



The Reformation **Messenger**

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“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND.”

John Donne

“Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing.” *—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 340*

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

ABOUT THE COVER

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Mysterious

Darkness!

“And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, E’loi, Eloi, la’ma sabach’thani? (Aramaic) which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Mark 15:33–34

WOUNDED SPIRIT

We are living again in the day of the cross—the day of Golgotha—an enveloping worldly darkness; eerie and oppressive!

It was the day darkness covered the land at noon. It was then, at noon, that a miraculous darkness came over the land, and all creation sympathized with the Creator as He suffered. There was not only darkness over the land, but there was darkness in the minds and hearts of the people (2 Corinthians 4:3–6; John 3:16–21; 12:35–41). This was, indeed, a miracle and not some natural phenomenon, such as a sand storm or an eclipse. It would not be possible to have an eclipse during full moon at Passover.

There was a thick darkness over the whole land for three hours, from noon until three o’clock. Now the Scripture was fulfilled (Amos 8:9), “I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day;” and (Jeremiah 15:9), “Her sun is gone down while it was yet day.”

SIN OFFERING

Toward the close of this darkness, our Lord Jesus, in the agony of His soul, cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (v. 34). The darkness signified the present cloud which the human soul of Christ was under, when He was making it an offering for sin. Jesus was denied the light of the sun when He was in His sufferings, signifying the withdrawing of the light of God’s countenance. And this He complained of more than anything. He did not complain of His disciples’ forsaking Him, but of His Father’s presence being withdrawn! This wounded His spirit, and that is a thing hard

to bear (Proverbs 18:14); and brought the waters into His soul (Psalm 69:1–3).

Because in this, especially, He was made sin for us; our iniquities had deserved indignation and wrath upon the soul (Romans 2:8), and therefore, Christ, being made a sacrifice, underwent as much of it as He was capable of; and it could not but bear hard indeed upon Him who had lain “in the bosom” of the Father from eternity, and was “always His light.” When Paul was to be offered as a sacrifice for the service of saints, he could joy and rejoice, (Philippians 2:17), but it is another thing to be offered as a sacrifice for the sin of sinners. “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death.” Mark 14:34. These dreadful words first opened the door to our Lord’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

ROARING WORDS

In this great cry from Jesus of absence, this prayer from the opening lines of Psalm 22 (sometime called “Passion Psalms)—“My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”—that arose out of the depths of His experience of forsakenness on the cross, the gospel writers identify the suffering of Jesus with the suffering righteous in psalms of lament.

Jesus does not lose faith even while describing His intense suffering and persecution. He feels forsaken by God but knows that God is near. After recalling the trust of His forefathers and their deliverance, He describes the contemptuous action by His enemies.

But if we can only be brought close enough, say realistically for a moment, to the tortured Jesus in faith and

spirit, we could almost hear the tremor in His breathless cry of abandonment. Close enough so that we can taste His sweat, smell His blood, and shiver in the cold wave of death that sweeps over Golgotha that moment. Here is the *pathos* (GR: power of exciting, tender emotions) of the cross! Jesus, in His moment of isolation and agony, cries out for all of us, lamenting the dreadful condition sin has brought upon us.

OUR OWN!

In His prayerful cry, He calls upon God to occupy the space of suffering and death through which we all must pass on our way to redemption. But that identification runs in more than one direction. Indeed, we may find ourselves identifying with the same lament of Jesus in the prayers that at times arise out of the darkness of our own lives!

We recognize in His prayer on the cross something of our own experience: that the prayer of Jesus in the darkness that covered the land at noon is at times very painfully like our own; that His experience of God's absence is something of our experience; that His loneliness is also our loneliness; that in Him we indeed find One who "hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows," One who can sympathize with us in our fears, in our distress, in our pain, in our emptiness, in our loneliness, and in our sorrows—One who knows what it is to cry out, "Why have I been forsaken?"

PRAYER TOOL

These days, however, in countless books on spirituality, prayer is portrayed either as a means of self-fulfillment or as a spiritual resource for managing our stressed-out, time-pressed modern lives, full of ceaseless technology, a punishing work week, and that to-do list that keeps multiplying. In a therapeutic culture like ours, prayer becomes one more therapeutic tool, a meditation tool, a spiritual technology prescribed by certain professionals for enhancing our quality of life or calming our frazzled nerves.

"Meditation is a specific and often effective form of

relaxation in Anxiety Neurosis: (Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Anxiety Reaction is characterized by chronic, unrealistic anxiety often punctuated by acute attacks of anxiety or panic. It afflicts 5% of the population, is characteristically a disorder of young adults, and affects women twice as often as men)." —*The MERCK MANUAL of Diagnosis and Therapy*, 16th Edition, p. 1582–1583, Robert Berkow, M.D. Editor-In-Chief, Pub. Merck Research Laboratories, Rahway, N.J., 1992

PROFESSED CHRISTIANS, WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

"Professed Christians, worldly Christians, are unacquainted with heavenly things. They will never be brought to the gates of the New Jerusalem to engage in exercises which have not hitherto specially interested them. They have not trained their minds to delight in devotion and in meditation upon things of God and heaven. How, then, can they engage in the services of heaven? how delight in the spiritual, the pure, the holy



in heaven, when it was not a special delight to them upon earth? . . . Spiritual things are not discerned, because they are viewed with world-loving eyes, which cannot estimate

the value and glory of the divine above the temporal." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 265

"Flatter not yourself that a time will come when you can make an earnest effort easier than now. Every day increases your distance from God. Prepare for eternity with such zeal as you have not yet manifested. Educate your mind to love the Bible, to love the prayer meeting, to love the hour of meditation, and, above all, the hour when the soul communes with God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 267

Paul exhorted Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, exhortation to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:12–13, 15–16

GOD AS GOD

Ah! But in Holy Scripture, and in classical Christian tradition, prayer has little to do with self-improvement or making life comfortable. Rather, authentic, Christ-centered prayer is always about encountering God as God is and ourselves as we actually are! When we enter those empty, lonely, and sometimes painful places of our lives in prayer and faith—instead of trying to avoid them or circumvent them—we may discover that those places of human agony or brokenness also can offer deep well springs within us from which to draw the living waters of prayer.

The American-born English poet T. S. Elliot knew this, I think, when he wrote,

“I said to my soul, be still and let the dark come upon
you,
Which shall be the darkness of God.”

In Scripture, furthermore, there are many examples of people who pray, but their experience of prayer is clearly not always an easy one. We often find them praying in great personal turmoil or in deep despair, “Why are you cast down, O my soul,” Psalm 42 asks repeatedly, “why are you disquieted within me?” the Psalmist then asks that question we have all asked, “Why God, have You forgotten me?”

PAIN AND TURMOIL

So, what does all this say to us about our experience of God in prayer? The picture we have from the gospels of Jesus praying on the cross in the darkness at noon reminds us that the way to God through prayer is not to be found by avoiding the shadows that descend upon our lives. Nor is it to be found by keeping our distance from the pain and turmoil of the raging world around us. Rather, authentic Christian prayer invites us to live in the often painful realities of life with Christ in faith. It invites us to be willing to walk into the dark places, vulnerable as we may be there, knowing that somehow, by the mystery of God’s grace to us in Christ, the road to Golgotha which passes through the darkness that covered the land at noon is also the same road of hope that leads to the inevitably surprising dawn of another new day.

SERIOUS BUSINESS

The day of the cross—the day when bewildering darkness covered the land at noon—reminds us that life, indeed, is serious business! It is not some Carnival Cruise Caribbean Holiday we are on as people of faith, where life sails tranquilly over calm, clear, turquoise waters, or into those perpetually golden, tropical sun-

sets. Neither is our experience of God in prayer a journey into some religious fantasy land. No! No! Prayer is the battle! Prayer is an effort of the will! Prayer is an interruption to personal ambition! Prayer is labor; not agony! Remember—every time you pray your horizon is altered!

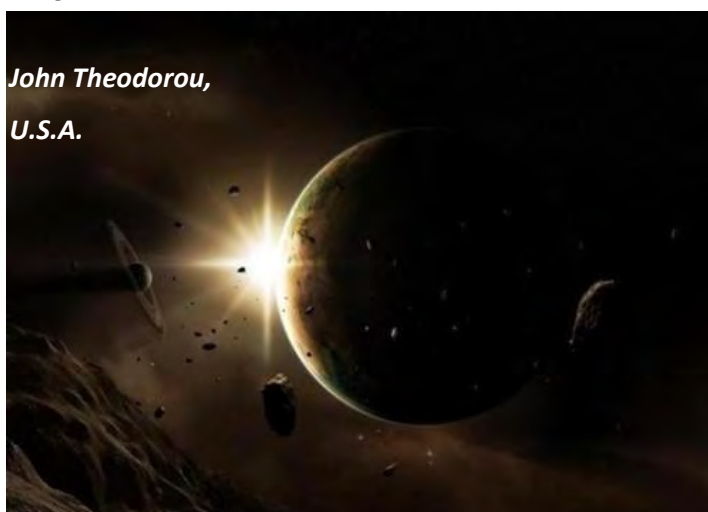
“God should be the highest object of our thoughts. Meditating upon Him and pleading with Him, elevate the soul and quicken the affections. A neglect of meditation and prayer will surely result in a declension in religious interests. Then will be seen carelessness and slothfulness.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 505

As the prayer of Jesus on the cross again reminds us, the life of true prayer can at times be full of painful realities. Christ calls us to face with Him all the darkness of our lives—together in the fears we have, the pain of living, the brokenness of our world, a sickness, a separation, a set-back—to face with Him in faith and in trust, assuring us by His own death on the cross that the way to true life, and so the path of true prayer, leads to the cross—where He has been and where He can work on us! But, “meditation and prayer are neglected for bustle and show. Religion must begin with emptying and purifying the heart, and must be nurtured by daily prayer.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 535

If we, therefore, heed His call, we will find that we can pray in “the darkness at noon” of our own lives, as Christ did on that day at Golgotha, knowing that God, through this very same crucified One, is an ever-present help in times of trouble; our refuge and our strength in the day of our distress (Psalm 46:1; 9:9).

The impossible is exactly what God does! (Luke 18:27).

Amen. <><





The word “always” implies never ending. It can be a strong word and cause misunderstandings when used incorrectly. When two young people are very much in love, they often say, “I will always be there for you.” This “always” may last until the first major argument; until someone else is found whom they love even more; until the divorce court is visited. One may end up severely hurt and disappointed.

Children tell their parents, “I will always help you, just ask,” until their friends call them and they feel the need to go out with them to some exciting event.

Even more serious is when people tell the Lord on their baptism day that they will serve Him always. They are baptized and have become zealous followers of the Lord, until they get discouraged because a brother inadvertently offended them; until the way gets difficult and they are too busy with the cares of this life to take time for spiritual pursuits. People’s jobs, friends, shopping, housework . . . all can take priority over the “always” that was promised the Lord. “Always” can turn into “later”, but “later” may become “too late”.

“Always” is the opposite of “never”. Some people in the world say they will never go to church. To say this is more serious than they realize, but unfortunately, oftentimes, unconverted Christianity has caused people to turn away from religion in disgust. People do not have their eyes always on Jesus.

WHEN NOT TO SAY “NEVER”

When human nature gets irritated and someone has done something that was very painful to us, I have heard it said, “I will never forgive that person.” This is a dangerous thing to say. In the Lord’s Prayer we are told to ask, “forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Matthew 6:12. If we cannot forgive our brother, our heavenly Father will not forgive us. This is serious. Rather we should say that we will always forgive those

that do us wrong.

What about feelings? With our mouth we may say that we forgive, but our feelings and emotions may say “never.” The saying goes, “I will forgive, but never forget.” Some people harbour, in the back of their minds, all the wrongs that others have done to them in their life. Once in a while these hurts come to the surface. Whether the other person repents or not, it is our duty to forgive. Jesus said that when someone harms you, you are to forgive them “until seventy times seven.” Matthew 18:22

Then there are those who do not join the church because they say they can never live up to the standards held by God’s church. To be a vegetarian? Keep the Sabbath? Pay tithes? Dress Reform? Oh, it is just too much. They go to another church that will provide them an easier way to find salvation. Or they simply give up, figuring it is too hard; impossible.

Some say they will never go to church because they are happy with their current lifestyle.

Are there sins that you feel you can never give up? Although we may be a member of God’s church, could we be harbouring secret sins that we feel we will never be able to give up? It could be diet related, TV shows, Internet web sites, or just selfish ease and pleasure.

The important thing is to never say “never” to Jesus, when sins are pointed out. Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

Satan tells a person that they will never be saved. They have gone too far, but, “Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before

him: 'I have a risen Saviour. In Him I trust, and He will never suffer me to be confounded. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness and my crown of rejoicing.' Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless, for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone, but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled, for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us." – *Faith and Works*, p. 37–38

Remember, Jesus said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5

WHEN TO SAY "NEVER"



There are definite times when we should say "never". We should always say "never" to sin and the devil. Say "no" to every temptation that comes our way. Say "no" to compromise of our principles or violation of our conscience. Say "no" to giving Christ a bad name by not living up to our profession. Say "no" to selfish ease and pleasure. Say "no" to making Christ and the angels weep. Say "no" to the selfish use of our time. Say "no" to anyone and anything that separates us from Christ. Is this easy? No, but there is a way that it can be done—through Christ and through Christ alone.

Although, we do not want to turn our religion in to a Pharisaical religion that focuses on the "no"—there are things that we must avoid in order to be granted salvation. We need to have a positive approach. When we say we will always serve the Lord; always put His work first in our lives; always commune with Him without ceasing; always keep a hold of His hand—then all the "no's" will take care of themselves. They will just vanish. When the love of Christ fills the soul, there is no room for, or any desire for, any evil, or anything, whether good or bad, that would separate us from Christ.

Never let go of Jesus' hand—always keep Him ever before you. "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17

"Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire

strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. **Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.**" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 32 (emphasis mine)

Pray the prayer of Jesus, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Matthew 26:39. Then, "with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. All things? Yes, all things. Everything that God requires. You can overcome every sin; every besetment; every inherited and cultivated evil tendency that exists in your character. Your character can be transformed. You do not need to sin. No, Never. The choice is yours. Who will be your master? With Christ you can overcome. Without Christ you cannot.

REJOICE ALWAYS



An important principle in our Christian walk is to trust in the Lord always; to be happy no matter what happens. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. According to this verse, is there ever a time when we should not be rejoicing? Do we rejoice only when things are going well? What about when things do not go well? Take, for

example, Job. He was a good man, loved the Lord, but he went through trials. Can we praise the Lord through these kinds of trials? We must learn to do so with the small trials we face today, because the end of all things is at hand and the trials will increase in frequency and intensity as we near the close of this earth's history.

How can we rejoice always? As we continue reading in Philippians we can take heart by knowing, "The Lord is at hand." Philippians 4:5. Yes, Jesus' ever presence in our lives brings us this joy. We can rejoice when things go well, but also we can have joy through trials and difficulties because Jesus is right beside us.

The key is to always lay hold on the hand of Jesus and never let go. Sometimes the trials of today seem to be insurmountable; overwhelming. We may wonder how we will endure. We may become anxious or worried. However, Paul continues in this chapter in the next

verse by saying, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6

When did the Apostle Paul write these words? "Though he was a prisoner, Paul was not discouraged. Instead, a note of triumph rings through the letters that he wrote from Rome to the churches." —*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 484. Yes, while in prison.

"When in the most discouraging circumstances, which would have had a depressing influence upon half-way Christians, he is firm of heart, full of courage and hope and cheer. . . . The same hope and cheerfulness is seen when he is upon the deck of the ship, the tempest beating about him, the ship going to pieces. He gives orders to the commander of the ship and preserves the lives of all on board. Although a prisoner, he is really the master of the ship, the freest and happiest man on board." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 352

"Whatever your disposition may be, God is able so to mold it that it will be sweet and Christ-like. By the exercise of living faith you can separate from everything that is not in accordance with the mind of God, and thus bring heaven into your life here below. Doing this, you will have sunshine at every step. When the enemy seeks to enshroud the soul with darkness, sing faith and talk faith, and you will find that you have sung and talked yourself into the light." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 233

This is how we can have true joy. And if we continue to make our requests known unto God, the promise is that, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7

The verse in the Bible before, "Pray without ceasing" is "rejoice evermore." 1 Thessalonians 5:15–16. In order to be able to "Rejoice evermore," we must "pray without ceasing." The two go hand in hand.

Thinking of the future, will we be able to rejoice in the time of Jacob's trouble? Can we rejoice when we are weeping? We are told to rejoice and we will never be asked to do that which is impossible. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your

sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20

We can take heart from the words of Jesus, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33. Why should we glory in tribulation? "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope." Romans 5:3–4

So, rejoice. God is in control of your life if you are yielded to Him. Nothing will touch you that He has not given permission for, and for which He has not made provision for. When we rejoice, our joy will spread like wildfire. Do not try to hide that light under a bushel or either you will be burned by the light, or the light will go out due to lack of oxygen. Let that light flow out to the world.

SEPARATE FROM CHRIST

The key is to always keep a hold of Christ. How do we separate from Christ? Many do not purposely want to separate from Christ, but do so unthinkingly. "Consider your ways." Haggai 1:5

"When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour

and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life's cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices. Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the centre and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror



through Him that has loved you.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 71

“We open to ourselves the floodgates of woe or joy. If we permit our thoughts to be engrossed with the troubles and trifles of earth, our hearts will be filled with unbelief, gloom, and foreboding. If we set our affections on things above, the voice of Jesus will speak to our hearts, murmuring will cease, and vexing thoughts will be lost in praise to our Redeemer. Those who dwell upon God's great mercies and are not unmindful of His lesser gifts, will put on the girdle of gladness and make melody in their hearts to the Lord. Then they will enjoy their work. They will stand firm at their post of duty. They will have a placid temper, a trustful spirit.” – *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 234

JESUS' PROMISE

Jesus' last promise to His followers was, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. What a wonderful promise. Do you believe it? Again, Jesus said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5



Jesus Christ is, “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” Hebrews 13:8. He does not change. When He promised to be with His followers always, He meant it. He was there in the lion's den with Daniel. He was there with the three worthies in the fiery furnace. He was there with Paul in prison, while shipwrecked and when he was stoned. He was there with Joseph when he was a slave, and when he was in prison. He was there with all the martyrs who were killed during the Dark Ages. They went rejoicing to their graves, knowing that the Lord was at hand with them. They never doubted His presence. We too must always have confidence with His presence today so that we will not doubt when the trials of tomorrow assail us.

What a wonderful God we serve. Let us take Him with us wherever we go. Always. Amen. **Wendy Eaton**

The Victory Crown

*When God looks down from heaven
To try the hearts of men,
His Spirit moves in gladness
To find again, again*

*People in every nation,
In every race and creed,
Who wistfully seek heaven;
Cry out from deep-felt need.*

*This is the task we're given,
This is our blessed right:
Take the message from heaven
To hearts that seek the light.*

*Let us so live, O Christian,
That watchers will exclaim,
“Behold they love each other—
How proudly bear His name!”*

*Soon in the clouds of heaven
While angel myriads sing,
We shall see Him, our Saviour,
Our great and mighty King.*

*Sabbath by golden Sabbath,
With all the barriers down,
All true hearts will adore Him,
Who wears the victory Crown.*

Jean Purdham

Submitted by, Franziska Pedersen

Who Will Rule The World In The Future?



Wouldn't it be intriguing to catch a glimpse of the future—to see what the next world empire will be? Will it be Japan? Could it be the rising new giant—China? Perhaps it will be the affluent and powerful United States of America?

Let us look in the Bible at the prophetic book of Daniel, that fascinating book that deals with the past, the present, and the future. Daniel chapter 2 tells us about the kingdom that is soon to rule the world. Let us look at this chapter in more detail.

About 2,500 years ago, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had an unusual dream. He could not remember the contents of this dream, yet it left a powerful impression on him. He, therefore, summoned the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans of his realm to help him recall and interpret the forgotten dream. They were, of course, unable to relate the dream to the king, thus showing themselves to be what they really were—deceivers.

There was someone, however, who could help the king: a young Hebrew captive, Daniel. God, working through Daniel, gave King Nebuchadnezzar an important message.

What was this dream that the king forgot? Let us read about it in verses 31–35. “Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold,

broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Did Daniel tell the correct dream to the king? Absolutely, in every particular! But what was the significance of this dream? Nebuchadnezzar had to know.

Daniel then interpreted the dream: “Thou art this head of gold,” he said. In other words, the golden head represented the Babylonian kingdom. When he heard this, the king probably smiled with satisfaction.

Babylon was truly a golden city in a golden age. The capital city seemed impregnable to enemy attack. The Babylonians had a food supply that could feed a million people for ten to twenty years. And yet, despite its great military might, this golden kingdom was to come to an end.

Daniel again spoke to Nebuchadnezzar. “And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee.” What nation conquered the Babylonians? Historians tell us that the Medes and Persians did, in the year 538 B.C. (Their Empire is represented by the image's breast and arms of silver).

As we continue our study, we find that the Medo-Persian rule of the world would also come to an end. History shows that defeat occurred at the battle of Arbela in 331 B.C., at the hands of Alexander the Great. Incidentally, although Alexander was able to conquer the then-known world in seven years, he could not conquer his own vices. Drinking, one of his biggest problems, led to his death at the age of 32.

God said further, “After thee shall arise another king-

dom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (verses 39–40). After the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C., the great iron kingdom of Rome began to rule the world. However, because of severe internal problems and the invasion by barbarian tribes, Rome, too, began to crumble.

Through Daniel, God said that the Roman Empire would be divided into ten parts. The ten barbarian tribes that overran and divided Rome were the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Alemanni, Lombards, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Burgundians, Vandals, Suevi, and Heruli. These ten divisions became the foundation of the modern nations of Europe. Note that God did not predict that Rome would be divided into six, seven, or even nine parts, but into exactly ten. Interesting, isn't it? The prophecies of the Bible are always precise and reliable.

Now, what does prophecy say concerning the relationship between these ten divisions? "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (verse 43). God's word says that no matter how hard the individual nations of Europe try to unite themselves, they will never become one world power.

Several attempts have been made in the past to this end, but they have always failed. Man will never be able to unite the nations of Europe. It cannot be done because God said so. These declarative seven words, "They shall not cleave one to another," have stopped men such as Charlemagne, Charles V, Louis XIV, Napoleon Bonaparte, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Adolf Hitler. Some have tried desperately to unite Europe through the inter-marriage of royal lines, but have failed. Others have attempted to achieve unity through wars and conquest, but they also failed. Just as iron and clay do not mix, so the nations of Europe will never become a world empire.

Now that we have looked at the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, as well as the divided nations of Europe, we again ask the question,

what will be the next world empire? The answer is found in verse 44: "And in the days of these kings shall *the God of heaven set up a kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *for ever*" (emphasis supplied). God Himself will establish His kingdom on this earth, and He will rule for ever and ever.

Note also verse 45: "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter." The stone represents the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt that Christ will return to this earth, accompanied by all the holy angels, to set up His government. Both the righteous and the wicked will receive their rewards—either life everlasting or eternal destruction.

The stone that strikes the image on the feet will end all existing governments. Are you ready for this stupendous event? Are you ready to enter Christ's glorious kingdom? I hope so! To be ready means to fall on the Rock, Jesus Christ and be broken. He loves you and wants you to be saved. Won't you commit your life to Him today?

When will the stone strike the metallic image? This event will occur while the last part of the image is still in existence, at the time when the ten kings of Europe are still reigning. When is that? Right now!

The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. Salvation begins when we surrender our sinful lives to Jesus. Accepting Him as a personal Saviour assures us of a place in His eternal kingdom. Wait no longer to be on the Lord's side! When He comes in the clouds of heaven, it will be too late to make a decision for Christ. Make your decision for Him today! Amen.

Henry Dering





The Crown Of Life

In His great love, God has reserved a crown of life for those who will overcome. This fact is clear when we read:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” James 1:12

“Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter 5:4. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10

Of Paul, God’s faithful servant, inspiration has preserved for us his dying testimony, when his executioners were about to end his life: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:7–8

Sister White also writes that “A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 590

The beloved prophet at Patmos saw four and twenty elders in heaven (from the earth) having sat down on seats laid up for them, “clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. Revelation 4:4. “Their golden crowns show that they had already finished their course, and taken their places among the citizens of heaven.” –Wesley, quoted by Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, (1897) p. 416

We need to acknowledge that language can hardly explain how the crown will be and the glory associated with it. However, Sister White, having been privileged to see that glorious land in vision, paints to us the following picture:

“We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square.” –*Early Writings*, p. 16

“Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns - a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the note, and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains” –*Ibid*, p. 288

“Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then

go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God.” –*Ibid*, p. 17

“As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white.” –*Ibid*, p. 18

As we read such descriptions and narrations, it is quite clear that nothing in this world is as dear as eternal life and those who are saved will be given a crown. Surely it is worth it! It is worthy, the fight necessary to receive it. Since the prize is of so great value, the standard required to attain it must also be high—a perfect character. For this reason we have been urged to strive for it with determined effort. It means aligning our characters to that of Christ's, through the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit, daily. We need to have a decided mind to accomplish this.

“We are to strive to enter in at the strait gate. But this gate does not swing loosely on its hinges. It will not admit doubtful characters. We must now strive for eternal life with an intensity that is proportionate to the value of the prize before us. It is not money or lands or position, but the possession of a Christlike character that will open to us the gates of Paradise. It is not dignity, it is not intellectual attainments, that will win for us the crown of immortality. Only the meek and lowly ones, who have made God their efficiency, will receive this gift.” –*Central Advance*, April 8, 1903

“We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labor, to strive, to agonize to enter in at the strait gate.” –*Faith and Works*, p. 48. Concerning this, the Saviour said: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Matthew 11:12. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Luke 16:16

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit's power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy-seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob.” –*The Review and Herald*, February 14, 1899

Not long ago, while doing my studies at the national university, it was not uncommon for management to crudely distribute the stationary allowances (government transfers), in cash, just at a window. Students were queuing outside. There was an indescribable struggle as each one wanted to be the first to receive their allowance. It was not infrequent to see those in front, with great force, being pushed backward or pushed out of the queue completely and their spaces taken by others.

In the spiritual life too, remember, that if you are first you can be last, or when you think you stand you can fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). As you have queued for the crown, Satan will try to do anything possible to push you out of the line, and when that happens, the Bible says that others will fill the vacancy that you have created. Let us take care lest we create a vacancy.

“Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.” Luke 13:28–30

We need to earnestly take this crown or else we will lose it. For fear that some would be at risk of losing it, the warning comes down to us through the apostle at Patmos: “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Revelation 3:11

As we are striving for the crown, let us also help others to get it. This in turn will make our crowns more beautiful and laden with stars (Daniel 12:3).

“You will be given the crown of glory if you will attend to the work that God has given you.” –*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 14, 1903

“But as we are urged to strive for the mastery, let us aim, in the strength of Jesus, for the crown heavy with stars. ‘They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that win many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.’” –*The Review and Herald*, October 25, 1881

We have come to the end of this lesson. My wish and prayer is that we strive with all the strength that God has given us to obtain salvation and receive the crown, and indeed be part of those who will be citizens of heaven. This is enough motivation for us, so let us meet there! Amen.

Joel L. J. Msiska



The Gate of Heaven

The Bible is the greatest work of literature, the most accurate record of ancient history, and the most profound book ever written. Great men and women of history have looked to the Scriptures for inspiration, guidance and hope. Napoleon wrote, "The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that opposes it." George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." Abraham Lincoln believed that "The Bible is the best gift God has ever given to men." The great astronaut of Apollo 13, James Irwin, once said, "The greatest thing in human history is not that man had put

his feet on the moon, but rather that the Son of God put His feet on earth and shed His blood on it." All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book,

and I believe that God in His infinite mercy wants us to be acquainted with the stories of such men and women who have been changed thoroughly and completely from inside to outside in such a visible and tangible way, that no one may doubt such a transforming power which comes from above through the work of the Holy Spirit. I do believe in the Bible because it is God's word—His love letter addressed to me.

In this particular study, as you may see, the title is "The Gate of Heaven". I did not use the title, "The Gates" as if there would be many—so that I may not confuse anyone that there would be many ways to heaven. People

and churches may say, "Come to us because we have all the truth; here is the only church God acknowledges as His. Come to us because we have a history traced down through the centuries and it reaches until our time." That may not be the case at all. I am not saying that we are the only one peculiar people in the world excluding other people. God still has those who are His people in the world today. Because Jesus said, "and other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they will hear My voice." Jesus is the door, Jesus is the Shepherd, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. He said, "no one comes to the Father except through Me." It

is obvious from these quotations that if we want to have eternal life we need to come to Jesus, just the way we are. This is good news, my friend; this is good news

for us all because Jesus' love was bestowed upon all people without any exception.

The Bible says that He gives rain upon the godly and the ungodly as well. The same sunshine we enjoy, other people also enjoy who may not have the same beliefs as we have. Religion does not change people. What does change is our faith in God through the Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave His life on the cross, making it possible for you and me to be redeemed. In other words, giving us the possibility to live in eternity, exploring the infinite universe and its creation with a loving Father who has bought us with an infinite price, the



life of His dear Son, Jesus Christ. This is the price that has been paid for you and for me, my dear friend. Can we be indifferent? Can we say, “well—it was easy for Jesus to give His life because He had the power to take it again?” That is not the case at all because we are told, both in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, that Jesus came to this world with the risk of losing His place with the Father forever if He would have sinned; and we would have remained without any hope of being saved. But praise God for the good news. That is why the Scriptures are called the good news, because Jesus wins and Satan loses—this is what we find throughout the pages of this Holy Book, from Genesis to Revelation.

Our story for this topic is inspired from the book of Genesis 28. First of all, my beloved reader, I want to remind you that heaven is a real and genuine place, heaven is a resting and residing place, and heaven will be a glorious place for those people who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. When we talk about Genesis 28, we talk about someone’s life to whom we can relate. Each one of us, in one way or another, has committed something that has separated us from God. I talk about sin. What is sin? The Bible simply says that sin is the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4. Here we come to one very important point that I want to underline in our study. As I mentioned before, each one of us has experienced something similar to the case of Jacob, Isaac’s son and Abraham’s grandson. I mentioned all of them because we will deal with them all in our study and we will learn something for our spiritual walk with God while on this earth.

Jacob means “deceiver”, and maybe you ask the question—whom did Jacob deceive? Let us start our journey back to the time when God promised to answer Isaac’s prayer, in that he would have a son from his wife Rebekah, as we read in Genesis 26, beginning at verse 2. In fact, this chapter is a prophecy regarding two great nations as coming from her womb, and the prophecy said that the older shall serve the younger.

When the time was fulfilled indeed there were twins in her womb, the first was Esau and after him came out Jacob. The Bible says Jacob’s hand took hold of Esau’s heel. In fact, they are the first twins mentioned in the Bible. The boys grew. We find Esau a skillful hunter, loved by his father, Isaac. Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents and was loved, or better preferred by his mother, Rebekah, more than Esau. Here we find a family with two boys given by God as a result of prayer, followed by a prophecy. I should be frank with you—I

have this tendency to do the same, although both of my two sons are precious to me and to my wife, sometimes I feel I have a preferred one, and I believe it is not right in God’s eyes. We sometimes have the tendency to love one more than the other or to make a difference between them, classifying them after their qualities and tendencies, looking from a human point of view or perspective. I believe, and I encourage families who have this tendency to have a favourite, to remember this particular case of Jacob and Rebekah, and Isaac with Esau, and the consequences derived from such relationships. Love them equally, without partiality, because this is the way God loves us—not for some qualities we may possess, but rather for the simple fact of who we are.

Now, maybe you are eager to know what happened in their lives. Why was the prophecy saying that the older will serve the younger? Because, in that time, the oldest son had more privileges than the youngest; according to the Bible, a birthright was an honour given to the firstborn, bestowing “head of household” status and the right to inherit his father’s estate. The son with the birthright would receive a double portion of whatever was passed down. Deuteronomy 21:17.

The birthright is emphasized in the Bible because it honoured the rights or privileges of the family’s firstborn son. After the father died, or in the father’s absence, the firstborn son assumed the father’s authority and responsibilities. This is about the birthright privilege as it is shown in the Bible, and I want you to see the lesson we can take from this experience in the life of Esau and Jacob. There is a great lesson; God knows the end of someone from the beginning. He has this prerogative because He can read our thoughts. He created us. In this story, I want you to understand that God is not arbitrary or that He predestined one for eternal life and another for eternal damnation, or to be forever lost. Oh no, that is not the case at all. God loves us equally, without partiality—remember this. The only difference consists in the choices we make.

Daily we make choices, either good or bad; and, of course, they have a personal impact in our lives—revealing sooner or later if we have made a good choice or a bad one. God allows this so that we may realize the way we have been created, with our free will, and with the power to choose for ourselves. This is our God, a wonderful God, full of wisdom and love. I believe Esau was loved by God the same way Jacob was. Then you may ask, “why did Esau fail and Jacob triumph?” Although we learn that Jacob used another

means to obtain the blessing than God wished for him, still God loved him and worked with his faults.

Let us go into some details that will help us to learn from their experiences with God. The Scriptures tell us that once, while Esau came from the field and was very weary, he found Jacob preparing some food, which the Bible called stew; Esau came in, asking Jacob to give him food to eat. Jacob always wanted the birthright but he could not have it because he was the youngest. However, the prophecy given at their birth said that the older will serve the younger. Rebekah would remember for the rest of her life the terrible mistake she made in an attempt to fulfill this prophecy that separated her from Jacob so that they never saw one another again.

Here is a lesson for you, mothers, when you know what God is saying, but you go contrary to His will. Perhaps it is for a good reason, but you may be using deceitful means. Not only for you, mothers, but this lesson is for us as parents generally speaking, also. Esau's problem was that he did not appreciate this calling, for he was just a simple, carnal man. Esau grew up loving self-gratification and centering all his interests in the present. Esau lusted for a favorite dish, and sacrificed his birthright to gratify appetite. Esau had a special, strong desire for a particular article of food, and he had so long gratified self that he did not feel the necessity of turning from the tempting, coveted dish. He thought upon it, making no special effort to restrain his appetite, until the power of appetite bore down every other consideration and controlled him, and he imagined that he would suffer great inconvenience, and even death, if he could not have that particular dish. "Thus Esau despised his birthright." In disposing of it he felt a sense of relief. Now his way was unobstructed; he could do as he liked. For this wild pleasure, miscalled freedom, how many are still selling their birthright to an inheritance pure and undefiled, eternal in the heavens! Do we appreciate God's calling, my brothers, my sisters? Maybe sometimes we fall into one extreme or another as in the case of Esau and Jacob. Do we remain humble and wait for God's will regarding the place or office we may hold in God's vineyard or in the church?

The God of Jacob is yours and my God also. Jacob, in his desperation, stole the birthright from his selfish and uncontrolled brother, Esau, thinking, now is the time to act because he desires something and I can give it to him. How many people in the world use blackmail in order to achieve something—how many people even in the church use the weaknesses of a brother or a sister in order to trap that person? Do you think Jacob could give Esau a good reason to appreciate the birthright and not sell it? Yes, I think he could do that, but he did not. So Jacob lied and deceived his father; following the advice of his mother he told the blind Isaac that he was his brother, Esau. Jacob and Rebekah succeeded in their purpose, but they gained only trouble and sorrow by their deception. Rebekah bitterly repented the wrong counsel she had given her son; it was the means of separating him from her, and she never saw his face again.

From the hour when he received the birthright, Jacob was weighed down with self-condemnation. He had sinned against his father, his brother, his own soul, and against God. This is the result and consequences of our wrongdoing, my friend. The way we pay, we will be paid; this is a saying in my birth country, Romania. In other words, my dear followers in Christ and friends, "The way we behave with others or treat them, the same way we will be treated." Or as Jesus said, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matthew 7:2



Now let us talk little bit about what happened after this terrible sin committed by Jacob. His experience may be your experience also. He sinned as we have seen, against his father, his brother, his own soul and against God. Now, many people, when they fall into discouragement and go astray from God sometimes say that it happened because of someone else. I have good news for you. The Bible says in Genesis 28:10, Jacob went out from Beersheba to Haran—he had to flee from his parent's house to an unknown place, wandering from the presence of those he loved. This is what sin has produced since the beginning, friend. Do you remember when Adam and Eve sinned against their loving Father? They hid themselves, the Bible says. Sin might be attractive in the beginning and this is what Satan uses to seduce people, making sin look nice, clothing it with

some attractions, but in the end there is deadly poison in it.

I remember when I started to go with my friends to the discothèques, gambling all night or doing some other sinful practice. In the beginning I enjoyed it, saying that what I was doing was interesting, it seemed to be nice, but at the end of it, after a while, when reflecting upon the consequences of my wrong doing, I felt lonely and discouraged—this is the way Satan likes you to feel while trapped in his snare. But be of good courage; you still have the chance to get rid of, or avoid, Satan's snare. The Bible says that God was with Jacob in the darkest time of his life—a place where only God can fill the heart with hope and encouragement. Jacob in his trouble had a dream, a dream where he saw a ladder that was set up on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and there the angels of God ascended and descended on it.

What a merciful and loving Father we have. Instead of receiving what he deserved now, Jacob received something that he never imagined. In his despair and loneliness he saw that ladder which represents Christ. We read in the gospel of John 1:51 that Christ is bringing something important to view—namely the angels and their involvement in the plan of redemption. Do you see or feel the protection of God in your life? Have you experienced, at any time, God intervening in a desperate situation, perhaps saving your life? Do you see that ladder with the top that reaches heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on it? Oh, let me tell you, I do; many times God has intervened in my life and in the life of my family, bringing us hope and showing us a way out from that pit of sin and degradation.

I thank God for the help He gives me every day. I thank God for my family. I thank God for His mercy and goodness in bringing me here to a new continent to preach the Gospel. I thank God for you, my dear brother, my dear sister or friend. Jacob, in his dark episode of life, found an answer to that problem, and the answer was Jesus. Do you want to succeed in your life? I have heard

many times that success only comes if you work for it, or some other human standard—that is not true at all. Success depends only on Jesus, not on any human formula or plan.

Jacob could never reach God with his own wisdom or merit. He needed a ladder—something, someone to bridge the gap between God and man. In his dream, Jacob was reaching to God in heaven for help and God was reaching down to earth to help. This dream demonstrates that heaven is not closed to men. There is a way to cross the gulf between heaven and earth and I want you to grasp that way; even as you go through different trials in your life, there is still a hand



which is reaching down to you and a voice saying, "My son, My daughter, trust Me; take My hand and walk with Me, because I have a better plan for you. I want you to live eternally. I want you to see My glory and the place I have prepared for you. Maybe right now you do not understand everything that I tell you, but one day, and that day is not so far in the future, when I will make all things new again for you, you will have a better understanding," says our Saviour. This is Jesus, my friend, who makes all things new because He has promised that. Will you receive Jesus right now, saying with a loud voice, "Yes Lord, I want You in my life?" Will you let Him transform your life? Will you and I prepare for His second coming?

Because I want to share more about this interesting story, I will continue with this topic. Until then meditate upon the questions I posed in this study and may God bless you richly as we approach the loving and long-expected day when Jesus returns to this earth, to gather together His people from all the corners of the globe. May this be our wish, to make known to every one we meet the importance of preparation, in order to meet with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen!

To be continued. . .

Nicholas Anca

“Prepare To Meet Thy God”

Amos 4:12

News from South Africa

On May 10–12, 2013 a mini-conference was held in the Kraaifontein church at the mission house. The theme of the conference was, “PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.” Amos 4:12

The conference was opened by Pastor S. Mdletshe.

The book of Amos was set in a time when the people of Israel had reached a low point in their devotion to the God of Israel. The people had become greedy and stopped following and adhering to their values.

God spoke to Amos, a farmer and herder, and told him to go to Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom. Through Amos, God tells the people that He is going to judge Israel for their sins.

Brother Morne Frieslaar held the Divine service on Sabbath, and once again we were reminded that soon Jesus will come and every case must be decided.

We were graced with music from the Kalkfontain church, as well as from Brother Majoli and his family.

On Sabbath afternoon Sister Francis gave us a study on stewardship; we were encouraged to keep true to our department and stewardship of the Lord's money, time and talents.

Our conference ended on a high note as brother Liam Jack made his vows to the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Brother Jack came from the Jehovah's Witnesses and became a Reformer through Bible study and intense prayer by Brother Morne Frieslaar and Sister Milly (we are now his spiritual parents). He is the first member to be baptized into the new group that has been started in Wellington, South Africa, where we (Brother Morne and Sister Millicent Frieslaar) make our home.

The conference banner was made by Br Syanda.

We are living in exciting times! Soon Jesus will come and we need to make haste to spread the gospel.

Sr. Millicent Frieslaar

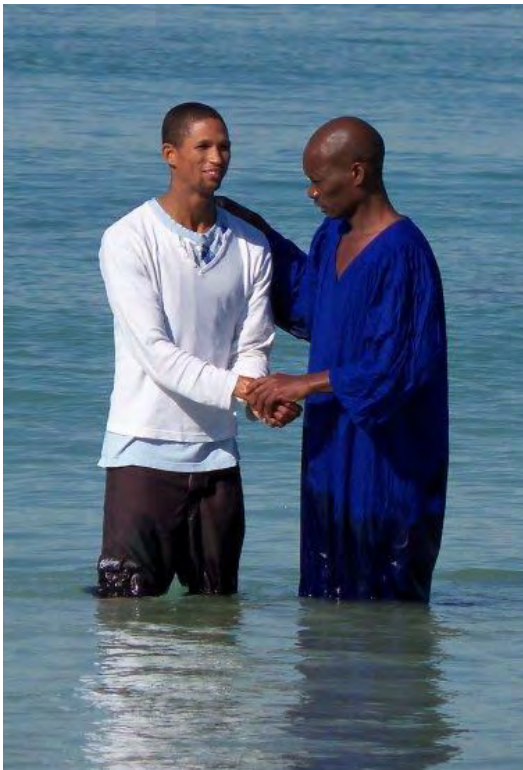




SISTER FRANCIS



BROTHERS GISELA AND HOLISWE



Brother Liam Jack (Left) with Morne and Millicent Frieslaar and their son





Elijah of the Last Days

God promised to send Elijah the prophet to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ. We read in Malachi, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5–6

Elijah was sent also to prepare the way for Christ’s first coming. “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.” Matthew 17:11–13

Sister White writes, “In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord, just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. The Lord is giving messages to His people through the instruments He has chosen, and He would have all heed the admonitions and warnings He sends. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; ‘for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Our message is not to be one of peace and safety. As a people who believe in Christ’s soon appearing, we have a definite message to bear,—‘Prepare to meet thy God.’

“Our message must be as direct as was that of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding the peril his life was in, he never allowed truth to languish

on his lips. Our work in this age must be as faithfully done. . . .

“In this time of well-nigh universal apostasy, God calls upon His messengers to proclaim His law in the spirit and power of Elias. As John the Baptist, in preparing a people for Christ’s first advent called their attention to the Ten Commandments, so we are to give, with no uncertain sound, the message: ‘Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ With the earnestness that characterized Elijah the prophet and John the Baptist, we are to strive to prepare the way for Christ’s second coming.” —*Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1184

God is calling us to be this prophesied Elijah, to proclaim the last message without fear to the people in the world. Our message is, “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” Revelation 18:2

Fearful and terrible is this message that God has sent to the world, the last warning before the judgment. Never has the message of God been more pointed and more condemning.

There is no praise and no flattery in this message. It lays bare the sins and corruption of the religious world, of the men and women who claim to be followers of Christ.

When Jesus said to the Jewish people, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Matthew 23:38. The house where divine agencies dwelled, a place where Jesus and His angels loved to stay, now was deserted of

heavenly beings. This temple became the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

How great is the deception; someone goes to church seeking salvation and peace to his soul, and ends up listening to false doctrines and teachings that Satan has inspired. This is not the case of only a few people, but over two billion belong to these fallen churches, and do not realize their danger. All these men, women, and children must hear the message of Elijah. Then they can decide if they will stay in Babylon, or come out. In Revelation 18, verse 4 we read, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This message must be cried mightily with a strong voice. It will surely cause persecution against the messengers of God, but they are not afraid of it. Those that are afraid will not be the Elijahs. The first ones cast into the lake of fire are the fearful (Revelation 21:8).

God is calling each one of us to be His messengers, the Elijahs. It is a great privilege and opportunity to participate in the last finishing work of God on the earth. You may say like Moses, "I am not able to speak," "I am fearful," or some other excuse. But who is really capable to be the Elijah of the last days? There is, in reality, only one requirement that is necessary, and that is that we empty ourselves from all that we think is good in us, and then let God fill us with His Spirit, with His power and wisdom. When Paul became an apostle of Jesus he emptied himself of all that he had before. He said, "For I know nothing by myself." 1 Corinthians 4:4. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Philippians 3:7

Now he was able to begin his great missionary work. Those who stand every test and remain loyal to God, they will be the Elijahs whose glory will lighten the earth. "Elijah the Tishbite nevertheless entered upon his mission confident in God's purpose to prepare the way before him and to give him abundant success. The word of faith and power was upon his lips, and his whole life

was devoted to the work of reform. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to rebuke sin and press back the tide of evil." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 119

Alone he stood on Mount Carmel against the idol worshipping people and hundreds of the priests of Baal and King Ahab. This is what today's Elijah must also do.

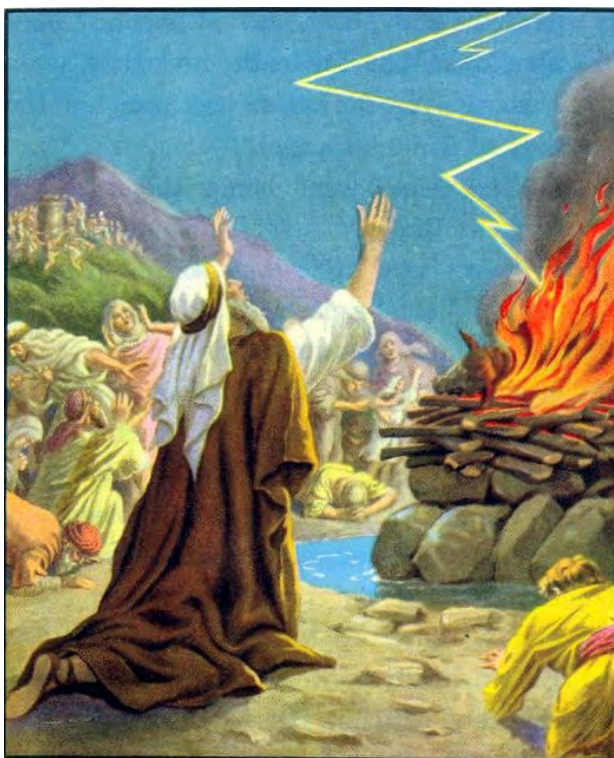
"Now is the time for God's people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest, and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather

warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 136

The world has never loved the reformers who rebuked them for their sins. The Waldenses, who lived in the Piedmont Valley and in the surrounding mountains, kept their faith. Their temple was nature and the caves deep inside the mountains. Yet they were persecuted. From time to time soldiers came to their villages and killed thousands of them. Yet they were the ones who started the work of Reformation, which was continued by Martin Luther and other reformers.

Reformers speak the language of love, but it is interpreted as the language of hatred. Jesus, in His great love to the people, came to this world to save sinners, but His words were rejected and hated. Finally His own church put Him to death. As Elijahs of the last days, do not expect any different treatment from the people that you try to save. But the reward in heaven and eternal life which is given to the faithful messengers of God will pay for all the sufferings that we may experience. When God is calling for the Elijahs, you should answer, "Here am I, send me." Then you will be the happiest person in the world. Amen.

Timo Martin





“The life of Christ was an ever-widening, shoreless influence, an influence that bound Him to God and to the whole human family. Through Christ, God has invested man with an influence that makes it impossible for him to live to himself. Individually we are connected with our fellow men, a part of God's great whole, and we stand under mutual obligations. No man can be independent of his fellow men; for the well-being of each affects others. It is God's purpose that each shall feel himself necessary to others' welfare, and seek to promote their happiness.

“Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

“This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed. . . .

“It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves. We know not

what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 339–342

Ellen G. White



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CHILDREN'S CORNER



The Composition

"There! It is finished, mama! Will you read it over now, and see if it is correct?"

Mrs. Carter looked up from her sewing at her little girl's eager, flushed face, smiling at her earnestness.

"Let me see, dear," she said, taking the papers in her own hand. "It looks very neat."

"There is not one blot or erasure," said Nettie; "If the spelling and grammar are right, I think my chance for a prize is as good as anyone's. Mr. Mason said he would give prizes for all the correct compositions, though the writing desk is for the best one in every way. I don't think I shall get that, mama. We all think Hattie Ross will have that, if she is only careful about her blots. She does write so beautifully; only she will blot and smear badly. I guess she will be neat this time, though, the desk is such a beauty, with a little silver plate for the name of the winner. If I can get one of the books for correct composition, I will be satisfied."

"I think you will get one, Nettie," said her mother, after carefully reading the composition. "This is correct, well expressed and very neat."

"Now, mama, will you tie it with the ribbons for me, and I will put it away."

The precious manuscript, being tied nicely with crisp dainty ribbons, Nettie put it carefully in her desk, with a long sigh of relief. It had been a very difficult task for the little twelve-year-old girl to complete a correct and neat composition. She was not fond of writing, had hard work to put her ideas into words, and found it quite as hard to keep her sheet clean. So it was quite a triumph when the work was really completed, entirely alone, and had been pronounced worthy of a place among the prize compositions.

The little girl was still in the room where she and her sisters studied, when Amy, her cousin, nearly her own

age, came in, flushed and tearful.

"Is your composition ready?" she asked.

"Yes, and mama says it will do."

"Then you can help me with mine. I have tried and tried, and I can't write one."

"But, Amy, if I help you, you can't try for a prize. You know Mr. Mason said we must not have any help, even from our parents."

"Your mama helped you."

"No, not one bit. She only read it when it was finished."

"But you will help me, Nettie. Nobody will ever know."

"But it will not be honourable."

Amy would not listen, however, to her cousin. She coaxed a long time, making it very hard for tender-hearted, good-natured Nettie to refuse the request. She loved Amy very dearly, and it was her constant habit to assist her with all her lessons and exercises. Only the fact that it would be a dishonourable trick upon their teacher kept her from yielding now. Hard as it was for her, she refused upon that plea.

Then Amy grew angry, taunted her with jealousy, selfishness, and miserably mean motives, that Nettie felt were untrue and unjust. Working herself into a fury, Amy suddenly seized the precious manuscript her cousin had just completed, and tossed it upon the red coals of the open grate.

"If you won't help me to a prize, you shan't have one yourself," she cried.

"Oh, Amy!"

The cry was too late to save the treasure. Already it was curling up in the fierce heat, and a bright blaze was in a few moments all that was left of the work of many play

hours.

As the flame died away in a black mass, both children stood very still, looking at the destruction one passionate moment had made. Already Amy was sorry, for her tempests of temper never lasted long, and she hoped Nettie would scold and cry, as she would have done, and then "make up." But Nettie's grief was too deep for anger. She did not speak after the first cry, but went silently from the room to lock herself in her own little bedroom, and sat down for a hearty cry.

Remember, she was but twelve years old, and had worked very faithfully for the promised reward. As the tears ran down her cheeks, her thoughts were very busy.

"I will never speak to Amy again, nor help her with a single lesson. She had no right to burn it. I would have helped her with anything else, but this would have been wrong; it would have been cheating to write this composition. I'll never forgive her, never! It was so pretty, too! And I cannot have another ready in time—there is so much to do before examination, and only one week for all. Oh dear! I wonder if Amy feels bad. I should, I know. I hope she does. Do I? Is this Christian forgiveness? Only one month since I resolved never to be bitter again, to conquer my temper, and try to be a real, true Christian, like mama; and now I am revengeful, unforgiving, and wicked. What shall I do? I can't forgive Amy, I can't."

So her thoughts ran, now blaming Amy, now herself, the tears flowing fast all the time. At last the little girl, tired of crying, knelt down and said very softly the Lord's Prayer. Her sweet face was very earnest as she whispered, "'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' I will forgive Amy. Help me, Heavenly Father, to forgive her, as I hope to have all my sins forgiven."

In the meantime, a very unhappy, penitent little girl was walking slowly homeward. Amy would have given all her own hard study for the other prizes if she could have restored the burnt composition. Her conscience was very sore. She knew that Nettie was right in refusing her request, and she knew that in every way she had been wrong; wrong in asking for help, wrong in getting angry, and oh! how very, very wrong in taking such a wicked revenge for Nettie's refusal! She thought of the many hours Nettie had spent trying to help her in her studies, of the many times her cousin had given up a pleasant

walk or ride to aid her in a difficult sum or exercise; and before she reached home, Amy was quite as sorry and felt quite as guilty and mean as Nettie could have wished her had she been ever so revengeful.

The next morning, after Nettie had started for school, Mrs. Carter was surprised to see Amy, with a grieved face, standing before her.

"Aunt Mary," she said, trying not to cry, "did Nettie tell you about the composition?"

"Yes," Mrs. Carter said very gravely.

"Do you think she will forgive me, if I try to make up the loss, Aunt Mary? I am so sorry."

"I don't think the loss can be made up, Amy."

"I have tried to make it right, Aunt Mary. It was very hard to do, but I went to Mr. Mason this morning, and told him the whole story. He says if you will send him a note saying the composition was correct and neat, he will consider it the same as if he saw it himself. O, Aunt Mary, please do! I am so miserable."

Mrs. Carter pressed a warm kiss upon the penitent little face. "If you always atone for a fault so nobly as this, Amy," she said kindly, "you will not feel miserable long.

It will be a lesson for you and help you to check the hasty temper that gets you into so much trouble. I will write the note to Mr. Mason now."

The note was soon ready, and Amy took it gratefully. "Will Nettie forgive me now, Aunt Mary?"

"Nettie forgave you fully and freely before she slept, Amy."

"I wonder if I could be so good as that?" Amy said tearfully. "I am sure I can never be ugly to Nettie again."

When the examination day came, Mr. Mason handed each of the cousins a small pocket Bible. "Yours," he said to the wondering Amy, "is to prove to you how much I appreciate the true penitence that acknowledges a fault at once, and tries to make amendment. Nettie earned a reward by her hard study, and she holds it in her hand; but, above all study, I prize the Christian kindness and forgiveness that kept her silent when I asked for her composition, rather than tell me how it was destroyed."

I have told you this story, little readers, because it is true, every word of it, and proves how truly the power of prayer and principle will aid us in atoning for faults and forgiving our enemies.



Health Seminar in London, Canada

In the city of London, Ontario, with God's help, a number of people joined us for two evenings of lectures that provided simple and natural ways to health and wellbeing. The topics were about proteins and carbohydrates in our body, and how we can get this fuel that our body needs in order to function properly. We were amazed to see new people coming and joining us during this seminar. Also we want to thank those who participated, encouraged and made their presentations in the Cooking Class demonstration held on Sunday May 25, 2013. We have seen God's blessings during this time, and I strongly encourage you to have more of these kinds of presentations and more often, because people come, sometimes more than our expectations. I believe God is blessing each effort we make to advance the message in

each city, big or small—the health reform message is the right arm of the third angel's message and this is our message as a church as well. Let us put all our strength in doing this great work because Jesus is coming soon; and blessed is he who is found working when He comes. I want to thank the Canadian Field for the support given. May God richly bless all of us. Amen!

In Christ,
Alina Anca



Believers in Vancouver, Canada





**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PANDAN CHURCH,
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**EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS,
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“As an island is separated from a continent, so earth was cut off from heaven, and a wide channel intervened between man and God. Jesus bridged this gulf, and made a way for man to come to God. He who has no spiritual light sees no way, has no hope, and men have originated theories of their own regarding the way to life. . . . But the only name given among men whereby they can be saved is Jesus. Across the gulf that sin has made come His words, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 82

