that is my blessed, my beautiful wife!"* Quoted in *The Present Truth*, November 25, 1897

E. J. Waggoner wrote in **1884**:

*"We have held that the Salvation Army, and the so-called 'Holiness Bands,' which are the same thing only less boisterous, are but **feeders for Spiritualism**; that they are, in fact, forms of Spiritualism; and that the leaders are simply in training, unconsciously, for Spiritualist mediums."* E. J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, December 4, 1884

Should it then surprise us that Ellen White stated that at the **Indiana camp meeting** 'satanic agents' were present and that God had instructed her "to say that at these demonstrations **demons in the form of men** are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make **the truth disgusting to sensible people**; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing the truth of the third angel's message before multitudes, should **lose their force and influence**." *Selected Messages*, volume 2, p. 37

Trampled the Law of God

It is also important to underline the fact that the Salvation Army encouraged people to follow their own impressions and to trample the law of God:

“The ‘holiness people’ and the Salvation Army have a great deal of what Paul denominates ‘bodily exercise’ that ‘profits little.’ They follow impressions and claim to be taught of the Spirit; and like the fanatics that troubled Luther, they place these impressions above the written word of God, while they trample upon the divine law because their hearts are not in harmony with its precepts. The Spirit and the word agree. The Spirit of Christ leads into all truth; but there is in these spirit-taught ones an enmity against the plainest statements of the Bible. The spirit that guides them leads to the believing of lies rather than the truth, showing that their teacher is the great master spirit that “works in the children of disobedience.” Signs of the Times, February 26, 1885

Questionable Evangelistic Methods

The Salvation Army not only used contemporary music to attract the crowds, they also used other questionable methods to entice people to attend their meetings. For example, they used clowns to share the gospel message. They believed that the message must be contextualized and sensationalized in order for people to be interested. Ellen White had something to say about this method:

“We need to study methods whereby we may preach the gospel to the poor and downtrodden and degraded of humanity. But let no one think that God will approve of a method which will require a man to act the part of a clown, or like a man who has lost his senses. Such methods as these are wholly unnecessary and inappropriate. Signs of the Times, March 19, 1894

E. J. Waggoner, who attended several Salvation Army revivals to have first-hand knowledge of their style of worship, wrote:

“We consider the methods of the Salvation Army to be the worst sort of a caricature on religion, and we cannot understand the condition of mind which will enable a well-instructed Christian man to find any pleasure in them . . . the fact remains that their proceedings have more in common with the circus or the minstrel show than with Christianity. We are not prepared to admit that they do any good.” The Present Truth, September 14, 1888

Ellen White continues her remarks:

“Among the Salvation Army workers such methods as these have been employed; but it is more necessary that they should study and preach the word than act in a sensational way in order to draw the attention of the people. It is the word of truth that, like a strong, golden chain, will

*bind men to God, where they will learn of the great Teacher. It is the word of God that is to test character. The Lord has precious, conscientious souls who have joined the Army; but they need to advance and receive other and **higher truths** of the word of God.” Signs of the Times, March 19, 1894*

Ellen White also warned about the religious world in the end time:

*“Popular revivals are too often carried by **appeals to the imagination**, by exciting the **emotions**, by gratifying the love for what is **new and startling**. Converts thus gained have **little desire to listen to Bible truth**, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a **sensational character**, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to **unimpassioned reason** awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.” THE GREAT CONTROVERSY, p. 463*

When Ellen White was in Europe she wrote about the **superficial religious experience** of the Salvation Army:

*“There is the Salvation Army, the Holiness Band with their **cheap Christianity**, and yet it **pleases** because there is **no warfare**. They present all **smooth sailing**.” Manuscript Releases, volume 21, p. 309 (Letter 7a, 1886)*

Theology or Worship Style?

Some have **minimized** what happened at the Indiana camp meeting stating that Ellen White objected to the **counterfeit theology** but **not to the worship style**. Those who say this are **simply not reading** what Ellen White wrote.

Ellen White repeatedly **takes issue** with the **worship style**, particularly the music.

Stephen Haskell also wrote about the **hypnotic effect** the music had upon those **who were favorable** to this kind of music:

*“There is a **great power** that goes with the movement that is on foot there. It would almost bring anybody within its scope, if they are at all conscientious, and sit and listen with the least degree of favor, **because of the music** that is brought to play in the ceremony.” Stephen Haskell, Letter to Ellen G. White, September 25, 1900*

It is notable that Haskell's letter to Ellen White was written **only two days after** the camp meeting ended so the recollection of what transpired was still **fresh in his mind**.

Ellen White's comments regarding the Indiana camp meeting are found in Selected Messages, volume 2, pp. Even a quick reading of these pages reveals several undeniable facts.

- Satan used this **style of music** to distract people from the present Truth in order to **neutralize** the power and influence of the **third angel's message**.
- The Holy Spirit **never manifests himself** in this style of worship
- This style of worship is **not needed to convert souls** to the Truth
- This style of worship will be **seen once more** in our camp meetings just before the **close of probation**
- We **should not encourage** this style of worship
- Ellen White's criticism had to do with the **style of music** that was used and also the way in which the **musical instruments** were employed

Ellen G. White Quotes

Here are some excerpts:

*"The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me **would take place just before the close of probation**. . .*

*. . . Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be **shouting, with drums, music, and dancing**. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is **called the moving of the Holy Spirit**."*

*"The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such **methods**, in such a **bedlam of noise**."*

*. . . This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of **none effect** the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying **truth for this time**."*

*. . . Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to **use musical instruments** to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into **our camp meetings**."*

*. . . The **truth for this time** needs nothing of this kind in its work of **converting souls**. A **bedlam of noise** shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing."*

*. . . The powers of satanic agencies **blend with the din and noise**, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working."*

*“I will not go into all the painful history; it is too much. But last January the Lord showed me that **erroneous theories and methods** would be brought into our camp meetings, and that the **history of the past would be repeated**. . .*

*. . . I felt greatly distressed. I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations **demons in the form of men** are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make **the truth disgusting** to sensible people; that the enemy was trying to arrange matters so that the camp meetings, which have been the means of bringing **the truth of the third angel's message** before multitudes, should **lose their force and influence**. . .*

*. . . The **third angel's message** is to be given in **straight lines**. It is to be kept free from every thread of the **cheap, miserable inventions of men's theories**, prepared by the father of lies, and disguised as was the brilliant serpent used by Satan as a medium of deceiving our first parents. Thus Satan tries to put his stamp upon the work God would have stand forth in purity.*

*. . . The **Holy Spirit has nothing to do with such a confusion of noise and multitude of sounds** as passed before me last January. Satan works amid the din and confusion of such music, which, **properly conducted**, would be a praise and glory to God. He makes its effect like the poison sting of the serpent. . .*

*. . . Those things which have been in the past **will be in the future**. Satan will make **music a snare by the way in which it is conducted**. God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed.*

*. . . Clear and definite instruction has been given in order that all may understand. But the **itching desire to originate something new** results in strange doctrines, and largely destroys the influence of those who would be a power for good if they held firm the beginning of their confidence in the truth the Lord had given them.”*

It will be noticed that sister White repeatedly emphasizes the **importance of present** truth and the three angels' message for this time. The music in our worship services must **communicate** the **unique message** and **mission** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We cannot **simply sing the repetitive and insipid praise songs** that have been composed by evangelical and Pentecostal composers because they are **totally oblivious** to what Jesus is presently doing in the **most holy place** of the heavenly sanctuary. They are worshiping in the holy place while Jesus is in the most holy place.

Letter 132, 1900 Ellen White wrote:

*“Last January [nine months before the camp meeting was held] the Lord showed me that erroneous **theories and methods** would be brought into our camp meetings and that the history of the past would be repeated.”*

Hymns for the Occasion

The heavenly beings don't sing just to sing. Each hymn that they sing has a central theme which is based on the historical event that is being celebrated at the moment. So to speak, the historical event is the sermon of the worship service and the music complements the historical event.

In Revelation 4 before Jesus arrived in heaven at the ascension the focus of heaven was upon God the Father who was sitting on His throne. In harmony with the occasion, the music the twenty-four elders sang on this occasion centered on God the Father as the Creator:

*"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You **created** all things, and by Your will they exist and were **created**." (Revelation 4:11)*

When Jesus died on the cross, the worship music of the heavenly throng centered on the victory of Jesus over Satan:

*"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven: "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the **accuser of our brethren**, who accused them before our God day and night, **has been cast down**.¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For **the devil has come down to you**, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."
(Revelation 12:10-12)*

When Jesus arrived in heaven at His ascension the theme of the choral music shifted from God the Father as the Creator to Jesus the Redeemer. The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders and the angelic host sang a new song for the occasion:

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because **you were slain**, and **with your blood you purchased** men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.¹² In a loud voice they sang: "**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"
(Revelation 5:9-12, NIV)*

When Jesus finally takes over the kingdoms of this world at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the central theme song of the heavenly beings will focus on this great event:

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:¹⁷ "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned.¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth." (Revelation 11:15-18)

When God's people **finally gain the victory** over the beast and his image this will be the central topic of their song:

"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested." (Revelation 15:3, 4)

When God finally **judges the harlot** who has shed the blood of His people, the song of the heavenly choirs will reflect this event:

*"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!² For true and righteous are His judgments, **because He has judged the great harlot** who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." (Revelation 19:1, 2) *Emphasis supplied**

Finally, when the redeemed are in the **new heaven and the new earth** their song will reflect that event as well:

"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

The point is that our Seventh-day Adventist worship experience **today must reflect our unique message and mission**. The present truth message for today is that Jesus is in the **most holy place** and He is about to begin the judgment of the living. Should not our worship experience **reflect this fact**? Should not our **theology** determine our **doxology**? Should not present truth dictate what we sing in the worship service?

If we worship **like the Pentecostals and evangelicals**, what reason do we have **to exist**? How can we say that our worship service is **Adventist** when we **rarely sing or preach** about what Jesus is doing presently in the heavenly sanctuary and what we should do in parallel fashion on earth?

*“No words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When human beings sing with the Spirit and the understanding, **heavenly musicians** take up the strain, and **join in the song** of thanksgiving. He who has bestowed upon us all the gifts that enable us to be workers together with God, expects His servants to **cultivate their voices**, so that they can speak and sing in a way that all can understand. It is **not loud singing** that is needed, but **clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance**. Let all take time to cultivate the voice, so that God's praise can be sung in **clear, soft** tones, not with **harshness** and **shrillness** that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, pp. 143, 144. (1909)*

*“In some of our churches I have heard **solos** that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house. The **long-drawn-out notes** and the peculiar sounds common in **operatic singing** are not pleasing to the angels. They delight to hear the **simple songs** of praise sung in a **natural tone**. The songs in which every word is uttered **clearly**, in a **musical tone**, are the songs that they join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung **from the heart** with the **spirit** and the **understanding**.” Evangelism, p. 510*

*“Great improvement can be made in singing. Some think that the **louder** they sing the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the **birds**--subdued and melodious.” Evangelism, p. 510*

*“They [the youth] have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows **what organs to excite** to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that **Christ is not desired**. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting.” (Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, p. 497)*

*“The religious service of the Roman Church is a most **impressive ceremonial**. Its **gorgeous display** and solemn rites **fascinate the senses** of the people and **silence the voice of reason and of conscience**. The **eye** is charmed. Magnificent churches, imposing processions, golden altars, jeweled shrines, choice paintings, and exquisite sculpture **appeal to the love of beauty**. The **ear also is captivated**. The **music is unsurpassed**. The rich notes of the deep-toned organ, blending with the melody of many voices as it swells through the lofty domes and pillared aisles of her grand cathedrals, cannot fail to **impress the mind with awe and reverence**. This **outward splendor, pomp, and ceremony**, that only mocks the longings of the sin-sick soul, is an evidence of inward corruption. The religion of Christ needs **not such attractions to recommend it**.”*

Satan does not want people to hear the solemn, life and death message for today, therefore he

substitutes all sorts of gimmicks which **excite the emotions, the feelings and the senses**. But these are only **temporary fixes to a mortal spiritual illness**. They may **excite, alleviate, and calm for a season** but they offer no real and permanent remedy for the sickness called sin. They are like taking a **Tylenol** to cure **cancer**. Tylenol may make the person **feel better for a while**, but it will not cure the cancer.

Additional study materials by Pastor Stephen Bohr are available at



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