



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**  
VOLUME 30, NUMBER 4, JULY/AUGUST 2023

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Volume 30, Number 4

He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all

**WE BELIEVE:** The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is

unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

**PHOTO CREDITS**

Helen Marttinen, all cover pages  
and page 3 and 4 (Canada)

The Reformation Messenger is published bimonthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

- E-mail: [ismessenger@yahoo.com](mailto:ismessenger@yahoo.com)
- Internet: [www.ismessenger.org](http://www.ismessenger.org)
- Mail: RR #3, 7899 15 Side Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X7, Canada

**COST:**

Black & White x \$22.00 per year. Colour x \$25.00 per year.  
(Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

Purchase all 29 years of the Messenger for \$200.00 (shipping included in price). Bound in books by year.

Catalogue is available upon request for all articles for 29 years.



## Beauty of Holiness

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” Psalm 29:2. “O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth.” Psalm 96:9

**What does beauty of holiness mean?** Is holiness beautiful? True holiness *is* beautiful in God’s eyes. There is a false holiness, which the scribes and Pharisees exhibited in the days of Jesus. It is a holiness that is self-righteousness (“filthy rags,” Isaiah 64:6). It is not beautiful holiness. The Lord wants His children to serve Him, and to show forth His love, in the beauty of holiness. True worship is a matter of beauty as well as holiness. The temple services in Ancient Israel, as well as the attire of the priests was both beautiful and impressive, however outward beauty is not what is meant here. It is a spirit of quiet reverence, inward devotion and outward piety, devout earnestness and joyous gratitude. Heaven and earth can never have any greater beauty than the beauty of holiness.

Beyond the clothing of the body, is the clothing of the soul. No external comeliness can compare with the beauty of a holy character.

“The afflicted, suffering ones who sought Christ as their helper, were charmed with the divine perfection, the beauty of holiness, that shone forth in His character. But the Pharisees could see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. His simple attire, and humble life, devoid of outward show, rendered Him to them as a root out of dry ground.” –*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1887

If something is beautiful, it is desirable and accepted. To be beautiful before God, we must clothe ourselves with the holiness and beauty of Jesus Christ—Christ our Righteousness.

The beauty of holiness, is something desirable that is set apart. This is what God wants for His children—a beautiful character that is set apart from the world.

Holiness is making sure that every decision we make is in accordance with God’s will and thus, the Holy Spirit will continue to be our guide.

Every moment of our lives must be lived with holiness to the Lord.

**How do you worship in beauty of holiness?** To worship God in the beauty of holiness means that we must humble ourselves before Him and approach Him as well as serve Him with the fear of reverence and awe.

“The confiding love and unselfish devotion manifested in the life and character of John present lessons of untold value to the Christian church. John did not naturally possess the loveliness of character that his later experience revealed. By nature he had serious defects. He was not only proud, self-assertive, and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injury. He and his brother were called ‘sons of thunder.’ Evil temper, the desire for revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. But beneath all this the divine Teacher discerned the ardent, sincere, loving heart. Jesus rebuked this self-seeking, disappointed his ambitions, tested his faith. But He revealed to him that for which his

soul longed--the beauty of holiness, the transforming power of love." *-The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 539-540

"John could talk of the Father's love as no other of the disciples could. He revealed to his fellow men that which he felt in his own soul, representing in his character the attributes of God. The glory of the Lord was expressed in his face. The beauty of holiness which had transformed him shone with a Christlike radiance from his countenance. In adoration and love he beheld the Saviour until likeness to Christ and fellowship with Him became his one desire, and in his character was reflected the character of his Master." *-Ibid.*, p. 545

***The following quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy will show you how to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.***

"The beauty of holiness is revealed as Christians draw near together, blending in Christlike love." *-The Upward Look*, p. 233

"We should all learn of Christ what it means to be a Christian. Let us learn of Him how to combine firmness, justice, purity, and integrity with unselfish courtesy and kindly sympathy. Thus the character becomes lovable and attractive. The beauty of holiness will disarm scoffers." *-That I May Know Him*, p. 218

"You should receive the righteousness of Christ, the sanctification of the Spirit of God, the beauty of holiness, that you may reveal to those around you the Light of life." *-Child Guidance*, p. 95

"The social meetings and all other religious exercises should be so planned and managed that they will be not only profitable, but so pleasant as to be positively attractive. Praying together will bind hearts to God in bonds that will endure; confessing Christ openly and bravely, exhibiting in our characters His meekness, humility, and love, will charm others with the beauty of holiness." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 174

"We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God's children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things." *-Prayer*, p. 285

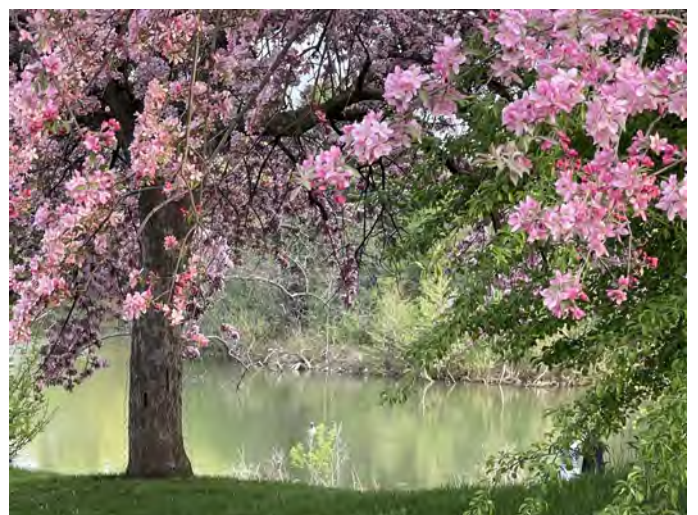
"Heavenly intelligences are waiting to co-operate with human instrumentalities, that they may reveal to the world what human beings may become and what, through their influence, they may accomplish for the saving of souls that are ready to perish. He who is truly converted will be so filled with the love of God that he will long to impart to others the joy that he himself possesses.

The Lord desires His church to show forth to the world the beauty of holiness. She is to demonstrate the power of Christian religion. Heaven is to be reflected in the character of the Christian. The song of gratitude and praise is to be heard by those in darkness. For the good tidings of the gospel, for its promises and assurances, we are to express our gratitude by seeking to do others good. The doing of this work will bring rays of heavenly righteousness to wearied, perplexed, suffering souls. It is as a fountain opened for the wayworn, thirsty traveler. At every work of mercy, every work of love, angels of God are present." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 30-31

"In consideration of the shortness of time, we as a people should watch and pray, and in no case allow ourselves to be diverted from the solemn work of preparation for the great event before us. Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger, and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value. Time is granted them, not to be employed in studying their own ease and becoming dwellers on the earth, but to be used in the work of overcoming every defect in their own characters, and in helping others to see the beauty of holiness by their example and personal effort. God has a people upon the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast fulfilling prophecy, and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear." *-The Review and Herald*, August 16, 1887

"The Divine Being is to be worshiped in the beauty of holiness; for He is excellent in majesty and power." *-Notebook Leaflets*, vol. 1, p. 118

***Wendy Eaton***





# Scaffolding

Have you ever been on a construction site where a house is being built? What do you see?

Firstly, you see scaffolding all around the building from the ground up to the top. The scaffolding goes up with the building first but in the end it is not needed. Then you see the framework. There are supports which hold up the floor and walls. Then piles of material lying all around the building site. You also see machines, such as cement mixers and digging machines. Finally you see tools—all kinds of them.

You also see a group of men with various skills. There are steel-workers, bricklayers, electricians, carpenters, plumbers, and so on. All this is needed to erect a building.

The building site does not look very pretty during the building process. As the work nears the end, slowly the materials are being used and removed from their places. When the work is finally finished the scaffolding is taken down and the surplus materials and tools are removed. The skilled builders also go away. What remains? A beautiful building. All the other things were temporary. Only the building itself is permanent.

In a spiritual sense, we are building a house. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5. We each as lively stones are built up a spiritual house. As a stone is cemented to a stone and timber nailed to timber, so we are making a spiritual house all together. There are not separate units, but one house, one spiritual temple for our

God.

Some are as lively stones cemented together with love so firmly that they cannot be separated. Others are as scaffolding. They are touching the building but are not part of the structure. Although they are helping in the building for awhile they will be removed in the end. With their tithes and offerings, they helped the building work, but they are not part of it because they were unconverted.

This world is a great construction site. After building a spiritual temple for God, when the scaffolding is not needed anymore, God removes them.

In the time of Noah and Ancient Israel everything seemed so confusing and out of order as on a construction site with scaffolding, but when the building of God was complete, many that helped were not useful any more and were removed.

Some worldly people, nations, and governments may also be helping in the cause of God, such as with financial assistance, equipment or supplies. They are the scaffolding. They are helping the building but are not part of it.

God called Nebuchadnezzar His servant (Jeremiah 27:6). Also, Cyrus, King of Persia He called him His shepherd (Isaiah 44:28). Persecuting powers cleanse the church of fearful cowards, those who are built of cheap building materials. The powers of the world cause shaking among God's people. So they all work for the faithful remnant.

Our unbelieving relatives and neighbours are testing our faith, creating trials and tests to try our faithfulness and patience. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Romans 5:3

In the church, many are helping to preach the gospel to the world, yet in the end they are removed from the building site.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:19-22. All the building fitly framed together.

The only thing in us that fits into the building of God is our characters. Our characters only inherit eternal life. God has given us a body, and Paul calls it an earthly house. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

In this earthly house we grow and are being built. We are waiting for the time when we are clothed within the house that is from heaven. This earthly house in this human flesh is full of passion, desires, lusts, inappropriate appetites. We must live and build a character that is perfect.

So often this house is burdened with sickness, weakness, and deformity. Yet God has chosen this to be our place for a Christlike character.

How was the building work of Paul going on? "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the

heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

This was all part of building a perfect character in him. These trials, persecutions, perils, hunger, and thirst, all were part of God's workmen, helping Paul in his building work.

Paul did become impatient and wanted his life to be a little easier. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

He thought that at least the thorn in his flesh should be pulled out, but God said, "no". The thorn must remain even though it was troublesome for him. What was the purpose of this thorn? "Lest I should be exalted." v 7. There was given him a thorn in the flesh by God. Paul said that it had a purpose.

Children often complain when they have to wear braces in their mouths for a few years, but they are necessary even though they do hurt at times and are inconvenient. But the end result is beautiful teeth.

A cast on a leg is cumbersome but it helps to heal a broken bone.



In the hospital patients sometimes have to endure painful procedures or take bitter tasting medications.

They have to be given injections and go through surgery. They all hurt, but they are necessary for healing.

Hosea wrote: "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." Hosea 6:1-2

We read here that first, the Lord has to smite us. Then

He will bind us and revive us so that finally we shall rise and live, just as a doctor has to operate, then bind the wound and then we shall continue to live.

This is a picture of the work of reformation. First, the church has to go through severe trials and persecutions, then a healing message is sent to it and the church is revived again and lives.

Many tools are on the building site for us to use in the building work.

Firstly, there is fasting and prayer. Satan may have controlled people but, "If the saints of God with deep humility fast and pray, their prayers will prevail. Jesus will commission holy angels to resist Satan, and he will be driven back and his power broken from off the afflicted ones. Mark 9:29: 'And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.'" *—Testimonies for*



*the Church*, vol. 1, p. 344

"Will you, through fasting and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character?" *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 400

Secondly, there is unity with others. "Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

Then there is missionary work. "That church or those persons who shut themselves away from bearing burdens for others, who shut themselves up to themselves, will soon suffer spiritual feebleness. It is labor that keeps the strong man strong. And spiritual labor, toil, and burden bearing, is what will give strength to the church of Christ." *—Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 188. "There are many . . . who would save their souls by thus working." *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 390

"So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn

from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:7-9

We are not able to build alone. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Psalm 127:1

Jesus is our master builder. Without Him our building is a failure. Jesus Christ will actually become part of the building. He Is the true Foundation and the Cornerstone. He makes our building perfect and valuable. So our spiritual house that we are, as a church building, must have Christ in it.

We may not have much earthly goods, not many members or institutions, but if Christ is in our building this is all we need. When we are rooted and grounded in Christ, when we have become one with Him—one building, then all those who also unite with Christ become one in love and fellowship.

For 6000 years Christ has been building His church. Men, women and children have been lively stones and added to it. Now in the last days, the 144,000 will form the highest pinnacle of this spiritual temple. The golden pinnacle that shines in the evening rays of the setting sun.

Do not look at your life as confusing or to the events surrounding us. It is all in control of the Master Builder. He is working and the building will soon be finished, whether we are a part of it or not.

May the Lord help that we will not only be a scaffolding, but cemented into the building with Christ for eternity.

Amen

*Sermon by Timo Martin*





**“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word.” Psalm 119:9**

I am greatly pained. My nerves are numb. My heart bleeds uncontrollably. It aches a lot, seeing what my non-Christian peers get into. It is an age of the pursuit of fame and identity but many end up losing interest in life if such is not accomplished. Unlike in the past, in this generation there is an incremental rise in the death toll among youth. I wonder who will be our future leaders, parents, doctors, or even the backbone of our national economy? How about life coaches, motivators and future preachers?

The future is endangered but it is never too late, however much it is besieged. What kind of a future will we have?

In all walks of life there is the dream for betterment of one’s self and achievements in life at a tender age, that is, at the youthful stage. This is also the blooming stage for individuals. Parents, nations, and other faculties invest much into the youth.

This tells much in terms of the importance that they will be to the next generation. In cases where the youth are besieged, the future is also endangered.

The UN definition of youth is a transitional period between childhood to adulthood that moves from the dependence stage into an independence stage and it ranges between 15–24 years of age.

In my own words I would say it is a stage of searching for one’s identity. A youth is a young person blossoming into adulthood with vigorous and incredible thoughts, strength, and ambitions.

The definition of the word “youth” perhaps is not constant depending on demographical, financial, economic and sociocultural settings. This is a very fragile stage; it requires keen observation, care, closeness, and attention. It is at this time that an individual can lose focus in life, especially when it comes to the development of good characters and habits. Often it happens out of curiosity or the influence of worldly associates. As the saying goes, curiosity killed the cat. Many good behaviours and ambitions are killed by neglect and venturing onto Satan’s enchanted ground.

I do not mean that interaction is to be avoided, but be as wise as serpents. Take caution on who you associate with. Many have been jailed or arrested because they were found in association with criminals, drug dealers or even thieves, without their knowledge.

The book of Proverbs talks about it being better to eat vegetables in a peaceful but humble home than to have honey and mouth-watering meals in a kingly house with no peace. This means that we are responsible for whatever happens to us and whichever place we find ourselves in.

A youth is someone who deserves reproof and direction in whatever course of action they take. It is at this same



stage that the government presumes a level of maturity at this age, and the youth are given certain legal rights. Once in acquisition of these legal rights, these individuals feel like they have dominion over the world. It is at this same stage that the current education system in various countries sends these persons away from home. It is at this point that some sense of freedom gets into them, not knowing that whatever action they take, they will be responsible for, both in this life and the life to come.

### **Brain Development of the Youth**

A youth's brain is much different compared to that of an adult or a young child. We can say it is in the middle between a child and an adult.

At this transitional stage several brain parts in association with specific functions undergo development or rather, we would say, are moulded. In this stage, young people get interested in various excitements.

A significant portion of brain growth and development occurs at this stage, for the brain is not fully developed until the age of 25 years. The brain does not mature homogeneously and linearly but instead in accordance with cognitive development. This development affects the youth's way of thinking and, in like manner, behaviour is also intensely affected. It mainly depends on age, experience, and the hormonal changes that occur in adolescence.

The prefrontal cortex is the decision-making part of the brain; however, at the youth stage it is not fully developed. This part of the brain also controls the ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses. This continues into early adulthood.

When viewing youth closely, at times they may act very mature and other times they seem to behave or think illogically, impulsively or emotionally at times. This is mainly because the prefrontal cortex is still undergoing development and the youth's mind relies on the amygdala to make decisions and solve problems. The amygdala is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression, and instinctive behaviours.

A young mind is believed to be strong, and basically this is when one can achieve and pursue most dreams in life.

### **Youth as an Oasis in the Sinful World**

As a growing Christian teenager you are like an oasis in the desert. Many look up to you; with or without your

knowledge you are a source of life and guidance to many. "It is not our privilege to claim special favors of the world" – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 286. But we are placed among men in the world to be their source of salvation. "The opinions and wisdom of men must not guide or govern us. They always lead away from the cross." – *Ibid.* We should always look up to God for guidance and counsel. We are placed as missionaries in various places and we are to spread the gospel as Christ instructed.

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." John 17:15. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servnt whom I have chosen." Isaiah 43:10. "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from Me." Ezekiel 33:7

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:18–20

"Do not give them the false impression that the religion of Christ is a religion of gloom, and that in coming to the Saviour they must give up all that makes life joyful." – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 517

As Youth we are to be Bible students. "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. As Daniel became an oasis in his time, and through him many received the opportunity to know the true God, the Living Lord, we are in like manner to purpose to save many souls in our time that are perishing in the desert of sin, in thirsting to know the word of GOD.

"Let all be educated to search the Scriptures, to be constantly looking unto Jesus, and not to human agents, to be their guide. The Word of God is to be the man of our counsel. That Word is infinite. Obeyed, it will guide us into safe and sure paths. But the Word diluted with human devices and imaginings is not a safe guide." – *The Upward Look*, p. 371

To be continued. . . .

*Sherfield Bright  
Kenya*

**Photo taken at Norman College in June 2023**



## “The End of All Flesh is Come”

Is it true that the end is nearly here? Jesus said that there is an open door and no man can shut it, and once He shuts it, no one can open it (Revelation 3:8).

There are many galaxies in the universe and our earth may seem insignificant. However, the Creator has taken a special interest in our planet and has stated, “The end of all flesh is come before Me.” Genesis 6:13

“The great controversy is nearing its end. Probation’s hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. The judgments of God are in the land. “The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 102

To declare the “end” of a situation or activity, is a significant decision. Throughout history this decision has brought many tears to millions and joy to others.

I remember my classmate told me how he divorced his wife: “I declare the end of my love to you as my wife” was his sentence. No effort could stop this since it came from his heart. He made a firm decision. It surprised many but it brought tears to different family members.

We need to be careful. The world has never been wholly destroyed since the flood. In the days of Noah “God said unto Noah, *The end of all flesh is come before Me*; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Genesis 6:13

“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was cor-

rupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And so, the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.” Genesis 6:5, 7, 11–12, 17

According to the dictionary, the word “end” means finish, conclude, close, complete, terminate, wind up, crown. These are strong words to refer to humanity. Even the animals and plants, will see their final end. In Noah’s time, “one hundred and twenty years of probation was granted to the inhabitants of the world, and Noah was to live through that generation.” –*The Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895. “The world was in its infancy; yet iniquity had become so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it; and He said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.’” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 92

All that was corrupt drowned in the flood, but this was not the end of mankind. Noah had a close relationship with the Lord and he and his family were saved. They knew they were only pilgrims on earth (Hebrews 11:13).

Today we are also given a warning. “A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed. The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.” –*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 120–121

“We should be awake to discern the signs of the times,

and to give warning to the people." –*The Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1889

There is much more to the story of Noah. It is not just a story of a man who built an ark to save his family and all the animals from the flood. We can learn lessons from Noah that will help us to run the race of life successfully.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Hebrews 11:7

"While Noah was giving his warning message to the world, his works testified of his sincerity. . . . He gave the world an example of believing just what God says. All that he possessed, he invested in the ark. As he began to construct that immense boat on dry ground, multitudes came from every direction to see the strange sight and to hear the earnest, fervent words of the singular preacher. Every blow struck upon the ark was a witness to the people." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 95

Noah had a close relationship with God. His faith was very strong and he was obedient. He listened and obeyed. Many people likely told him over and over again that he was foolish to be building such a huge boat. Noah had an unshakeable faith in order to endure all the harsh scoffing that he faced.

#### ***Here is what we can learn from Noah:***

- He warned the world that the end of the world was coming. Today it is our duty to warn the world of the second coming of Jesus, which will put an end to this world.
- He built an ark and was saved with his family members by entering into the ark. We are also called to enter the ark of safety (Jesus Christ and His church) and warn our fellow men to enter also—our families, neighbours and friends. We have to point them to the true church, to Christ, the Lamb of God. We are to be a channel by which others are blessed and saved.
- He lived in a wicked time and experienced the end of the world. We are also living in very wicked times. We will soon, very soon experience the end of the world.
- He had walked with God by faith. Each step of our life is to be done also by walking with God by faith.
- He was blameless and righteous. This is expected of us today if we wish to escape and find grace as did Noah.
- He believed the prophecy, trusting the unseen. We need to believe prophecy trusting the unseen.
- He was obedient throughout the process. He submitted to God's will before, during, and after the building. We must also obey also at all times. We need

to persevere and not abandon the work until its completion.

- He was rewarded with righteousness by God because of his faith. We too will be rewarded if faithful.

"God in His providence set forth Noah as a representative of what true faith would do. It was because he had faith in God, because he was a man of prayer, that he was a man of power." –*The Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895

"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:9. It is important to consider that the words "just" and "perfect" do not mean "sinless." Noah was a man. He was not an angel or any other type of divine being. He was born with a sinful human nature just like you and me. He struggled with sin and made mistakes in his life, but "he walked with God." Noah had a close relationship with God. He talked to God and God talked to him.

What about you? Are you ready to be firm like Noah within your family and in your neighbourhood? Or is the corruption around you pressing you so much that you yield? "But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. He was surrounded by every species of wickedness and moral corruption; but amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. While the world around him were disregarding God, and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to violence and crimes of every kind, the faithful preacher of righteousness declared to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned them to repent and believe, and find refuge in the ark." –*Reflecting Christ*, p. 322

The end of this earth is nearer than ever before. We are standing before the gates of our eternal home: the heavenly Canaan. We are to, "build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 58:12

God will call a people at the end of time to repair the broken principles. "The end is near, probation is closing." –*Messages to Young People*, 89–90. "The terrible reports we hear of murders and robberies, of railway accidents and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord's second coming." –*Last Day Events* p. 23

#### **Marriage**

One of the institutions corrupted in the days of Noah and is very corrupt today is the institution of marriage. Vile practices are legalized; there are laws in many developed

countries allowing people of the same sex to marry. (Romans 1:24–28, 32)

These laws change what God established from the beginning of creation in regard to marriage; without realizing it, nations are returning to the same situation as was dominant before the great flood of Noah's day.

Countries which in past decades were opposed to divorce now approve it, and it is sad to see that there are many religious groups that support it today. Globally, the statistics show that a couple breaks up every three minutes, and most marriage breakups occur within the first six years after the wedding. It is estimated that 60 percent of divorces involve children of that age or younger. This is very sad.

The true church of God does not espouse these errors.

### **Today's Eating and Drinking**

There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking, but it is excessive pleasure—eating and drinking, that is condemned. Today, people are focused only on eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage as they were in the days of Noah.

As God's people, we must lift up the principles of health reform, for we live in a time of great intemperance.

It is taking its toll on millions of lives each day and we must sound the alarm, as did Noah, for intemperance made it impossible for the antediluvians to understand the message that God gave to Noah. "Those who eat and work intemperately and irrationally, talk and act irrationally. It is not necessary to drink alcoholic liquors in order to be intemperate. The sin of intemperate eating—eating too frequently, too much, and of rich, unwholesome food—destroys the healthy action of the digestive organs, affects the brain, and perverts the judgment, preventing rational, calm, healthy thinking and acting." —*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 155

"Gluttony and intemperance lie at the foundation of the great moral depravity in our world. Satan is aware of this and he is constantly tempting men and women to indulge the taste at the expense of health and even life itself. Eating, drinking, and dressing are made the aim of life with the world. Just such a state of things existed before the flood. And this state of dissipation is one of the marked evidences of the soon close of this earth's history." —*Letter 34*, 1875

### **Violence and Moral Corruption Today**

"And God said unto Noah, *The end of all flesh is come before Me*; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with

violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Genesis 6:13, 11–12. In the news around the world today you see a lot of corruption. Much of the judgments of God will come upon the earth because of the increasing corruption. We are today warned that "very soon the wickedness of the world will have reached its limit and, as in the days of Noah, God will pour out His judgments." —*Last Day Events*, p. 23

"In the days of Noah the overwhelming majority was opposed to the truth, and enamored with a tissue of falsehoods. The land was filled with violence. War, crime, murder, was the order of the day. Just so will it be before Christ's second coming." —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1090

On October 3, 2002, the World Health Organization released the first comprehensive report on violence, which is considered a worldwide public health issue. Each year, more than 1.6 million people worldwide die violently. Public health experts say these statistics are only the tip of the iceberg, since most of the violent acts are committed behind closed doors and go unrecorded. The report says that deaths and disabilities caused by violence make it one of the main public health problems of our time.

Violence is a major cause of death for people aged 15–44 and is responsible for 14 percent of deaths among males and 7 percent among females. On any given day, 1,424 people are killed in acts of homicide—almost one person every minute. Roughly one person commits suicide every 40 seconds. About 35 people die every hour as a direct result of armed conflict. It is estimated that in the twentieth century, 191 million people died as a result of direct or indirect conflict, and well over half of them were civilians.

"The terrible reports we hear of murders and robberies, of railway accidents and deeds of violence, tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord's second coming." —*Last Day Events*, p. 23

Christ said that as it was in the days of Noah, when the earth was filled with violence and corrupted by crime, so it will be when the Son of man is revealed.

### **The Religious World**

The religious world, also, is to be terribly shaken, for the end of all things is at hand. We see terrible changes all around us and religious bodies are not prepared. Many things are accepted by many churches today which is contrary to godly principles: polygamy, homosexuality, and other immoralities. Dress and fashion is not seen as an offense to God. Eating and drinking whatever one chooses is encouraged by religious leaders, alcohol, tobacco, flesh

meats, stimulants and narcotic foods, tea, coffee, chocolate and other harmful foods show that not all churches are following godly principles. Only one church is rebuking sin and defending the broken law and is holding up the standard of truth today and preparing the people to stand before the terrible day of Jehovah ahead.

“Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.”—*Last Day Events* p. 41

### Obedience is a Choice

Obedience is a choice. Noah chose to build the ark. God did not force him. His faith and obedience was proof that he loved God. Noah never questioned God, but simply obeyed and did exactly as God directed.

“The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, ‘All things continue as they were from the beginning.’ When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is carried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 635

Today we can see much injustice, pain, evil, and suffering. We want to be with Jesus one day, to be able to embrace our loved ones that death has taken from us. We want to enter through the gates of New Jerusalem. Yes, the time has come; the great deceptions that seduce the world, the bloody wars and violence that continue, the financial and social crises that affect our society, the hunger and disease that so many are suffering from, and the many earthquakes shaking many parts of the world with increasing intensity are God’s clock telling us that the time has come for deliverance when God will wipe away our tears.

We see God’s judgments on both land and sea. We are not granted a second probation. Today, there is still a little time left to surrender all to Jesus. An hour, day, or year that is past will never return. While we have life, there is still opportunity to seek God while He can be found. Seek Him today, my dear brother and sister. Jesus intercedes for you. He is standing at your heart’s door. Open it, for He grants full salvation. Trust Him as your Saviour.

Will you be like the antediluvians? “They refused to listen to the words of Noah; they mocked at his message. Righteous men lived in that generation. Before the destruction of the antediluvian world, Enoch bore his testimony unflinchingly.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 2, 1898. “It is

sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ.”—*The Acts of Apostles*, p. 260

“By faith Noah. . . . condemned the world.” Hebrews 11:7.

Because of Noah’s faith and obedience to do exactly what God had asked of him, the rest of the world was condemned to die. They were condemned because of their unbelief. Noah stood



alone. He stood firm in his belief and in his conviction that God would do what He said He was going to do. The rest of the world drowned in the great flood.

Is this different from your duty today? To “condemn the rest of the world” does not mean to judge but to warn and rebuke, calling sin by its proper name. Tell the people their transgressions. If you do not give the warning, you are in danger of being lost. “Everything around him was in confusion. On all sides was sin and wickedness, disregard of God and His holy law; but he was to live among men, and not be a partaker of their wicked works, but to be an example of righteousness, and faith, and entire obedience to God. . . . He was a faithful preacher of righteousness, exemplifying to the world what a man’s life could be. . . . Nearly the whole world was against Noah.”—*Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895

Is your faith like Noah’s? I encourage you to stand firm in your faith in Christ today. Do not let the unbelief of the world around you shake your faith. Noah ran a good race and he and his family received God’s blessing. They lived. The waters receded and they were the only people left alive.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God?

Ask yourself, if you had lived in the time of Noah, would you have been as trusting and obedient to all that the Lord commanded, as Noah was?

May the Lord strengthen us to live in faith. “Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven.”—*Maranatha*, p. 240. Amen.

*Victor Shumbusho*  
*DR Congo*



# What Shall I Render Unto the Lord?

*“What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?” Psalm 116:12*

Have you ever given this Bible verse a thought? Do you pray this prayer as did King David? Or are your prayers mostly thanking God for His many blessings, and asking for more, with little thought of giving back to God? How often do we ask the Lord what we can do for Him, or give to Him in return for His many blessings? The word *render* means to provide a service, or to give help to someone or something. It can be physical help, or monetary help. Is there some service you are willing to render to the Lord? Do you ask the Lord daily, what do *You* want me to do today? It should be our daily prayer.

When things go wrong in some people’s lives, an immediate reaction for some who are not very close to the Lord is, “why did you allow this, Lord?” and then in mere frustration, they add, “What has the Lord ever done for me?” *Stop and think!!!* Have you ever felt that way? “What has the Lord ever done for me?” and thought, “It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?” Malachi 3:14. They believe there is nothing to be gained by serving the Lord and what little they had done for Him was from selfish motives. We *will* have difficulties and trials because of this corrupt and evil world we live in, but in the midst of the most trying circumstances, we should have the confidence of Job. In the midst of his suffering he said, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Job 1:21

Even with trials, there is always a blessing intended. Daily we need to recount the blessings that He has giv-

en us, whether in good times or when things seem to go wrong. We are to take the words of this song to heart, “Count your blessings—name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” Then ask the Lord what He would want you to do for Him.

David did just that in our opening verse. He was forsaken by men from whom he expected assistance, but he learned to appreciate the help and benefits that come from heaven. David wonders how he can best express and show appreciation and gratitude to God for all the benefits bestowed upon him. “The Christian should often review his past life and recall with gratitude the precious deliverances that God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, opening ways before him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint. He should recognize all of them as evidences of the watchcare of heavenly angels. In view of these innumerable blessings he should often ask, with subdued and grateful heart, ‘What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?’ Psalm 116:12.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 187. “Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” John 6:28. This should be our daily question, “What shall I render unto the Lord?”

Remember, “Jesus treats us far better than we deserve.” —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 179. Sometimes the Lord does something truly amazing for us, much more than we deserve. Are you so grateful that you are willing to give a thank offering? Or render some service, sacrificing your own pleasures and plans? Or do we just say “thank you” over and over again. It is one thing to say thank you, but quite another to show you are thankful.

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:10–12. “And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this.” Ezra 9:13

“I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isaiah 43:25. Once your sins are confessed, forsaken and forgiven, God treats you as though you had never sinned. How wonderful! Pause for a moment and contemplate on these thoughts about how the Lord has treated you better than you deserve. How different from the way we act. When someone has hurt us, some people seek vengeance. Others may forgive, but they may never forget. Thankfully we have a God who forgives *and* forgets. We need to copy His example. Divine forgiveness is not just a transaction that wipes away the record of sins. It completely eradicates sin from the life—this is possible, in Christ. God transforms a sinner into a saint. He says He will “cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Micah 7:19. And also, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25. What love! Who can fathom it?

Although salvation is a free gift, do you appreciate what the Giver has given to you? It is a very expensive gift, and do you wish to render something in return for His matchless gift that He has given you? It is a free will offering that you may give to show your love. He freely gave to you, what will you give freely in return for His love?

When you give your tithes, do you feel it as an obligation? Are you glad to give it, or do you think that you could have had multiple uses for that money for your own selfish purposes and thus give grudgingly?

When King Saul led the Israelites to war against the Amalekites, Samuel had told them to destroy all people

and all animals, however, “The people reserved for themselves the finest of the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden, excusing their sin on the ground that the cattle were reserved to be offered as sacrifices to the Lord. It was their purpose, however, to use these merely as a substitute, to save their own cattle.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 629. They took from others to give to the Lord, so they would not have to give of their own. This is not true rendering to the Lord in heart.

Do you have enough faith in God to provide? Are you thankful for His blessings and trust His providential care to give Him a second tithe? Or is that asking too much? Remember the widow who gave her final two mites to the sanctuary? “Jesus said of the poor widow, She ‘hath cast in more than they all.’ The rich had bestowed from their abundance, many of them to be seen and honored by men. Their large donations had deprived them of no comfort, or even luxury; they had required no sacrifice, and could not be compared in value with the widow’s mite.

“It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour’s commendation. . . .

“God’s blessing upon the widow’s mite has made it the source of great results. So with every gift bestowed and every act performed with a sincere desire for God’s glory. It is linked with the purposes of Omnipotence. Its results for good no man can measure.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 615–616

She deprived herself of food in order to give to the cause she loved. What have you deprived yourself of to give to the cause you love? Do you love the cause of God enough to deprive yourself of some of the pleasures of this life, your strength, your time, your money, and any of your talents? Yet, the Lord did not forsake the widow. She will be rich in heaven. And also, He will not forsake you either.

In the Old Testament there were a lot of sacrifices that were “expected” to be given. Has anything changed between the Old Testament times and the New Testament? Is God’s church less in need of financial support today? Are there less needy people who are seeking for salvation, for something better than the world has to offer? The only difference is that today, it is considered free will, while in the Old Testament times some sacrifices were expected. Remember that animals were a source of their wealth. To sacrifice an animal was equivalent to us giving a monetary donation.

When they gave their different offerings there was sometimes quite a ceremony involved, and each part of the ceremony had significance. The entire system was a means of restoring the relationship between God and man. The ceremonies in themselves had no merit, but they pointed to the Lamb of God, who took our penalty of sin on the cross.

Although we do not adhere to the Ceremonial Law any longer, we can learn from some of the offerings they gave. We do not give animal offerings today. Most commonly we give monetary offerings; however, instead of just our tithes and a small weekly offering, there are special times when we can thank the Lord and give a little extra. It will never do us harm to give to the Lord. We will never find ourselves in need. Our offerings show our love. Tithe is obligatory—it is a part of our baptismal vows. Our offerings show how much we love the Lord. They are for the same purpose as in Old Testament times for the purpose of restoring our relationship to God. What will you render to the Lord?

**Peace offering:** The peace offering in the Old Testament taught in type and shadow how to obtain peace. Peace offerings were voluntary offerings. They were sometimes given as a token of thanksgiving, or to confirm a vow or contract. “So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God.” 1 Chronicles 16:1

They were not always presented at the temple. After David sinned in numbering Israel, punishment was swift, and David longed for peace. “And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.” 1 Chronicles 21:26

The peace offering could also be given to consecrate a meal between two or more parties before God. They share a part of that meal together in fellowship of peace and a commitment to each others’ future prosperity, promising to be at peace.

After 20 years of separation from the time Jacob deceived his brother, he longed for peace. “And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept. Jacob entreated Esau to accept a peace-offering.” *–The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 120

In the time of King Hezekiah, he desired to have the Passover celebrated, not only for the nation of Judah, but he also invited the people in the Northern Kingdom. He hoped to bring peace, and thus offered peace offerings. “And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.” 2 Chronicles 30:22

The peace offering is also a thank offering. If the Lord has worked some miracles in your life or the lives of loved ones, perhaps you should consider a thanksgiving offering to the Lord. Are you thankful to the Lord for some great blessing? Are you thankful for peace that you have now with someone you were having difficulties with before? Then render to the Lord a peace and thank offering.

**Meat offerings:** The meat offering consisted of flour, oil, and frankincense (Leviticus 2:1). It was commonly given with all other offerings and typified a full surrender to the Lord of all that you have and all that you are. When it was given with sin offerings it showed the connection between pardon for sin and consecration to the Lord.

Yes, the Lord forgives us our sins, but then He goes on to say, “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11), and thus we consecrate ourselves to Him, asking His help to overcome all sin so that we do not repeat our mistakes.

It is important for those who have accepted the atonement of Jesus for their sins that they then express their dedication to Him. This is the relationship between the meat and burnt offerings. The meat offering was an acknowledgement that everything the person had and was belonged to God. We are to make the same acknowledgement and when the Lord’s cause has a need, we are to willingly give a portion back to God, trusting that He will provide for us when we are in





need. All that we have and possess belongs to the Lord and we should be willing to consecrate and render to Him when there are calls for help.

**Drink offerings:** "And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with Him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon." Genesis 35:14

This is the first mention of a drink offering in the Bible. Jacob had already wrestled with the Angel. He had already met Esau and now he was about to go see his father. The Lord appeared to him and spoke with him. After his conversation, Jacob was thankful for all that the Lord had done for him. He showed his willingness to pour out his life to God as needed.

Like the meat offerings, the drink offerings were given, often along with some other burnt offering. The pouring out of a drink offering can also signify the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The one who has fully surrendered his life for the Lord's service pours his life upon the sacrifice of Christ, to be spent for the glory of God, as His life was spent. Pray every morning for the Holy Spirit to direct and guide you during the day that you may render due service to your Lord and Master. "Holy Spirit faithful guide, ever by the Christian's side. Gently lead us by the hand, Pilgrims in the desert land."

**Sin and trespass offerings:** When we sin, we do not



offer an offering in order to be forgiven. In Old Testament times, that animal the was sacrificed did not atone for the sin. It pointed forward to the true sacrifice of Jesus, who would atone for their

sin on the cross of Calvary. The Catholic Church has, unfortunately, taken that concept of penance for sin and continued the practice today. Many in the Christian world feel as though they must *do* something in order to be accepted by God. They have it backwards. Jesus accepts us as we are—in our sin polluted self. He forgives and cleanses, and we show our gratitude by rendering back to Him.

While the forgiveness of sins through the atonement expressed in these sacrifices was ultimately fulfilled in Christ, the sacrifices reminded the worshiper of his or her sinfulness and ultimate need of the propitiation for sins provided by Christ Jesus.

It is essential for the sinner to realize his sinfulness be-

fore God and appreciate the pardon offered. The purpose of the sin and trespass offerings was for the sinner to see by faith the Son of God through whom he would receive pardon and thus to repair the broken relationship between man and God. Reconciliation with God requires a full acknowledgement and repentance of sin and a desire to turn away from it.

Just like they had different offerings in the Old Testament, so today, we have different offerings we can give. We can give monetary offerings for peace, for thankfulness, for consecration. We can give offerings of our time to the service of God. We can deny our own time, and give a Bible Study, pass out leaflets, clean the church, work in the publishing department, write an article, do the treasury or secretarial work. All this is an offering of our time and talents to God.

What sacrifice and offering does the Lord ask of us today in exchange for pardon for sin? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. Salvation is free. Yet, Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My Commandments." John 14:15. Even the service and obedience that the justified and reborn believer is able to render to God are not due to his own virtue but are the fruit of the Holy Spirit whom God has sent to dwell in him. None of us can earn salvation. None of us deserves redemption. We are saved by grace through faith as the gift of God.

All we have to do is repent and confess. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Yet, in order for us to receive salvation, full and free, we do have to make a sacrifice. "My son, give Me thine heart." Proverbs 23:26. Your heart? What value does it have? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9. But Jesus wants it.

What is it that we are *really* giving back to the Lord when we give Him our heart? We sacrifice our cherished idols, our love of unhealthy foods, immodest dress, pride of opinion, love of worldly entertainments, our sinful polluted heart, our righteousness which is filthy rags, and anything that we find more interesting and gratifying than spending time with the Lord in prayer, study and missionary work. Anything that is dear to our hearts. It is a sacrifice for some.

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." Galatians 2:20.

Physical crucifixion is painful. Spiritual crucifixion is equally painful. "A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness--sin in all its forms--must be overcome if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is that they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.

"After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by earnest prayer and untiring effort. We must resist, we must deny, we must conquer self. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 231. This is honourable service to render.

In Old Testament times, the sacrifices were required. Today, they are not. However, ask yourself how thankful you are for what God has done for you? When you are saved from imminent danger, when you are restored to health following an unpleasant illness, when you receive a bonus from work, . . . the blessings are many. . . how do you thank the Lord? Do you just say thank you? Or have you ever thought of giving the Lord a thank offering or peace offering?

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 6:20-21. The Lord hopes that His followers make a sound investment of their money, time, and strength into the bank of heaven. All that men own in this life is really only lent them by God in trust. We are His stewards. We own nothing. Only the treasure you lay up in heaven is truly your own. The treasure in heaven appreciates with time, whereas on earth it depreciates. That heavenly treasure is permanent. No one can touch it.

I bring you back to the opening text, ask yourself, "What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits

toward me?" Psalm 116:12

Do you want true freedom? Then read the following text carefully:

"The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts *the service of Jesus as the truest freedom*. The law of God is *his delight*. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 220

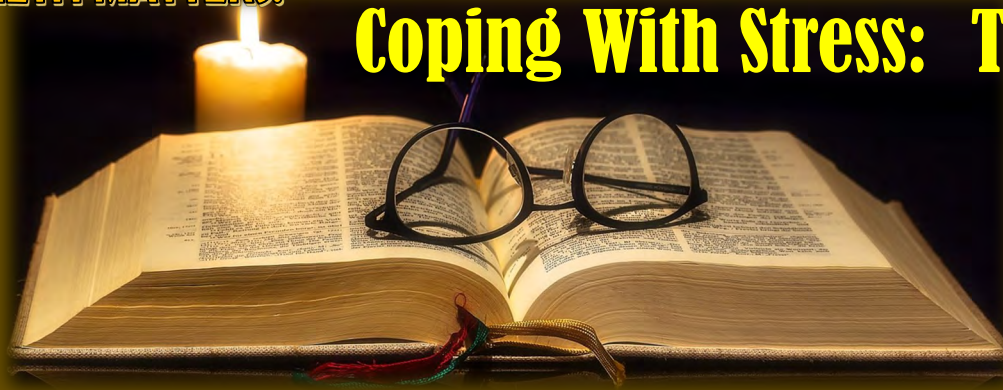
We can never render the Lord enough for the great gift He has given to us. We do not owe the Lord anything for the gift He is offering us. He gives it to us for free, but how much do you love Him and His offer? Your offerings will show.

"It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies. Like the people of Israel, let us set up our stones of witness, and inscribe upon them the precious story of what God has wrought for us. And as we review His dealings with us in our pilgrimage, let us, out of hearts melted with gratitude, declare, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.' Psalm 116:12-14." *-The Desire of Ages*, p. 348. Amen

*Wendy Eaton*



# Coping With Stress: The Bible As Our Guide



In the last article in the series about stress, we looked at ways of reducing the impact of stress. In that article, we introduced some Biblical references that align with the concepts of psychology in dealing with stress. Many of the concepts that are used in worldly counselling in dealing with stress come directly from the Bible. This month we will focus on Biblical principles, and how various men and women of the Bible used or chose not to use these principles to cope with stressors and the results of their decisions.

We first looked at the strategy of problem-solving which can be used when stressors are perceived as changeable, when there is a stressor that we can control. With problem-solving, we can reduce stress by doing practical things that we can do to reduce or remove the stress in our lives. Who in the Bible used problem-solving to cope with a stressful situation? Did they lean upon their own strength to problem-solve? “We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul.” *—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 146*

Let us look at the example of Nehemiah. He was the king’s cupbearer in Persia when he learned of the deplorable condition of the walls surrounding his beloved city of Jerusalem, leaving it vulnerable to attacks from its enemies. He knew he had to do something, but there were many obstacles to overcome in order to make it happen. He decided that he would be the one to undertake the task of rebuilding the walls, but first certain conditions would need to be met before he could put his plan into motion. How did he problem-solve? First he prayed, urging God to keep His promise to His people to end their captivity. After praying for God’s blessing on his work, the next step was to gain permission from the king to be relieved of his duties and to return to Jerusalem. God softened this heathen king’s heart and granted Nehemiah his request. Nehemiah then asked for a military escort for safe passage back to Jerusalem, and for supplies needed

to rebuild the wall. Lastly, he asked for letters to prove that he was authorized to perform the work of overseeing the rebuilding of the walls. Throughout the planning process Nehemiah prayed for God to open the way. Only when we ask God to guide our plans can they be successful. But, prayer alone is not enough. We need to take action—we need to work, we need to be able, with God’s help, to remove the obstacles that may be in our way. “Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the carrying forward of sacred enterprises today as in the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls.” *—Prophets and Kings, p. 633*

Other examples from the Bible include King Solomon who, in the beginning of his reign, prayed for wisdom to lead God’s people. We see this wisdom in the example of the two women presented before him, each claiming that the child brought before the king was hers. Solomon’s problem-solving was evident in his presenting the idea of cutting the child in two and offering half to each woman. This quickly revealed who the real mother was.

The greatest act of problem-solving seen in the Bible was after Adam and Eve fell into sin. How to reconcile back to God two people who were now doomed to death because they had sinned by eating the forbidden fruit? To destroy Adam and Eve would have sent a message to the universe that God is an unforgiving Judge to those who rebel against Him. The Plan of Salvation was formulated, where man could be redeemed by the death of Jesus on the cross, thus allowing sinners to escape the punishment of death. This problem of sin is the greatest problem that we face in this world, with the solution formulated by a loving and merciful God, so that all have a chance for salvation if they believe and obey His commandments.

When people take matters into their own hands, problem-solving without God’s help, we see the opposite happen. We see the grief that was brought about in the deception that Jacob and Rachel exacted on Isaac. We have the example of Abraham and Sarah, who doubted God’s lead-

ing when he promised to make of Abraham's seed a great nation; he chose to have a child with Hagar instead of waiting on God to give him and Sarah a son in their old age. This caused a rift in the family, and the nation that was formed from Ishmael have been an enemy of God's people since that time.

We looked at the ways that our own attitudes and perceptions can play a role in how stressful we feel. When we have a thought of how our life "should" be, or how the world "should" be, this causes a lot of stress when our life and the world around us do not meet our expectations. Often people blame God when they lack the things they feel they "should" have. "Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressures come, you give evidence of a sickly enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146. We are reminded of the popular verse in Romans 8:28, "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When we look at life from the perspective that this earth is only our temporary home, then we no longer think of what we "should" have in this life, but instead we focus on what we "should" do to strive for our future, eternal life in heaven.

We talked about finding a supportive network of friends to help us to reduce stress. Connections with others who are also striving for a common goal and can identify with the stress we encounter as we walk along our Christian path. Friends share our grief, our struggles, and help ease the burdens of life. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." 1 Thessalonians 5:11. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

We see examples in the Bible of supportive friendships. David and Jonathan became friends after David defeated Goliath. "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." 1 Samuel 1:18. Although by birth Jonathan was to be the heir to the throne, he knew that God had anointed David to be the next king of Israel and held no animosity towards him. It was David's friendship with Jonathan that allowed his life to be preserved, and strengthened him when King Saul was determined to kill him.

Another beautiful friendship is the one shared by Ruth and Naomi. Ruth was a Moabitess and a heathen. However, after the death of both Ruth and Naomi's husbands in the land of Moab, Naomi chose to return to Judah, to her family. Instead of returning to her own family, Ruth chose to return to Judah with Naomi. She recited the beautiful

words we read in the Bible, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16

However, there are some stressors that are specific to Christians that we are also advised that we should not share with others except with God. When we struggle with overcoming sin, when our faith weakens, when we are encompassed about with temptations and feel discouraged, we need to seek divine help. "When perplexities arise, and difficulties confront you, look not for help to humanity. Trust all with God. The practice of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak, and brings no strength to them. It lays upon them the burden of our spiritual infirmities, which they cannot relieve. We seek the strength of erring, finite man, when we might have the strength of the unerring, infinite God." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146.

The next topic was radical acceptance. This is a coping strategy that is used when situations are outside of our control, and there is nothing we can do to fix or change the situation. At these times we must practice radical acceptance. We allow ourselves to feel pain and sorrow, but we also accept reality instead of fighting against it. God allows things to happen in our lives for our character development. When we give up our need to control stress and relinquish all control to the Lord, we will reach radical acceptance. Acceptance is active, it does not mean that we agree with stressful situations, but it allows us to take steps to reduce our suffering. Let us look at a few examples of people from the Bible to further explain the concept of radical acceptance.

Daniel and his three friends were taken captive into Babylon, and instead of complaining about their situation, they remained faithful to God, despite the dangers of doing so. They accepted that they were to serve their heathen masters in a foreign land, and by their example taught godly principles to the kings and subjects of Babylon and Persia. Had they not accepted their fate, and instead murmured against God in allowing themselves to be captured, they would have dishonored God and their influence for good would have been lost. Because they



remained faithful to God, they were given high positions in the country where they could spread the knowledge of the true God far and wide.

Esther and Mordecai are both examples of problem-solving and radical acceptance. When Haman was determined to destroy Mordecai, and then the Jewish people, Mordecai devised a plan for Esther to save her people. Esther, through her faith in God had the courage to approach the king, with the thought that "If I perish, I perish." Her willingness to die to try to save her people showed an acceptance that God was in charge, and she trusted in Him in taking her petition to the king.

Job had everything that man could strive for on this earth, great wealth, many children, and good health. He was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God." Job 1:1. But, when he lost all his earthly possessions including his animals, his servants, his children and then his own health, did he lose his faith? No. He accepted that whatever his lot in life, it was God's leading, and his faith never wavered. "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Job 1:21. How often do we murmur when we do not have the things we desire on this earth, when we may be poor, without a family, or suffering ill health? Is this any less reason to accept God's leading than if we were endowed with the riches of this earth?

Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers, and taken to a land far from his father, whom he loved dearly. He served in Potiphar's house until Potiphar's wife made an accusation against him. Joseph was cast into prison for the next two years. Because Joseph accepted his circumstances, the Lord blessed him. From slavery, to a prison cell, and then finally being placed second in command to the Pharaoh of Egypt, he was able to lead the nation through the seven years of famine, even being able to save his own family from starvation.

As the weight of all the sins of mankind weighed heavily on Him, Jesus prayed to His Father three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matthew 26:39. After He prayed, a calmness came over Jesus, He accepted drinking the bitter cup, to save the human race at any cost to Himself.

Despite being hunted by King Saul, and having to flee as a fugitive, David accepted that Saul was the anointed of the Lord and he would not harm him when the opportunity was given to him. Paul suffered persecution, affliction, beatings, in constant danger for his life, imprisoned, yet his witness was, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest

upon me." 2 Corinthians 12:9

We also see examples from the Bible of those who did not use radical acceptance. The children of Israel murmured against Moses and against God in the wilderness on the way to Canaan, instead of accepting God's leading. The result was that of those who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb made it to the Promised Land. Initially, Jonah was unwilling to accept God's command to go to Nineveh, and set sail instead for Tarshish. God caused Jonah to be swallowed by a fish to bring him to repentance. Then when God spared Nineveh after the inhabitants repented of their sins, Jonah again murmured against the leading of God, and God had to teach him yet another lesson. King Ahab took what was not his when he coveted Naboth's vineyard, which, by Jewish law, was not his to own. It ultimately led to his death and the death of his wife, Jezebel, who conspired with him to take the vineyard by force.

The final concept that we talked about was gratitude. Even in the worst situations that we are in, we can find things for which we are grateful. When we focus on even the small mercies that God provides for us, we can endure the difficulties that life presents to us. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18. As Christians, we have much to be grateful for. We are encouraged to count our blessings, as they all gifts from God.

We look again to the life of David. The whole of the book of Psalms are a witness to David's gratitude towards God. He sang praises to God during the most difficult times in his life. He was grateful for His protection, His mercy, His creation, His forgiveness of sins, and for listening to his prayers. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm 103:1-5

Christians have the most powerful stress-relief strategy known to mankind. It is so powerful that nothing on this earth can ultimately cause us any stress. We can find peace and comfort, knowing that the Ruler of the universe has told us to "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and there ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:28-29

*Helen Marttinen*

# Western Canadian Summer Youth Conference—June 1-4, 2023



"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 1:3. This Bible verse brought to us the message of the theme, "We Know Not the Hour," of the recent Western Canadian Summer Youth Conference. This beautiful event was held on June 1-4, 2023, at Camp Kasota West, Alberta.

**Brother Adones (Jessie) Abragan, opened the youth conference Thursday evening by speaking on the subject, "Blessed is He that Readeth"**

Before Brother Jessie knew the Lord, his life was full of vanity. He started gambling, drinking, and smoking at a young age. It was only when he reached the age of 27 that he first encountered the Lord. His early steps in understanding more about the Bible was by reading the Spirit of Prophecy. He shared his experience of spending his time under a shade tree on the beach reading *The Great Controversy*. He would only go home to eat during the day and sleep during the night.

Brother Jessie's experience encourages us to read more of God's word. "Blessed is he that readeth" Revelation 1:3. A personal experience with the Lord begins by reading His word.

**Friday morning started with beautiful sunshine and morning worship led by Brother Edward Anca. His subject was, "The Lord is My Light," and "The Great Physician"**

We need power to resist temptation and only God can give us that strength. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18

As our Great Physician, Jesus encourages us to buy from Him "eyesalve" which is the ability to discern right from wrong. This will give us power to resist temptation. After we are healed, we are to help others find the same healing. "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Because we know not the hour when the Lord comes, we need to hasten our work in reflecting the light of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**The following topics were presented regarding the signs that tell us we are living in the end of time.**

**"Signs in Nature," by Sister Jeve Lou Abragan**

"And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places." Matthew 24:7. Though we do not know the exact time of Jesus' second coming, He gave us signs to look out for.

As Jesus warned His disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem, "so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 37

Today, many changes are occurring in nature. Natural disasters are increasing, the global temperature is rising, the sea level has recently been reported to have risen one metre, more and more coral reefs are dying, and animals and insects are likely to lose almost half of their habitat. Governments have passed environmental laws and bills, scientists have invented sustainable materials, and people are protesting in the streets, calling on others to care more for the environment. A lot has been done by humans in hopes of preserving the dying planet. These events are fulfilling the warning that Jesus gave in the Bible. We must be aware of these signs to get ready. "Behold, I come as a thief.

Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Revelation 16:15

**"Signs in Nations and Society," by Sister Aines Abragan**

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matthew 24:6-7. "Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations, —trouble that will not cease until Jesus comes." —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 337

Regarding the war between Ukraine and Russia, the world sees this war as the highest risk of nuclear confrontation than had existed in the past 60 years. Because the leaders of these great nations love money and power, nothing can stop their greed any more, and this resulted in tragedy — war.

Then there is the increasing immorality in this world. Tattoos, abortion, divorce, co-parenting, LGBTQ community, and so on. We read, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:28. Abortion is a transgression of the sixth commandment, "Thou shall not kill." Exodus 20:13. Divorce and co-parenting and LGBTQ are Satan's work of deceit.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." Matthew 24:10. The Lord gave us this warning. The opposition might come from inside the family circle, among relatives, friends, and colleagues. But Jesus assured us that just because we are facing opposition and will soon face persecution, does not mean that we are wrong, but because Satan is earnestly and constantly working to destroy God's people.

"Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." John 15:20. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:10

**"Signs in the Religious World," Sister Jaihana Abragan**

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matthew 24:4-5. "Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem many false messiahs appeared. But this warning was given also to those who live in this age of the world. The same deceptions practiced prior to the destruction of Jerusalem have been practiced through the ages, and will be practiced again." — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 628

Along with the false personification of Christ, will be false dreams and prophecies, false revivals, evil angels and ly-

ing spirits. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Satan will use every opportunity to separate men from God. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1

Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:15-16, 20

Let us get to know God, making Him our only God and Saviour. We know not the hour when He comes. Therefore, now is the time to come to Him. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11

**Brother Makoto Matsumoto continued by leading a workshop entitled "Last Day Events"**

He gave a summary of the last day events by reviewing the Three Angel's Messages, the 144,000 and the Revelation 18 Angel (the Loud Cry). This angel is also known as "Christ Our Righteousness." This angel began to sound in 1888. When the Sunday Law will be implemented, then the shaking will take place. Only those who were faithful inside the church of God will remain. After this, the latter rain will be poured out. This will be the peak of the Loud Cry. Many faithful people who are still in the false churches will be called out to join the faithful in God's church. The 144,000 will also be completed at this time. Then the close of probation will come. All the saved ones will be sealed. Together they will go through the seven plagues but will not be hurt by them physically, and they will endure Jacob's trouble. The unfaithful ones are those who will experience the wrath of God through the seven plagues.

**"The Sunday Law and The Shaking," Brother Edward Anca**

The Sunday Law is Satan's last effort to challenge God's authority. "During the Christian dispensation, the great enemy of man's happiness has made the Sabbath of the fourth commandment an object of special attack. Satan says, 'I will work at cross purposes with God. I will empower my followers to set aside God's memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus I will show the world that the day sanctified and blessed by God has been changed. That day shall not live in the minds of the people. I will obliterate the memory of it. I will place in its stead a day that does not bear the credentials of God, a day that cannot be a sign between God and His people. I will lead those who accept this day to place upon it the sanctity that God placed upon the seventh day.'" — *Prophets and Kings*, p. 183

Because nations are on the verge of a financial crisis, the papacy will one day offer financial help. This will give the

papacy more power over the government. When this happens, the papacy will propose a law—a Sunday Law that supposedly will help people be united to avoid another crisis. Then the shaking will take place in the church of God to separate the faithful from the unfaithful ones.

**“The Latter Rain and The Loud Cry,” Sister Jasmine Avila**

The Latter Rain and the Loud Cry are profound messages of the present time. The Loud Cry is the amplification of the third angel’s message. The latter rain is the spiritual outpouring of God’s power, with physical and spiritual blessings. The early rain happened during the time of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–6). So, the latter rain is the final outpouring, to help the crops be ready for the harvest. The tares, which are the unfaithful people in the church, will be separated from the wheat, the faithful ones (Matthew 13:30).

The Latter Rain is a divine calling. We are to prepare because only the faithful ones will partake of this glory.

**“The Great Time of Trouble,” Brother Patrick Anca**

A great time of trouble as never seen before, is coming soon. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1. It is the last event before Jesus descends from heaven. As fearful as it sounds, the Lord tells us, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” John 14:1. If we are faithful until the end, we will go through this unimaginable trouble, but our hearts should not be troubled. God assures us “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 14:18. By God’s help we will pass through this final trouble.

**Brother Misael Meji gave the Sabbath opening service, entitled “They that Hear the Words” (Revelation 1:3)**

In this world full of sorrow, we do not have to be afraid because we know what will happen in the future, before Jesus returns. In order to meet Him face to face, we need to ask Him for a revival. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” Romans 13:12

We cannot take our youth for granted. We are not guaranteed a long life. We do not know when our time is up. The most important thing we can do right now is to make a covenant with the Lord. Therefore, we must plead with the Lord for guidance and thank Him for His blessings. There are only two destinations, salvation or perdition. Let us read our Bibles so we can be saved in the end.

**Sabbath morning worship was led by Sister Aines Abagan., “Beware of the Hard Heart” –Our High Calling p. 160**

“For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. To day if ye will hear His voice,

harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.” Psalm 95:7–8

“The Lord sends us warning, counsel, and reproof, that we may have opportunity to correct our errors before they become second nature.” When the Egyptian king, in the time of Moses, stubbornly refused to obey the voice of God, the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from him. In our time today, there are a lot of people like Pharaoh who are constantly rejecting the truth. “By persistent rejection of the Spirit’s influence, men cut themselves off from God.” We do not know the hour nor the day when the Lord comes, let us therefore always choose to listen to His voice. As we are drawing closer to the time of the end, we need to be strong in faith. “Unbending principle will mark the course of those who sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him.”

**Brother Makoto Matsumoto presented the Divine Service on Sabbath, “Keep Those Things.” Revelation 1:3**

We have read the Bible, and we have heard the things that we need for our salvation and now we must keep them.

With our own human strength, we cannot become righteous, but through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, it is possible. Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. Like the wind, we cannot see it, but when it blows, we can feel it. So is the working of the Holy Spirit upon us (John 3:5–8). Jesus went on to promise, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:14–15. Just as the people of Israel who were bitten by snakes had to look at the serpent to be healed, so we need to look to Jesus for healing. He promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us change our characters.

When we go through trials in life, we do not need to be afraid. We have an assurance from God that if we call on Him, He is, and will be, there for us. Nothing can separate us from Him if we cling to Him (Romans 8:31–39).

**Sabbath afternoon, more presentations were given.**

**“Why Will He Come?” - Sister Melissa Avila**

The return of Jesus Christ is the climax of the plan of redemption. Jesus will come again to save us. He comes to save us from sin. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:14

We all need to be saved from our sinful nature. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Romans 3:23–25



Jesus will also come to recreate this sinful world. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:1, 3

**"Our Hope and Desire," Sister Hailey Curato**

Is there hope in our world? The answer is yes!

Martin Luther once said, "In our sad condition, our only consolation is the expectancy of another life. Here below all is incomprehensible." In this world full of trial, sickness, death, and sin, we can only hope for a different life which will be given to us when Jesus comes the second time.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18. We also have the same hope. We need to hold on to these thoughts and see the fulfillment of God's promises for the faithful ones when He comes soon.

**To close the Sabbath, Pastor Nicolas Anca spoke of "Things Which Are Written Therein." Revelation 1:3**

We need to keep only the things that are written in the Bible. We have prophecies, which tell us what to do to be ready. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7. If we assess our lives right now, what will be our reward? To know the answer, we must have our eyes only on Jesus, our perfect example.

**Brother Adones (Jessie) Abragan, presented the Sunday morning worship, "Young to Old Age."**

Solomon wrote, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement." Ecclesiastes 11:9

This is what we should not do: "We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God." Jeremiah 3:25

We are striving to be saved, so we need to be pure and holy in the sight of the Lord. Ezekiel wrote, "Then said I, Ah Lord God! Behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth." Ezekiel 4:14

We have the law of God as our safeguard against sin and disobedience.

**In closing, Brother Makoto Matsumoto, spoke about "For the Time is at Hand: Called to be A Hero"**

When Satan started the war in Heaven, he wanted to prove that God's law was unjust and imperfect—that angels do not need the law and it is impossible for humans to keep it. So, when Adam and Eve committed sin, it seemed to prove Satan's argument true. For God's law to be just, Adam must die. For Adam to live, he needed mercy. Then, Jesus came down to earth to prove that it is possible for human beings to keep the law. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2:14. With the death of Christ, justice and mercy were fulfilled.

Another reason Jesus came to this earth was to reveal the character of God. By this, "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away." *-The Desire of Ages*, p. 761

Jesus won the battle once more with the devil. But Satan is not giving up. "Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law. . . . That the law which was spoken by God's own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world." *-Ibid.*, p. 204. Through the power of the Papacy, by teaching false doctrines and claiming to change the Ten Commandments, Satan is trying to prove his deception to be true.

There are, however, always people of God who will prove otherwise. In these last times, God has a peculiar people. A group of people who will prove that the law of God has not changed and that it is possible for us to keep the law. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. Dear reader, you are called to take part in this mission. To obey or to disobey, to choose between the law of God and the laws of men, are the questions that we need to decide upon. We are all called to participate in finishing this war that has been going on for 6000 years.

We know not the hour when the Saviour comes to take us home. May we be found victorious in the army of God. Amen.

*Aines Abragan*



## **Carlos Kozel Centre in Peru where the General Conference Delegates are meeting, July 11-30, 2023**



## **Marriage**

“Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward His church is the spirit that the husband and wife are to manifest toward each other. If they love God supremely, they will love each other in the Lord, ever treating each other courteously, drawing in even cords. In their mutual self-denial and self-sacrifice they will be a blessing to each other.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 95

Most young people desire to be married one day. The challenge for some young people is that they say there are so few options in the church and so they get married outside the church. However, we are counselled. “As a child of God you are permitted to contract marriage only in the Lord. Be sure that you do not follow the imagination of your own heart, but move in the fear of God.” –*A Call To Stand Apart*, p. 50. True happiness in marriage can only be found if you share the same faith. Sometimes you may be required, to “Wait on the LORD,” but the promise is, “He shall strengthen thine heart.” Psalm 27:14

In 2023, three young men living in Canada patiently waited upon the Lord and each were blessed to join their lives in holy matrimony to a young woman who shares the same faith.

The Lord has someone for each person. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33. Let us join in prayer for our young people that are still single, that they will patiently wait on the Lord, knowing that in the Lord’s time, He will direct and guide them to a good spouse with whom they can grow together in the Lord.

**On October 2022, Jeffrey saw Flordeluna singing on the Canadian Field's Mornings with God program and contacted her on Facebook. They immediately fell in love believing God put them together in this surprising and unexpected manner. After Jeffrey's travelling to the Philippines three times, Jeffrey and Flordeluna got married five months later in Davao City in a civil wedding on March 24, 2023 and in a religious wedding on March 26, 2023.**

**Jeffrey and Flordeluna will live in Vancouver, Canada, where Jeffrey has been living for many years.**




**Richard and Emily met through mutual friends a number of years ago. Richard introduced Emily to the church and, over time, she began to attend, study, and read, before getting baptized in 2018. They spent this time building a strong friendship which became the foundation of their partnership. In the Lord's time, after much patience and growth personally, with God and with each other, they got married on June 11, 2023. They will be living in Toronto, Canada in the first couple years of their marriage.**

**Makoto Matsumoto, (Japanese) and Ylenia Gallo (Italian) met in 2017 at the General Conference session in Italy. They have patiently waited on the Lord and had a long-distance relationship until Ylenia moved to Canada to be closer to Makoto, where he is studying in University. They were legally married on June 18, and held a reception with their Canadian friends. On July 3, they had their religious wedding in Italy.**

**They intend to continue living in Toronto, Canada.**



**If you are still single, the Lord has someone for you, even if they live on the other side of the world.**

A photograph of a garden scene. In the background is a weathered wooden fence. In the foreground, there are several plants: a large bush of red roses, a climbing plant with purple flowers, and a dense area of green foliage on the left. A small wooden trellis is visible on the left side. The overall scene is lush and vibrant.

**“Christ is not to be hid away in the heart and locked in as a coveted treasure, sacred and sweet, to be enjoyed solely by the possessor. We are to have Christ in our hearts as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, refreshing all who come in contact with us.**

**We must confess Christ openly and bravely, exhibiting in our characters His meekness, humility, and love, till men shall be charmed by the beauty of holiness. It is not the best way to preserve our religion as we bottle perfumes, lest the fragrance should escape.” –*Counsels on Health*, p. 400**