

"Amid the confusing cries, 'Lo, here is Christ! Lo there is Christ!' will be borne a special testimony, a special message of truth appropriate for this time..."
(*Ellen G. White Comments*, Vol. 7, p. 984)

The Heart of the 1888 Message **Ten Unique, Essential Ideas**

1. Christ's sacrifice is not merely provisional but it is effective for the whole world.

He finished the work the Father gave Him to do. His mission was successful. The only reason anyone can be lost at last is that he has chosen to resist the saving grace of God. Salvation is by faith; condemnation is only by personal unbelief (or anti-faith).

2. Thus Christ's sacrifice has literally saved the world from premature destruction and has legally justified the entire human race.

When the sinner hears and believes this pure gospel, he *experiences* justification *by faith*. By their unbelief, the lost deliberately negate the justification Christ has already effected for them and has given them.

3. Thus, true justification by faith is always a change of heart.

It is, therefore, much more than a legal declaration of acquittal; it makes the believer to become obedient to all the commandments of God.

4. This marvelous work is accomplished through the ministry of the new covenant.

The Lord actually writes His law *in the heart* of the believer. Under the new covenant, the Ten Commandments become ten promises of complete victory over sin. This new motivation transcends the egocentric one of fear of being lost or of hope of reward in being saved. Abraham's faith enabled him to live under the new covenant, while multitudes today live under the old covenant because self-centered concern is their motivation. The old covenant was the promise of the people to be faithful; under the new covenant salvation comes by believing God's promise to enable us to obey, *not by our making promises* to Him which by their very nature are vain.

5. God's love is active, not passive.

As Good Shepherd, Christ continually seeks His lost sheep. Salvation does not depend on the lost sheep seeking the Shepherd, or the lost coin its owner, but on our believing that He is seeking us. Such faith motivates us to yield our all to Him.

6. It is difficult to be lost and it is easy to be saved if one understands and believes how good the gospel Good News is.

A constant resisting of His grace is laborious sin. Since Christ has already paid the penalty for every one's sin, the only reason anyone can be condemned at last is continued, persistent unbelief, which is a refusal to appreciate the redemption accomplished by Christ on His cross. The true gospel unveils this unbelief and leads to an effective repentance that prepares the believer for the close of probation.

7. In seeking lost mankind, Christ came all the way to where we are, taking upon Himself and assuming the fallen, sinful nature of man after the Fall.

This He did that He might save the human race. He must be tempted in all points like as we are yet demonstrate perfect righteousness "in the likeness of [our] sinful flesh." "The message of Christ's righteousness" is rooted in this unique view of the nearness of Christ. The contrary teaching that Christ took the sinless nature of Adam before the fall is a legacy of Roman Catholicism, the insignia of the doctrine which keeps Him "afar off" and "not nigh at hand."

8. Our Savior "condemned sin in the flesh" of fallen mankind.

This means that He has outlawed sin, conquered it forever. In the light of the cross, the devil cannot force anyone to sin. To be truly "human" is to be Christ-like in character, for He was and is truly human as well as truly divine.

9. The only element God's people need in order to prepare for Christ's return is genuine faith which works by love.

Righteousness is by *faith*; it is impossible to have faith and not demonstrate righteousness in the life, because true faith *works* by love. Moral and spiritual failures are the fruit of perpetuating Israel's ancient sin of unbelief today through the confusion of a false righteousness by faith.

10. Righteousness by faith since 1844 has become "the third angel's message in verity."

Thus it is greater light than what the Reformers could see and what the popular churches can understand today. It is a message of much more abounding grace consistent with the unique understanding of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. It is a work contingent on the full cleansing of the hearts of God's people on earth, which the High Priest is accomplishing for all who let Him do so.

—Condensed from 1888 RE-EXAMINED , Preface