Recently, as I observed the cover of Our Firm Foundation, I was reminded of where the name for the magazine came from. You will notice that underneath the title are six of the pillars of our faith as Seventh-day Adventists. Of course, Jesus Christ is the true foundation of the church, but it is through these pillars that we honor our Lord and Saviour. I wondered how many people who read the magazine could repeat these pillars, if questioned. I found that whoever I asked could not. They knew some, or none, of the pillars, but never did anyone give me all six. I had to look at them to really get it myself. Once I looked, I was confident I knew them, but I should also be able to list them. I therefore made it a priority to memorize them, and to know what each pillar should mean to me. I thought that our readers might also want to know these pillars.

The best way I found to memorize the list was to take the first letters and be able to repeat them as follows:

**ICSTNS.**

I = Immutable law of God—the ten commandments are the basis for God’s government, the first four displaying our love for God, and the last six, our love for our fellow man. They epitomize the character of God.

C = Christ’s righteousness—this is the whole basis of our Christian walk. By surrendering completely to our Lord and Saviour, we can have characters that are safe to save. We can have the power to overcome every sin so that sin will not rise up a second time. (See Nahum 1:9)

S = Seventh-day Sabbath—this was given to us at the time of creation as a memorial to creation. It was given to us—one day out of seven—in which our entire day is dedicated to our walk with God.

T = Three angels' messages—these three messages encapsulate the whole of the last day message of the Seventh-day Adventist Remnant Church.

N = Non-immortality of the soul—when we die, we die. We do not go to heaven, but we remain in the grave until the resurrection at our Lord's second coming.

S = Sanctuary—by knowing and understanding the sanctuary, we can understand the whole plan of salvation. It is a picture of the work the Lord does for and in us to prepare us for heaven and the world made new.

The thoughts that I have shared have been brief, and I am sure that each of our readers could add to those thoughts, especially if they spend time in meditation and prayer in regard to the pillars of the church.

We are aware that God’s perfect number is seven. As I thought about that, I thought that Ellen White would not tell us that she was a pillar of the church, but as our last day prophet, her writings guard us against many errors, focus our attention on the Bible, and in particular, on our walk with Jesus. I therefore see the writings of Sister Ellen White as the seventh pillar in her role as prophet to the end time church.

In Amos 3:7, it states, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

Ellen White has said, “I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me. I was given illustrations of heavenly things, and of the sanctuary, so that we were placed where light was shining on us in clear, distinct rays.

“All these truths are immortalized in my writings. The Lord never denies His word. Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days…”

“I am thankful that the instruction contained in my books established present truth for this time. These books were written under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit.” 8 MR 320, 321.

On the contents page of the magazine, you can read the following under Our Mission: “It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of Our Firm Foundation to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days remaining for this world are few, and we must work quickly. **We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.**

Clark Floyd, editor of Our Firm Foundation magazine, has been co-host of the radio program Bible Answers with Clark and Lee and is a licensed attorney and an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He has spoken internationally and makes his home in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina.
Our Mission:
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Executive Director:
Joe Olson
executivedirector@hopeint.org

Editor:
Clark Floyd
editorial@hopeint.org

Copy-editor:
Reen Swindle

Director of Hope For Health:
Heather Olson, N.D., R.N., C.H.
hopeforhealth@hopeint.org

Bookstore Manager:
Georgine Olson
shipping@hopeint.org

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Phone: 309.343.1844 • Fax: 309.343.3721 • Email: office@hopeint.org • Web: www.hopeint.org
Our Firm Foundation

By Patricia J. Smith

Throughout His Word, God admonishes us in various places and through various prophets not to forget important truths He knows can easily slip the human mind. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Ex. 20:8. “That ye remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.” Num. 15:40. “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.” 1 Chron. 16:11, 12. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...” Ecc. 12:1. “Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.” Is. 46:9. “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statues and judgments.” Mal. 4:4. “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” 2 Tim. 2:8.

Not just another Bible story to read and forget

One of the most serious of these “Remember” phrases is a little three word sentence in Luke 17:32, which is a part of Jesus’ prophecy concerning the condition of the last days and how His people are to face the coming crisis. Our Lord’s three word warning is one that no one living in these evil days can afford to ignore who truly desires to meet Him in peace at His soon return.

From this prophetic warning of Jesus in Luke 17:28-33, it is obvious that He did not consider the history of Lot and his family’s escape from Sodom just before its destruction to be just another Bible story to read, hear, know and forget. Clearly He believed that this history of Lot, his wife and family, Sodom and the surrounding cities to be true, having last-day applications to which we are to take heed. Thus He warns us, “Remember Lot’s wife.”

In Sodom, they carried normal, legitimate activities to excess

“Likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.” Luke 17:28. In Ezekiel, further light is shed on the lifestyle of the people of Sodom.
that called for such great punishment from the God of heaven - a lifestyle that was called by the Lord Himself grievous sin in Gen. 18:20, and which was shared by the inhabitants of Gomorrah and surrounding cities. “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous.” This sinful lifestyle was very easy and selfish. “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” Ez. 16:49.

**Jesus gives warning against loving the things of this world**

Material, worldly possessions were uppermost in the minds of these people to the point where they refused to help others less fortunate than themselves. Does this not also describe the way that very many people are living in 2012, with so much new technology and electronic “toys”, and a 24/7 round of entertainment and frivolity, with no care for anyone that is not like themselves?

In verse 31 of Luke 17, Jesus gives a warning against loving the things of this world; a warning similar to the one the angel gave to Lot and his family as they left Sodom. “And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Matt. 8:20.

**The focus of prosperity gospels is obtaining worldly possessions**

Those who preach the prosperity gospel while disregarding the duties and self-denial required to be a Christian have not heeded Jesus' warning. Instead, they have imitated Lot’s wife in focusing on worldly possessions, ever wanting more and more stuff. Pastors who have this worldly emphasis do not truly and faithfully represent our humble Lord and Savior. Although He was the Majesty of heaven, He so disregarded earthly wealth as He lived a man among the people, that He had nowhere to call His own. “And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Matt. 8:20.

**The saving of souls is to be the priority**

Time and again in calling His disciples, Jesus emphasized the importance of saving souls over having material wealth. “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.” Matt. 4:18-22.
In similar fashion and demonstrating the same utter disregard of earthly wealth, Jesus called Levi Matthew the publican to follow Him. “And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.” Mark 2:14.

“Matthew “left all, rose up, and followed Him”. There was no hesitation, no questioning, no thought of the lucrative business to be exchanged for poverty and hardship. It was enough for him that he was to be with Jesus, that he might listen to His words, and unite with Him in His work.” DA 273. Unfortunately for her, Lot’s wife did not deny herself, seeking the good of others, as did Christ and His disciples. Her fate demonstrates the danger of having the heart set on possessing material goods, making wealth a god and losing out on salvation.

**Her treasure was in Sodom**

Lot’s wife turned a deaf ear to the warnings from God through His angels; three times dire warnings were given; warnings that meant they must disregard their possessions and family in Sodom and flee for their lives.

This she did not want to hear, for her treasure was in Sodom, and so was her heart.

More than likely, she heard the angels’ warning to her husband, while they were still in the house. “And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.” Gen. 19:12, 13.

The angels could force her to leave the city, but could not force her to change her will.

The second warning was given by Lot himself to their sons-in-law. Lot repeated the warning of the angels to his family, saying, “Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.” Genesis 19:14. One cannot help but wonder if Lot’s wife also mocked at these warnings in her heart, considering her later action of disobedience.

After the angels had brought them out of Sodom, Lot and his little family were given the third, most urgent warning to flee and escape to the mountain, for to stay in the plain would be dangerous. Lot’s wife was not only disobedient to the voice of the LORD through His angels, but she was also ungrateful to Him, disregarding His mercy. She did not consider His great love and kindness toward her family and herself in sparing their lives that they did not perish as did the other inhabitants of Sodom. Her focus, on that terrible morning after they had fled Sodom, was not on the goodness, kindness, long-suffering and mercy shown to them by the God of Abraham, but on her material possessions and unbelieving family left behind in Sodom.

**Disobeying God’s clear instruction is a dangerous thing**

Boldly, and in utter defiance of God and His mercy, she disobeyed and looked back. The punishment for staying in the plain and not escaping to the mountain was to be consumed, but the punishment for looking back had not been as clearly specified. Perhaps she thought that looking back was such a little thing, that it would be overlooked, and nothing would happen to her. Perhaps she decided that she could go with her two daughters and her husband to the little city of Zoar to make a new life with more peace of mind if only she could get one last look at her beloved home in Sodom. Whatever she thought, it was just an excuse that led her to disobey the clear instructions given by God’s heaven-sent messengers.

**No second chance after looking back**

She turned and looked behind her, back toward Sodom and Gomorrah as they were being consumed by fire and brimstone from the LORD out of heaven. She looked one more time at Sodom, and that was her
last look, not only at Sodom, but at any thing in life. She was not given a second chance; she was not given time to repent, confess and heed the warnings. No, she had no excuse for her willful disregard of God’s word, and she was immediately punished and turned into a pillar of salt.

One can only imagine the shock, dismay and horror of her husband and daughters as they discovered her fate. As Lot was ahead of her, he would not have seen her turn into salt. But maybe her daughters were behind her and witnessed the tragic transformation. She may have turned so quickly, that before the young ladies could utter a word, her rebellious act was completed. It is not difficult to imagine the helpless wailing, the grief-filled mourning of those two daughters as they ran their trembling fingers over the salty pillar etched with their mother’s features! Never before had they heard of such a thing, and together with their father, they wondered at the terrible cost of such a small act.

The deceitful, carnal heart is easily led to trust in possessions

The history of the rich young ruler is another sad warning against the human heart’s natural tendency to love material wealth to the detriment of the soul. After he had turned his back on eternal life and following the Lord Jesus Christ, choosing instead his “great possessions” (Mark 10:22), Jesus told His disciples these words that still ring true in our day, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” Mark 10:23.

The Word tells us the disciples’ reaction to His statement, which led to His repeating the truth. “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” Mark 10:24.

Because having wealth makes life easier and brings honor and prestige with men in this world, the carnal heart which “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (see Jer. 17:9), is easily led to trust in great possessions for influence with God and an easy entrance into the future, immortal life. Thus the twice-repeated warning of Jesus to His disciples about the powerful influence that riches has against the kingdom of God.

God’s warnings lead us to put our full trust in Him

Throughout His Holy Word, God gives us even more very serious warnings against this tendency to place trust in riches instead of God; a tendency that is so strong that even those who claim to be born-again Christians come under its spell. These warnings lead us to put our full trust in the Lord and to view worldly wealth in its true misleading, deceitful, and short-term character.

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” Matt. 13:22.

“He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.” Prov. 28:20. “For riches are not forever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?” Prov. 27:24. “A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.” Prov. 28:20. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt; and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matt. 6:19-21. “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Tim. 6:17.

Outward display does not portray character

When God does allow one of His disciples to have wealth, as He did with Abraham and Solomon, it is a great test of character to see if the wealth will be appropriated to the glory of God and the blessing of others. It was Solomon, the decadent king, who said, “Then I looked
on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” Ecc. 2:11.

In the preceding ten verses of this chapter, Solomon used the personal pronouns “I”, “mine”, “me”, “my”, and “myself” forty times, showing that the focus of his wealth was pleasing himself. He used his God-given wealth selfishly and found all this activity toward self-gratification “vanity and vexation of spirit” and profitless.

**Worldly possessions and pleasure were not Abraham’s chief aim in life**

On the other hand, Abraham, the Friend of God (James 2:23) valued people’s welfare above personal wealth and the pleasure it can bring. Even though God had blessed him to be “very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold” (Gen. 13:2), when he and his 318 trained servants went to rescue Lot from the hands of the five kings and their armies, he wanted none of the spoil for himself, but said to the king of Sodom, “I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.” Gen. 14:22, 23.

When Abraham, Sarah and Lot left Haran after Terah’s death, they took with them all their substance and the souls (persons) they had gotten in Haran. The Spirit of Prophecy brings out the fact that included in this company were converts to the true God. “During their stay in Haran, both Abraham and Sarah had led others to the worship and service of the true God. These attached themselves to the patriarch’s household, and accompanied him to the land of promise.” PP 127.

**Heed our Savior’s warnings**

Abraham and Sarah. Our treasure then will be laid up in heaven, away from the decaying effects of moths and rust, safe beyond the reach of every conniving thief.

**Those who don’t look back will gain eternity**

By the grace of God, we will be preparing to join the redeemed throng who will enter into the joy of their Lord, when this world is over. “With unutterable love, Jesus welcomes His faithful ones to the joy of their Lord. The Saviour’s joy is in seeing, in the kingdom of glory, the souls that have been saved by His agony and humiliation. And the redeemed will be sharers in His joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifices. As they gather about the great white throne, gladness unspeakable will fill their hearts, when they behold those whom they have won for Christ, and see that one has gained others, and these still others, all brought into the haven of rest, there to lay their crowns at Jesus’ feet and praise Him through the endless cycles of eternity.”


**Patricia is a second-generation SDA writer who loves to study and share the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. She enjoys biking, rock collecting, and spending time with family. She resides in Louisiana with her husband and two children.**
“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”
Ps. 73:25

Each day is so full of my Saviour,
I smile as the hours pass along,
I feel the sweet joy of His presence,
And thrill with the rapture of song.
Forever, from morn till the nightfall,
Communion with Jesus I’ve known;
I leave all of earth’s troubles behind me,
As I kneel in my chamber alone.

Each day is so full of my Saviour,
My Comforter, Guide, and my Friend;
He’s with me in pain’s dreary valley,
And will all my footsteps attend.
A peace settles down o’er my spirit,
As angels of mercy draw near;
He leads me beside “the still waters”,
And makes life’s great meanings appear.

Each day is so full of my Saviour,
That I can not know grief or regret.
His coming shines out in its beauty,
And his promise I can not forget.
My joy, and supreme consolation,
Is the hope I shall see him one day;
It dwells in the depths of my spirit,
’Tis a dream that shall not pass away.

Each day is so full of my Saviour;
And he comes and communes with me there,
As I worship on love’s sacred altar,
With the incense of faith and of prayer,
I lift up my hands to the Highest,
And I worship the King on his throne;
O, heaven to me seems the nighest,
As I kneel in my chamber alone.
“Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” Zech. 4:7.

Zerubbabel had a problem. He was the leader of the Jewish people and was in charge of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. Seventy years earlier, king Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army had overrun Jerusalem and destroyed it and the temple Solomon had built. The whole area was a mountain of rubble. It was a mess. No, it was an overwhelming mess. It was so bad that it seemed too much to accomplish.

An overwhelming task for Zerubbabel

So God gave Zechariah a message for Zerubbabel. “This mountain of difficulty you are looking at, Zerubbabel, will be a flat, clean, beautiful plain.” Zechariah’s visions were for the people who had returned to Israel and for Zerubbabel’s encouragement to clean up and rebuild both the city and the temple. This would have been vastly important to Zerubbabel and the rest of the returning Jews.

This vision, in other words, was given to comfort and exhort everyone and to let them know that God was with them and no matter how hard the perceived difficulties appeared, God would help them and be their strength and they would be victorious.

Please remember that they were in captivity for the last 70 years. Imagine what kind of overgrowth and weeds and trees and wilderness had overtaken the city by now. I’m sure it appeared impossible, or overwhelming to correct. It’s not like they had chainsaws and bulldozers and jackhammers and such. This was all hand and back work.

God always wants to reach us the easy way

What really captivated me about this story was the love that it showed. Things had gotten so out of hand with the Jews that the only way God could reach them was through hard and exacting punishment. You’ve heard me say over and over again that God wants to do it the easy way. He has no desire to punish, or chastise, or cause any suffering. He loves us more than we can even love ourselves, and He wants us to do the right things so we can be together again. But if praise and appeals and exhortation don’t work, then He has to bring it to the next level. And if hard talking and threats and promised punishments do not have an impact, then He has to take it to yet another level. Then, if withdrawn blessings and sickness and financial loss does not work… He has to use more dire means to arrest the wickedness.

After 70 years only a remnant returned to Jerusalem

It took 70 long years to get the attention of His children. Seventy years! Have you ever gone to God in prayer asking how long it will take before your child or children are ever going to get it? He knows exactly what you are feeling. Have you ever talked with your child, practically begging them not to do evil but do good, and it seems to no avail? God knows exactly what you are feeling. Has your heart ever been broken, as you have had to resort to physical punishment to get your child’s attention? God knows exactly what you are feeling. Have you done all you could, and still your child will not go in the right way? Nobody knows more than our heavenly Father. It took 70 years, and even then, only a remnant of His children decided to return to Jerusalem. Many of them never came back. Most of them never came back. God knows the heartbreak of a parent with a child who refuses obedience.

We are responsible for our own choices

We often blame ourselves for the way our children turn out. And there is plenty of good reason for that. But at the end of the day, each person has to make his or her own choice. No one can blame another for the choices they make. But it does not
take away the pain from the heart of
the one longing for a return to the
right path.

But here in our story, there were
almost 50,000 people who had
returned. A small remnant of Jews
had decided that they wanted to come
back home. They wanted to do what
their Father said now. They realized
their sin and wanted to act right and
do right now. Praise the Lord!

The consequences of sin must be paid

And Zerubbabel is in charge of
this band of loyal, returning children.
God tells them to go and rebuild
everything. But... it seems too much.
Not only is there a lot to do, but they
are being opposed by local people.
They are being lied about to the king.
They have to work with a trowel in
one hand and a sword in the other.
And there is so much left to do!

The punishment is over, but the
consequences of what they had done
were still there. This is so important.

Suffering the consequences helps us to “get it” and break the cycle

God could have instantly
rebuilt the temple Himself and had
a beautiful and ornately decorated
building prepared for their return and
they just luxuriate in the grandeur of
it all. He could have spoke
and created all new homes
for them and cleaned up
the streets and even planted
some vineyards and gardens
for them.

But He didn’t. Why?
They had suffered for 70
years. They had learned
their lesson. They were truly
repentant. Why not fix it up for
them? Because that would not have
been best for their own needs. To fix
it all would have taken away from the
instruction that they so desperately
needed. They had
to go through the
arduous process of
rebuilding what
they and their
families caused to
be destroyed so
that it might be
faster in their
minds that they, through their
disobedience and disregard of God’s
will and instructions, caused this to
happen. They had to see that there
were ramifications for their decisions.
They needed to learn by their own
wretched experience that
going in a direction away
from Jesus’ ways and will, is
counter-productive and will
only lead to sorrow and loss.
When that lesson is finally
learned, and one is willing
to truly look at cause and
effect and what they themselves cause
to happen to themselves, then there is
the distinct possibility of reform and
ture conversion. We need to learn
that WE are our own worst enemy.
We do it to ourselves, and when we
realize that, then there is hope.

Cleaning up our messes
requires God’s help

It is so cool to me that the Lord did
not merely tell them
to go and do what
He said, and then
folded His arms to
see if they would
be obedient now
or not. They were
just getting over
their punishment
and He certainly did not “owe” them
any kindness or special condescension
at this time. Yet God’s loves shines
through and all can see that He was
going out of His way to make their
lives as easy as He could without
ruining their own
ccharacter development.

I’d like to
repeat that.

God was
doing all He
could, without getting in the way of
what they needed, to grow from their
experience. The happy Jews return,
only to find this horrendous mess that
remained. Now they have to clean it
all up, and the task is daunting. How
in the world are they going to be able
to do this? With God’s help of course.

Why didn’t God just fix it for
them?

Now, God could have instantly
rebuilt the temple Himself and had
a beautiful and ornately decorated
building prepared for their return and
they just luxuriate in the grandeur of
it all. He could have spoke
and created all new homes
for them and cleaned up
the streets and even planted
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disobedience and disregard of God’s
will and instructions, caused this to
happen. They had to see that there
were ramifications for their decisions.
They needed to learn by their own

Children need our
encouragement, especially
after a huge failure
Our Firm Foundation

work for them or paying the debts in will always mean more than doing the inspiration. That They want our need our optimism! Only a parent can provide. They need our optimism! They want our inspiration. That will always mean more than doing the work for them or paying the debts in their place. And the character building that will result can last an eternity! We have to let our children learn from their mistakes. And as we see from God's method of teaching, it is often best to let them fix their own messes, with our encouragement, trust and helpfulness. And this is not just for our children, but for our own selves as well. Outside of us grasping this extremely important truth, there is little chance we will ever come to God for help and cleansing and true sanctification, because we will not see the evil things that go on around us as our fault.

The Jews needed to see what they had done

They needed to see the results of their choices. Not just a cursory glance, but see daily, hourly, minute by backbreaking minute what their sin had wrought. And so, God had to let them see and feel and experience the results of their own folly that possibly someone, or some few, might recognize what and who caused all this destruction and evil. Can we see what God is doing?

Another aspect that we must not lose sight of here is that the Jews who returned were 70 years older. That means many of them were born in captivity, like Zechariah. In other words, a lot of the problems they were facing were not problems that they themselves had created. This is another very important lesson from Zechariah's vision. More often than we would like to admit, what we do affects others. What we do affects our children and our grandchildren and beyond! How we act, the way we obey, or disobey… materially, and spiritually, and physically affects our children. “The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” Num. 14:18. This verse is not referring to God arbitrarily punishing our children for our sins, but it is obvious, especially from the story in Zechariah that how we act has an impact on our children. We can't lose sight of this important concept.

We should do the right thing for our own selves to be sure, but we should also do the right thing for our children as well.

Who suffers more from our sins?

As a matter of fact, many times our children suffer more from what we do than we suffer personally. As an example, if you eat wrong and die, who suffers more... the dead or the living? If you smoke and you die, who suffers more? If you fall asleep in the car and drive off the road and are in a coma for 40 years... who suffers more?

In the case of the Jews here in the book of Zechariah, who had to clean up the mess from the Babylonian destruction 70 years later... the ones who rebelled and sinned, or the children of those that sinned?

These stories are to remind and to show us how important doing the right thing is... not just for us, but our children and grandchildren as well. When we look at these things and all that we are responsible for, it can indeed seem overwhelming to us as well. After all, who is capable of doing all the Lord asks of us? Who is capable of cleaning up all of their own messes and mistakes?

Our messes cannot be fixed by our own strength.
Most of us have made a real mess of our lives. Who has a life that our children can look at and say, “I want to be just like him or her… in every respect?” Who is up to the task and worthy and capable of such responsibility? This is just what Zerubbabel was asking himself. This is what we ask ourselves isn’t it? How am I to be and to do all of this?

Zechariah was told how. And he told Zerubbabel how. And it was saved for us so we would know how. “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Zech. 4:6. It cannot be done by being so strong or so smart or so powerful. It can only be done by the power of the Spirit of God. We cannot do it alone.

God knows it, and He offers His help. The Holy Spirit is offered without measure to those who ask for Him.

Jesus wants to give us every good and perfect gift. Ask anyone who has tried hard to do it themselves and then gave up and turned to God. Ask them if things improved or not. The Bible says to taste and see that the Lord is good. God says to “prove Him” and see if He will not pour you out a blessing.

We cannot fail when we accept God’s help

God promised Zerubbabel that he would not only start the building process there in Jerusalem, but that he himself would finish it, too. “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it;…”Zech. 4:9.

Our wonderful Master encourages us to go on… not in our strength, but in His! He says, “With My help, you cannot fail.” That’s what was so encouraging to Paul, and what he tried to convey as well… “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Rom. 8:31. If we ask God for His help, and He has promised to be our helper, then how can we fail?

Nothing we do can be right without God’s Spirit

When we look at our lives and the messes we have made, it is so discouraging, just like it was for Zerubbabel and the Jews. All our grand plans, all our ideas and thoughts of how things would work out for us… they all fail miserably… unless the Lord is in them. It is only by the power of God that we can be a success. We can’t learn correctly, without God’s Spirit. We can’t work right, without God’s Spirit. We can’t raise our children up the way we should and the way they need, without God’s Spirit.

At some time in our lives, each of us is Zerubbabel

Child rearing is the most important job there is for parents, but it is a job most of us are woefully unprepared for. How do we know what to do? There are a thousand people telling us what to do and what is right and wrong. Who is right? Who can we follow with absolute certainty? Who never fails to do the right thing? I think you know the answer to that. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27.

Do you have a mess? Did you make your own mess? Did you inherit a mess from others? Do you not know what to do about the mess? Then you are Zerubbabel. Have you thrown up your hands? Do you seem incapable of fixing the situation you are in? Are you discouraged? Then you are Zerubbabel. Do you need help? Are you looking for encouragement? Would you like a helping hand? Then you are Zerubbabel.

This vision in Zechariah chapter 4 is for us! There isn’t a man, woman or child that is not in, or has been in, or will be in the position Zerubbabel was in. This vision then, is for each one of us. This vision is to help us in parenting, and working, and overcoming.

Jesus is the God of the whole Bible

Our Bibles are the greatest blessing we could ever have; so many do not appreciate the Old Testament like they should. There is a vast goldmine of wealth in the Old Testament. We lose so much when we just stay in the New Testament or just the gospels. Jesus is the God of the whole Bible and there is more of Jesus in the Old Testament than the New, simply because there is more writing. Don’t leave out the New of course, but never forget how much there is to help and encourage and strengthen in the Old.

May God open our eyes to see the wondrous works of His majesty. “Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.” Ps. 119:27.

Joe Olson serves as the executive director and chairman of the board of Hope International. He also travels as an international speaker.
PERFECTION IN CHRIST

By Raymond F. Cottrell

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of the series which began in February, 2012.

Three Great Temptations

Satan confronts those whom God summons to find perfection in Christ with three great temptations. His first proposal is that we assume an attitude of indifference. Careless unconcern is the natural Laodicean condition of satisfaction with one’s present attainments. It is Satan’s purpose, if at all possible, to keep us in this state of mind in order to prevent us from realizing our need of the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and thus from obtaining it. If the invitation to perfection in Christ does meet with a response in our hearts, Satan next tempts us to think that the goal is unattainable, at least in our own personal experience. The sense of discouragement with which he afflicts us is intended to prevent our even setting out on the pathway to perfection, or once we have begun the journey, of making no progress in that direction. The remedy for discouragement is the realization that the Saviour has not left us to walk the pathway alone. Christ is our ever-present companion every step of the way, and so long as our hand is in His we have nothing to fear from the enemy of God and man. Stealthily he seeks to trip us up, and when we fall he tempts us to give up in despair.

Satan taunts us and troubles our minds

If we are not deterred by unconcern or discouragement, Satan offers us the prod of righteousness by our own efforts as a substitute for the power that comes from righteousness by faith in Christ. This is the very opposite of his first two temptations. He proceeds to inject us with a false zeal that leads to extremes, and eventually to fanaticism. In place of unconcern we develop a morbid spiritual neurosis that feeds on itself and leads us to try to attain to righteousness by our own works. Satan taunts us with fear of having committed the unpardonable sin, or with the
persistent worry of not having done all that God expects of us. He troubles our minds with the continuing disparity between our aspirations and our attainments, and snatches from us the calm assurance of victory in Christ.

A peddler of spiritual nostrums

When we are in this state of mind Satan knocks on our heart’s door in the guise of a peddler of spiritual nostrums. He recites glowing accounts of the wonders that result from taking his patented prescription of righteousness by one’s own works. Like Eve in Eden, we taste his magic elixir and imagine that we are entering upon a new and marvelous existence. This narcotic of righteousness by one’s own works has a tendency to soothe the symptoms, but it leaves the basic cause of the malady of sin untouched.

What is the Christian’s defense against these three temptations of the evil one to turn our eyes away from Christ, and to lure us from the pathway God has appointed for us today?

One Sure Defense

“Justified by faith”, a man is at “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). He has turned his back on a life motivated by sin, and set out on a new life dedicated to the pursuit of righteousness. Born again, he purposes to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” until he attains “to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”—to perfection in Christ (2 Peter 3:18, Eph. 4:13, R.S.V.).

Justification became an accomplished fact in his experience the instant he accepted God’s gift of grace, but the process of sanctification requires a lifetime. “True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last.” SL 10.

Applying right principles in every situation

Justification is being set free from the guilt of sins committed and being reconciled to God. Sanctification is the process of being delivered from the sinful nature that leads a person to commit sin. It is the process by which a person who has already been justified by faith and is at peace with God, is transformed in character and restored to the state of sinless perfection in which man was created in the beginning. It is the process of learning to apply right principles to every thought, word, and action, in every situation that may arise.

The master key to sanctification is the renewing of the mind

What is the key to this process of growth to Christian maturity? “Christ in you” is the Christian’s “hope of glory”—Christ “at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13; Col. 1:27). “The will must be placed on the side of God’s will” MB 142. Instead of being conformed ever more closely to this world, the Christian is transformed into the likeness of Christ by the renewal of the mind. This enables him to know the will of God, moment by moment in every situation of life, and to choose “what is good and acceptable and perfect” with God (Rom. 12:2). The master key to sanctification—to ultimate perfection in Christ—is the renewing of the mind, a change of attitude toward God’s revealed will. “In the renewed heart there will be a fixed principle to obey the will of God, because there is a love for what is just and good and holy.” 2T 488.

Perfection in Christ is a continual battle

This is the ideal to which a person commits his life upon accepting Christ. But those who accept this ideal as their own soon discover that it is not attained by a single act of the will or one strenuous effort. The process of achieving perfection in Christ requires a battle and a march today, and another battle and a march tomorrow—every tomorrow, as long as life shall last. It is necessary to run with patience and persistence the race that has been set before us, looking unto Jesus.
The sayings of Christ are to be valued not merely in accordance with the measure of man’s understanding; they are to be considered in the important bearing which Christ himself gave them. He took old truths, of which he himself was the originator, and placed them before his hearers in heaven’s own light. And how different was their representation! What a flood of meaning, and brightness, and spirituality was brought in by their explanation!

Christ spoke not only to the ears, but to the hearts
Christ set forth deeper and more spiritual truths than had ever before been heard from ruler, scribes, or elders. “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” he declared. The rich treasures of truth opened before the people attracted and charmed them. They were in marked contrast with the spiritless, lifeless expositions of the Old Testament Scriptures by the rabbis. And the miracles which Jesus wrought keep constantly before his hearers the honor and glory of God. He seemed to them a messenger direct from heaven; for he spoke not to their ears only, but to their hearts. As he stood forth in his humility, yet in dignity and majesty, as one born to command, a power attended him; hearts were melted into tenderness. An earnest desire was created to be in his presence, to listen to the voice of him who uttered truth with such solemn melody.

At the beginning of his ministry, Christ had declared the character of his work
“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Every miracle wrought by Christ convinced some of his true character
That word was fulfilled. The sick were healed, demoniacs were restored, lepers and paralytics were made whole. The dumb spoke, the ears of the deaf were opened, the dead were brought to life, and the poor had the gospel preached to them. Every miracle wrought by Christ convinced some of his true character. Had a man in the common walks of life done the same works that Christ did, all would have declared that he was working by the power of God. But there were those who did not receive the light of heaven, and they set themselves more determinedly against this evidence.

Christ was rejected by the Jews because he exposed their professed sanctity
The Jews were expecting an earthly prince who would deliver them from the power which God had declared would rule over them if they refused to keep the way of the Lord, and obey his laws. They had made their proud boast that Israel’s king, the star arising from Judah, would break their thraldom, and make of them a kingdom of priests.

It was not the absence of external honor and riches and glory that
caused the Jews to reject Jesus. The Sun of Righteousness, shining amid the moral darkness in such distinct rays, revealed the contrast between sin and holiness, purity and defilement, and such light was not welcome to them. Christ was not such a one as themselves. The Jews could have borne the disappointment of their hopes better than they could bear the righteous denunciation of their sins. In parables, Christ laid bare their professed sanctity. He compared them to whitened sepulchers; deceiving the people by their pretensions to purity.

Scattering heavenly grain, Christ was the perfect example of obedience

In his youth, Christ was subject to his parents, an example of obedience to all the youth. In his youth he learned the trade of a carpenter, and earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. Thus he honored physical labor. It should be an encouragement and source of strength to every human being, in the performance of the commonplace duties of life, to know that Jesus toiled to provide for his own temporal wants.

The teachings of Christ, in precept and example, were the sowing of the seed afterward to be cultivated by his disciples. The testimony of these fishermen was to be referred to as the highest authority, by all the nations of the world. They had not learned in the schools of the prophets; but Jesus had been their teacher, and had given them knowledge uncorrupted by tradition and bigotry. Christ scattered the heavenly grain, which minds and hearts that desired light and knowledge might gather up as precious treasure sent from heaven.

By the arts of Satan, truth was covered with error

After his resurrection, Christ opened the understanding of his followers, that they might understand the Scriptures. Everything had been transformed by the working of the arts of Satan. Truth was covered up by the rubbish of error, and hidden from finite sight. When Christ had foretold his humiliation, rejection, and crucifixion, the disciples would not take in his meaning. It had been a part of their education that the Messiah would set up a temporal kingdom; and when Christ spoke of his sufferings, they did not understand his words. He reproved them because of their slowness of apprehension, and promised them that when the Comforter should come, he would bring many things to their remembrance.

As men’s minds become narrow, they think they know it all, when they only have a glimpse of truth

Christ had many truths to give to his disciples, of which he could not speak, because they did not advance with the light that was flashed upon Levitical laws and the sacrificial offerings. They did not accept the light, advance with the light, and follow on to still greater brightness as Providence should lead the way. And for the same reason, Christ’s disciples of 1898 do not comprehend important matters of truth. So dull has been the comprehension even of those who teach the truth to others, that many things cannot be opened to them until they reach heaven. This ought not to be. But as men’s minds become narrow, they think they know all, when they have only a glimpse of truth. They close their minds, as if there were no more for them to learn; and should the Lord attempt to lead them on, they would not accept the increased light. They cling to the spot where they see light, when that which they see is only a glimmer of the bright beams they might enjoy. They know very little of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

The mind that grasps truth becomes elevated and sanctified

In their harmonious relation, the truths of Scripture are like links in a chain. Just as fast as our minds are quickened by the Spirit of God to comprehend light, and in humbleness appropriate it, we shall dispense it to others, and give the glory back to God. The development of truth is the reward of the
The humble-hearted seeker who will fear God, and walk with him. The truth which the mind grasps as truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. While we behold it, the truth is revealed in all its bearings in the life and character, and becomes more clear, and certain, and beauteous. The mind that grasps it in its preciousness becomes elevated, ennobled, sanctified.

The entire system of Judaism was the gospel veiled

Far, very far, are human minds from grasping the teachings of Christ. These are old truths in new settings. The entire system of Judaism was the gospel veiled. Those who will not consider are like the Jews. It is humbling to their dignity and pride to work the mines of truth. But the Light of the world is sending his divine rays to illuminate the entire Jewish economy, and the minds that have been accepting the sayings of men as the commandments of God are to be educated to look to God himself, the author of all truth.

Christ did not conform to the standard of the world

In his habits and customs and practices, Christ did not conform to the standard of the world. What a lesson he gives to the churches that bear his name! They are not to exalt themselves above the Majesty of heaven, their Redeemer. What do men find in the example of Christ to justify them in their feelings of superiority, in keeping themselves apart from their fellow men, hiding themselves from their own flesh, because they have obtained more of this world’s goods than their neighbors? Because the world honors the wealthy and despises the poor, shall those who claim to follow Jesus do the same? Whose example are such following? Surely not the example of him who said, “He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” “to preach the gospel to the poor.”

To accept man’s word for truth is dangerous

Very many teachers are content with a supposition in regard to the truth. They have crude ideas, and are content with a surface work in searching for truth, taking for granted that they have all that is essential. They take the sayings of others for truth, being too indolent to put themselves to diligent, earnest labor, represented in the Word as digging for hidden treasure. But man’s inventions are not only unreliable, they are dangerous; for they place man where God should be. They place the sayings of men where a “Thus saith the Lord” should be. The world’s Redeemer alone possesses the key to unlock the treasure-house of the Old Testament. He explores hidden things. He separates the precious truth from superstition and error and the devisings and imaginings of men.

Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence

Investigation of every point that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; he will find precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture. Christ would have the searcher of his Word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found. The Word of God is the mine of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

RH, July 2, 1908

Ellen G. White, 1827–1915, received the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the fruits of her life and work accord with the biblical tests of a true messenger of God. To this day, her counsels are an inestimable blessing to God’s people around the world.
ACROSS
3. The name of the first son of the prophet Hosea
6. Called to be a prophet to Judah as a boy
9. The prophet who gave King David a choice of punishments because of a census
10. A silversmith of Ephesus
11. An angel mentioned in the Bible by name
12. Moses' mother
13. A goddess of whom statues were made in Ephesus
14. Isaac's second son
15. A prophet that was a disciple of Elijah
16. The Philistine of Gath with whom David sought refuge
17. Discovered the lost book of the law under King Josiah
18. Coregent with his aging father Jehu
19. He seized the throne of Israel by murdering King Pekah
20. The third son of Jacob and Leah
21. Feast instituted after the end of the death decree in the Book of Esther
22. Elijah hid from Ahab near what brook?
23. The daughter of Herodias, the wife of Herod Antipas
24. The 5th King in the line of David and 3rd over Judah after the division of the kingdom
25. The only prophetess mentioned in the Monarchical period
26. A trusted associate of Moses during the wilderness period
27. ____, an ally of Israel ruled the Phoenician port city of Tyre
28. David's sister
29. The prophet in King Ahab's day [ELIJAH]
30. What kind of vow did Samson take?

DOWN
1. The mother of Moses
2. The father of King David
3. King David's commander in chief and confidant
4. The wily woman unwisely loved by Samson
5. Paul and Silas went to jail in this city
7. Naomi's husband
8. The Temanite who was a wise and sympathetic friend of Job
10. He shared Paul's 2 year house arrest in Rome
11. The first word of the handwriting on the wall
12. Brought forth from the dead by Jesus
13. A goddess of whom statues were made in Ephesus
14. Isaac's second son
15. A prophet that was a disciple of Elijah
16. The Philistine of Gath with whom David sought refuge
17. Discovered the lost book of the law under King Josiah
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30. What kind of vow did Samson take?

Answers from Christian Crossword published in the February 2012 issue of Our Firm Foundation

Volume 27, Number 3
“She hath done what she could,” said
the Master, “for me”
(How tender and sweet was the word!);
“And the deed she hath done her memorial shall be
Wherever my gospel is heard.”

Ah, ‘tis this that must try every deed that we do,
Ere Jesus pronounces it good:
Not the thing that we have done, but the love
it may show,
And whether we’ve done what we could.

There are some who are struggling along on the way,
And reaping, they think, only leaves,
Whilst others return at the close of the day,
And bring in a harvest of sheaves.

But the eye of the Master is on every one;
Not a sigh nor a struggle is lost;
And it is not the much nor the little we’ve done,
But—what has the offering cost?

Not the poor widow’s mite nor the gold of the king,
Shall count of itself in the test;
It will not be the stamp of the coin that we bring
But whether the gift is our best.

--S. C. Kirk
If you’ve ever suffered through a lung or respiratory problem and felt like you couldn’t breathe, you know what an uncomfortable and even scary feeling that can be. If you deal with any respiratory problems, get relief today! Breathe easy again, with Bron-QDrops, a powerful formula for strengthening and opening the lungs!

**Price:**
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- 6-12 drops (about 1/2 - full dropperful) two to three times a day as needed.
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**COMMON SIGNS OF LUNG PROBLEMS ARE:**
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Feeling like you’re not getting enough air
- Decreased ability to exercise
- A cough that won’t go away
- Coughing up blood or mucus
- Pain or discomfort when breathing in or out. Although you should always contact your doctor if you think you have a serious lung problem, there are things you can do to help soothe your cough and open your lungs, allowing you to breathe again! Bron-QDrops is a powerful lung-strengthening formula that can help open the airways and enhance your entire respiratory system!

**THIS POTENT HERBAL INFUSION CONTAINS:**

**Allspice**
- Allspice is used for the healthy maintenance of the respiratory tract and improving respiratory function. It has outstanding pain-relieving and muscle-relaxing properties that help open the airways and contribute to easier breathing.

**Bayberry**
- Bayberry is a strong astringent, meaning it is useful for toning and tightening tissues. When there is excessive mucus in the sinuses or respiratory system it can help dry the fluid and restore tone. In addition, bayberry is unusually rich in oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), the most powerful class of tree radical scavengers known. Twenty times more powerful than vitamin C and 50 times more potent than vitamin E, OPCs have been shown to enhance immune response and inhibit the growth of unhealthy cells.

**Fennel**
- Fennel contains two chemicals, cineole and anetol. They are expectorant in nature, which means they promote the discharge of mucus from the respiratory passages, making fennel useful for respiratory complaints like congestion, bronchial ailments and cough.

**Galangal**
- Galangal is a member of the ginger family commonly used in traditional eastern medicine for respiratory problems like congestion, coughs, colds and sinus/nasal infections. Known to help regulate breathing rate and reduce inflammation in the airways, galangal can also help to break up mucus and allow for a more productive cough in patients with respiratory infections.

**Goldenseal**
- Related to the buttercup and native to North America, goldenseal’s primary benefit is its effect on the immune system, increasing the immune system’s production of germ-fighting compounds. It has also long been used against infections of the respiratory system, for its ability to soothe inflamed mucous membranes and ease congestion.

**Thyme**
- Thyme clears the respiratory system and aids breathing. This herb helps to gently loosen and expel mucus, opening the sinuses and the lungs. It soothes irritated respiratory tissue, relieves congestion, reduces inflammation and fights foreign substances and invaders. Some of thyme’s value comes from its volatile oils that provide antiseptic qualities (which help fight respiratory infections) and antispasmodic properties (that help relieve coughing).

**Red Clover**
- By regulating and thinning mucous production in the respiratory system, red clover enables the body to remove toxic substances from the lungs and helps strengthen the immune system. It has also been used for congestion and coughs because it contains resin. Plants with resin are known for their antimicrobial and expectorant (helping the body expel phlegm/mucus) abilities.

Red Clover has a strong antispasmodic effect on:
- Hoarseness & wheezing
- Colds & coughs
- Disorders of the respiratory organs
- Irritation of the vocal cords, windpipe and bronchial tubes

*These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure any disease.
Excitotoxins Part 6: 
Cover-up: Who Owns What? 
Continued

Last month we gave you a little history lesson about MSG and the Ajinomoto Company. We discussed when ingredients were approved, when products were sold, and gave you *numerous* references to scientific literature that document how dangerous this (and other) additives truly are.

We understand how poisonous these substances are, but if they are really that bad why don’t more people know? Who is running this company?!

In 1973, Ajinomoto Corp formed Ajinomoto General Foods products and began working with General Foods Corp. (1) Then in 1985 General Foods Corporation along with Kraft Foods was acquired by Philip Morris Companies Inc. (2) Following this, in March 1989 Philip Morris combined the two food companies under a new subsidiary called Kraft General Foods, Inc. (3)

**Who exactly is Philip Morris USA?**

If you didn’t already know, Philip Morris USA is the largest *tobacco company* in the United States. Philip Morris USA brands include Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Benson and Hedges, Merit, Parliament, Alpine, Basic, Cambridge, Bucks, Dave’s, Chesterfield, Collector’s Choice, Commander, English Ovals, Lark, L&M, Players and Saratoga. Following are some highlights of litigation that occurred as a result of people realizing that cigarettes are actually bad for you (after years of tobacco companies arguing otherwise).

**United States v. Philip Morris (Department of Justice Lawsuit)**

In 1999, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) *sued* Philip Morris for *fraudulent and unlawful conduct* on the grounds that the tobacco companies had engaged in a *decades-long conspiracy* to:

1. Mislead the public about the risks of smoking
2. Mislead the public about the danger of secondhand smoke
3. Misrepresent the addictiveness of nicotine
4. Manipulate the nicotine delivery of cigarettes
5. Deceptively market cigarettes characterized as “light” or “low tar,” while knowing that those cigarettes were *at least as hazardous* as full flavored cigarettes
6. Target the youth market
7. Not produce safer cigarettes (4)

According to International Directory of Company Histories: “In 1999 (the same year as the trials), one out of every six cigarettes sold around the globe was a Morris brand. As litigation in the tobacco industry appeared to be slowing, Morris continued to gain market share in many of its product categories and investor confidence returned. In fact, share price rose over 90 percent during 2000, making Morris the best performer on the Dow Jones Industrial Average for the year. (5) So even while the company is wrapped up in a lawsuit, business could not be better!

**Changing Names**

Even though business is booming, PM knows there is trouble on the horizon and they need to protect themselves from future backlash. They know they will lose their case, as their lies have finally caught up with them. So they quietly began to change their name from Philip Morris to Altria Group, Inc. in 2003 (an obvious effort to hide or deemphasize their negative association with
tobacco products). (6)

Now, think about this for a moment. Philip Morris has spent more than a **150 years** building up brand equity. Meaning, it’s well known and everyone knows the name. Just like Wal-Mart or McDonalds – brands people automatically recognize and associate with low prices or quick meals. Why would they voluntarily give up such a well known name, rather than embracing a name and an image that has taken years to develop; all of a sudden wanting to distance themselves from it? Why would that be? Because they don’t want to be associated with all the corruption they have just been caught participating in.

Now, make no mistake; even under this new name, Altria still continues to own **100%** of Philip Morris USA. But wait a few years and see if anyone associates Altria with tobacco products, lawsuits, or scandal. Clever, isn’t it?

Do you remember ValuJet Flight 592? It was the flight that crashed in the Florida Everglades in the late 1990s, killing all 110 persons on board. Have you heard about ValuJet lately or flown on their airline recently? No, you say! In fact, ValuJet was grounded by the FAA on June 16, 1996, and even though it was allowed to resume flying again on September 30 of that same year, it **never recovered from the crash**. (7) However, the following year in 1997, ValuJet had a great idea. If it could find a smaller airline to buy out, merge the two and use the new (fairly unknown) name, no one would be afraid to fly with them and they would be back in business! So they did just that. They found and merged with a little-known-at-the-time airline that you may be familiar with and may have even flown with: AirTran Airways. (8) While ValuJet was the larger airline, the ValuJet name was so tarnished by this time that it was scrapped in favor of the AirTran name. AirTran, which just merged with Southwest Airlines, is now ranked 3rd most used airline in the United States just 15 years later; and ask around if anyone remembers ValuJet. You may be surprised that many people you ask will only vaguely remember, if they remember at all. See how a simple name change can make all the difference in the world?

**Judge Kessler Rules Against Philip Morris**

After the name change, a few years later on August 17, 2006 Judge Kessler completed and issued a **1,683-page** opinion holding the tobacco company [Phillip Morris] liable for violating RICO by fraudulently covering up the health risks associated with smoking and for marketing their products to children. In this document she states “Substantial evidence establishes that Defendants have engaged in and executed – and continue to engage in and execute – a massive 50-year scheme to defraud the public, including consumers of cigarettes, in violation of RICO”. (9)

**Philip Morris Appeals Court Decision**

If that wasn't bad enough, it gets worse. Rather than admitting their mistakes, apologizing and taking the hit, PM filed an appeal based on the first amendment. Basically, they said, we can say whatever we want because we have free speech! We can lie, cheat, or in the words of the court, create “a massive scheme to defraud the public” because hey, we have free speech!

According to the Public Health Law Center of William Mitchell College of Law, “The tobacco companies filed an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals. The court granted the motion, and on May 22, 2009, the three-judge panel **unanimously upheld** Judge Kessler’s decision finding the tobacco companies liable...The court also found that the First Amendment **does not protect fraudulent statements**, stating that “Defendants knew of their falsity at the time and made the statements with the intent to deceive. Thus, we are not dealing with accidental falsehoods, or sincere attempts to persuade.” The court dismissed the defendants’ argument that their statements were ‘protected by the First Amendment’.” (10)

**So what does Philip Morris/Altria say now?**

That was just 6 years ago, in 2006. Do you even remember any of this? And what has Philip Morris learned from all this? From the current Philip Morris/Altria Website: “We are the largest tobacco company in the U.S. This website offers information about the company, its business and important tobacco issues, including health issues related to our products.” Since they can no longer lie about health problems, they are admitting it right on their website. They are selling a product that kills and they could care less. More from their website:

1. “PM USA agrees cigarette smoking is addictive
and helps connect adult smokers with expert quitting information.” Wait! They are basically saying on their own site: We sell a product that is bad for you and will cause you to be addicted, however, we want to help you quit this habit of smoking this product that we are going to continue to sell and market for smoking. What?! Come on! This simply does not make sense. It’s more than obvious they are saying it because they have to. If they actually wanted people to quit, they would get into any other business that does not involve selling cigarettes or other poisonous/addictive substances.

2. “Altria also holds a continuing economic and voting interest in SABMiller plc, the world’s second-largest brewer.” Actually, Altria owns 36% of it! So not only do they sell cancer-causing tobacco, but they own nearly half of the second-largest beer producer! Is there any poison they won’t sell?

3. “Smoking & Disease in Smokers: PM USA agrees with the overwhelming medical and scientific consensus that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other serious diseases in smokers. Smokers are far more likely to develop serious diseases, like lung cancer, than non-smokers. There is no safe cigarette.” So for years and years they have said that cigarettes were either not bad for you or actually good for you. Now that it’s impossible to lie and purposely deceive people and the public is becoming aware of the risks, they’ve taken a new tact. Now they say, yep, it will kill you. It will cause lots of diseases and heartache and death. Smoking is very dangerous. They stop just short of saying they don’t want you to do it. I mean, they can’t actually say that! If they agree that it’s so bad, and that there is no safe cigarette, and that it isn’t even mildly safe in moderation – why are they still selling it? How can they have the audacity to try to act like they want to help people quit, when they spend billions of dollars on marketing each year trying to encourage people to start or to continue smoking?!

4. “Quitting Smoking: To reduce the health effects of cigarette smoking, the best thing to do is to quit.” Not “we want you to quit” or “you should quit” but “the ‘best’ thing to do is to quit”. It gives the implication that while quitting is obviously the “best” thing, smoking isn’t necessarily that bad. You hear people all the time say, yeah I know I really should (insert good, healthy habit). I know it’s “best” for me. But I’ll just (insert bad, or less healthy habit) instead and I’ll be ok. I won’t be quite as healthy, but it’ll be fine. Like when people say I know I should drink water, but I’ll just drink soda instead. It can’t be that much worse!

5. “Smoking & Pregnancy: Women who quit smoking before or during pregnancy reduce the risk of adverse reproductive outcomes.”

6. “Second Hand Smoke: Public health officials have concluded that secondhand smoke from cigarettes causes disease, including lung cancer and heart disease, in non-smoking adults, as well as causes conditions in children such as asthma, respiratory infections, cough, wheeze, otitis media (middle ear infection) and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.” (11)

So the cigarette company who intentionally sells products that are proven to kill (and have lied about it for years), has bought part of the company who sells MSG and aspartame (under the original company name) is telling us that MSG and aspartame are perfectly safe and healthy. Really?? If after all this, you still think that these companies wouldn’t “intentionally mislead” us, think again. All these
companies want is for you to blindly trust everything they say. Don’t think so?

Listen to Ajinomoto’s Group Philosophy from their own website: “Ajinomoto Group’s aim regarding Group philosophy is to develop into “a unique company with worldwide trust”. They go on… “A universal wish is that the twenty first century be an inspiring one, but it is important for the community we live in to continue to be healthy and full of vitality in order for the wish to be realized.” They want to give us the idea that they are actually interested in our health, as the tobacco companies did for years. But that is the farthest thing from the truth. There is only one thing they are interested in, and that is: making money, by any means necessary.

Or how about the Otsuka philosophy (The company we mentioned last month who collaborates with Ajinomoto): “Trusted by individuals, trusted by the company, trust is the dream of our society, building trust with technology and commitment, and through our people we will spread this trust throughout the world.” (12)

Doesn’t that sound kind of like what the tobacco companies were saying for years? Just trust us!! This won’t kill you! It’s good for you!! Although personally, the way they are saying it sounds creepier to me. It sounds like they are trying to hypnotize someone. Trust us, truuust us, truuuuuuust us… It gives me the chills!

We now know that the same kind of deceptive people who are behind the lies, corruption and sales of tobacco and alcohol also have their hands in the sale of MSG, aspartame, and associated products. Now, if they have intentionally misled the public about the dangers of tobacco for decades, what are the odds they wouldn’t do the same thing with these food additives? This isn’t a bunch of conspiracy-theorist talk. There is real, hard, scientific evidence that proves the danger of these ingredients. Yet rarely will you hear about it. Why?

For one, according to the Center for Public Integrity, Altria spent around $101 million on lobbying the United States government between 1998 and 2004, making it the second most active organization in the nation. (13) We’re talking about big money and big government. If this message gets out, not only do the producers of the toxic products take a hit, but any government officials taking a cut or accepting money (*ahem* bribes) from these companies will lose too! But if all the scientific information we talked about last month is out there, why don’t more people know? There is an interesting little twist to the story that you’ll have to tune in next month to hear about!

To read some of the actual transcripts of the court proceedings on March 17, 2005, go to: http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/exo11b00/pdf

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News Watch

Fires on All Fronts

Nigeria—As sectarian violence ravaged stretches of Africa’s most populous country, forcing thousands to flee their homes, tens of thousands marched in cities nationwide against the government’s elimination of subsidies to refined oil importers, which led to a near doubling of fuel prices to consumers. At least three protesters were killed when police opened fire on a riotous crowd in the coastal megacity of Lagos, but the general strike, dubbed Occupy Nigeria by its organizers in a nod to protests elsewhere, continued…Meanwhile, the death toll from clashes between Muslims and Christians rose following a mob raid on a mosque in the country’s south, killing five.

**END TIME PERSPECTIVE:** “It is no wonder that violence and crime have spread over the earth, and moral darkness, like the pall of death, shrouds the cities and habitations of men. Satan controls many households, people, and churches. He watches the indications of moral corruption, and introduces his specious temptations, carefully leading men into worse and worse evils, till utter depravity is the result. The only safety is to watch unto prayer against his devices; for he goes about, in the last days, like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The presence of Jesus is a safeguard against his advances. The Sun of Righteousness discloses the hideous blackness of the enemy of souls, and he flies from the divine presence.” 2SP 317.


Bats are dying in record numbers, heralding a real problem for people. There’s an animal apocalypse afoot in the northeastern U.S. Between 5.7 million and 6.7 million bats are estimated to have died since 2006 from white-nose fungus—an infection marked by the telltale white fuzz around their noses—in 16 states and Canada, according to officials at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service…It could spell disaster—not just for the animals but for humans as well. …A female bat of reproductive age can consume her weight in insects each night—and that amounts to millions of pounds of insects each year. If the bats are wiped...
out, insect populations could explode, including pests that can decimate food and agricultural yields and infest forests, not to mention the swarms that plague summer barbecues and spread disease to humans.

**END TIME PERSPECTIVE:** “…what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them….There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Matt. 24:3-8.

**3. Newsweek, January 30, 2012, Death on the High Seas—Thinking about booking a cruise? The crew may be unprepared, Page 10, by Eve Grant.**

Talk to cruise-line workers, and you won’t hear much surprise about the chaos during the Costa Concordia disaster. “Those of us who’ve had close calls before knew it was a question of when, not if,” says Shari Cecil, a former merchant marine with Norwegian Cruise Line America. Cecil describes safety drills where crew members had no clue about their responsibilities—

**END TIME PERSPECTIVE:** “The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.” 9T 11.
As God has shown me the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City and the rich reward to be given those who wait the return of their Lord from the wedding, it may be my duty to give you a short sketch of what God has revealed to me. The dear saints have many trials to pass through. But our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory--while we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. I have tried to bring back a good report and a few grapes from the heavenly Canaan, for which many would stone me, as the congregation bade stone Caleb and Joshua for their report. (Numbers 14:10). But I declare to you, my brethren and sisters in the Lord, it is a goodly land, and we are well able to go up and possess it.

A bright light, the midnight cry, gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble

While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, “Look again, and look a little higher.” At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, “Alleluia!” Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses’ did when he came down from Mount Sinai.

The wicked were enraged at our happy, holy state and rushed violently toward us

The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another’s feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.

Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man’s hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet...
had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, “Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?” Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: “Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.” At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth.

Jesus gazed upon the graves of the sleeping saints and called them forth

Then Jesus’ silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried, “Awake! awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise.” Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, “Alleluia!” as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

The 144,000 stood in a perfect square on the sea of glass

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some of them had very bright crowns, others not so bright. Some crowns appeared heavy with stars, while others had but few. All were perfectly satisfied with their crowns. And they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, “You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stilly for My truth, enter in.” We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city.

The glorious fruit of the tree of life looked like gold mixed with silver

Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like gold mixed with silver.

We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, “Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!” and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven’s arches ring.
The houses of the saints had pillars set with pearls

With Jesus at our head we all descended from the city down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain, which could not bear Jesus up, and it parted asunder, and there was a mighty plain. Then we looked up and saw the great city, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We all cried out, “The city, the great city, it’s coming, it’s coming down from God out of heaven,” and it came and settled on the place where we stood. Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God.

We will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods

I saw another field full of all kinds of flowers, and as I plucked them, I cried out, “They will never fade.” Next I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus. Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts—the lion, the lamb, the leopard, and the wolf, all together in perfect union. We passed through the midst of them, and they followed on peaceably after. Then we entered a wood, not like the dark woods we have here; no, no; but light, and all over glorious; the branches of the trees moved to and fro, and we all cried out, “We will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.” We passed through the woods, for we were on our way to Mount Zion.

The pure white robes of the martyrs had borders of red

As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were martyrs that had been slain for Him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they also had a hem of red on their garments. Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly, to the top of the mountains and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place: the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs—these made the place all over glorious. And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, “Only the 144,000 enter this place,” and we shouted, “Alleluia.”

In a little while, if faithful, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, “Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.” We shouted, “Alleluia! glory!” and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it. I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit. I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said, “Not now. Those who eat of the fruit of this land go back to earth no more. But in a little while, if faithful, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain.” And He said, “You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you.” Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things of earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest!

~EW 13-20

Editor’s Note: We pray that not one of our readers will miss this experience!
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Chaparral
• Known as “Nature’s Detergent” due to the foamy residue produced when the leaves are shaken in water, chaparral is recognized for having properties that assist in the overall well-being of the body and in the improving of a variety of maladies. Chaparral boosts the immune system and helps keep the body in an alkaline state that allows it to naturally fight against infection, microbial invaders, and many other potential health problems. It is widely accepted that chaparral prevents the developmental growth of irregular cells.

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“WHOSOEVER SHALL EXALT HIMSELF SHALL BE ABASED; AND HE THAT SHALL HUMBLE HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED.” MATTHEW 23:12