

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.
Psalm 25:14



*“Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come”
(Ezekiel 7:5, 6).*

Prayer Requests

“This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us”
1 John 5:14. We have three very faithful workers who stand in the need of prayer.

Recently, our Brother Elvis Alberto had a small stroke and had to be hospitalized. He is improving daily, and we would appreciate you joining us in praying for his recovery.

Our Brother Aland Ashton was hospitalized again with a liver ailment but is now home, and we covet your prayers in his behalf. Brother Ashton has been laboring in the country of Peru.

While both of the servants of the Lord need your prayers, let us

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The Time of the End

by Allen Stump

As we have studied the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-11, we have noted that the time of the judgment of the first angel's message was to begin in 1844. The prophecy of Daniel 8:14, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," clearly points to 1844, but how do we harmonize a judgment occurring almost two millennium after certain pronouncements given in the New Testament that seem to declare the end of time had come in the days of the apostles?

As we study through the Bible, we find the transcendence of God revealed in his speech to humanity. God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, does not count time as mortal men. "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:4). "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). To the average person who lives three score and ten years, the 69th year may seem like "the end of time," but to God it is nothing. As we continue this study, we will see that God's word declares the "last days" or the "last time" to begin during the New Testament era. The "last days" stretch from the time of the cross until the end of the judgment and the coming of Jesus, but within this time frame, near the end of the "last days," we find a sub-compartment of time called "the time of the end." This final compartment of time runs from the completion of the 1260 year prophecies of Daniel and Revelation until the end of the judgment and the coming of Jesus. Graphed onto a timeline, it might look like this:

Now that we can see the overview to what the Bible teaches, let us see the explanation of this as we explore the passages of inspiration which speak to this truth.

As we study through the New Testament, we notice many of the Bible writers declared that they were living in the end of time. For example, notice these of the words of Paul:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. (Hebrews 1:1, 2)

The Apostle Peter wrote: "But *the end of all things is at hand*: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Peter 4:7). On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted from Joel 2:28, stating: "And it shall come to pass *in the last days*, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17). Peter was certainly applying Joel's statement to his day.

The Apostle John noted: "Little children, *it is the last time*: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby *we know that it is the last time*" (1 John 2:18).

Jude stated: "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers *in the last time*, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 1:17, 18). Some other references that apply the last days during the time of the New Testament might be James 5:3; 2 Timothy 3:1; 1 Corinthians 16:22.

Despite these statements, we have had over nineteen centuries since the canon of Scripture closed. Furthermore, we must consider the phrase *the time of the end* which occurs five times in the Bible, all in the book of Daniel. This phrase clearly foretells a period of time at the end of the earth's

The End of Time - "Last Days" Approximately 2000 years



history, but, interestingly, it is not the same as *the last days*. You might be thinking that we misunderstand and are lost in the semantics of the issue. No, not at all, and if you will be patient, you will soon see what the Bible is saying. Before we consider the prophecies in Daniel, however, let us notice some of the other statements of the apostles and see if the apostles were teaching that the coming of Jesus and the judgment of the world were imminent.

The New Testament actually warned the early believers against declaring that the judgment was just at hand in their day. In the book of Acts, we find Paul preaching before Felix of “righteousness, temperance, and *judgment to come*” (Acts 24:25). Speaking on Mars Hill in Athens, Paul spoke of the judgment as a future *day* that had not yet occurred. “Because he hath *appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world* [future tense] in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: *for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first*, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

Paul went on to say that this mystery of iniquity was already working but also clearly said that it had not matured and the predicted falling away had not yet occurred.

In Acts 3:21, Peter declared: “Whom [Jesus] the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things.” In other words, Peter was directing his hearers to the future, saying that the heavens which had then received Christ would retain him till the times of restitution.

To help clarify the picture, let us now go to the book of Daniel and examine the expression “the time of the end.” The first instance this phrase is used is in Daniel 8:17:

So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: *for at the time of the end shall be the vision.*

Daniel had been given a vision concerning a ram and a he-goat, followed by a notable horn which would be broken and replaced by four horns. These four horns are then followed by a little horn waxing great unto the heavens and warring against the prince of the hosts. The last part of the prophecy itself is in verse 14: “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” The angel Gabriel interprets the ram and the he-goat to be the kings of Media and Persia and then Grecia (Daniel 8:20, 21). The notable horn is the first king of

Grecia (verse 21), and the four horns are four kingdoms that would (future in Daniel’s day) arise. The direct identity of the little horn is not given, but it was declared to be a “king of fierce countenance” who would understand “dark sentences” (v. 23) or mysterious riddles. This notable horn is parallel to the “little horn” power of Daniel 7 which was to arise after the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. This was accomplished about five hundred years after the time of Christ. The length of the time that this little horn was to rule was for “a time and times and the dividing of time” (Daniel 7:25). This is the same as three and a half prophetic years or 1260 literal years. This is the same period of time foretold in Revelation 12:6, 14. According to Daniel 7, the power (the papacy) would come into judgment after this period.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: *the judgment was set, and the books were opened.* (Daniel 7:9, 10)

The man of sin of whom Paul spoke and the king of fierce countenance of whom Daniel spoke, would rule about five hundred years after the time of Christ’s advent for a duration of 1260 years, and then the judgment would begin during “the time of the end.” Specifically, the papal supremacy lasted from AD 538, when the decree of Justinian declared the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over the church, and ended in 1798 with the overthrow of the Pope’s temporal power. The warning of Paul in 2 Thessalonians against a false proclamation that the judgment was at hand expired at that time.

Going back to Daniel chapter 8, we can prophetically trace the first portion of this prophecy from the time of Persia, to Greece, to Rome, and finally to the setting up of the papal power. However, the explanation of the 2300 days was not given. This was the part of the prophecy that Daniel had to wait to understand. It was especially this part that was sealed for the “time of the end” (v. 17).

The next usage of the phrase “the time of the end” is found in Daniel 11:35 “And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” A reading of the context of chapter 11 relates this “time of the end” to the 1260 year prophecy and marks the end of the 1260 year prophecy as the beginning of the “time of the end.” Furthermore, before Gabriel instructed Daniel, Daniel was told: “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people *in the latter days*: for yet the vision is for many days” (Daniel 10:14).

Before continuing to the next usage of “the end of time,” it should be remembered that the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11 are all parallel prophecies, with more detail added

different angles of perspective used. As we understand the earlier prophecies, they will help us with the more detailed later prophecies.

The third usage of the phrase “the time of the end” is found in Daniel 11:40, “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him [king of the north]: and the king of the north shall come against him [the king of the south] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” In this sequence of events, the king of the north is the papacy and the king of the south is “a new manifestation of satanic power” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 269), socialistic atheism. Just prior to verse 40, we find the following description concerning the king of the north:

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a *strange god*, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. (Daniel 11:37-39)

This god which his fathers knew not is “a strange god” and is a reference to the trinitarian concept of god which came into Christianity about three hundred years after the time of the apostles. The events depicted in verse 37-39 happen before “the time of the end.”

The fourth reference to “the time of the end” is found in Daniel 12:4: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” This says that the prophecy of Daniel is to be sealed until “the time of the end.” Clearly, certain parts of Daniel’s prophecy were understood



Daniel was given visions from the days of Babylon to “the time of the end.”

before 1798, but major portions, especially the truth about the 2300 days, were never understood before that time.

As the message of Christ’s first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second advent announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based on the prophecies. The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. At that time, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” “The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” Daniel



12:4, 10. The Saviour Himself has given signs of His coming, and He says, “When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.” “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be ac-

counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Luke 21:31, 34, 36. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 234)

The fifth and last time the phrase “the time of the end” is used in Scripture is found in Daniel 12:9: “And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time if the end.” This is a repetition of the command of verse 4.

Until 1798, a correct understanding of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 was unknown and, indeed, could not be known, for the prophecy had been sealed until “the end of time.” But after 1798, this prophecy was studied, and men began to preach it worldwide. William Miller, a Baptist, was the most well-known preacher at that time, but there were many others who trumpeted the “time of the end” had come and that prophecy was being fulfilled. And these clarion calls were just on time. History records no movement of God prior to this time that preached the judgment hour message *had* come.

No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.

Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Saviour's advent was near. (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 356, 357)

Beloved, we are living during the judgment time, "the time of the end," and though it has been 165 years since the beginning of the judgment and 211 years since the end of the 1260 year prophecy, do not allow Satan to fool you into thinking that too much time has passed for these prophecies to be relevant and true. Remember that "the LORD seeth not as man seeth" (1 Samuel 16:7). Let us not walk by temporal sight but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7), and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The word of God commands us to:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and *he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* (Hebrews 10:35-37)

For *the vision* is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it *will surely come, it will not tarry.* (Habakkuk 2:3)


God has not been wrong concerning the judgment hour message, nor have his servants been wrong in proclaiming this message. Just as the apostles knew that they were living in "the last days," we today know for a solid, immovable fact that we are living not only in "the last days" but within "the end of time" and that we are at the ending border of that time! Just before the Battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, Lord Nelson signaled to the British Navy the simple message: "England expects that every man will do his duty." During the battle he was mortally wounded yet before he died, the victory was in sight. As Nelson lay dying, he said: "Thank God I have done my duty." Beloved, there is a dying world to be warned of the judgment. If a man of the world like Lord Nelson could do his duty, surely the servants of God can do their duty, too. Will you do your duty? Will Jesus be able to

say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

We are living in *the time of the end*, when *the judgments of God are in the land*. Signs on every hand show that the agencies of evil are strengthening. Lucifer and his servants are working with unceasing activity. In this time of peril the people who keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment are to be awake to the situation, prepared to resist the attacks of the enemy. While wickedness abounds on every hand, God's people are to be fully controlled by the Holy Spirit. Greater solemnity and earnestness should be brought into the work. All light and trifling words should be left unspoken. Believers should speak and act as a people who realize the solemn meaning of the events taking place. (*Australian Union Conference Record*, April 15, 1912)

A terrible conflict is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding her wings, preparing to step down from the throne, and leave the world to the control of Satan. The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against those who serve him, and soon, very soon, will be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battlefield – the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here, where for so long Satan has led men against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed.

God's people are to bear a bold, decided testimony for the truth, unfolding the purposes of God by the witness of pen and voice. In place after place, they are to proclaim the message of God's word. By converted, sanctified, holy men and women the message of warning is to be proclaimed, that the prayer may be answered, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

All heaven is in activity, and the angels of God are waiting to co-operate with those who will devise plans by which the souls for whom Christ died may hear the glad tidings of salvation. Angels who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, are saying to every true saint, "*There is work for you to do. Go, stand and speak to the people all the words of this life.*" (*The Review and Herald*, May 13, 1902) 

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remember their dear wives and families as they minister to their needs.

We would also like to remember Wilbur Hargreaves in prayer for his wife, Vera, who died last month after a long illness.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" James 5:16.

Corporate Repentance?

by Allen Stump

A review of the article “The Godhead” in the October 2009 issue of *Glad Tidings*

Corporate repentance has become a well-known, if not a well-understood, term to those who are familiar with the 1888 Message Study Committee. The concept of corporate repentance in its most basic form is that the body of Christ is responsible to repent of its corporate guilt, especially for the guilt they continue to share in through participation in the same sins of their spiritual forefathers.

For several years, it was the burden of Elders Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short to call the church to repentance for its rejection of the message that Elders Jones and Waggoner preached at the 1888 General Conference session and thereafter. In the latest issue of *Glad Tidings*, we may have a *quiet example* of what the 1888 Message Study Committee could call *corporate repentance*.

Starting with the October issue, *Glad Tidings* is beginning a series of studies on the fundamental beliefs of the church. The October issue has a study on the first two beliefs: The Holy Scriptures and the Trinity. It is the study on the trinity that we would like to examine in this article. The study in *Glad Tidings* was written by Gerald Finneman, who is listed as being on the evangelism editorial board of the magazine.

Interestingly, the title of the study is not “The Trinity” but, rather, “The Godhead.” Among some independent ministries, there is a view of God that is not considered to be mainstream Adventist thought because these ministries have chosen to not use the Catholic term *trinity* and instead use the term *godhead*. This raises the question as to what the mainstream Adventist teaching about God actually is. There are some members of the church who truly believe the church teaches that the trinity is actually three co-equal and co-eternal *beings* who are one in purpose and nature. While this sounds very much like the standard definition of the trinity, it is actually incorrect in one key word. That word is the replacement of the word *persons* with the word *beings*. The orthodox, or classical, trinitarian doctrine teaches that God is one *being* with three co-equal and co-eternal *persons*. While this may sound like a matter of semantics, it is actually a very critical issue.

Trinitarianism teaches that God is one in nature and his being is one. He is not considered to be three distinct beings as Peter, Andrew, and John were three distinct beings. Peter, Andrew, and John were three beings, yet they could be considered to have one mind, purpose and goal because they thought alike. This idea of three different beings is considered polytheism and an anathema to Adventist, Catholic, and evangelical trinitarians.

The belief that there are three different gods is called tritheism, and this is certainly the belief of some independent Seventh-day Adventists, as well as the belief of some members in the pews. However, this belief is not kosher with the Seventh-day Adventist statement of beliefs, with the seminary at Andrews University, nor with the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, also known as volume 12 of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Notice the following statements:

... since the God of the Bible is one and not many, all the various revelations about Him presented throughout the Bible refer to the same, one divine reality and *not to a plurality of divine beings*. (*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, p. 121; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

Though other interpretations have been suggested . . . it is possible to see that “a distinction in the *divine Being* [singular] with regard to a plurality of persons is here represented . . .” (*Ibid.*, p. 122)

In the *being* of God is an essential coprimordiality of three coequal, coeternal, nonoriginated *persons*. (*Ibid.*, p. 150)

The danger of Tritheism [three beings in the godhead] involved in this position becomes real when the oneness of God is reduced to a mere unity conceived in analogy to a human society or a fellowship of action. Beyond such a unity of action, however, it is necessary to envision God as the one single reality which, in the very acts by which He reveals Himself directly in history, transcends the limits of our human reason. (*Ibid.*)

Within this article published by *Glad Tidings*, the writer appears to be careful to walk within the boundaries of strict trinitarianism, carefully using the word *persons* and not *beings*.

The article begins with a discussion of Amos 4:13 as quoted from the NKJV: “For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth—The LORD God of hosts is His name.” The article observes that this verse, along with verse 12, expresses five attributes about God: his unlimited power, his ability to communicate with finite minds, his omniscience, his rulership of all, and his omnipresence.

It is also noted that the name of God in Amos 4:13 is “the LORD God of hosts.” The author states that the “same word for LORD is translated ‘I AM’ in Exod. 3:14 where God

expresses His eternal self-existence” (Gerald Finneman, *Glad Tidings*, October 2009, p. 12). This is not exactly accurate. The Hebrew word translated “LORD,” all capitals, in Amos 4:13 is: יהוה – *Yhwh*, which is usually translated today as Yahweh. The Hebrew word translated “I AM” in Exodus 3:14 is יהי – *hayah*. This word means to be or exist. The word translated Yahweh (also known as the Tetragrammaton) is built off of the word *hayah*, but it is not the same word. As the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says:

A final and brief word may be said about the meaning and interpretation of Jehovah/Yahweh. It seems beyond doubt that the name contains the verb haya [hayah] “to be.” (vol. 1, p. 214)

The article notes that Jesus claimed to be the “I AM,” as recorded in John 8:56-59, and it is further noted that Ellen White supported this idea by stating that “in Christ is life original, unborrowed, underived” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530).

Finneman’s position is stated to help promote the idea that Jesus is coeternal with the Father. However, this teaching of the trinity sadly takes the ability of Jesus to be God’s only begotten Son away from him, for if he is eternal in the same way the Father is eternal, then he cannot be his son in any real sense of the word. The great problem with this kind of teaching is that it removes the love of God from the Christian. We are told:

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9, 10)

The way God proves his love towards the sinner is by the greatness of the gift for his/her redemption. John further writes that “we love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Mankind will not love God without a demonstration of God’s love first, and God says that demonstration is made in the gift of his only begotten Son. This gift the trinity doctrine obscures; however, the truth of God’s word gives light upon the subject.

Jesus stated, as recorded in John 5:26: “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” This life that Jesus claimed to have was life from and of the Father. But does that not mean it would be a *derived* life and hence could not be “underived”? *The Desire of Ages* was published in 1898. A year earlier, in the April 8, 1897 edition of *The Signs of the Times*, Ellen White stated:

The life of Christ was unborrowed. No one can take this life from Him. “I lay it down of myself” (John 10:18), He said. In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived. This life is not inherent in man.

This certainly seems to bolster the argument of Finneman, but we must read one more sentence. Notice the next words of Ellen White:

He [man] can possess it only through Christ. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. (*Ibid.*)

Ellen White says that life “original, unborrowed, underived . . . is not inherent in man” but in the next breath says that we may have that life as a free gift from Christ. If I can have this life, which must be the “original, unborrowed, underived” life of God the Father given to me by Christ, then certainly Christ may also have that same life given to him by the Father. While some might question Ellen White’s usage of terms such as *original*, *unborrowed*, and *underived*, they are actually perfect expressions of the quality of life that God bestows upon the repentant sinner.

The article we are examining now proceeds to Genesis 1:26 NKJV: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” Notice that the pronouns are capitalized in the New King James version, although the Hebrew grammar does not demand it. You see, in both the original Hebrew and Greek there were no lower case letters, only what we today consider upper case letters. This capitalization has the effect of placing in the mind of the reader the concept of deity when he reads these pronouns because of the traditional usage of capital letters in pronouns for deity. While we do not disagree with the implication of deity in this verse, you should be aware of the lack of capitalization in the original languages for your future study. The article then comments:

Then God [*Elohim*, plural] said [singular verb in Hebrew], “Let Us [plural] make [singular] mankind [singular] in Our [plural] image [singular] . . .” We observe here the unity and purpose of co-existing eternal divine Persons. (*Glad Tidings*, p. 13; bracket insertions by Finneman)

Although the actual Hebrew text has one word that is translated “Let Us make” and although we do not know of a Hebrew grammar rule that allows a word to be *both* plural and singular at the same time, there are more important issues we should examine. Can we really derive (exegesis) from this text “co-existing eternal divine Persons”? Before we continue, we need to understand who the “us” is in this verse. The Bible teaches that God was not alone in his work of creation.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. (Hebrews 1:1, 2)

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. (Colossians 1:16)

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 3:9)

These verses help us to see that the Father and the Son created all things, and Ellen White agrees with this: "God said to his Son, 'Let us make man in our image'" (*Early Writings*, p. 145).

While we agree with Finneman that Genesis 1:26 teaches a plurality at work in creation, the verse does not state the number involved. However, Ellen White does, and she mentions two and not three.

The next part of the article discusses the prayer of Jesus for unity among the disciples, and John 17:21-23 is quoted from the NIV. The emphasis is that the disciples "may be one as" Christ and God are one. But the doctrine of the trinity says that the oneness of God is not simply in purpose, as the prayer of Jesus requests, but is also a oneness in nature and being. However, the disciples were not to be a multi-headed being with 11 or 12 heads. Commenting upon this, Elder James White wrote:

Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one as he was one with his Father. This prayer did not contemplate one disciple with twelve heads, but twelve disciples, made one in object and effort in the cause of their Master. Neither are the Father and the Son parts of one being. They are two distinct beings, yet one in the design and accomplishment of redemption. The redeemed, from the first who shares in the great redemption, to the last, all ascribe the honour, and glory, and praise, of their salvation, to both God and the Lamb. (*The Law and the Gospel*, p. 1)

Perhaps John 17:3 would have been good to quote in this article: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

The article then states that the plurality of persons in the godhead is specified in Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commissioned the disciples to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This text is probably used more than any other verse in the Bible to try to prove that God is a triune being. This text is typically understood to mean that when an apostle or minister baptizes someone, he is supposed to baptize them using the formula "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But what is the record of the apostles who directly heard Jesus? Acts 2:38 records the first time this command was carried out. Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Peter instructed these people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ rather than in the names of three

separate persons. In Acts 10:48, Peter "commanded [Cornelius and his brethren] to be baptized in the name of the Lord." From these verses, it is plain that Peter didn't understand Christ to have commanded him to baptize into a trinity.

Peter must have understood the command of Jesus differently than most trinitarians understand it today. As we continue in the book of Acts, we find that Peter was not alone in his understanding of this command.

When Peter and John came to Samaria, they found a group of people who had been "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16).

Let us also consider Paul, who claimed he received the gospel directly from Jesus Christ. When he visited Ephesus and met some brethren who had only been baptized with John's baptism, he instructed them about Christ, and the Bible says "when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).

There is no record in the Bible of anyone baptizing in three separate names of three individual persons. There are a few possibilities that could explain why the disciples always baptized in the name of Jesus:

- 1) The disciples may have been in direct rebellion against Jesus.
- 2) They may have misunderstood what Jesus said.
- 3) Matthew 28:19 may be a gloss. Perhaps Jesus never gave this command.
- 4) The disciples understood the command of Jesus differently than most trinitarians understand it today.

I do not believe that we can accept the first two possibilities. There is a reasonable amount of evidence that the third reason may be true, but for the sake of argument, we will reject it as a possibility. The fourth statement, however, offers a reasonable solution. Jesus was not trying to teach us that God is a trinity or he would have been contradicting other statements he had made and many statements made by other Bible writers. This verse says nothing about God being three persons. However, Ephesians 4:6 says that there is "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." The Bible uses the phrase *God the Father* thirteen times, but it never says *God the Son* or *God the Holy Spirit*.

To literally baptize someone in the name of a person, we must know the person's name. Yahweh (Jehovah or other similar spellings) is the personal name of the Father. Jesus (Yahshua or other similar spellings) is the personal name of the Son, but the Scripture nowhere gives a name for the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not even hint that such a name exists, so we can see that Jesus was not giving a specific formula of words for the preacher to recite at a baptism. We know this, first of all, because all the recorded examples of people baptizing after this command was given to show that it was done in the name of Jesus. Secondly, it would not be possible to literally baptize in the proper name of the Holy Spirit because the Bible makes no mention of such a name.

The word *name* in the Bible often refers to a person's character. Jacob's name was changed to Israel because his character had changed. The word *name* in Matthew 28:19 has reference to the character rather than to the proper names of individuals. Once we realize that Christ was commissioning his disciples to baptize into the character of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it is easier for us to understand his words. This command is closely connected with the command to teach. Christ wants his disciples to understand the truth about God, his Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three of these are vital in a Christian's life. The Father loves us so much that he gave his Son to die for our sins, and he gives his Spirit to guide us in our lives. If a person lacks the knowledge and experience of any of these aspects, his relationship with God will suffer. This is why Christ specifically mentioned all three.

Concerning Matthew 28:19, the article by Finneman is careful in its comments to mention the term *person* instead of *being*, but it is confusing in what it says next. Notice the comment:

In His commission Jesus spoke specifically of three divine Persons who of course are more than one entity, thus meaning that They are three distinct and independent, co-equal and eternal Persons in the one Godhead. (*Glad Tidings*, October 2009, p. 13)

The word in question here is *entity*. The 1828 Noah Webster Dictionary defines entity as: "Being; existence. Fortune is no real entity. 1. A real being, or species of being." A modern definition of *entity* is: "The fact of existence; being. Something that exists independently, not relative to other things" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). Now, if Brother Finneman means *being* when he says *entity*, then he is unorthodox, is teaching tritheism, and is out of harmony with the church's fundamental beliefs. If he means *person* by this word, the sentence becomes confusing, for if we replace *entity* with *person*, it would say:

In His commission Jesus spoke specifically of three divine Persons who of course are more than one *person*, thus meaning that They are three distinct and independent, co-equal and eternal Persons in the one Godhead.

If the meaning of *entity* in the article is simply "something that exists independently, not relative to other things" then the paragraph would state:

In His commission Jesus spoke specifically of three divine Persons who of course are more than one *thing that exists independently, not relative to other things*, thus meaning that They are three distinct and independent, co-equal and eternal Persons in the one Godhead.

This is circular reasoning and confusing. But, of course, the trinity has been repeatedly described as a mystery and attempts to defend it are also confusing and mysterious.

The article closes with 2 Corinthians 13:14 and 1 Peter 1:2 used to prove the existence of "three divine Persons in the

one Godhead." But let us notice these texts. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, we read:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Let us be clear. The denial of the trinitarian doctrine does not necessarily result in the denial of the existence of the Lord Jesus Christ and/or the existence of the Spirit. If this were so, we would become trinitarians as quickly as possible, but it is not so. Jesus spoke of the Spirit in a possessive sense; the Spirit belongs to somebody. In Matthew 10:19, 20, he said: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the *Spirit of your Father* which speaketh in you." Here Jesus speaks of the Spirit as being "the Spirit of your Father." Let also notice what 2 Corinthians 13:14 is actually saying. The text speaks of 1) the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2) the love of God, and 3) the communion of the Holy Ghost.

In this verse, the word *God* is used only once, and it is used in reference to a specific person — God the Father. It is the Father whose love is spoken of in this verse, and according to 1 John 4:9, 10, he loves us so much that he gave his only begotten Son to give grace to us that we can be drawn into communion with them both *through* the Spirit. Jesus said,


If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)

Continued on page 12

Tasty Recipe

EUGENE'S SCRAMBLED TOFU

- 1 pound firm tofu
- Salt to taste
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon rosemary
- 1/8 teaspoon sage
- 1/8 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 medium onion
- 1 red or green pepper
- Olive oil as needed for sautéing

Sauté onion and pepper. Mix the remaining ingredients with the tofu and add to the onions and peppers. Cover and cook at medium heat for 20 minutes. Stir from time to time. Serves four. Bon appétit! 

We greatly appreciate this submission by Eugene Turtorean. Editor

Those That Seek Me Early...

B---e--e--p B---e--e--p
B---e--e--p screamed the alarm clock. Oh, how loud it was, and what a rude awakening to such a sweet sleep! I quickly shut the annoying alarm clock off and then settled down a little more comfortably under the covers while I seriously thought about going back to sleep. The night seemed far too short, and the bed was awfully cozy. After all, it was still dark outside, but in the quiet stillness of the morning the last part of Proverbs 8:17 flashed into my mind, proclaiming: "Those that seek me early shall find me." Then in my heart, I cried out: "Father, I want to find thee this morning."



I know that many of us have very busy schedules, but that is all the more reason to seek God everyday on a personal level. We need to take the time, even if we have to reschedule our lives and leave something undone or get up earlier. It can be really difficult to do, if we don't have our priorities straight, but if it is important to us, personal devotions will become a part of daily life. I find that when I neglect this time with God, the day is so hard to get through! When I do spend time with God, it's a lot easier to be cheerful and sweet and to face the trials that come. I personally like early mornings because it is quiet, still, and so much easier to hear God speaking to my heart than at any other time. King David saw the value of spending early mornings with God, even in the busy life of a king: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Psalms 5:3). Maybe there are circumstances in your life that prevent you from seeking God in the early morning hours, but do not let circumstances control you. Put first things first and spend time with God to build a personal relationship with him. This is vital to the Christian life.

God longs to spend that time with you each day, and he is waiting to give you peace and strength. May God not proclaim to us "and ye would not" (Isaiah 30:15)! Will you join me in taking time each day with God, learning to put your confidence in him more and more? Those moments will be some of the most precious you will ever have. It is there you will find peace. It is there you will learn God's will for you and find strength to perform it.



The best time to seek God is early in the morning.

There is something about those quiet morning hours before the hustle and bustle of the day that is so special, when it is just my God and me. It is there upon my knees and in spending time in his word that I find strength for the day, strength to meet the trials and whatever else the day may hold. Just as God says:

For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; *in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength* (Isaiah 30:15).

We all need some time alone with God each day. It is not enough to just have family worship, group prayers, or go to church. You cannot have an intimate relationship with God by those things alone. All these things help in our Christian walk, but it is not the same as a one-on-one relationship. You cannot pour out your heart to him and share with him your struggles, your sorrows, and your joys when you are not alone with God. You cannot find the strength you need for each trial if you do not spend some quiet moments alone with him.

Elyssa Sims



Elyssa Sims loves to help around the house and even to help gather the firewood!

Finding My True Identity in Christ

by Adrianna Turturean

Earlier in my life, I wished to develop a lifestyle of continual praise to God. I had a need to keep things in perspective by realizing who God is and who I am not! I also needed to know God (not merely about God but to know him for whom he really is), and to define my own identity in relation to God and to myself.

To make myself clearer, allow me, please, to introduce you to whom I was in the past, and this will bring me to whom I am now.

I am a university graduate from Europe, and I earned a master's degree in hydraulics. When I moved to Canada, my credentials of academic standing were submitted to the Comparative Education Service of the University of Toronto for interpretation and appraisal. According to my credentials, I was able to register for an occupation, and I chose a career in social housing. I served in different administrative positions in the beginning and later was promoted to more responsible positions. Before too long, I was a Social Housing Manager at the Ministry level in Toronto. *That was it for me!* It was the reward of my lifetime!

As a middle-aged emigrant from Romania who started from nothing, it was more than I could dream. I felt fulfilled; I could not desire more. I became powerful and successful in a very short time not just in any obscure country, but in North America. Friends and relatives in my entourage were amazed and sometimes covetous. Nothing could stop me. It was my career, after all. It was my time, my strength, my mind, and my influence. It was my *identity* and who I wanted to be.

Little did I know how much I was displeasing God. Because God is a jealous God, he wanted to be first in my life, and he wanted 100% of me. Nothing less. Therefore, when recession hit the country, God allowed me to lose my job. Although I received a generous severance package when I left, I suffered the loss and found myself shortly back to nothing. Above all, I lost my *identity* again. How many times was this scenario happening and why?! Didn't I faithfully pay tithes on all my earnings? Didn't I attend church regularly, read my Scriptures, and work like I was in the presence of the Lord? I thought I was a good Christian! How come I failed? The answer is simple: I served self all my life, although I thought I was serving God.

But now, it could be the last call for me. God had challenged me many times in my lifetime, and I always procrastinated. As I look back, I believe I was on the fringes this time! I had to decide it's either God or self again. I had to choose to serve him 100% and forget about serving self or I would be lost. It was an either/or decision, and I knew it. I'm sure there comes a time in everyone's life to make this decision, and now it was my time.



Eugene and Adrianna Turturean

I was not only facing God's challenge, but a new difficulty arose: I lost my *identity* as a Christian, too. I had become a mixed-up Christian over the years. With all the confusion going on in the church, with all the winds of doctrine, and with the many independent ministries, where was I to turn to worship the truth?

I badly wanted answers to my questions; I could not allow myself to be deceived. Time was running out for me, and profession only was no longer an option. At this time, because I was diligently searching for truth, God, in his providence, put me in touch with Smyrna Gospel Ministries and the teachings they promote. And it's time for me to tell you how much the articles in *Old Paths* have impacted me. I went over and over articles about the doctrine of God, about the nature of sin, about the nature of Christ, about the Holy Spirit, and about the three angels' messages and Revelation 14 and 18. While my husband, Eugene, and I studied the *Old Paths* with the Scriptures, God's Spirit impressed us, and we became aware more and more that what we were studying was the truth about God.

We would like you to know that the articles in *Old Paths* accomplished a major contribution in helping me find my *identity* as a Christian. They have helped me understand that I have a mission to proclaim the three angels' messages, but first I needed to define my *identity*. I needed to understand who I am and take a stand for it. I needed to believe first and then apply what I believe.

God works in mysterious ways with us but very effectively when we allow him. The articles in *Old Paths* fulfilled God's purpose in my life. Thank you, and God bless. ✍️

Please observe that Paul did not say we would commune with the Holy Ghost, but he speaks “of the communion of the Holy Ghost.” What does he mean by this? When Paul spoke of the communion of the Holy Ghost, he was showing how our communion would be. It would be by the means of the Holy Spirit that we would commune, or have fellowship, with God and Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 states: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

According to John, we have fellowship with the Father and with his Son through the Holy Spirit. Paul wanted this experience to remain with the Christians in Corinth and also with us today, an experience of true fellowship with the Father and with his Son through the Holy Spirit.

Finally, 1 Peter 1:2 states: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” This verse mentions “God the Father,” a term found thirteen times in the Bible (John 6:27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 1:1, 3; Ephesians 6:23; Philippians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1). Interestingly, this phrase is found well over one hundred times in the writings of Ellen White, but the terms *God the Son* and *God the Holy Spirit* are never found in inspiration anywhere — not in the Bible nor the writings of Ellen White. First Peter 1:2 speaks of Jesus Christ and of *sanctification of the Spirit*, but it does not say that these are coequal, eternal persons with God the Father.

We are sure that Brother Finneman is a fine *person*; we would even call him a fine *being*. Under the circumstances, he has done as good a job trying to defend the concept of the trinity in a short article as anyone could do, but it is hard to explain a mystery in a non-mysterious manner. How much more simple it is to accept the plain statements of the Bible that the early Adventists accepted.

We began our study by mentioning corporate repentance, and we suggested Finneman’s article was a *quiet attempt* at this. We suggested this because Finneman believes that the pioneers taught a damnable doctrine in the distinctly non-trinitarian position they all took. Though nothing is mentioned in the article about a radical change in belief from the pioneers, Brother Finneman is well-acquainted with the change. Perhaps he has never considered that the “new light” of the trinity (as some claim it is) provides a means for the church to corporately repent for having taught what he and the church believe to be heresy — non-trinitarianism. In this respect, the mainline church has done better than the independents, for the corporate church has been very vocal in the last few years concerning their repentance towards the non-trinitarian doctrine of God. They openly state their belief that the pioneers were wrong in their understanding of God and that we now

have left that position behind, never to return to it. That does, indeed, sound like healthy corporate repentance. The only problem with this is that they are repenting for the pioneers’ acceptance of truth, and in this repentance they are rejecting truth for error. Ellen White wrote in 1905:

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. (*Life Sketches*, p. 196)

This statement, though published in *Life Sketches* in 1915, was first published in 1893 in the *General Conference Daily Bulletin* of January 29. Long before trinitarianism had come into the church and even five years before *The Desire of Ages* was published, Ellen White testified to the leading of God among his people and “His teaching in [their] ... past history.” How sad that this lesson has been lost today. As for me, I agree with what Ellen White wrote in *Life Sketches* and also with what Paul said, as recorded in Acts 24:14: “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”

Additional Thoughts

Within the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, there are four statements that directly deal with the doctrine of God. Statement 2 is on the “Trinity,” while statement 3 is specifically on the “Father.” Statement 4 is on the “Son,” and statement 5 is on the “Holy Spirit.” Included in the October 2009 issue of *Glad Tidings* are two articles written by A. T. Jones that were originally published in 1894 as editorials in two consecutive issues of *The American Sentinel* (vol. 9, nos. 24, 25). These studies were not given any title in *The American Sentinel* except to be designated as editorials. In *Glad Tidings*, the first article by Jones is entitled “Holy Spirit” and subtitled “The Real Presence,” and his second article is entitled “The Real Presence of Christ” and subtitled “In You Or In the Eucharist?”

These studies by Jones are not a systematic presentation on the Holy Spirit and if they are intended to be a part of the *Glad Tidings* series on the fundamental beliefs, then statements 3 and 4 on the Father and the Son have been missed. These editorials by A. T. Jones are actually very good, and we recommend them for reading. However, the top of the pages for these articles have a border with the header inscribed “Trinity,” just the same as is found on their article entitled “The Godhead.” With such a header, the reader has the impression that the articles support the trinitarian doctrine. However, a careful reading of the articles does not reveal any such teaching, but reveals, instead, how we receive the presence of Christ by his Spirit. The emphasis in

the first article is summed up well by the last two paragraphs of the study:

THUS “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And this treasure we have in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. . . . Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” 2 Cor. 4:6, 7, 10. “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless 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.” Gal. 2:19, 20.

SUCH is the Scripture doctrine, the true doctrine, of the real presence of Christ with his people and in his people. It is the presence of Christ himself in the believer by the creative power and overshadowing of the Spirit of God. This is the mystery of God. Col. 1:26, 27. (*The American Sentinel*, June 14, 1894)

The second article contrasts the presence of Christ in the life of the believer with the eucharist. In this article, Jones’ summation is excellent:

The Christian truth of the real presence of Christ converts the soul of the believer: the papal dogma pretends to convert the bread and wine. The Christian truth of the real presence of Christ believed, makes man subject to God in everything; the papal dogma makes God subject to man in everything. The preaching of the Christian truth of the real presence of Christ in the believer, is the revelation of the mystery of God; the preaching of the papal dogma of the real presence is the proclamation of the mystery of iniquity. The Christian truth of the real presence of Christ is the sum of the mystery of God; the papal dogma of the real presence is the sum of the mystery of iniquity. (*The American Sentinel*, June 21, 1894)

To use these articles under the heading of “Trinity” is a disservice to Jones, who by his writings clearly did not believe in the trinity. Notice the following statement which clearly portrays Jesus as being the Son of God before the incarnation:

He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was born again. He came from heaven, God’s first-born, to the earth, and was born again. But all in Christ’s work goes by opposites for us: He, the sinless one, was made to be sin in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He, the living One, the Prince and Author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the

first-born of God, was born again in order that we might be born again. (*The Review and Herald*, August 1, 1899) (This is also found in *Lessons on Faith*, page 154.)

Jones also called the trinity a “Catholic doctrine”:

Another, and the most notable of all the victims of Calvin’s theocracy, was Servetus, who had *opposed the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity*, and also infant baptism; and had published a book entitled “Christianity Restored,” in which he declared his sentiments. (*The Two Republics*, p. 590; 1891)

In Jones’ book *The Two Republics*, Chapter 14 (pp. 329-396) is entitled “The Establishment of the Catholic Faith.” This chapter is a historical account of the Council of Nicea, at which council the framework of the doctrine of the trinity was established. Thus, Jones believed that the trinity was the basis for the establishment of the great harlot of Revelation 17. Chapter 16 (pp. 383-402) in *The Two Republics* is entitled “The Catholic Faith Re-Established.” This chapter gives a historical account of the Council of Constantinople. These chapters also include the pro-trinitarian creeds declared in these respective Councils.

Beloved, if there was ever a time when God’s people needed glad tidings, or good news, instead of the creeds of the councils, it certainly is today. To be reconciled to the God of truth requires one to receive truth, for we are told that “the righteousness of Christ, . . . is pure, unadulterated truth” (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 65). ✍

Season’s Greeting Tracts

The holiday season will soon be here. Most of the world will be spending money for gifts and decorations. Some will attempt to ignore the season because of its pagan ties. We believe that this is a time of year when many hearts are open to receive the gospel who would otherwise not listen. We have published a tract in the form of a card that can be shared with others at this time of the year and have found it to be one of the easiest tracts to share when accompanied with a sincere smile!

The first two paragraphs of the tract are taken from a section of the *Adventist Home* entitled “Christmas is Coming.” This is followed by a short Bible study on God’s love in giving his only begotten Son for our sins. The tract ends with an appeal for readers to give their lives to the Lord and offers a free copy of the *Shelter in the Storm* version of *Steps to Christ*.

The cost of production and mailing is \$7.50/100. Envelopes are available for mailing if you so request. If you are interested in obtaining copies of this tract, please let us know as soon as possible, so we will be able to get them to you before the season starts. ✍

144,000! Really!

The *Adventist Review*'s lead article for the October 22, 2009 issue is entitled "Just 144,000? Really?" This article was written by Ganoune Diop, Ph.D., who is director of the Centers for the Study of World Religions and Philosophies for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The article attempts to explain four aspects of the 144,000: 1. "The 144,000 are associated with the idea of standing." They stand for Christ while upon the earth and will stand with him upon Mount Zion. 2. "The 144,000 are spared and sealed." They will not experience the negative side of judgment or the seven last plagues. They are eternally sealed for Christ. 3. "The 144,000 are called servants," with an emphasis upon their worship of God. After explaining these aspects of the 144,000, Dr. Diop states:

The number 144,000 is a *symbolic* number that refers to the totality of God's people living through the great tribulations and deceptions of the end-time. They come out victorious over the end-time challenges orchestrated by the antitrinity described in Revelation 12 and 13—the dragon that mimics God the Father, the antichrist, and the counterfeit Holy Spirit (emphasis supplied).

Early Seventh-day Adventists believed the 144,000 to be literal in number. When the brethren were first coming together and were few in number, some must have wondered where God would find 144,000 faithful souls. The literal-number view prevailed for several years. Helping to drive that position were statements from Ellen White which Dr. Diop failed to mention in his article. As early as 1846 Ellen White noted:

The living saints, *144,000 in number*, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. (Broadside, *To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*, paragraph 2)

These exact words were published at least five other times while Sister White was alive. (For example, see *Early Writings*, page 15 and *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 59.) Joseph Bates accepted this position, for he wrote in 1848:

We believe, what I shall attempt to prove by-and-by, that there will be 144,000 saved at the coming of Jesus. (*A Vindication of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and the Commandments of God*, p. 184)

Stephen Haskell wrote: "There are 144,000 of the sealed ones. Many children of God are dying daily who have never had their attention called to this truth, and are saved among the innumerable company. Rev. 7:9" (*Bible Handbook*, p. 89). Clearly, Haskell did not see the 144,000 as a symbolic number. James White wrote, "When this work [the sealing] was accomplished, 144,000 were found to be sealed"

(*Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 9, 1851). Elder White's article will be reprinted in *Old Paths* next month for your consideration and study.

With the small number of Adventists in the mid-1800s, we can see it took a great deal of faith to believe that the 144,000 were a literal number. Today, with a church that has a rapidly growing membership of over 16,000,000, the number 144,000 seems pretty small, not even 1/100 of the membership! Yet, when we consider the counsels of Ellen White about how unprepared the people were for the coming of Jesus in her day and add to that the lack of depth that many so-called converts have today, we can easily begin to wonder, as the pioneers must have, where will the Lord find 144,000? The Bible speaks of martyrs in the last days (Revelation 16:6; 17:6), and perhaps some of these come from the ranks of those who now profess to keep the commandments of God.

God will have 144,000 "in number"! Really! There will be a group of people that have pledged themselves to remain loyal to God at any cost, and they give glory and honor to him as no group has ever done or will ever do.

The 144,000 are a very special group with a very special experience, and they will have special privileges. They alone go into the temple of God in heaven (*Early Writings*, page 19). They sing a song of experience that nobody else can sing because they will have had an experience such as nobody before has ever had (Revelation 14:3; *The Great Controversy*, page 649). "The names of the one hundred and forty-four thousand were engraved in letters of gold" (*Early Writings*, p. 19) in tables of stone. No wonder we are told to "strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand" (*The Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905).

Salvation is open to all, but only a few will accept the gracious offer of God. Jesus described his people as a "little flock" (Luke 12:32). Fewer still will be those among the 144,000.

There are a few characteristics of the 144,000 we wish to note before closing. Firstly, this people have no guile or deceit in their mouths (Revelation 14:5). Secondly, they have the "Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). According to Revelation 3:12, it is the church in Philadelphia, not Laodicea, who have the Father's name written in their foreheads.

Not to miss a chance to promote the trinity, Dr. Diop writes, near the end of the article: "They are sealed for an eternal life of worship and fellowship with the God of love—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The 144,000 are directly mentioned only in the book of Revelation. Revelation gives more information of what happens in heaven than any other source. Jesus prayed that God's "will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). If we wish to worship and serve God properly on earth, let us study how it happens in heaven as revealed in the Revelation. A check of

the book of Revelation does not reveal a single place where the Holy Spirit is worshiped; but instead only God and the Lamb are worshiped (Revelation 5:13; 21:22). The 144,000 will worship God in heaven perfectly because they will have learned to first worship him here perfectly. Let us strive with all our God-given power to be among that group and to bring

honor and glory to God. Jesus says that the gate is straight and the path narrow that leads to eternal life (Matthew 7:14), but it is broad enough, brothers and sisters, for everyone who wishes to enter thereat.

Allen Stump

Quiz on Job 20, 21

1. Who is the speaker in Job chapter 20?
2. What is the internal state of the speaker in Job 20:2?
3. What verse in chapter 19 could the speaker be referring to in Job 20:3?
4. What source for authority is the speaker appealing to in Job 20:4?
5. What is the basic argument in Job 20?
6. In Job 20:19, the speaker accuses Job of forsaking the poor. Look ahead in the book of Job and find a statement from Job that denies this and give the reference.
7. Paraphrase Job 20:24, 25.
8. Job 20:27 is a statement in opposition to what statement of Job's found in ____? (chapter and verse)
9. Like Bildad, Zophar all but directly calls Job "wicked" (Job 20:29). What lesson can we learn from this? Compare Matthew 7:1.
10. In Job's response, he tells his friends that he is going to say something so revolutionary to them that they will be astonished (Job 21:5). Give a summary of what he said that was contrary to what they had said that astonished them.
11. Find and list with verses Job's contrasting points to the statements in Job 15:20; 18:19; and 20:24.
12. Who does Job 21:15 remind one of in the history of the children of Israel? Find a reference.
13. Job argues that children are not punished for the sins of their fathers. Which verse in chapter 21 states this?
14. What is a summary of the point that Job is making in Job 21:23-25?
15. While the wicked may prosper upon this earth, what does Job say about their final end? In what New Testament verse does the apostle who was crucified upside down say the same thing?
16. What has Job declared about his "friends" in Job 21:34?
4. In verses 5-21 the calamities of the wicked are spoken of as falling into or being snared by a trap six times. Verse 7-cast him down; verse 8-cast into a net, walketh upon a snare; verse 9-the gin shall take him; and verse 10- the snare is laid and a trap in the way.
5. The "brimstone" of Job 18:15 might have reference to the fire from heaven (lightening) that destroyed Job's sheep.
6. In Job 19:1, Job explained that his friends were tormenting his very heart. His body was already vexed with boils, but now his friends were vexing his spirit/mind (*nepesh*).
7. In Job 19:2, Job says that he had been reproached ten times, yet there have only been five speeches by his friends at this time. We account for this by understanding that the phrase "ten times" appears to be a round expression representing many and not necessarily an exact number. See Genesis 31:14; Numbers 14:22; and Nehemiah 4:12. There is a principle of Bible interpretation called "first usage rule." The first usage is used to explain later usages of a phrase. Since Job is the first book of the Bible, it is the standard for first usage and since Job had only been reproached five times, we feel that it is a rounded symbolic number, unless there were five reproaches that are not listed or known of, but there is no other evidence for such and it seems unlikely.
8. The "He" and "His" that Job is speaking of in Job 19:8-13 is God. This tells us, at this time, that Job believed God had overthrown him and compassed him about with his net.
9. The significance of the expression "he counteth me" in Job 19:11 is that Job was thinking, I am not an enemy to God; I know that cannot be, but he is counting me as such for some reason I cannot know.
10. Job 19:20 indicates that Job's physical condition had wasted away, with no muscle or fat left.
11. The Hebrew word for "book" in Job 19:23 is *cepher*.
12. The Hebrew word translated "redeemer" in Job 19:25 is *Ga'al*. In the book of Ruth it is also translated: To act as kinsman.
13. Though the worms would eat his flesh, Job expressed hope that he would yet see God in his flesh.
14. In Job 19:28, Job is representing his friends as saying that they can be cruel to him due to his sin, but he warns them about the judgment in Job 19:29.

Answers to Quiz on Job 18, 19

1. Bildad is the speaker in Job chapter 18.
2. Bildad might have felt his statement in Job 18:3 was supported by the words of Job in Job 16:11: "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked."
3. In verses 5 and 21, Bildad classifies Job with the wicked who know not God.

Faithfulness in Confessing Christ

by Ellen G. White

(The following article is timely for many reasons, and we encourage all to read it carefully. Of special interest is the statement concerning Christmas and New Year, where Ellen White puts a balance to the issue and teaches that effective missionary work can be done for the poor during that time of the year, when their hearts can be touched in a special manner as we work disinterestedly for them. Editor)

“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven” [Matthew 10:32]. Do you confess Christ in your expenditure of His entrusted means? Is He confessed when most of your income is spent on self, when the Lord’s tenth is withheld, and when gifts and offerings are used for your own pleasure and benefit? It would not be out of place for you to head a column in your domestic account book “Charity.” Had you done this, and had you put down all that you have spent for self, and all that you have used for charity, the list of that spent for self would make a large amount; but how would your column set apart for charity come out? Again I urge you to ask yourself, Do I confess Christ in my expenditure? Heading a column of your account book “Charity” would make a revelation to you. No other human eye may see that book but yourself, but the Lord Jesus Christ sees it, and your reward in the day of reckoning will be in accordance with your works.

When the question is asked those who have professed to be Christians, “How much owest thou unto my Lord?” many will stand silent and convicted, unprepared to answer, because they have not considered the Lord’s dues and have set apart nothing for charity. Have you been forward with gifts and offerings? Would not an examination of your account book reveal that you have neglected your duty in this respect?

If Christ had that which is His own in tithes and offerings, so much would not be left for selfish outlay on nicknacks and display. Less would be spent for dress, for pleasure excursions, for entertainments, or for display in table fare. We may confess Christ by making no elaborate preparations for visitors; we may deny Him by making more than ordinary preparations, which takes time that rightly belongs to the Lord. Not only do you rob your family of the attention they need, in order to prepare an elaborate entertainment, but the practice is followed by others whom you have influenced by your example. The Lord does not judge us according to the highness and elevation of our various spheres, but according to the faithfulness with which we fill them. Before you enter into amusement for the gratification of self, ask yourself the question, Is not this God’s time and money that I am expending needlessly? Open your account book and see how your account stands with God, with your household, and with the world.

Have you confessed Christ by faithfully tithing the mint, the anise, and the rue? When we give the Lord the tithe, we are only giving Him that which is His own, to withhold which is theft and robbery. When we withhold the tithe we keep back that which God designs shall sustain His work on the earth. For this work of redemption God gave the richest gift of heaven; can we not give one tenth of what we have? Many have forgotten God, and have kept back the tithe. Does your account book reveal that you have dealt faithfully with your Lord? Are you poor? Then give your little. Have you been blessed with abundance? Then be sure to lay aside that which the Lord registers as His own.

By dealing truly with God, we really deal much more benevolently with ourselves; for when the great day of reckoning comes, every man will be asked, What have you done with the goods which I lent you? As we consider this question many of us need to walk more humbly and with greater self-denial before God. All who feel it a cross not to keep up an appearance in the eyes of the world, I would point to the life and work of Christ, who for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. The fear of not keeping up an appearance need not exist; for an appropriate course of action will bring honor rather than discredit from all sensible minds. Confess Christ in this particular; for He has said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” [Luke 9:23]. The neglect to confess Christ in your account books cuts you off from the great privilege of having your name registered in the Lamb’s book of life.

Do you confess Christ by visiting the sick, the needy, and the poor? “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” [James 1:27]. Do your works testify, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless 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].

As Christ represented the Father to the world, so we are to represent Christ; and every inducement is presented to us that we may represent Christ by keeping the way of the Lord, and faithfully living out every requirement of His Word. This is the power of the gospel. By doing this we will be as lights shining in a dark place, and will be of more value to the world than sermons or religious ceremonies. The world is watching us, and will criticize us severely. We are constantly making an impression, favorable or unfavorable, upon those with whom we associate. Through us others will look at Christ, but unless we practice the lessons of Christ, we are none of His, and cannot properly represent Him. Cheerfulness will

be the fruit borne by the Christian tree, but levity and coarse, unruly conduct are as thorn berries.

The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion of practical godliness, and while the grace of God abides in the heart, the Christian will produce the fruit of industry, frugality, economy; he will not waste, but will gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost. In the lives of those who have Christ abiding in the heart will be seen no avarice, no dishonesty in trade, no overreaching, for all covetousness is pronounced idolatry, but every species of dishonesty will be put away from the character. Unkindness of disposition will be overcome; for they are made new men in Christ Jesus, and sin no longer reigns in their mortal bodies. Everyone who has thus been renewed will manifest kindness, forbearance, and generosity, in this confessing that Christ, the hope of glory, is formed within.

The cause of God should be kept in a healthful condition; the treasury should be supplied with means for carrying forward the work of God. Institutions which are established to help orphans, those who are dependent and destitute, the infirm and the aged, should be aided. Those who have the blessing of health should cooperate with Christ by helping the weak. The blessing of God rests upon those who represent Christ by doing this work. Christmas and New Year celebrations can and should be held in behalf of those who are helpless. God is glorified when we give to help those who have large families to support. But no man who can earn his own livelihood has a right to live on the produce of others. The proverb, "The world owes me a living," has in it the essence of falsehood, fraud, and robbery. The world owes no man a living who is able to work to gain a living for himself.

Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also

bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (2 Corinthians 8:7-15; 9:6-8)

Christ demands the entire service of the soldiers in His army. In His Word he has given the principles of action: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" [Romans 12:11]. These principles should govern our conduct at all times. No allowance is made for lazy, negligent work, or for want of zeal. God has a righteous claim to constant service and supreme love. Your body, your soul, your life, all your God-given capabilities should be consecrated to God for the promotion of His glory. No one can be a sincere Christian unless he is a laborer together with God, unless he belongs to the family of workers. We must ever bear in mind that we are in copartnership with God. His work and His cause demand the first consideration. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" [Matthew 6:33].--Ms 13, 1896; released by the White Estate February 2, 1983 in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 231

Descriptive Words of the Old Testament

Look up the references to find the descriptive words.

1. Isaiah 14:4 _____ city
2. Jeremiah 11:4 _____ furnace
3. Amos 5:24 _____ stream
4. Isaiah 11:6 _____ lion
5. Jeremiah 2:13 _____ cisterns
6. Habakkuk 2:18 _____ idols
7. Nahum 3:17 _____ grasshoppers
8. Isaiah 35:3 _____ knees
9. Jeremiah 8:19 _____ images
10. Isaiah 5:4 _____ grapes
11. Lamentations 5:10 _____ famine
12. Jeremiah 3:12 _____ Israel
13. Isaiah 28:11 _____ lips
14. Jeremiah 4:3 _____ ground
15. Ezekiel 9:2 _____ altar
16. Daniel 11:30 _____ covenant

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Waldensian Center Begins New Term February 2, 2010

by David Sims

We are often reminded that “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37). God’s cause is in desperate need of missionaries, ministers, Bible workers, canvassers, and medical missionaries. The times demand that these gospel workers know how to support themselves in secular labor, as well. This all demands a thorough training in both the secular and spiritual lines.

The great commission includes everyone of us. God is calling you! He asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us” (Isaiah 6:8)? Are you wanting to respond but cannot because you need training? Do you need some direction to know where and how to begin?

The Waldensian Center will provide such a training. The new term will begin February 2, 2010. For more information, please see our website at: www.7thdayhomechurchfellowships.com. You may also contact me at david@historyinfo.net or by calling 530-294-1115 or 619-851-0953.

“Ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Strength, time, intellect, are but lent treasures. They belong to God, and it should be the resolve of every youth to put them to the highest use. (*Education*, p. 57)

The Lord has called us out from the world that we may be witnesses for his truth; and all through our ranks, young men and women should be trained for positions of usefulness and influence. They are privileged to become missionaries for God; but they cannot be mere novices in education and in their knowledge of the word of God, and do justice to the sacred work to which they are appointed.

In every land the want of education among our workers is painfully apparent. We realize that education is not only necessary to the proper fulfillment of the duties of domestic life, but necessary for success in all branches of usefulness . . . Whatever business parents might think suitable for their children, whether they desire them to become manufacturers, agriculturists, mechanics, or to follow some professional calling, they would reap great advantages from the discipline of an education. . . They need to be thoroughly furnished with the reasons of our faith, to understand the Scriptures for themselves. Through understanding the truths of the Bible, they will be better fitted to fill positions of trust. They will be fortified against the temptations that will beset them on the right hand and on the left. But if they are thoroughly instructed and consecrated, they may be called, as was Daniel, to fill important responsibilities. Daniel was a faithful statesman in the courts of Babylon; for he feared, loved, and trusted God; and in time of temptation and peril he was preserved by the power of God. We read that God gave Daniel wisdom, and endowed him with understanding.

Those who obtain a knowledge of God’s will, and practice the teaching of His word, will be found faithful in whatever position of trust they may be placed. Consider this, parents, and place your children where they will be educated in the principles of truth, where every effort will be made to help them to maintain their consecration, if converted, or if unconverted, to influence them to become the children of God, and thus fit them to go forth to win others to the truth. (*Counsels on Education*, pp. 197, 198) ✍

Youth’s Corner – Joseph Wolff

Our story this month is about a little Jewish boy who lived just a few hundred years ago. Little Joseph was born into a Jewish family and as he grew, his parents taught him Hebrew. Joseph learned to read the Hebrew Bible and to speak the Hebrew language. When he was 7 or 8 years old, his parents arranged for him to attend a Christian school in the neighborhood, but with the agreement that when anything from a Christian point of view was taught, Joseph would be excused from class and be allowed to stay home. He was just going to school to learn mathematics, reading, and science but nothing about Christianity because, remember, Joseph was a little Jewish boy.

As Joseph grew, he made friends in his neighborhood, and when he was a teenager, he made friends with his barber who was a Christian. The barber asked Joseph questions about the

Old Testament, especially about the book of Daniel, for which Joseph really did not have the answers, but Joseph knew his father would know! For you see, his father was a rabbi and his father knew “everything” about the Old Testament! So, Joseph took his perplexing questions about the prophecies in the book of Daniel home, but Joseph’s father did not seem to have the answers and, instead, sent Joseph away. Joseph finally thought that if he wanted to understand anything about the book of Daniel, he was just going to have to study for himself. And he did! He studied (remember he could read and understand the original Hebrew), he asked his barber questions, and do you know what? Joseph realized that although the Jewish people were looking for the Messiah *to come*, the Messiah had *already come!* He learned this from the book of Daniel, and he knew

that if he were going to be honest with his faith and to God, he had to accept Jesus as his Saviour. And he did! And he became a Catholic.

Joseph was a very intelligent young man. By this time, he was fluent in Hebrew, German, and Greek, and now he began to study Arabic because Joseph had a great desire to be a missionary to the Muslim world, as well as to the people of his birth. He wanted to tell them all about Jesus, the Messiah, but he was also going to Muslim lands, too, to tell those people about the Messiah.

The Catholic Church realized the talents Joseph had and wanted to use him in work for the church, so they sent him to school. While he was attending one of the Catholic universities in Italy, he had a friendly visit with the Pope! The Pope told Joseph that he was very happy Joseph was in Italy (Joseph was born in Germany) and that he wanted Joseph to stay in Italy and continue studying at the Catholic universities. Joseph put his hand on the shoulder of the Pope and said that he would be happy to learn at their universities. And he did.

While at the first Catholic university, he told a fellow student his story of meeting the Pope and putting his hand on the Pope's shoulder. That student stood back aghast and said, "You didn't touch the Pope, did you? Why the Pope is infallible! Anything he says is true!" Joseph looked at his friend and said, "He is a human being like you and me. He is not infallible! The only one infallible is God!" When Joseph's teachers learned of the conversation with his friend, they realized they had someone on their hands who wasn't quite under their wings, so to speak, and they thought it best to send Joseph to different Catholic school. While there, Joseph became friendly with one of the teachers and learned from him that the Catholic Church burned martyrs. Joseph said, "That's not right! You are not supposed to burn people!" But the teacher said, "No, the church has the authority to do that." Joseph responded by saying, "The Bible says 'Thou shalt not kill!' You cannot burn martyrs. It is wrong!"

Once again the teachers knew Joseph still was not under their wing, so they sent him to another school because they wanted Joseph to learn Catholic ways and be a help to the church, for he was very intelligent and energetic and knew many languages. So, they sent him to another school. That did not quite work out either because Joseph stood up for what he knew the Bible said. He knew the Old Testament in Hebrew backwards and forward, and when he was taught things that were not biblical, he spoke up.

Well, Joseph made a friend while he was attending school who was from England, and this person was a Protestant. This friend also recognized Joseph's worth and said, "You



Joseph Wolff preaching to Arabs

Continued on page 20

DOES GOD HAVE COMPETITION DURING CHRISTMAS?

Through this Christmas season Santa Claus is much in the mind of American children. He is read about, sung about, portrayed on television, even seen "live" in stores. Just how Santa will accomplish all that he is credited with doing in delivering his gifts poses little problem to the imagination of his admirers.

Many parents who profess to worship God have acquiesced to the Santa Claus myth simply because the world around us exalts him. Is the Santa fable really innocent fun? Should it be accepted in our families and promoted by Christian parents during the holiday? Does the Bible have anything to say about this emphasis on the mythological Santa?

The Santa Claus myth is a fanciful, destructive lie perpetuated by parents who hypocritically tell their children not to lie! Are we justified in lying simply because a child enjoys the lie? Are we exempt from the guilt and consequences of this lie simply because it is accepted by a majority of society?

The Word of God very plainly states: "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 12:22). God also hates "a lying tongue" (Proverbs 6:16, 17). The apostle Paul tells us to lay aside "lying" and to "speak truth" (Ephesians 4:25). And Revelation 21:8 tells us that "all liars" will have their part in the lake of fire. This should settle the matter for those who value honesty and truthfulness.

Besides, this Santa Claus is not simply an overweight, white-bearded, jolly old man dressed in a red suit who lives at the North Pole. By many, Santa is elevated to the level of Deity. Notice the characteristics of God attributed to Santa even by Christian parents:

Santa is omniscient like God - knowing whether every child has been "good or bad".


Santa is omnipresent like God - he can be everywhere in the world during the same night of the year!

Santa is omnipotent like God - flying through the skies with his supernatural reindeer, carrying tons of toys!

Santa is a moral judge like God - rewarding good little children and refusing to reward bad children.

Santa personifies love, good will, and giving - just as God does.

In these and other ways, the mythical Santa has become something of a god, competing for the adoration and worship which is due only to the true and living God. (Change the position of the letter "n" and one has Satan - the counterfeit who exalts himself as God, claiming the attributes of God.)

We gain nothing of eternal value and can lose much of eternal value by believing a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Nothing is more precious than truth. Let us remember the virtue of honesty through all seasons of the year. 

We are thankful for this submission by Judy Brown. Editor

should come back to England with me. We can study the Bible and make a plan for your life.” Joseph, however, was not quite ready to leave Italy, but he could see that his teachers were becoming more controlling and were trying to get him to accept their doctrine and teachings, even if they were not biblical.

One day Joseph was in his room and went to leave but found the door locked. He thought it was because it was night and the doors were locked for safety. He knew he would be fine for the night, and he just went to bed and slept. But the next morning the door was still locked. He did not understand what was happening, but something in the back of his mind made him a little anxious. Well, his teachers were getting ready to send him to another school, this time accompanied by a guard.

Joseph went to this next place of higher learning with letters of recommendation from the cardinals at his former school, and everything seemed to go smoothly. But while there, he met another person from England and this person asked him, “Are you Joseph?! Joseph Wolff? *The* Joseph Wolff?!” Joseph said that he was, and this new person said, “Well, I have a letter for you,” and it was from his friend in England. The letter said, “You need to come to England and study with me. This lady is a Christian, and she will help you make arrangements to travel.”

Joseph decided it was time to go to England, and the long story made short is that Joseph left the Catholic Church, became a Protestant, and then he went on his missionary journeys to the Far East and to Jerusalem. While he was on these journeys, he was chased by pirates, and he was captured by Turks and Muslims, who thought, at first, he was their friend because he could speak their languages, but when he began to talk about his God in heaven, about the Bible, and about Jesus Christ, then things changed. At one particular camp, the commander was a strict Muslim and said, “What are you doing teaching these things and speaking to my people about them? You are an infidel!” And he ordered for the soles of his feet to be lashed 200 times. Because of this, Joseph was not able to stand for three weeks, but he did not give up! If you see drawings of Joseph riding on a mule with nothing on his feet and his hands tied, it is because he had been taken captive and he could not wear anything on his feet.

On another occasion, Joseph was invited into the tent of the Turkish commander because Joseph spoke Arabic and he was thought to be a friend, but when it was learned that he was a Christian, they said, “You’re an infidel! We are going to kill you!”

Joseph said, “You cannot do that. The Koran says you can’t!”

“What do you mean!? The Koran says we are to kill infidels!”

“But I am your guest, and the Koran says you do not kill your guests,” answered Joseph.

And, so, they could not kill him. The commander said, “All right! You will buy your freedom with everything you have. It is ours.” And they stripped him of all his clothes, took everything he owned, and then put him on a mule and sent him away. And he traveled that way until he found someone who was willing to give him clothes. But Joseph was of good courage, and he did not mind being treated like this because he was a *missionary for Jesus*.

Joseph shared his faith and told everyone he could about the God in heaven and that the Messiah had come! And that he is coming again and they needed to be ready! It did not matter to him if he could not stand because his feet were badly wounded. It did not matter if all his clothes were taken from him or if he was chased by pirates. Many things happened to Joseph as he witnessed for Jesus, but his friend was Jesus. He did not travel alone, and he did not give up! Maybe you will be a missionary one day like Joseph. ✍



I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (John 9:4)

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
Assistant Editor Onycha Holt—onycha@smyrna.org