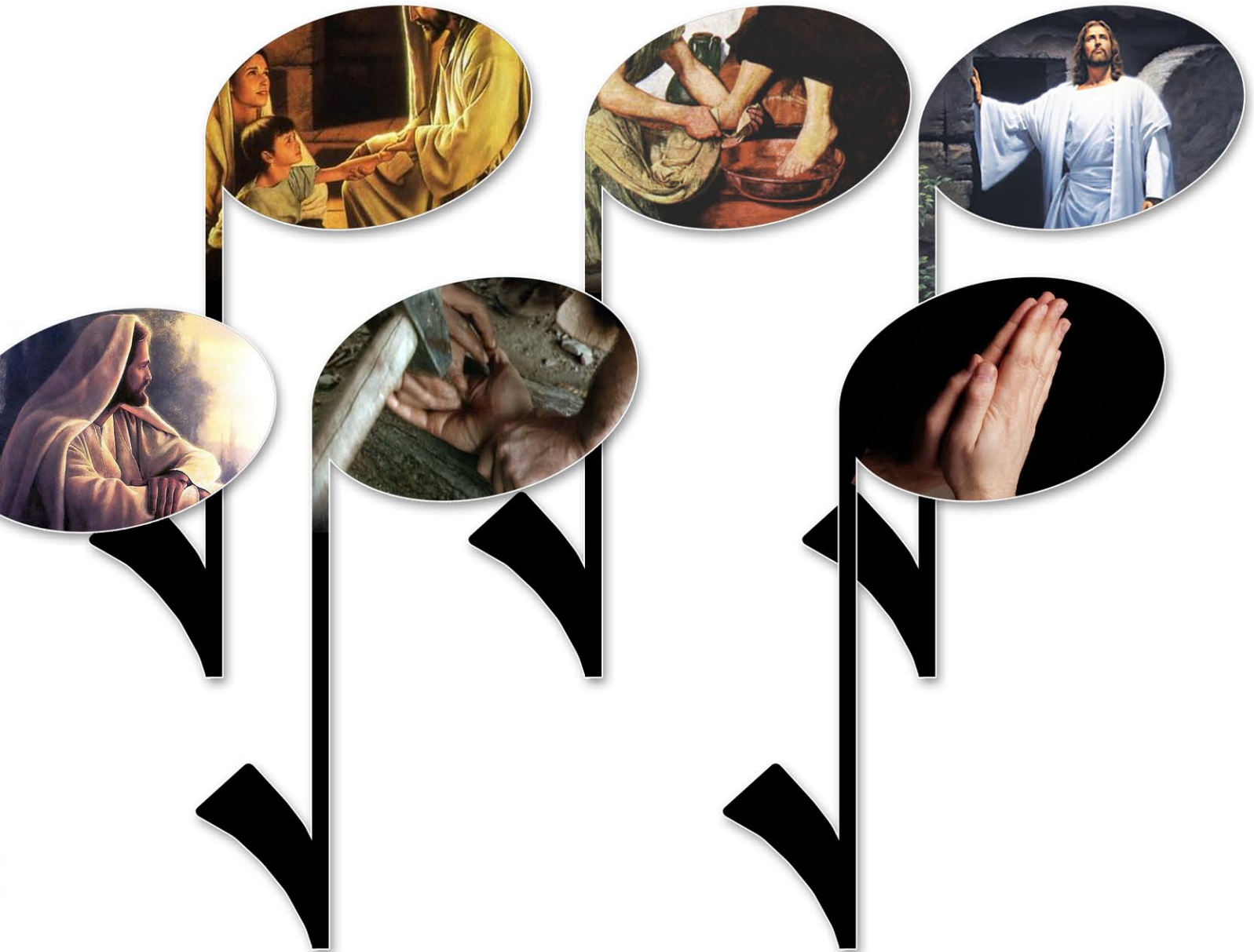


# *The Reformation* *Messenger*

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2007

International Missionary Society of The S.D.A. Church Reform Movement



"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." Revelation 14:3

# The Reformation Messenger

## We Believe

The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its 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 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.

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# A NEW SONG

There was a multitude of people standing on the seashore, happy, smiling and rejoicing. A little earlier they had been in cruel bondage, hated and exploited. Now they were free, safe and happy. As they stood on the eastern bank of the Red Sea, they were singing a song that no one had heard before. It was a new song, a song of their experience, a song of victory, a song of joy.

Their affliction and seemingly sure death had turned to deliverance and to a complete victory; and the Egyptian army perished to the last man.

How was it done? Were they a match to the well-trained army of Egyptian soldiers? No, they were completely helpless.

They were traveling with their belongings, little ones and the aged. Now they realized that someone mightier than man and his armies had taken compassion and pity on them. Someone loved and cared for them. This gave them the words and the melody to their new song.

Would you like to learn this New Song?

It is possible to learn it even today. Our experience will be much similar to the experience of ancient Israel.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” Rev. 14:1-3

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and

true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” Rev. 15:2, 3.

The hundred and forty and four thousand had gained the victory over the mighty beast and over his image also over his mark.

Their victory is similar to the victory gained by Moses at the Red Sea, and also by the Lamb of God in the garden of Gethsemane and at Calvary.

Now they realized that they had contributed to their victory no more than the people of Israel in the time of Moses. Someone mightier than all the host of evil had taken compassion and pity on them and saved them from their enemy.

What would happen to a Christian who wants to go to heaven but has not learned this song of Moses and the Lamb? Could he join this heavenly choir?

No, he would not fit into this company of the singers, and we cannot learn this song in heaven, we must learn it here. Daily we are learning the words of this song, and also the melody, as we are making experiences

with God. Verse by verse we are learning until we know the whole song; and the others in the company of the hundred and forty and four thousand are passing through the same experiences and learning the same words and the melody, so that one day we can all unite in singing this song in perfect harmony.

The first verse of this song we learn as we leave the world behind and cross the Red Sea. Our exodus from the world is not any easier than that of the ancient Israel leaving the land of Egypt.

The world does not give us up easily. As we flee the temptations, sin and the evil influence of the world our enemy will pursue us trying to get us back to our old life and to sin.

Then we need to depend on the power of God as much as did the ancient Israel. When all seems hopeless and lost then a way is opened before us, a way of escape, and we can sing with David, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Ps. 124: 6-8.

After learning the first verse we go on to learn the next one. If someone smites us on the right cheek, we must learn to turn to him the other also. We must also learn to love our enemies and to bless them that curse us. These are not easy lessons to learn and to put into practise, but they are part of the new song that we will one day sing in heaven.

Can you already love the worst person in the world, the most sinful so much that you could give your life for him? Jesus did this; His love was extended to the greatest sinner.

Another difficult verse that we must learn is self-denial.

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Matt. 16:24.

When you are looking to the tree of the forbidden fruit and a desire is aroused in your heart to touch and to taste it, then you

must decide against it and say a firm "No" to the temptation.

We do not have only one forbidden tree, but hundreds of them all around us.

This is the hardest battle that we are asked to fight. It is a war against ourselves.

You must deny to yourself foods and drinks that you may be craving for. You must deny to yourself the worldly music, also worldly books and shows. Paul writes, "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. 13:14.

God is teaching us melody of this new listen and follow Leader. If we stop will stop teaching Himself and left us show us how it is shows us fasting the whole night

This new song has minor key.

seems

We may see around us, have not been our faith is tested to the utmost. But this all has a purpose to purify and to sanctify us.

If we put a grain of sand inside an oyster shell, it will irritate and rub against the sensitive skin of the oyster, but the result is a beautiful pearl.

A painful thorn was put into the flesh of Paul, and a faithful apostle was created.

If there is something painful in your life, it may have a purpose to create a beautiful character, fit for heaven in you.

We read of Jesus. "He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isa. 53:3.



Jesus learned this new song during His stay in this world.

Does this verse in the minor key appeal to you? Can you see something beautiful in it? Are you willing to be also a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Then you can sing this song with Jesus and those who did learn these verses.

Another verse of this song we learn from John the Baptist. "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30. I must become smaller, and be more unnoticed. I must be put aside.

Paul writes, "Let each esteem other better than themselves." Phil. 2:3. This is a verse of utter humility, and one of the most beautiful verses in this new song.

"I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57:15.

Peter tells us of the most beautiful ornament that we can wear. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

Many, especially educated and talented

persons fail to learn this verse and therefore they cannot join the heavenly choir.

Also we must learn another beautiful verse, which also Jesus learned. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

This verse is of forgiveness. The Lord will forgive us in the same measure as we forgive others. What our world would be if this attribute would be practised. We need to practise this in our homes and also in the church. This is the secret of a happy, and united family.

In our new song there are verses of unselfish love, that no worldly love song can equal.

There are verses of patience similar to the patience of Job; when there seem to be no end to our trials and sorrows.

Then there are verses of praise and thanksgiving. We need to learn to praise and adore our Saviour, Lord Jesus. This is really the main theme of the whole song, because it is through Christ that we can overcome and be victorious in our battle against sin and evil.

There is not even one verse about defeat or failure.

Also, you may think that your life is harder than that of other people. But when you listen to them singing the same song with you, then you realize that they went through the same trials and sorrows as you went through. Then it will be a mighty chorus, as the voice of many waters and the voice of great thunder.

If there are still some verses that you have not yet learned, then you must hurry and learn them quick, before it will be too late. Only those who have learned all the verses of the song of Moses and the Lamb will be part of the 144,000 in heaven. May the Lord help each one of us to learn it. *AMEN.*

*Timo Martin*



## LOOKING FOR YOU!!

If you are interested in submitting an item for publication in the Reformation Messenger, please submit them to:

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# NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE



*"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."  
Revelation 21:5*

## **What's New?**

The Athenians, who spent their time in telling and hearing some new thing, were by no means singular persons: novelty still fascinates the crowd. How pleased we are with that which is new! Children's eyes sparkle with talk of new things; for our short-lived nature loves that which has lately come, and is therefore like our own fleeting selves. We, too, are all children for we eagerly demand new things and rush after "many inventions" of the hour, for "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Dan 12:4). I don't wonder, therefore, that the words of the opening text sound like a pleasant song in your ears. But, joyfully, there's a deeper, prophetic meaning.

## **Good Old Days?**

The newness Jesus brings is bright, clear, heavenly, enduring. We are especially ready for this New Year. How? Well, most men have grown weary with the old cry of hard times; and are glad to escape from what has been for many, twelve months of great trial or affliction. The last year had become croaking, groaning, and feeble in its old age, and is now asleep with a psalm of judgment and mercy.

## **Blessed New Year!**

We hope that this newborn year will not be any worse than its predecessor, and we pray that it may be better. We know prophetically, however, otherwise. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities; against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 5:12). Moreover, "the world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19). "Our adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). Indeed, many have been voraciously devoured, and many more are being fiendishly devoured.

Nevertheless, it's a new year and we're encouraged to join it with the ideas and wishes of happiness, "remembering God in a special way" (CS 296), as we say to one another, "I wish you a blessed or happy New Year."

## **Old Fashioned?**

But, as men (and women) in Christ, we should not be carried away by a childish love of novelty. Yet, in some matters "the old is better." Indeed, the old, old gospel is the newest thing in the world; in its very essence it's forever good news. In the things of God the old is ever new, and if any man brings forward that which seems to be new doctrine and new truth, it is soon perceived that the new dogma is only worn-out heresy repaired, and the discovery in theology is the digging up of a carcass of error. Dead, dead—which had better have been left to rot in oblivion. In the great matter of truth and godliness, we may safely say, "There is nothing new under the sun." (Eccl 1:9).

## **Old Rags**

Yet, there's so much evil about ourselves and our old nature, so much sin about our life and the old past, so much mischief about our surroundings, and the old temptations, so much self, pride, that we are

not distressed or troubled by the belief that old things are passing away. Ah! But, hope springs up when we hear the words from the lips of our risen and reigning Lord: "Behold, I make all things new." It is fitting that things so outworn and defiled should be laid aside, and better things fill their places; new heavenly places, divine thoughts, exceeding joy, overflowing heart!

### Thin Line

New Year's day, as the first day of a new year, is significantly a solemnly joyous day for many. Though there's no real difference between it and any other day, yet in the minds of many it's a marked period in our journey of life. It's only in imagination. When men "cross the line," they don't find a visible mark; the sea bears no trace of an equatorial belt; and yet mariners know whereabouts they are, and they take notice thereof, so that a man can hardly cross the line for the first time without remembering it to the day of his death.

Well, we are crossing that line now; we're silently sailing into the new year. Another year of grace and mercy; another year of probation; another year closer to the second coming of Jesus in all His glory. If Jesus has not made us new already, let the new year cause us to think about the great need of true conversion and the new world of righteousness; or for others, renewing our solemn covenant with God.

### This Year!

Let us be persuaded by the season to enthusiastically (GR en-Theos; in God), divinely press forward into the center of His new creation; praying unceasingly, fasting, studying the scriptures and testimonies, establishing your hearts, watching, self-examination, earnestly preparing for His soon coming; so as to receive the latter rain; and by proclaiming the three angels' message, prepare the earth's inhabitants for Jesus' second advent. Furthermore, that we may always feel to the full, all the power of His loving grace and Holy Spirit working in us, and through us; that incessant blood-beat!

Clearly, then make this a "year of fulfillment" – surrendering totally to God's will; allowing Him to fulfill His purpose in your life. Face the challenges, of opportunities and trials, by passionate and

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stalwart faith. James tells us to be quick to listen. Remember, also, "our glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

O Lord! We would rejoice and be glad forever in that which Thou doest create. The former troubles are forgotten, and are hidden from our eyes because of Your ancient promise, - "Behold, I create new

heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isaiah 65:17). Finally, – **Endure!**  
**AMEN.**

*John Theodorou, U.S.A.*

## [www.imsmessenger.org](http://www.imsmessenger.org)

We are pleased to announce the revised Reformation Messenger Website, which is located at:  
[www.imsmessenger.com](http://www.imsmessenger.com).

To date we have served over 28,000 visitors. The revised website now has added features including the entire catalogue of the magazine published from 2000 to 2006. This includes more than 80 issues comprised of over 1100 articles that are available in both text and PDF format. Both formats may be searched by various methods.

The use of the website and access to all of the articles continues to be free.

Additionally we have also added an online subscription service with various rate plans comprised of both printed format and now newly available on CD, that can be mailed to you. There is also a donation service for those who would like to support the important work that the magazine accomplishes throughout the world in spreading the gospel message to each continent.

We hope that you will find the changes to the website convenient and worthwhile. May God bless your support of His work throughout the world and may these efforts hasten His soon return. Amen

## [www.imsmessenger.org](http://www.imsmessenger.org)

# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

On December 31, 2006, the Toronto and Mississauga churches got together to bring in the New Year. Included in the programme was a time for everyone present to share a New Year's resolution. The list below includes all the New Year's resolutions promised that night:

**Augustus:** I want to see that the Montreal Church be re-established.

**Beulah:** I want to work on unity between the Churches.

**Vicky:** I want to pray more, read the Bible more and walk by faith more and not by sight.

**Reyna:** I want to take more risks in the New Year.

**Nidya:** I want to drink more water.

**Elaine:** I want to learn to play the piano.

**Lucia:** I want to be more humble.

**Alberto:** I want to do more missionary work.

**Len:** I want to work for the unity and do more missionary work.

**Joaquin:** I want to read a new Bible through next year.

**Leone:** I want to overcome my shyness and speak to the people more of the truth.

**Emelinita:** I want to be more patient and pray more.

**Janice:** I want to study more and do more missionary work.

**Rosario:** I want to be more patient.

**Emelina:** I want to forgive others and be more patient.

**Pasita:** I want to serve God and my neighbours more.

**John M:** I want to lose 10 lbs of weight.

**Irene:** I want to act more like a Christian.

**Juan:** I want to learn of God.

**Rafael:** I want to be stronger in the Lord.

**Isabel:** I want to spend more time with the Lord.

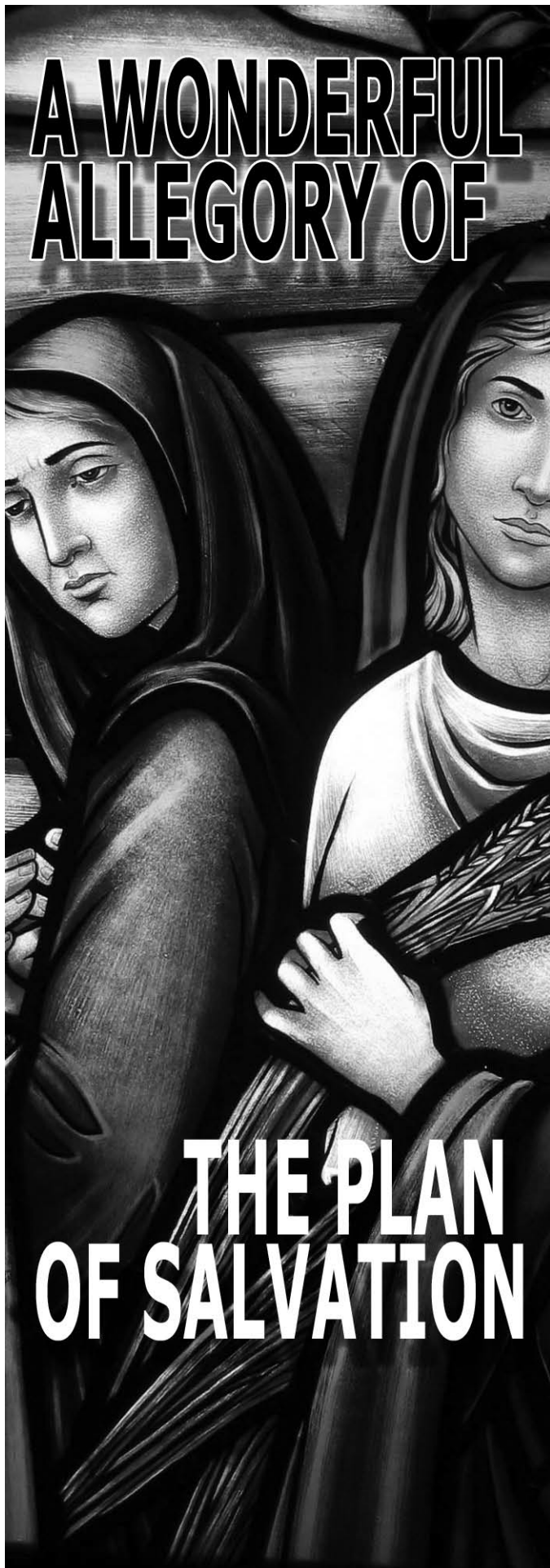
**Gustavo:** I want to learn to forgive more.

**David:** I want to think of God before doing a sin.

**Timo:** I want to reach perfection.

Please let us pray for all those who resolved to be better Christians in the New Year, that with God's help they will be able to fulfil the promises made before the church and God. AMEN.





## PART ONE

The book of Ruth, the Moabitess, is a wonderful allegory of the plan of salvation, but it also entails a great lesson on how our faith can be tested.

The story takes place in the time of the judges. We can read about this time in Judges 21:25, *"In those days [there was] no king in Israel: every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes."* Adultery, idolatry and apostasy from the faith prevailed all over; there existed absolute anarchy and lawlessness.

The book of Ruth begins, *"Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land."* (Ruth 1:1) Famine is one of the three methods God uses to call His people to repentance, as we read in 2 Samuel 24:12, 13, *"Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three [things]; choose thee one of them, that I may [do it] unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."* The Lord gives His people three tough lessons: famine, persecution and pestilence; surely a very hard choice. In this case, the Lord does not ask them what they prefer, but He sends a famine.

*"And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man [was] Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there."* (Ruth 1:1, 2)

Moab was not far from Bethlehem. It was on the other bank of the Jordan. The Moabites were related to the Israelites, since Moab was the result of the incest between Lot and his daughter. There was a law in Israel that up to the tenth generation the Moabites could not be part of the people of God. The god of the Moabites was Chemoch to whom human sacrifices were brought. The Moabites had also tried to bribe a prophet from Israel, Balaam, to curse God's people. This is the country Elimelech, whose name means "my God is king", chose to go and live, in order to escape God's corrective lesson to His people. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, the city where the Redeemer of the world, according to prophecy, was supposed to be born, *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting."* (Micah 5:2).

Ephrata means fruitful place and Bethlehem- house of bread.

None of the blessings we have should be taken for granted. Let us be thankful for what God, in His grace, gives us today and be ready to accept anything that may come with a thankful heart. Job gives us an example with his attitude toward misfortune: *"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."* (Job 1:21)

God had brought a test upon His people and this family tries to flee from it. They set their material needs above their spiritual principles and went to dwell in the enemy's territory- a pagan country, in order to

survive. But what happens? *“And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one [was] Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”* (Ruth 1:3-5)

What they feared would happen due to the famine in their own land happened to them in the land of plenty. Our life does not depend merely on bread. Now Naomi is left alone with her two daughters-in-law, who do not know the living God. What loneliness and pain! What can she do? *“Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.”* (Ruth 1:6) Is it only bread what motivates Naomi to move?

*“Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.”* (Ruth 1:7)

It seems that Naomi’s daughters-in-law are closer to her than to their own families. There is something in Naomi that they do not find in their own people and in their religion. Surely Naomi had spoken to them about her God and her people. She led a completely different kind of life from the rest of the inhabitants of Moab, so the young women’s spirit was awoken to another kind of hunger: for spiritual food.

*“And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother’s house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each [of you] in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? [are] there yet [any more] sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go [your way]; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, [if] I should have a husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands?*

*nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.”* (Ruth 1:13-18) The many experiences in a foreign country have not helped Naomi to be a spiritual believer. She thinks of the material condition of her daughters-in-law; they should remarry and it is better for them to find a man among their people, even if he is a pagan. What a testimony does Naomi give about her own God? *“The hand of the Lord is gone out against me.”* He is a punishing God who oppresses His children. Naomi does not take upon herself the responsibilities of her own decisions, but accuses God.

*“And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.”* (Ruth 1:14) Orpah is weak and since she does not find any support or encouragement in her mother-in-law, she follows her advice and remains in Moab.

So Naomi says to Ruth, *“Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.”* (Ruth 1:15) In other words, “Go back to worship Chemoch- there is no difference between your god and mine.” Do not many believers think the same today? It does not seem to be the Holy Spirit that is the One to inspire the words of Naomi.

*“And Ruth said, Entreat 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: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, [if ought] but death part thee and me.”* (Ruth 1:16, 17)

But the Holy Spirit is surely and steadily working in the heart of Ruth and she is convinced that in Israel the thirst of her soul will be quenched. *“Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.”* She is ready to leave everything behind in order to know the true God and to serve Him: her country, her family, her tradition and her chance of ever getting married again. Jesus said, *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”* (Matthew 19:29)

Ruth knows in her heart that her loss can only be a gain.

*“When she (Naomi) saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”* (Ruth 1:18) Steadfastly-minded! What an important trait of character! She knows what she wants and is determined to obtain it.

*“So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that, and they said, [Is] this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why [then] call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?”* (Ruth 1:19-21)

Many people have survived the famine; they went through the trial with faith and made great experiences with God who preserved their lives.

*“ All the city was moved about them.”* The people of God are a large family and whenever someone is away the other ones do not forget him, they miss him and think and pray for him. There is great joy among the people of Bethlehem to see Naomi coming back. Instead of taking part in this joy and of praising the Lord who has protected her along the way and brought her safely back, Naomi complains and expresses all her bitterness. She is to be called Mara – Bitterness, instead of Naomi, Lovely. Naomi is a typical pessimist and can see nothing good in her life experience. Once again, everything is God’s fault. We can see in Naomi no new birth to a spiritual life in the Lord. A person who thinks only in material things and benefits and is focused only on herself and her own family has no room for the Lord in her heart.

But, have we maybe judged Naomi and her family too hard? Could it not be that this family was an instrument in God’s hands to bring Ruth out of that pagan country and set her free from her tradition and false belief? How could otherwise this sincere soul that longed for the knowledge of the living God come in contact with His people?

It can be that Elimelech, whose name was “my God is king”, was inspired by His Lord to make that move. A whole family can be a

wonderful testimony of the true God in a heathen land just by living according to the principles of heaven. Is that not also our mission, to be a light in this dark world? It is certainly our privilege. The children of God who are instruments of His grace are used by Him to be a blessing wherever they may be sent: like Joseph was in the land of Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, the young girls in Assyria, at Naaman's home, and Jesus Christ in the world.

No, Naomi could not have been such a carnal believer otherwise she would not have had such an influence upon her daughters-in-law. Could it not be that when she told them to go back to their people and their god she was trying their faith and their real interest in knowing the true God?

When Bartimeus, the blind man from Jericho, heard that Jesus was going by, he called, "Thou, son of David, have mercy on me", but Jesus did not stop. The multitude that followed Jesus rebuked him and told him to shut up, but the poor blind man, who knew what he wanted and that this might be his only chance, screamed at the top of his voice; "Thou, son of David, have mercy on me." Only then did Jesus stop and he was healed. The blind man's faith had been tried and he passed the test.

The Canaanite woman, who came to Jesus when He visited Tyre and Sidon, said to Him: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, [thou] son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." (Matthew 15:22, 23) Does Jesus reject anyone who comes to him in search of help? No, He does not, but He tries his faith, his desire to be set free, to be cleansed and redeemed. That is why He says, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (15:24) Does the woman now go away convinced that she has no right? No, she falls at Jesus' feet and says, "Lord, help me." Does Jesus' heart melt and immediately respond to her plea? No, the test continues, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast [it] to dogs." (15:26) What an offence! Does the woman go away hurt and angry? No, she believes Jesus is the loving, merciful and almighty Son of God and she says, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Jesus then

answers, "O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Now let us see Naomi not as a simple person, but as God's instrument.

"Go, return each to her mother's house... The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each [of you] in the house of her husband." (Ruth 1:8, 9)

The two young women cry; they do not want to go back. Naomi emphasizes that she cannot give them a husband and they will remain widows all their lives. She wants something better for them. Orpah is finally convinced that it will be a great loss to go to Bethlehem, but Ruth insists she still wants to go.

"Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law." (Ruth 1:15) In other words, "you will be the only Moabitess among us, a foreigner, all alone. Follow the example of your sister in law."

Ruth, who had no roots on this world, says, totally determined, "thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God." (Ruth 1:16) What can Naomi say about Ruth? The same thing Jesus said about the Canaanite woman, "O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

The seed of the Gospel is sown on many types of grounds, "And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture... They on the rock [are they], which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke 8:6,13) Is this not the case of Orpah? The dialogue with Naomi was this "time of temptation", the test of her faith.

"And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. ... But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [it], and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:8, 15.) This is certainly the case of Ruth.

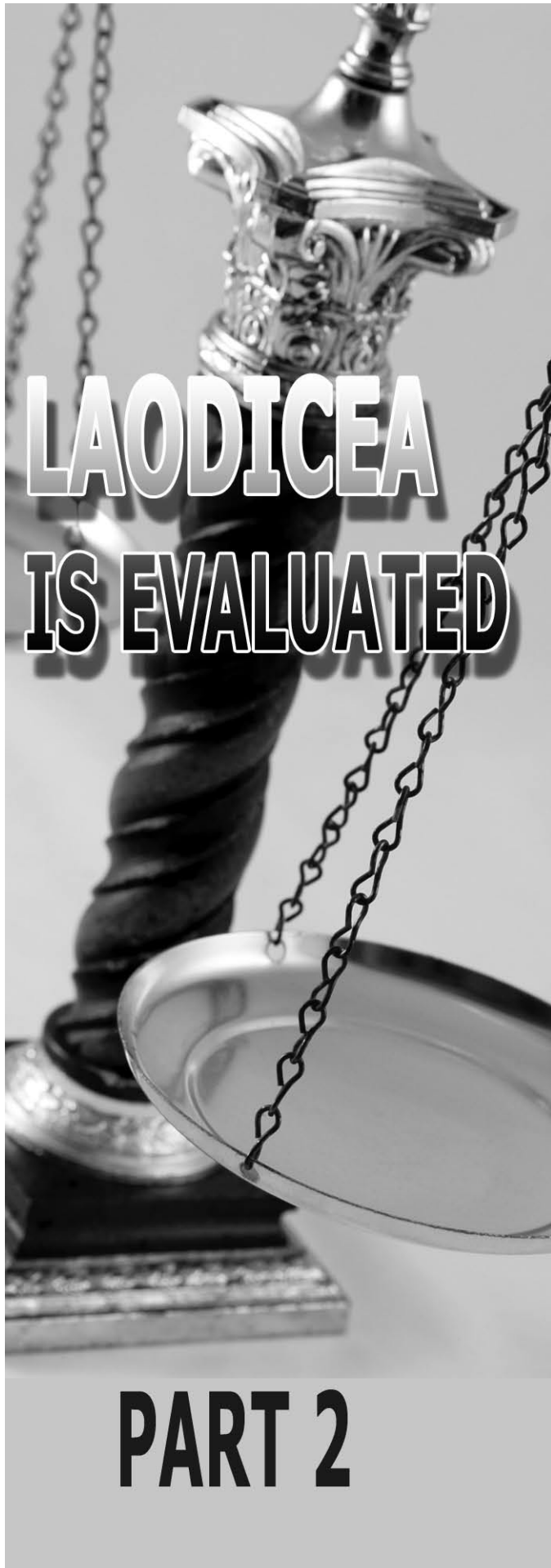
On what kind of ground has the seed of the gospel fallen in our particular case? Have we already left everything to follow Jesus or are we still holding tightly to a certain wish or dream of the flesh?

The story goes on with wonderful lessons about the plan of salvation, but what we can learn from this first part is how our life can be a testimony and lead souls to Jesus and how our conversation can have a great influence upon other people. But also, even if all what we say is wrong, the Lord can still use it to fulfil His plan, if the love of God is in our hearts.

Among the people of God there are many Marthas and Marys, many Ruths and Naomis and Jesus loves them all. If any of us acknowledges that she is a Naomi type, let her remember what happened when the people of Israel were in the wilderness and the water was bitter. "The Lord showed him [Moses] a tree, [which] when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." (Exodus 15:25). In 1 Peter 2:24, we can read: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." This tree (wood in the Greek version) is the cross. Only when the cross enters our life will the bitterness of our past experiences become sweet. May the Lord help us to follow Paul's advice, "let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith" (Hebrews 12:1, 2). **Amen.**

**Teresa Corti**





*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Revelation 3: 15 – 16*

Have you ever bitten down on some grapes, thinking they were seedless, and they were not? What did you do? You spit out the seed and the little pieces of seeds that had gotten chewed up, didn't you? And you felt a kind of relief when you had gotten rid of those seeds that you weren't expecting.

In the days of the New Testament, people hadn't yet learned how to produce seedless grapes or oranges. So when they came to seeds, they were expecting them. But they spit them out just the same. Consequently, the phrase "to spit out" or "to spue out" something became a way of saying you rejected that thing. To spit out something meant to reject it. That is the meaning of what Jesus says to Laodicea.

To those who are indifferent at this time, Christ's warning is: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Revelation 3: 16). The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His Word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you. (6T:408).

Here is the problem. Jesus says our works are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. He says He wishes we were either hot or cold. In other words, if we were hot, he would be happy. If we were cold, He would be able to correct that. But lukewarmness, He cannot abide. This is because both hot works and cold works are natural, but lukewarm works are not. What do I mean?

The flesh is sinful, so the natural thing for the flesh to produce is – what? Sin! When you and I commit sin, we are simply acting according to our natures, which are sinful.

Likewise, when the Spirit lives in us, it is natural for the Spirit to do righteousness. John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (1John 3:9). The new life that begins when the Holy Spirit lives in us does not sin, because the Spirit naturally does righteousness. So hot works are the natural result of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. And cold works are the natural result of the flesh. But lukewarm works are *not* natural either to the flesh or to the Spirit. Therefore, when the flesh, which is sinful, pretends to be good through self-righteousness, such works are hypocritical and unnatural.

Before we consider why Christ rejects lukewarm works so strongly, let's look in more detail at exactly what lukewarm works really are. And in order to do that, let's see first what lukewarm works are *not*.

When Jesus tells us that our works are lukewarm, He is not saying that sometimes our works are hot and sometimes they are cold, so on average they are lukewarm. Some Adventists believe that this is the substance of Jesus accusation against Laodicea. They believe He adds up the total picture of her works – some hot and some cold – and the average is only a lukewarm condition.

That is not at all what Jesus is saying. He is saying, "All the time all your works are lukewarm." It's not that some are hot and some are cold; everything Laodicea is doing is lukewarm. We need to keep this important point in mind.

Second, some Adventists understand Laodicea's lukewarmness as a particular point in a process of moving from being hot to being cold. In the early days, they say, our church used to be hot. Our pioneers worked hard and sacrificed themselves and their possessions. But as we became a larger, more popular church, we became lukewarm. Once we were hot, but we are moving toward being cold. Right now, we are sort of in-between, we have cooled off until we are only lukewarm and need revival.

Those who understand Laodicea's lukewarmness in this way use Revelation 2:4, 5 to support the idea. "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent." The problem with using Revelation 2:4, 5 is that these verses are from Christ's message to the church at Ephesus, not Laodicea. Christ doesn't say to the Laodicean church, "You were once hot, but now have become lukewarm. Be careful, or I will spit you out." No. Christ says to Laodicea, "You are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm." Lukewarmness is Laodicea's chronic condition.

We can't apply Christ's message to Ephesus to our condition as Laodicea. It's true that the pioneers of this movement worked hard and sacrificed themselves. But what about the works they were doing – were they works of faith (hot works) or works of law (lukewarm works)? The evidence from Seventh-day Adventist history suggests that, like us, some of the early leaders of this church became trapped in a subtle form of legalism – that is, of lukewarm works.

In 1874, Uriah Smith, editor of *The Review and Herald* (it is called the *Adventist Review* today), published a four-month series of articles titled "Leading Doctrines of the Review." The articles had much to say about the law but *nothing* about justification by faith, which is the foundation of hot works.

Three years later, James White and Uriah Smith held a "Bible Institute" in Battle Creek, Michigan. This was a series of lectures for Adventist ministers, focusing on the Bible. The purpose was to train these pastors to go out and preach the three angels' messages more effectively. These lectures were later published, and once more, there was no mention made of justification by faith. The following year,

1878, Uriah Smith published a 336-page book, *Synopsis of Present Truth*. Again, this summary of the Adventist message contained no mention of justification by faith or of righteousness by faith. You can see why Christians of other faiths began to accuse Adventists of being legalists as they noted our focus on law and our neglect of righteousness by faith. It was in this context that Ellen White wrote, "We have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboah that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching." (*Review and Herald*, 11 March 1890).

So when Jesus accuses us of being lukewarm, this is what He is talking about – works of the law, legalism, attempting to obey the law in our own strength in order to be saved, doing good things for the wrong reasons. And He warns us, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Revelation 3:16)! This lukewarmness will cause Christ to reject us!

Why? Are lukewarm works bad works? Are they the same as works of the flesh (sin)? Not outwardly. Why then, is God so opposed to lukewarm works? Here are four reasons that self-righteousness, works of the law, are so nauseating to Christ that He will have to spit us out if we remain lukewarm.

**1. Hypocrisy.** In the past studies we saw that our flesh, that is, our fallen human natures, are 100 percent sinful (see Romans 7:18). Therefore, when we try in the flesh to be good, when in our own strength we try to imitate God and His righteousness, that is "hypocrisy". Paul calls it "a fair shew in the flesh" (Galatians 6:12). In the Galatian church, the issue was circumcision; for us, the issue could be Sabbath keeping, dress, diet, or any one of many things. But the principle is the same. The flesh is trying to be good and to show others how good it can be.

Matthew 23 is dealing with what Jesus thinks of self-righteousness, works of the law. In this chapter, He is evaluating the Pharisees, who were experts at works of the law. He told the people, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works." (verses 2, 3). In other words,

Jesus recognized the scribes and Pharisees as the authorities in interpreting Moses' law; they were the experts. The Pharisees were extremely zealous regarding the law of Moses.

Jesus did not argue with the religious leaders regarding the law. They were teaching good things. He even told the people to observe what their leaders told them to do (see verse 3). But He warned the people *not to do as their leaders did*. Why? The problem was not with the Pharisees' understanding of the law, but with the motive behind their works. "All their works" Jesus said, "they do for to be seen of men." (verse 5). What they were doing was good, but *why* were they doing it? They were doing it as a way of saying "See how good I am!" They wanted everyone to see. Jesus called them "hypocrites" and "blind guides." (verses 13 – 16). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (verses 27, 28).

This attitude of the Pharisees and scribes may also be our attitude as well. Ellen White tells us:

*"We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus. (Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, so he was a first-class Pharisee), that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are, we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. (Steps to Christ, 28, 29).*

We all face this problem of self-righteousness in different forms. Satan will encourage the flesh to raise its ugly head wherever possible. Notice Ellen White is dealing in this statement with *motive*, not with the outward action itself. She says, "We shall discern the selfishness of motive."

We need to ask ourselves, "Why am I doing the things that I do?" For example, do I go out and work hard giving Bible studies because I want to share God's truth with

others? Or because I want to impress the church? Or because I want to impress God? Or because I think it will help ensure my salvation? Am I performing works of faith or works of the law? That's the question. What is the source of the works that I do – the Spirit or the flesh?

Obviously, we cannot determine another person's motive for what he or she does. That is why we must never judge each other. We have enough difficulty understanding our own motives. One way to discover if your own motives are selfish is to ask yourself: "When I'm successful in God's work, do I have a tendency to look down on those who are having failures?" Be warned; this is the flesh trying to tell you how good you are! The flesh doesn't want to give the Holy Spirit the glory, because the flesh is the enemy of the Spirit.

The first reason, then, that God rejects self-righteousness, or works of the law, is because the motive is all wrong. We may be doing the right things, but for the wrong reasons. The Jews in Jesus' day were keeping the Sabbath. In fact, they were very strict and had all sorts of rules to make sure they didn't desecrate God's holy day. But they kept the Sabbath from selfish motives – so that they might be saved and so that God would bless them.

**2. Unbelief.** The second reason self-righteousness is so nauseating to Christ is that in reality it is based on unbelief. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5).

If you say, "No, God, You're wrong; I *can* do something good", then are you exhibiting belief in Him or unbelief? Clearly, you are exhibiting unbelief. Let me give you some examples. When, shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus said to the disciples, "All of you will forsake Me this night" (see Matthew 26: 30 – 35), did they agree? No. What were they guilty of? Unbelief.

When God showed Peter that the gospel was not only for Jews but for Gentiles also, did Peter agree? No. God had to tell him, "What I have cleansed, don't ever call unclean." (see Acts 9-16). God was correcting Peter's unbelief.

Any time we deny God's verdict on the flesh, we are exhibiting unbelief. That is exactly what is happening in Laodicea's

reaction to Christ's message. The True Witness says that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". What is Laodicea's response? "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." (Revelation 3:17). Who is right? Is Jesus telling the truth about us, or do you believe that He is making a mistake? We may admit with the lips that Jesus is correct, but our temptation is to point to our glowing reports of the works that we do and say, "But our works are so good".

What did Jesus mean when He told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6)? Was He not saying, "Let me tell you the fact, Nicodemus. Your flesh, your sinful human nature, can never produce righteousness." We can only have righteousness if we are born from above of the Spirit, and it is Christ's righteousness, not ours.

No matter how good our works of the law may appear in our sight, we must remember that they are always based on unbelief. Whenever the flesh tries to do something that God has said it cannot do, we are saying, in effect, "God, You are a liar". And that is unbelief. That is why works of the law are always based on unbelief.

**3. Selfishness.** Paul says. Love *agape* "seeketh not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). There is no selfishness in *agape*. Therefore, if we do anything from a selfish motive, we are in opposition to the principle of *agape* love, the true motivation for all works of faith. Peter came to Jesus once and said, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matthew 19:27). Why did Peter forsake all? Was that a work of the law or a work of faith? His motive was selfish; he believed that Jesus would overthrow the Romans, and he wanted to be one of the top cabinet ministers in the new government. He forsook everything to follow Jesus, but his motive was a selfish one, and thus his sacrifice was a work of the law.

How can we be sure? Because when Jesus came to wash Peter's feet in the upper room, Peter said, "You will never wash my feet".

Now, Jesus knew Peter's heart, so He said, "If I don't wash your feet, you will have no part in My kingdom." To Peter, this meant that he would not have part with Jesus.

"Oh", Peter said, in effect, "in that case, wash not only my feet, but my head and my hands, because I want to have a part with you."

Works of the law may appear good on the outside, but they are devoid of *agape*. They are based on selfish motives, and therefore they are as filthy rags to God (see Isaiah 64:6). "Love to God is the very foundation of religion. To engage in His service merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment would avail nothing." (PP 523).

**4. Denying Christ.** The final reason that Christ is nauseated by works of the law is because they deny Christ as our righteousness. Paul emphatically told the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." (Galatians 5:4). What was the problem in the Galatian church? Was it the same problem the Jews were having? No. The Jews wanted salvation entirely by their own works. The Galatian Christians fell for another of Satan's traps. It was legalism, to be sure, but it was a subtle form of legalism. The Galatians fell for the idea that it isn't enough to accept Christ as our righteousness. We must also contribute to His righteousness by keeping the law – in their case, by being circumcised. In other words, the Galatian problem was the idea: "I am saved by faith *plus* works."

Ellen White speaks to this issue specifically, "Should faith plus works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth." (*Faith and Works*, 20). This is where the Roman Catholic Church has gone wrong. The Catholic Church teaches that a person is saved by faith plus penance. Ellen White says that if we add works to our faith, we are no different from the Catholics who add penance to confession.

Both imputed righteousness (justification) and imparted righteousness (sanctification) must be all of Christ. The world needs to see not us, but Christ living in us and through us. Only when Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit will we do the works of Christ from the motive of pure *agape* love. Then the world will be lightened with God's glory (see Revelation 18). And that is Christ's real objective in giving the Laodicean message. May it be realized soon! **Amen**

**Anonymous**

# THE MERCY SHIP

One day while I was living in High Prairie, Alberta, I went to a prayer before my Lord, and asked, “What is it like to be in a ship in the middle of the sea?”

Knowing that my Bible says in James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Thus I fell asleep, and had a dream. In my dream I saw a man named Jesus come to my door, and invite me to go for a free ship ride; which I gladly accepted.

It was free because Jesus paid the debt in full. There were many other families invited to the Mercy Ship who were also going through difficult times, as I was.

When we were gathered together, Jesus assigned everyone of us a certain job according to our ability.

We all gladly accepted Jesus as the Captain of the ship; and then we launched out into the deep and let the shorelines go.

The first few days were smooth sailing, the stars were beautiful at night and everyone felt like kissing, and it was very dark out there.

The Mercy Ship was equipped with its own lighting system, so then we had a good understanding that we are to be shining lights in a dark sinful world; and how beautiful it was.

The Mercy Ship also was very executive style; a very expensive tourist ocean liner, with quality food, and our cabins were like sleeping in a very expensive hotel for scot-free.

Once in a while at night a helicopter would fly around the Mercy Ship, and beam its light on the water, that we could see some

people in the water who got on the wrong ship, going the wrong direction and sank.

All of us, including children, worked together to throw out the lifeline, and saved many, many souls from death.

At these times Jesus would command to anchor, and we would all celebrate for the newcomers; it was happiness that we’ve never experienced before.

Jesus provided them also with a job and a cabin. There was such wonderful unity aboard the Mercy Ship that we all felt like we were all part of the family of God.

Then Jesus commanded everyone to gather together, for He had something to say.

“At midnight tonight we will be sailing through a fierce gale, but fear not for I am with you, again I say fear not for I am with you,” sayeth the Lord.

At about 11:30 p.m. we all knelt in prayer and were ready for whatever was coming our way.

At 12 midnight, the gale was right on time. The wind blew very strong, the waves rose very high, lightning flashed very brightly in the dark black sky, thunder roared all at the same time. This is what it is like to be in a ship in the middle of the ocean.

We all worked together to help man the ship while Jesus stayed at the rudder, for only He knows the way through the storms of life.

None of us were afraid of the gale, even though it lasted a full nine hours; we all worked gladly for Jesus.

The next morning the sun was shining and we were all refreshed and retired to our cabins after a long busy night.

When we were all awake again, Captain Jesus gathered the crew together again, and He preached the gospel to us while He kept the ship under control, and in His message He pointed to the massive amount of water all around us and told us to remember that He said, “My love for you is deeper than the ocean, and wider than the sea.”

After more days of sailing we came to a place called THE HAVEN OF REST; which was truly a wonderful resting place, a very fruitful land where we were all given the fruits of the Holy Spirit as we were able to handle. the name of this land was called Beulah Land, and the residents that lived there and hosted us were all angels.

In this land also there was joy unspeakable and full of glory receiving the end of our faith as Peter mentioned in his epistle—it was true.

It sure would have been nice to live there, but Jesus reminded us that we were only guests, and that at a certain time it was time to return to your own home.

Toward the end of our trip we all exchanged each other’s addresses and phone numbers so we could support each other in brotherly love.

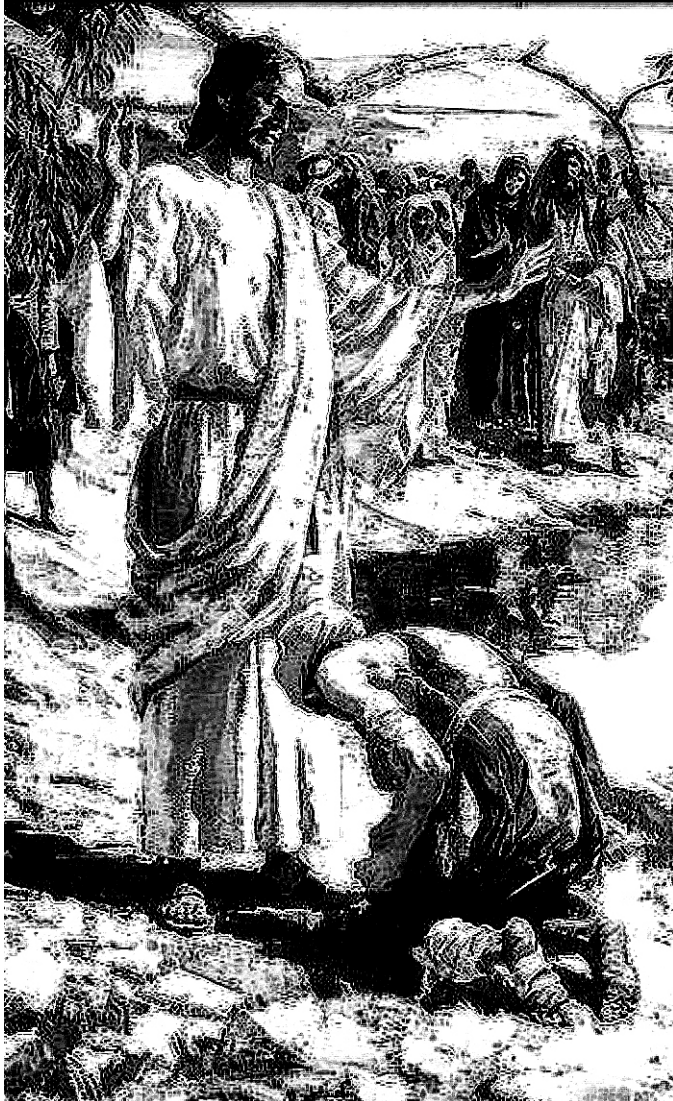
It was very hard for all of us to say goodbye, but it had to be done, and Jesus returned me to my home and left.

I woke up the next morning and worshipped my Blessed Redeemer, with thanksgiving for answering my prayer.

The story is so beautiful I want to share it with everyone. **AMEN.**

*Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada*

# THE SINNER'S NEED OF CHRIST



“When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being, to have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, and new motives. What is the sign of a new heart? A changed life, there is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride.” MYP 72. Isaiah 1:5, 6 “Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

“Pride, ambition, deceit, hatred, selfishness, must be cleansed from the heart. With many these evil traits are partially subdued, but not thoroughly uprooted from the heart. Under favourable circumstances they spring up anew and ripen into rebellion against God. Here lies a terrible danger. To spare any sin is to Christ a foe that only awaits an unguarded moment to cause our ruin.” 5T 175.

## Man's Helpless Condition

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed.” SC 17:1

“Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings... Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven. They are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.” SC 17:2

“But in vain are men's dreams of progress, in vain all efforts for the uplifting of humanity, if they neglect the one Source of hope and help for the fallen race. ‘Every good gift and every perfect gift’ (James 1:17) is from God. There is no true excellence of character apart from Him. And the only way to God is Christ. He says, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.’ John 14:6” SC 21:1.

“Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul—a Saviour. With joy and gratitude he saw revealed a way by which he, a sinner, could be restored to communion with God. The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man.” SC 19:2.

“Oh, let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labour and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father's house.” SC 21:3.



“Shall we not regard the mercy of God? What more could He do? Let us place ourselves in right relation to Him who has loved us with amazing love. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us that we may be transformed into His likeness and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son.” SC 22:1.

### **Leprosy and Sin**

“Of all diseases known in the East the leprosy was most dreaded.” DA 262:1

The sinner is like someone with leprosy, with an incurable and contagious character, unless he finds pardon from the Saviour Jesus Christ; who came and redeemed us from the curse of sin and made provision for our salvation. We need Jesus in our life, Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Job 14:4 says, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one;” so a sinner cannot make himself whole, without Jesus we are like dry bones.

“The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was “full of leprosy.” Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin,—deep-rooted deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power... But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner... It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. Christ ‘gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.’” DA 266

### **“Thou Canst Make Me Clean”**

“‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.’ Jesus replied, ‘I will; be thou made clean,’ and laid His hand upon him.” DA 263. We long for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body

of this death? Romans 7:24 To all, there is but one answer, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. “To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest.” DA 528

In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, undenied. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. Let us acknowledge our sins and seek for Christ. “And the same power that gave life to the body had renewed the

heart. He who at the creation “spake, and it was,” who “commanded, and it stood fast,” (Ps. 33:9) had spoken life to soul dead in trespasses and sins. The healing of the body was an evidence of the power that had renewed the heart.” DA 269-270

May the Lord open our eyes and our minds to enable us to feel our guilt and turn to the Lord for eternal salvation. *AMEN.*

*Anthony Cedric Adjei, Ghana*  
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## **HIDDEN WAYS TO HELP YOUR HEART**

The good news about heart disease-North America’s No 1 killer- is that a healthy heart is within everybody’s reach. We already know some of the rules: Eat less fat; eat more fruits and vegetables; and keep blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels in check. But there are more ways to boost heart health.

### **DON’T SKIP BREAKFAST.**

Most heart attacks occurs between 7 am and noon -possibly because the cells that help blood to clot called platelets, are stickiest then. Eating breakfast appears to make the platelets less sticky... and less likely to clump together.

### **LIGHTEN UP.**

People who over react to stressful situations are more likely to have heart trouble. In one study, people whose blood pressure and heart rates jumped the most during frustrating tests were also the ones most likely to have reduced blood flow to the heart.

### **MEET THE “A’S”.**

You may have heard about the antioxidant Vitamins A, C, E and Beta-carotene - that appears to slow plaque formation in the Arteries.

### **KICK TOBACCO IF YOU ARE USING IT.**

Smoking affects more that your lungs. Fact is, within a few years of quitting, you will cut your risk of a heart attack by at least half, similar to those who have never smoked.

### **GET OFF THE COUCH.**

Sedentary living – not high cholesterol – is one of the greatest risk factors in heart attacks. Tip: just a half an hour of moderate physical activity most days of the week can deliver fitness benefits similar to traditional exercise routines. So walk briskly. Take the stairs. Play actively with kids. Live longer

# HEALTH MATTERS:

## GRINDING TEETH, ACHING HEAD

A 35-year-old woman went to her doctor with the complaint that she was waking up with headaches every morning. Her temples throbbed and her face and neck muscles hurt. Her doctor asked her if she was aware of clenching her jaw or grinding her teeth during the night. She said that she wasn't but that her jaw felt tired and stiff when she woke up.

An examination quickly revealed the source of her problem. When the doctor pressed the appropriate facial, head and neck muscles, she felt the same sort of pain that plagued her in the mornings. Her teeth were far too worn for someone her age, and the wear patterns were abnormal. The diagnosis: chronic teeth grinding and clenching, also known as bruxism, which played a role in her muscle pain and chronic tension-type headaches.

The case of this “parafunctional” jaw activity—unrelated to the normal use of the jaw and mouth for chewing and talking—remains a mystery, though there is some evidence that it may be connected to psychological or physical stress. Psychological factors which can cause bruxism is anxiety, stress or tension, often from suppressed anger or frustration, or those who have aggressive personalities. Whatever the cause, many people grind or clench their teeth without ill effect. Only an unfortunate minority will develop the muscle pain and headaches that afflict some people. It is unclear why this is so; it

may have to do with individual anatomical or genetic factors, or sleeping habits.

Bruxism usually occurs during sleep, even during short naps. In a typical case, the teeth move against each other in a side-to-side action. Untreated bruxism can ruin fillings, destroy tooth enamel, remove the sharp biting surfaces of the teeth, and flatten the tooth edges. The destruction of tooth enamel exposes the softer dentine of the tooth and will worsen the abrasion of the tooth, which can lead to dental decay. It can also loosen, cause chips in, or even fracture teeth, and stress the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), which connects the lower jaw to the skull. Tooth sensitivity to cold and hot is also a sign of bruxism. In some people, gum recession and damage to the tissues on the inside of the cheek is also evident. The pressure exerted by bruxism on the teeth is very high. Bruxism may also set off migraines in people whose trigger is muscle tension.

### An Unconscious Habit

The main barrier to diagnosis is the fact that people may have no idea that they grind or clench their teeth because it usually happens when they are asleep. Often, the first indication of a problem comes when the scraping sound disturbs a bed partner. But some people are clencher without being grinders; they're tougher to spot because they don't make any noise. Occasionally, people grind or clench their

teeth unconsciously while awake. What usually leads sufferers to a dentist is the vague awareness that their symptoms seem to be centered on their teeth and jaws.

A dentist's work-up for suspected cases of bruxism starts with a thorough review of the patient's symptoms. The patient is asked to keep a pain and headache diary for a month in hopes of discerning a pattern to the symptoms. Pain in the jaw, face, ear or head on awakening strongly suggests nighttime bruxism. The dentist will look for abnormal tooth wear, and will press on the head and neck muscles involved in bruxism. If the patient reports that this replicates his or her usual pain, it indicates that the cause is bruxism. To confirm the diagnosis, the dentist may inject a local anesthetic or use a chilling spray to temporarily numb a particular muscle or muscle group to see if that stops the pain.

### Multiple Treatments Needed

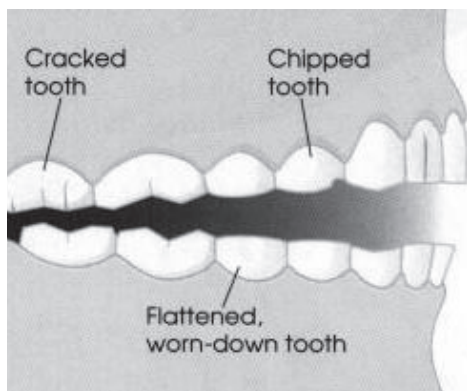
Treating bruxism can be a challenge because it is an unconscious behaviour that often happens during sleep. Bruxism is caused by the normal reflex activity of chewing when asleep, and in most cases is mild and does not require treatment. The more severe cases need intervention to prevent further tooth damage. Dentists will prescribe an occlusal guard—a custom-molded hard-plastic appliance that covers the tops of all the teeth in either the upper or lower jaw. The occlusal guard at a minimum stops the

wear and tear on the patient's teeth, and may also reduce the TMJ and muscle stress that lead to facial pain and headache.

For patients who have numerous painful and tense muscles, physical therapy should be prescribed.

If those treatments still haven't done the job, patients should receive stress-reduction and relaxation techniques. Often getting stress management counselling will stop the problem. Doing relaxation exercises or meditating before sleep will help relieve the tension that causes bruxism.

Daytime bruxism is much easier to treat once the patient becomes aware of what may have been an unconscious habit. Often, all it takes is cognitive awareness of the abnormal jaw activity and a little bit of behavioural training, by practicing proper mouth and jaw positioning. Concentrate on resting your tongue upwards with your teeth apart and your lips closed. This should keep your teeth from grinding and your jaw from clenching.



# WORSHIP

## What is real worship?

I believe that it can be described as the wonder we feel before the beauty, splendour, majesty, power, holiness, and boundless love of God. The man who cannot feel wonder is incapable of worshiping. Worship will be but a vain and idle ritual to him who is not moved to wonder by everyday common things. Are you filled with a sense of gratitude when you watch a vermilion sunset? Do your eyes open wide at the sight of a lark winging its way toward a fleecy white cloud? Does the morning dew thrill you? Are you moved by the regular coming of night and day? If you do not habitually feel wonder in the face of the world and its splendours, chances are you will never fall on your knees and send up to God a song of praise.

The instinct of worship is inbred in man. Even uncivilized tribes worship, and this can be a dangerous point, for if we do not worship God, then a vacuum is created in our lives, and this vacuum will somehow be filled—by a Hitler or by some tyrannical idea. Man was created for worship on the most exalted plane, and any perversion or degradation of that worship can only result in a deplorable state of existence. There is no substitute for worshiping God. How could there be? It would not be logical to raise our voice in thanksgiving and adoration to someone who had nothing to do with the endless procession of gifts that are ours to cherish.

Whenever God's goodness overwhelms us, and whenever the wonder of His works silences our shattered hopes and worries, then we are close to worship. In wonder, all our knowledge begins, and in wonder all our knowledge ends. The first wonder springs from ignorance, but the last flows from admiration, adoration, and praise for the bountiful blessings and the undeserved goodness God gives each of us day by day.

One of my village pastors, Ramasamy, says he wishes that all churchgoers could stand in the pulpit on a Sabbath day morning and watch the faces in the congregation during the sermon.

Although most people seem to give the minister their attention, many have their minds elsewhere.

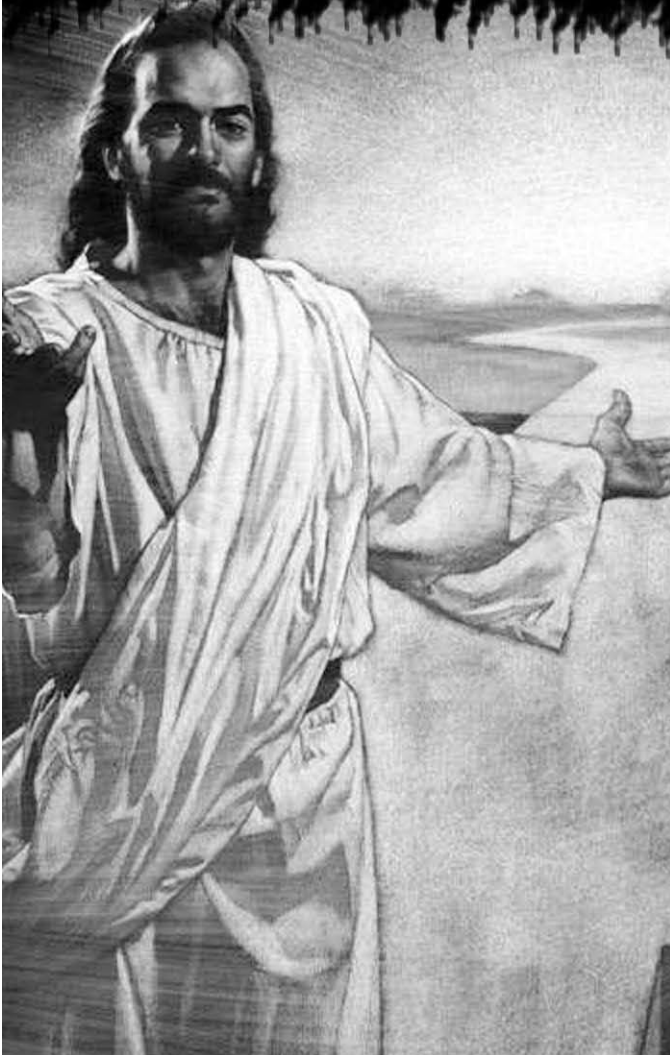
To receive the greatest benefit from a church service, we must prepare our hearts and become active participants. We must become wholeheartedly involved in singing the hymns, silently praying as the pastor leads the congregation in prayer, and worshiping from the heart as the choir sings.

Finally, we need to discipline ourselves to listen intently with a receptive heart to the teaching of God's word. We must develop a hunger for truth that quiets our spirits, inspires worship, evokes praise to God, and moves us to serve Him.

It is very easy to blame the pastor if we leave the service feeling empty and discouraged, but he is just one participant; we must do our part. Those who get the most out of worship are those who put the most into it. The true heart of worship is worship from the heart. This will make our church a powerhouse in the future. To acknowledge this and thank God for it—that is real worship!

*Xavior Chelliah*

# THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD



Do you ever wonder at times if you'll ever be saved? As the realities of God's greatness and his true aspects of living come up before you, do you see yourself far gone in your past ways of actions and living? Do you ever wonder whether you're going to make it? This is nothing unusual. Even the disciple's were under that dilemma.

Matthew 19:25, 26. "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed saying, who then can be saved? Jesus beheld them and said unto them, with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

The answer that Jesus gives to an over whelming sense is very important to us.

There was such an occasion where it dawned upon the disciples, if God's ways are like that, then who can be saved? You and I will come frequently face to face with new dimensions of God's truth. It will make you shrivel with the reality is that it is impossible to be saved with man. This will come across your conscience.

Jesus comes back with the affirmation that with God all things are possible. Jesus qualifies what He means;

John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

With man to be saved is impossible. This is life eternal, this is how you're going to be saved says Jesus, by the knowledge of God. This is our only hope of salvation, to know God. If this is the only way of our salvation, won't we come to terms with this and realize what our focus then should be?

I was marking bible lessons through the week and the question was asked, how can you conquer the evil one and be saved, the answer was, "try harder and work hard at it."

Isn't that the typical human answer? I've got to try hard to be saved, there is a fragment of truth in that. Jesus says strive to enter. No matter how hard you try, you're not going to improve your prospects. It's only by the knowledge of God.

Wouldn't you then make it your first priority, the real purpose of your life to really know God? If that is going to give me eternal life, then I want to know him.

Jeremiah 9:23-24. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

If to be saved is impossible with you and me, and the only way is the through the knowledge of God, then this must be my priority.

Jesus said, we are to gain eternal life by knowing God and Jesus Christ. We often try by our own efforts to gain salvation; we pride ourselves in our own accomplishments and give ourselves the glory for the gain. God says this is not what we need to glory in. We must stop trying to pursue this method.

If you want to be saved and glory in anything, glory in the fact that you know God. That is the only glory you should pursue as that is going to bring you eternal life. God promises this.

Ephesians 1:17, 18. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. "

We can know what is the hope of our salvation. To know God.

That you may understand God and that you might know him, this is the prayer, this is the object of our life on this sin riddled planet. There is nothing else that can release us from sin and destruction on this earth.

This is the question, is it possible to know God? Doesn't the Scripture say he is past finding out? Doesn't Scripture say man can not find God by searching? To know and to understand God is only possible by one avenue. Jesus made it quite clear. No man cometh to the father but by me.

Matthew 11:25 – 27. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee oh father Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save The Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

This is the simple answer to the discovery of knowing God. No man knows God the father but Jesus. Jesus knows the father through and through. He is part of him; he knows all the deep things of the father. Did you notice? You need to know God through Jesus Christ. No man knoweth the father but the son, or the son but the father and him to whom the son will reveal him.

How will you get to know God? Only by the revelation of Jesus Christ. If you want to know God, you need to have God revealed to you. This is what I love about Revelation. Some people study

Revelation to know prophecy, that is a short understanding of Revelation. If you will study the Revelation, you will discover God as Jesus reveals the father to us.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. You are to have a revelation of the mind of Jesus. What does it say about the Holy Spirit? That we may know the deep things of God.

As we through the spirit are illuminated with God and we come to know him, what will this affect in our life? The big problem is that we see ourselves as we really are. I can never change, I can never be saved because according to the word, I must be holy before he comes, and it will never happen. With man it is impossible, with God all things are possible.

How is it that through knowledge of God we will be saved when in fact you get to know God through the Holy Spirit? What will happen? As you know him?

II Corinthians 3:18. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

What will happen, as you come to know God? We are changed to the same image. You will see his personality, glory, and character. As you look upon it, it's a law of the mind, that which you behold, you become.

So, that which is impossible, the belief that you'll never be able to change, becomes possible with God. Because by beholding him, you will change. What do you spend your time looking at? If you don't spend much time looking at the character of God you'll never be saved. You can try as hard as you like to keep those commandments; it's impossible without looking to God. As you keep looking to Jesus and God, what will happen?

"As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master. By beholding by "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," he becomes changed

into the same image. It is not by looking away from him that we imitate the life of Jesus, but by talking of him, by dwelling upon his perfections, by seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character, by trying, through faith and love, and by earnest, persevering effort, to approach the perfect Pattern." {RH, March 15, 1887 par. 12}

Indeed if you keep looking at God, you'll see the depraved condition you are in. That's not all you are to be looking at Him for. You are to keep looking. Many people see the vision and look away, as they don't like what they are seeing. They say; I see so much depravity, but don't stop looking, keep on looking. That is the answer to be saved. The reverse will take place as you keep looking. The evil will be burnt out of your life. The good will be established.

We will now seek for the Lord to imprint upon us His mind. So we can worship him in spirit and in truth. For the initial revealing of God in his word, let us cast the eye of our understanding back to the fall of Lucifer. Discover what God really is like. Right back, when sin first arrived in the heart of Lucifer. We remember this bright, perfect angel right next to God. He saw God, right next to the throne as a covering cherub. As we see how sin arose in him. Look at God's reaction to Lucifer and study it carefully.

"The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants.

But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love. {PP 36.2}

That's what God revealed to the angels. That Jesus the Son of God was actually God himself. He showed that. Although they saw him as the archangel, he now revealed to them, the eternal self-existent one, encircled once.

So here was Lucifer. He was already confused in himself. Sin had already taken root in his heart and now God in his wonderful love, met with all his hosts, Lucifer among them. As he unveiled the reality of the Son of God before them notice:

"The angels joyfully acknowledged the supremacy of Christ, and prostrating themselves before Him, poured out their love and adoration. Lucifer bowed with them, but in his heart there was a strange, fierce conflict. Truth, justice, and loyalty were struggling against envy and jealousy. The influence of the holy angels seemed for a time to carry him with them. As songs of praise ascended in melodious strains, swelled by thousands of glad voices, the spirit of evil seemed vanquished; unutterable love thrilled his entire being; his soul went out, in harmony with the sinless worshippers, in love to the Father and the Son." PP page 36.

Can you see God's mind? He wanted Lucifer to stop in his track and win him to his heart, and he did. Lucifer had already begun a path that was sinful and God could have cut him off like that. But what did he do? He bought him before the angels and touched his heart with the amazing glory of his personality. This is God.

See how patiently God dealt with Lucifer. This enemy, he dealt with him so patiently. We know that the sad reality was that Lucifer hardened his heart again. Under that wonderful glory when he was being carried away by God's amazing love. What happened with the conflict inside of him?

"But again he was filled with pride in his own glory. His desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged. The high honours conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as God's special gift, and therefore, called forth no

gratitude to his Creator. He glorified in his brightness and exaltation and aspired to be equal with God." P&P. Page 36

He went on in his track and managed to take a third of the angels with him after God had done this wonderful work of patient labour for his soul. But then came the point of no return. He was expelled from heaven. Why did God not destroy Satan and prevent this from happening again?

We have to look at God's character. We have to keep understanding to get to know God. Look at God's character. Look at God and learn so by beholding we might become changed. Lucifer became his enemy and had to be cast out of heaven. Why didn't he destroy him?

"God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not--flattery and deceit. {PP 42.1}

Satan used force and war. God could not do these kinds of things, only Lucifer does that. God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. Notice God's character. Does God condemn anyone? Man's own work must condemn him. This is God. If you can understand what God is like, we want to get to know Him very closely and to be changed into the same image.

"Satan had claimed from the first that he was not in rebellion. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {GC88 498.2}

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in Heaven, infinite wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of his creatures must rest upon a conviction of his justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of Heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan." {GC88 498.3}

God had to wait 7000 years of observation for the universe, for them to see and be convicted in their own hearts that the justice of God is here displayed.

"Had he been immediately blotted from

existence, they would have served God from fear, rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of his law might forever be placed beyond all question." {GC88 498.3}

Did you notice there are several factors here for which God could not destroy the devil and prevent the horror of what we see on this earth? 1) Because God could not employ what Satan employs. 2) Neither could he prevent the demonstration of the nature of the claims of Lucifer. He had to expose himself to the universe. He had to condemn himself by his own actions.

The reality of God's justice and mercy had to be embedded in the mind of the universe so for eternity the same would never arise again. We are looking at God. Look at him in creation with Adam and Eve and God's wonderful plan. After Lucifer was expelled from heaven, God created this earth as he had planned to do. Then we know how Satan had planned to deceive Adam and Eve. Then we see God in action. Adam and Eve had done this terrible sin. Who comes to visit them? God himself.

Genesis 3:15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here is the display of God's character. God would use no arbitrary force to halt the development of the affairs of this earth. He uses no intervention in regards to the choices of his created intelligences. God could have put stops to it all. When you look around today, at life you see danger coming and you can see there is a person doing something wrong, put a stop to him, don't let him do it! Is that our natural response? What is God's response? He can't put a stop to anybody. Everybody has a free choice. He will not stop anyone from exercising his or her free choice.

Study carefully the mind of God. The serpent to multiply their seed and the

church to multiply her seed. God would not put a stop to any ongoing realities. The woman's seed and the serpent's seed would continue. Until a particular point in time where Satan's thoughts will be totally revealed in contrast to God's thoughts. The development of Satan's seed would come to the point that there would be the enmity between the two seeds in Jesus Christ. I would put enmity. Did God arbitrarily put enmity? Jesus throws light on this.

Matthew 10:34. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."

What did Jesus come for? I have not come to send peace. But wasn't he the prince of peace? Can you understand? I will put enmity. How did he put enmity? By revealing Jesus Christ in his character of God would create enmity inside every heart just as God did it in heaven. Lucifer had the conflict in his heart. How did he do it? By revealing to Lucifer and all the angels his character.

Now Jesus comes to this earth and he does the same again. Everyone who looks at Jesus will be warmly bound to him. That's the enmity.

BC Vol 1 page 1085. "What love! What amazing condescension! The King of glory proposed to humble Himself to fallen humanity! He would place His feet in Adam's steps. He would take man's fallen nature, and engage to cope with the strong foe who triumphed over Adam. He would overcome Satan, and in thus doing He would open the way for the redemption from the disgrace of Adam's failure and fall, of all those who would believe on Him."

How did God create enmity against Satan? By this amazing love that Jesus would be sent to this earth to become the woman's seed. What amazing condescension.

As this would dawn upon individuals, the line between good and evil would become accentuated. No longer would Adam and Eve continue with their fear against God. Now they would love him. This is the enmity.

Divine Culture for Christians.--Divine culture brings perfection. If in connection with God the work is carried forward, the human agent, through Christ, will day by day gain victory and honor in the battle.

Through the grace given he will overcome, and will be placed on vantage ground. In his relation to Christ he will be bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, one with Christ in a peculiar relationship, because Christ took the humanity of man. He became subject to temptation, endangering as it were, His divine attributes. Christ in a peculiar relationship, because Christ took the humanity of man. He became subject to temptation, endangering as it were, His divine attributes. Satan sought, by the constant and curious devices of his cunning, to make Christ yield to temptation. Man must pass over the ground over which Christ has passed. As Christ overcame every temptation which Satan brought against Him, so man is to overcome. And those who strive earnestly to overcome are brought into a oneness with Christ that the angels in heaven can never know. {7BC 926.5}

Christ took the humanity of man. Here is the atonement again. What does the atonement create? It creates enmity against the evil one.

Doesn't that melt your heart? How can you hold onto any evil? How can you love it when you let this enmity against evil reveal itself? Jesus and God have such a love to us that he would become one with us and then follow in the steps of Adam and Eve. He would come right up to the time that he experiences all the horror of our lives and come into an intimacy with you and me that not even the angels comprehend. I don't know what God has got left. This is as far as it can go. God's character is beyond human comprehension. Here is the enmity and those who embrace this know very well that they become enmity against others. That's the sword you receive, as you believe this truth. It is anathema to the pride of man!

All your goodness that you can ever claim before God and say here I am, I'm good aren't I, makes you shrivel. Look at Jesus; here he is in an intimate relationship of your total depravity. There's nothing you can bring to God, nothing, you then begin to hate Satan and sin. Then you begin to conquer because you'll be changed into the same image. The same conflict Lucifer had before his eviction will begin to take place in your heart. What was the conflict?

"Lucifer bowed with them, but in his heart there was a strange, fierce conflict. Truth,

justice, and loyalty were struggling against envy and jealousy. The influence of the holy angels seemed for a time to carry him with them. As songs of praise ascended in melodious strains, swelled by thousands of glad voices, the spirit of evil seemed vanquished; unutterable love thrilled his entire being; his soul went out, in harmony with the sinless worshippers, in love to the Father and the Son. But again he was filled with pride in his own glory. His desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged." PP page 36.

Can this not happen in our hearts as we behold God in an amazing demonstration of his love? This was Lucifer's conflict. This is the privilege God brings to Adam and Eve before they sinned, just like Lucifer. In Lucifer's second chance when the conflict of good and evil took place in his heart, he reverted to the evil. You and I are given a chance that Lucifer had. What do you want to do with it? God will not force anyone of us. Isn't he wonderful? Don't you love him? In his effort to help us he could not use Lucifer's ways. He can only use what he is, love. When you look at him like this, can you see God will hold nothing against you? No matter how sinful you are, God will hold nothing against you if you let your heart open to his wonderful love. Jesus came to bring this about in our heart. To see God, God was revealed by Jesus Christ. As we continue to look at him, can you see, the two lessons conveyed here? As you look at the church experience around you, you would do what God would do. You see people around you that are sinful, won't you relate to them as God would? As you embrace the mind of Jesus, you will begin to show the people this amazing glory. In the study of God, there is another detail that becomes evident. Here is another characteristic that comes through with this story. God forces no one.

Matthew 13:24-25. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

God's character is demonstrated by sowing seeds. Seed sowing is God's only labour with minds. The seed that comes up is his method of reward.

Galatians 6:7 & 8. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,

that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

How can you be saved? God sews a seed. With man it is impossible, but God sews a seed. If you receive the seed in your heart, it will germinate and grow and multiply. It depends what you do with the seed or if you permit other things to crowd it out. God builds on the process of seed sowing. If you choose to surrender your heart to the seeds of the evil one, it will multiply the tares.

The teaching of this parable is illustrated in God’s own dealing with men and angels. Satan is a deceiver. When he sinned in heaven, even the loyal angels did not fully discern his character. This was why God did not at once destroy Satan. Had He done so, the holy angels would not have perceived the justice and love of God. A doubt of God’s goodness would have been as evil seed that would yield the bitter fruit of sin and woe. Therefore the author of evil was spared, fully to develop his character. Through long ages God has borne the anguish of beholding the work of evil. He has given the infinite Gift of Calvary, rather than leave any to be deceived by the misrepresentations of the wicked one; for the tares could not be plucked up without

danger of uprooting the precious grain. And shall we not be as forbearing toward our fellow men as the Lord of heaven and earth is toward Satan? {COL 72.2}

God’s kingdom is one of seed sowing and seed germination and growing, be patient with that process, this is God’s character, are you getting to know him? The seed of Jesus coming to this earth was the enmity that he placed in every heart overwhelmed by sin so that seed would grow and destroy sin. Those that would receive that seed would grow and become pure wheat. Everyone who rejects it become tares. This has been God’s orchestration from the beginning of sin right through the history of the earth. As you study the prophecies, this is what you will behold. God demonstrates his orchestration of sinful minds and pure minds interacting together. As evil rises up in nations, there is the demo in prophecy. God permits them to have their will. He looks on it with anguish beholding the work of evil.

Why does God not stop this whole thing? People visualize God different to what he is. When they see him, as he really is, this will create eternal life in you, as you will hate sin to such a degree, you’ll never do it again. Those who reject this amazing love turn in their hearts like Lucifer did. They will be the fruit of Lucifer’s creation. The

seed will bring forth its true condition.

Matthew 13:40-43. “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

It’s at the harvest time. God has to wait for the harvest. God has to wait for the full growth of everything. For 6000 years he’s waited and he’s going to wait right through to the very end when everything comes to fruit. What will happen to the tares? They will be gathered. Now people think God’s going to destroy everything. Wrong. Final destruction of sin and Satan and his seed will not be done with any change of God’s character.

Psalms 9:16. “The LORD is known [by] the judgment [which] he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion.”

God’s character never changes even in his wrath. This is my favourite representation of God’s character with the destruction at the end. Isn’t that what he said he had to let Lucifer do? Show his true condition?

Psalm 7:11-16. “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry [with the wicked] every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch [which] he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall





come down upon his own pate.”

Psalm 5:10. “Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.”

Ezekiel 9:10. “And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, [but] I will recompense their way upon their head.”

Ezekiel 7:3,4. “Now [is] the end [come] upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity; but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD.”

Proverbs 22:8. “He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.”

God’s character revealed in destruction is in these texts.

“God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Gal. 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow.” {COL 84.4}

Isn’t Judas a perfect example of this? Who killed Judas? He killed himself. That was a full fruition of selfishness he continued to indulge. The wicked is snared in the work of their own doing.

We saw that all through the history of the

world nations that work against God are destroyed with the wars they initiated. They destroyed themselves. Thus it will be at the very end. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed. The temple is gone. Man has tried to rebuild it but the destruction is discussed in the book Great Controversy.

The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God’s mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God’s hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. {GC 36.1}

What you can study in Jerusalem, you can study for the end. God has prevented the passions of man from destroying himself. Where their cup was full he let them destroy themselves. In the meantime as he has done this, the harvest continues to develop until finally the whole world will be destroyed. All God does is orchestrate. Are you getting to know God? Are we observing his character? We know that after a thousand years, God’s words will stand true. If the people who are wicked are given a chance to see the land of the redeemed they will destroy again. They will go for the city of Jerusalem and want to take it. And then there will be the grand finale when they will turn against each other. It will have to be a very carefully orientated destruction. God will have to step in and give just enough punishment according to the decisions of God’s people through the 1000 years. Everyone will receive a just punishment. What is our response to the revelation of God? Right from the

beginning he dealt with the same principle of his character and he followed it right through. He dealt with Lucifer that way; he dealt with Adam and Eve the same way.

When finally men choose, he’s given them plenty of opportunity to make the choices of their life. He never interfered with it; he never wants you to interfere with it either. Are we following his character? Do you discover the knowledge of God that if you will behold it, it will change your whole approach to life? You will have eternal life in you because your heart has received the character of God. In the conflict that is created internally, which side of the battle will you emerge? It’s as simple as that. Which side of the battle will you emerge? Will you emerge on the side of Jesus and his army? Which opens its heart to this amazing picture of heaven of God? Or will you resist these amazing characteristics of God’s love and decide you will harden your heart by the deception of sin? Will you unreservedly choose to lose your joy on this planet earth to lose your joy of indulgence in the things of this planet so that you may cling to the life that was ready to give all as Jesus did?

Jesus came not to send peace on earth, but a sword. He turns the hearts of the mother and daughter and father against each other.

Matthew 10:38, 39. “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

Is this really clear to you? I would like us to mediate this to really understand God, to really know him so that we understand the principle that is contained. So that we will be prepared to do everything that is of God’s character even if I lose the pleasures of this present life. Isn’t that what Jesus did? Isn’t that the character of God? He was prepared to surrender all for us. This is life eternal that you may know God. This must become greater and more profound in our experience so that we can express and hold our fellowship together with one another in the understanding of the character and knowledge of God. *Amen*

*John Thiel, Australia*

# GOD USES CHILDREN



## CHILDRENS CORNER

Children are very precious to the Lord Jesus. He was once a boy Himself; and when He was only twelve years old, He went into the Temple, and by asking questions of the teachers of Israel there, He taught them things they did not know. He has often used children to speak for Him. There was Samuel, who when a boy in the temple in Shiloh, heard God's voice, and gave His message. There was the girl whose name we do not know, but who, though a captive maid in Syria, so loved her enemies that she brought her master Naaman to be cured of the leprosy and to worship the true God. There was the great prophet Jeremiah, who was only a child when the Lord called him to speak His words. There have been many others through the ages, and there will be more. If children will love the Lord with all their hearts, and seek to do His will, God will make them His workers and helpers.

When Ellen Harmon (Ellen White), a strong and happy little girl of nine years, was by an accident turned into a weak and sickly child, she thought at first she could never be of any use in the world. For several years she struggled with the temptations made by her illness and her troubled thoughts. But God was watching over her, and He led her to know and to trust her Saviour.

When she was thirteen years old she began to have dreams, dreams that seemed to mean far more than most dreams. One dream filled her with dread, for it made her think she was lost. But then she dreamed another dream which changed all that. She dreamed she was sitting in despair, with her face in her hands, and thinking, "If Jesus were on earth, I would go to Him. Surely He would have pity on me." Then she dreamed that a bright angel came to her and said, "Do you want to see Jesus?"

"Yes, oh, yes," she said eagerly.

"Then come with me," said the angel. "Gather up all the things you have that a little girl or a big girl loves. Gather them up, and come with me."

So she heaped them on her bed. Then she took a big cloth and wrapped them up.

"Are you ready?" asked the angel.

"Yes, I'm ready," said Ellen, and she picked up her things.

So they went out and walked until they came to where there was an outside stairway by a tall building, and up this the angel led the way. It was very steep, and Ellen's arms were full, and she panted as she climbed up the stairs behind the angel. By the time they reached the top she was ready to put her treasures down.

"Do you want to see Jesus?" asked the angel again.

"Yes, oh, yes," panted Ellen, "Yes, I want to see Jesus."

"Then leave all your precious things here," said the angel as he put his hand on the doorknob. "Leave them here, for you will not want them when you see Jesus."

Quickly Ellen laid all her things on the floor. And she stood waiting.

Then the angel opened the door, and they went into a room. There stood Jesus, Ellen knew it was Jesus, for no one else could look so beautiful and so kind. But He was dazzling bright, and the light that came from Him filled all the room, and shone like the sun in her eyes. She tried to shield her eyes from the brightness, and she began to be afraid.

Then Jesus smiled at her. He came forward, and laid His hand on her head, and said, "Fear not, I am Jesus, your friend."

The sound of His sweet voice filled her heart with a happiness she had never known before. So thrilled was she that all her strength ebbed away, and she sank to the floor at Jesus' feet.

While she lay there helpless the beauties of heaven seemed to pass before her, and she thought that she was at last in glory. Slowly her strength returned, and she rose. With the smile of Jesus still upon her she followed her angel guide out of the door and down to her home. This dream filled

her heart with peace.

For all these months Ellen had kept her troubles to herself. She thought no one could understand how she felt. But now that Jesus had encouraged her, she went to her mother and told her all. Her mother sent her to Elder Stockman, a good Methodist minister who believed in the coming of Jesus. And to him she told her story, of her doubts and fears, her hopes and prayers, and of the dream she had had. He listened to her story, and then, laying his hand upon her head, he said, "Ellen, you are only a child. Your experience is very unusual for one of your age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work."

What was that work? Ellen could not guess; but she thought, "There can be no more special work than helping my friends to know Jesus." And so she started with those nearest her—her sisters, her brother, her friends. She told them how she loved Jesus and why she loved Jesus. And she told them Jesus was coming very soon, and asked whether they were glad it was so.

Some of them were not very glad, for they were afraid that when Jesus came, they would not be ready to meet Him, and they would be lost. But Ellen told them of her dream, and she said to them "Jesus loves you just as He showed He loves me. Let's pray to Jesus, and He will love you, and you will love Him too."

So they formed little prayer bands, and her friends all came to be joyous in the Lord. And then they prayed together for others around them. They made special prayer lists of those who were not free or happy; and Ellen and some of her friends went to them and talked with them of the love of Jesus. And so at last all of them but one were brought to Jesus. I do not know who that one was; but I remember that even Jesus lost one for whom He laboured. You know whom I mean; Judas, who betrayed Him. There are some who will not be saved.

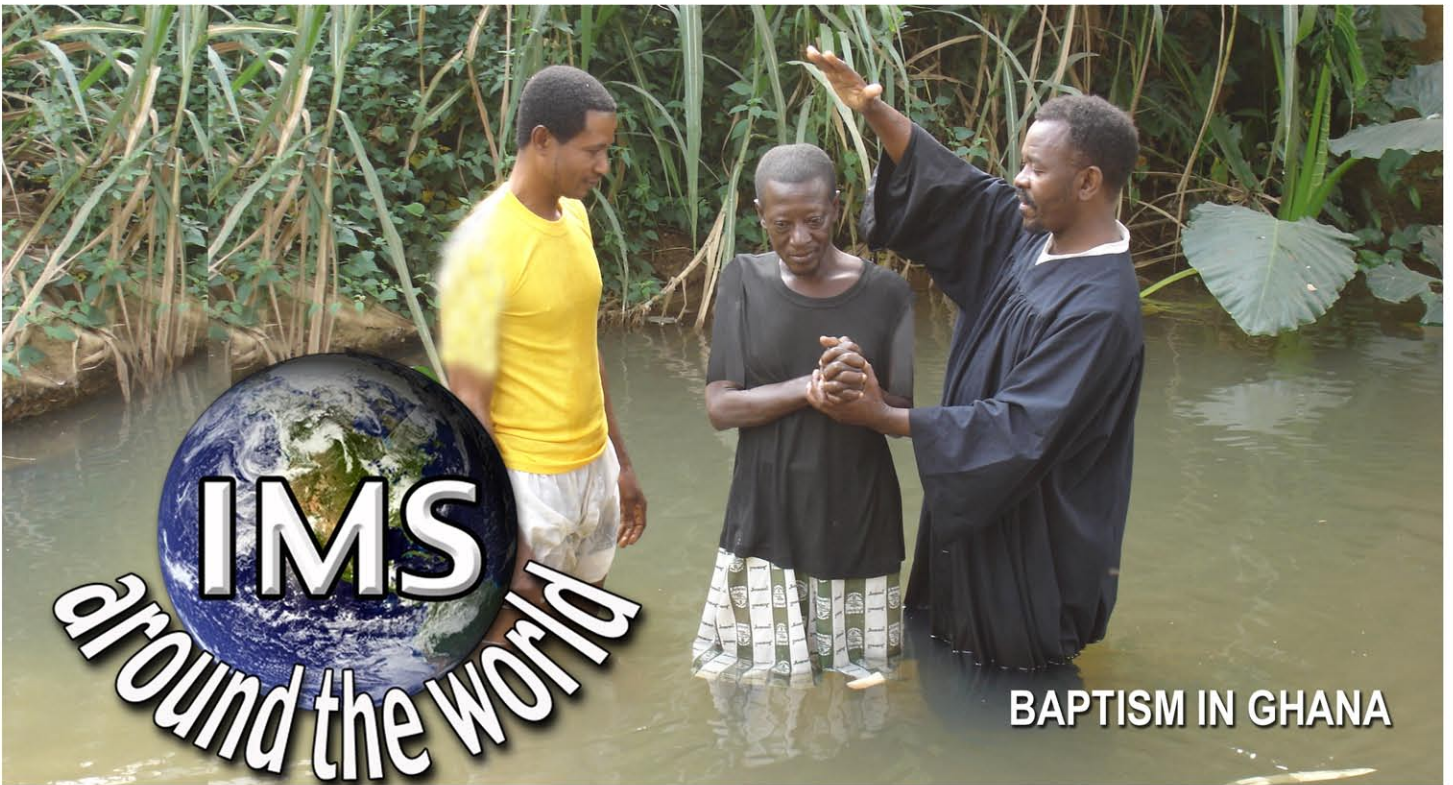
For three years, Ellen laboured in prayer and in personal work to save sinners. And when she was asked to speak in the meetings, she told her story of salvation through her faith in her soon-coming Lord. Hundreds were brought to their Saviour through her efforts.



4 GENERATIONS IN ROMANIA



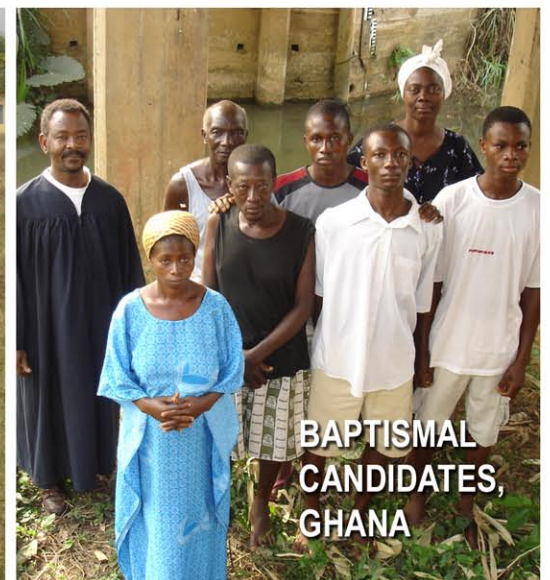
YOUNG & OLD  
IN ROMANIA



BAPTISM IN GHANA



GHANA CHURCH MEMBERS AND VISITORS



BAPTISMAL  
CANDIDATES,  
GHANA



**Pasca Maria Dumitru**, our oldest member in Romania passed away on January 5, 2007. She was born on January 28, 1906 and was baptized in 1929. She leaves behind 4 loving children, 10 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. She was a widow since 1980. Even though she was poor, she said that she was very satisfied with her life and that God had blessed her very much.

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