

Ashes

When something is thoroughly burned, all that remains are ashes. In the Scriptures, they are associated with sacrificial offerings, repentance, mourning, fasting, and cleansing ceremonies. Even now ashes are one of the main ingredients in soap (fat being the other). Peter says that the fate of the unrepentant is like that of “the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah,” which were turned into ashes. 2 Peter 2:6.

Even the wealthy patriarchs Abraham and Job referred to themselves as but “dust and ashes.” In other words, as nothing! It is not what we have or do not have that defines us, rather what we do with what we have. Do our possessions possess us, or do we manage them for God’s glory? Are we stewards of what we have, or are we slaves of that which we have and/or want? These questions boil life down to one concept—personal responsibility, or stewardship.

As ashes are all that remains after a fire burns out, so at the end of time the remnant or residue of the seed of the woman will see themselves as nothing. Taking what we have and dedicating it unreservedly to God is the only way we can be ready for Him to give us more.

Furthermore, when all the wealth, wisdom, and wants here of this world are seen as ashes—of no value outside of God’s plans—then we will be ready to inherit heaven. Then Babylon will occupy its proper position in our hearts and minds—fallen and ready to become ashes. Revelation 18:2.

In this issue, the themes of justice and freedom remind us that privilege and blessings are two-edged swords. With globalism have come commercialism and insatiable desire; everyone can see what others have, and covetousness abounds. “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” 1 Timothy 6:6, 7.

So, our thinking needs to be permanently changed—our minds’ eyes lifted high above our everyday surroundings to the eternal world. To walk in that place, it must be a habit—a principle—now to put God’s blessings to use in His service. Be ready. Do it.

In His service,


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The personification of justice

Outside the entrance of the county courthouse in Tampa, Florida, stands a statue that personifies justice. It is a blindfolded woman with a sword in one hand and a scale of weights in the other. The blindfold symbolizes that those who execute justice should not be influenced by the beauty, financial means, education, ethnicity, or race of those who stand before the court. However, my uncle put a different spin on it when he said, “Justice appears blindfolded so that she does not see the injustices committed in her name!” Is it possible that we are committing injustices in the name of justice?

In the Jewish Torah, Moses taught Israel not to deceive others in business transactions. Merchants were not to obtain more for less, nor sell less for more deceitfully. He said, “Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.” Deuteronomy 25:13.

Our afflictions

In our minds, we have a bag of diverse weights—great and small. When it comes to measuring our own trials, troubles, and sufferings, we open our bag of diverse weights and take out the heaviest ones. We use them to overestimate our own difficulties and measure them as heavy and insurmountable. With our minds carnally wired to display a large digital read-out of our burdens in comparison to those of others, we weigh our own troubles by tons.

Yet how does the apostle Paul consider our afflictions? “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Corinthians 4:17. Paul declares that all our afflictions are light, not heavy. They are small, not great. We are guilty of unrighteousness when we choose from our bag of diverse weights a large weight to estimate our “light affliction, which is but for a moment.”
The next time we are tempted to weigh our trials, we need to be careful not to pull out of our diverse weights’ bags a great weight or large measure but to plead with the Spirit to help us, by faith, to pull out a small weight or a light measure with which to estimate our trouble.

**Our aspirations**

Even our holy, noble aspirations can be misleading. The carnal heart is deceitful above all things. We are tempted to aspire to be rich so that we can do grand things for God, for the community, and for the betterment of humanity. Like the Jewish protagonist in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, we seem to sing, “If I were a rich man,...” I could help the poor, I could help the church, I could be a true help to all. I would not be like other rich folks who buy big houses, expensive cars, and nice clothes. No, I would not be like that. And so we flatter and deceive ourselves.

At the time of the Civil War, an Adventist pioneer, Ellen G. White, wrote a letter to a poor sister in the church who aspired to be rich so she could help others. This woman often held silent conversations with herself, promising that, if she ever became wealthy, she would not use her means to gratify herself, like other well-off individuals had done. However, her story typifies the reality of many believers.

“My attention was called to your desire to possess means. The sentiment of your heart was: ‘Oh, if I only had means, I would not squander it! I would set an example to those who are close and penurious. I would show them the great blessing there is to be received in doing good.…

“When your condition in life began to improve, you said: ‘As soon as I can get me a home, I will then donate to the cause of God.’ But when you had a home you saw so many improvements to make to have everything about you convenient and pleasant that you forgot the Lord and His claims upon you, and were less inclined to help the cause of God than in the days of your poverty and affliction.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 277, 283.

Yes, even in our righteous aspirations, we can be led down a path of self-deception. We are tempted to bring out a great weight from our...
bag of diverse weights to measure our seemingly noble pursuits. But, after all is said and done, we have to exclaim with Elijah that we are no greater than our fathers.

The wise Preacher advises us not to aspire too greatly to worldly pursuits, or we might end up with very few heavenly treasures. His prayer was, “Two things have I required of Thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” Proverbs 30: 8, 9.

Rating others’ afflictions, actions, and aspirations

When we rate the afflictions of others, do we use the same large weights to estimate their troubles and trials as we do to measure our own? Absolutely not! We weigh the difficulties of others as if they were mere feathers on the scale. The troubles of others are easy, light, and short lived. The suffering of others is small stuff, not large like our own. We are tempted to pull out of our mental bag of diverse weights a small measure to estimate the pain of others’ afflictions.

Our carnal mind estimates the successes, accomplishments, and righteous works of others from the same selfish perspective. We tend to find fault with their accomplishments. We easily see their mistakes and foibles. We quickly recognize their imperfections and failures. We downplay their abilities. We criticize their achievements.

When negotiating the price of an old stamp, a collector will devalue it by using negative descriptions such as, chipped, stained, used, cancelled, dull, faded, wrinkled, or torn to help lower the price. We seem to use the same adjectives in describing the actions of others. We devalue their accomplishments with our own self-righteous spirit.

The spiritual reset button

In the modern world of technology, many electronic gadgets come with a reset button. When the equipment goes out of whack, the operator’s manual gives instructions on how to press the reset button.

Similarly, the Holy Scriptures serve as our operator’s manual. The Holy Spirit has the ability to activate the reset button of our souls. Consider what the Bible says about this matter of estimating the trials of others:

1. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” Romans 12:10. Here the apostle Paul exhorts us to put on a spiritual mindset. He instructs us to prefer others above ourselves.

2. “Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:3-5. Paul states that if we have the mind of Christ, we will automatically pull out of our mental diverse weights’ bag a greater estimation of others than of ourselves. We will be lowly when comparing our afflictions, acts, and aspirations with those of others. We will estimate others more highly than ourselves.

Did Christ really estimate the capabilities of others as greater than His own? Yes. Notice what He told His disciples right before His great sacrifice on Calvary. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.” John 14:12.

Jesus stated that the works of His apostles and subsequent disciples would be “greater works” than those which He had performed. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Philippians 2:5; Ephesians 4:12, 13.

Why not enter today into His rest? Why not stop using our diverse measures of self, and rather let each esteem others better than themselves? What is in our bags of diverse weights? What weights will we use when we estimate the actions of others and of ourselves in the light of God’s word? May God help us always to choose the correct weights and measures. SW
How Can We Be Righteous?

By Glendon Higgins

Christians speak about heaven. They hope for something better past this life. Many people are aware of heaven, yet not many are ready to be a part of its society. Human beings have ugly character attributes, none of which can be taken to heaven. If such ugly character attributes were taken there, they would be thoroughly discordant with that place. Therefore, to enter heaven, a person’s character must be changed through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In this process, good character attributes are obtained.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. Yes, it is possible to partake of the divine nature. God’s nature is very different from human nature. God has character attributes that human beings must have. These attributes are described in the Scriptures as the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22, 23. If we partake of the Holy Spirit and receive the attributes God provides, we can become people who are fit for that better world.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee—a righteous, holy man to the Jews. He came to talk with Jesus one night. In this interview, Jesus told him that in his present condition he was not fit for heaven. Nicodemus was astonished. In fact, Jesus was more definite, prefacing His pronouncements with the determined words, “Verily, verily,” telling him that he must be born again, be born from above. Nicodemus needed the Holy Spirit to regenerate and renew his heart. He was a church leader who thought he kept the law and believed he was already righteous, but he had been attempting to generate his own righteousness. Instead, he needed to look to Christ for righteousness.

To illustrate the point, consider electricity. What could we do if we had no electricity in our house and everything was dark? We might get a stationary bicycle and attach to it a small generator that produced electricity. We could wire the generator to the electrical supply of the house. Then we could pedal away, trying to produce enough electricity for the entire house. Pedalling away furiously with our little generator, trying to come up with enough electricity, we might produce enough so the light bulbs in the house flicker a little, emitting very dim light. This would hardly be enough to see by. We could keep on pedalling until finally we were exhausted. We couldn’t keep this up for very long, and we could never produce enough electricity for the whole house on our own in this way.

This is the same as trying to be righteous through our own merits or trying to keep God’s commandments in our own strength. It is like trying to attain salvation with the small generator of our own human power. It is impossible.

Why not connect to the power grid? There are power lines running up and down the street. The power grid will bring electricity to the whole house. We won’t need to generate it under our own steam.

In a spiritual sense, we need to connect to the power grid of heaven and receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus appealed to Nicodemus to do this. He told him that he must be born again. He needed the Holy Spirit to regenerate his heart and to cease trying to generate his own righteousness. No one can succeed at this on his own. We need to connect to the power grid of heaven. This is the only way we can obtain salvation.

During the days of the apostles, the people of Galatia fell into error. Initially they had trusted in Christ for salvation. Later there were some who came in among them, teaching them to trust in the flesh. Galatians 3:3. These teachers did not tell them that they were at liberty to sin. Oh no, they told them that they must keep the law. Yes, they must do it themselves. They must make themselves righteous.
strates what happens when we approach the law of God and promise to keep it in our own strength. This is an attempt to keep our promise to God by producing our own righteousness. Likewise the Israelites entered into the old covenant agreement thinking that they could keep the law by themselves and be righteous. Inevitably they failed, which led them to devise a system of human works.

The birth of Isaac came from God’s promise. It demonstrates what happens when God’s law is approached in faith, trusting in His promises.

In the new covenant (Hebrews 8:10-12), God promises to forgive past sin and to write the law in one’s heart so he can obey it. He promises to impart the Holy Spirit to renew and regenerate the heart. Even though human unbelief often gets in the way, God has promised to make His every child righteous through the indwelling of the Spirit.

Many centuries before the first advent of Christ, the Israelites had escaped from Egyptian slavery. God performed many wonderful miracles in the process of freeing them from Egyptian bondage and bringing them to Mount Sinai in Arabia. In the book of Galatians, it is written that the covenant from Mount Sinai gives birth to bondage. The Israelites had just escaped Egyptian bondage. Was it God’s intention to take them out of Egyptian bondage only to put them under another kind of bondage at Mount Sinai? What occurred at Mount Sinai that could have put them into bondage?

“Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:5, 6. When God spoke these words to the Israelites, to what covenant was He referring? The covenant God had made with Abraham was already in existence. No other covenant had been made. If the Israelites would have faith and believe in God, He was able to do for them everything He promised. They would be a righteous, holy people. But, instead, a covenant of a very different character emerged at Mount Sinai.

“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God.”
impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Exodus 24:7.” –Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 371.

It was admirable that the people agreed to obey God. But in making this covenant, the people in their self-sufficiency rashly took the entire responsibility for obedience upon themselves. They believed they could be righteous in their own strength. How miserably they failed when, just a few days later, many of them were found worshipping the golden calf. The covenant they made with God at Mount Sinai was faulty, not because of God but because of them. “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them,…” God needed to “make a new covenant.” Hebrews 8:7, 8.

If we approach the law of God in the spirit of self-sufficiency, in the old covenant way, it gives rise to a type of bondage.

If we approach the law of God in the spirit of self-sufficiency, in the old covenant way, it gives rise to a type of bondage. Why does this self-sufficiency end up in bondage? When we attempt to obey God in our own strength, we inevitably fail. We try again and fail. We try again and again and again. We’re locked into this cycle of doing and failing. At this point, many just give up and go back to their sinful ways. Meanwhile, others, like the Pharisees, up the ante. “For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey…. They developed a system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions…. ” –Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 123.

The Pharisees made many extra laws to promote righteousness and obedience to God’s law. It was probably all well intended, but they particularly defined everything that should and shouldn’t be done on the Sabbath day. In addition, they defined many other laws to cover almost every contingency of life. Perhaps they were trying to remove the guesswork of how to be holy or righteous. The definitions of what constituted righteousness were contained in many volumes. The scribes and Pharisees supposed themselves to be masters of the law, yet their lives were still full of sin.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.” Matthew 7:15; 23:27. Outwardly the Pharisees appeared holy, but inwardly they were full of pride, malice, hatred, and many other sins. Their legalistic religion, devoid of God’s power, led them to live lives of hypocrisy.

“They [the Jews] answered Him [Jesus], We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:33, 34. The Jews supposed themselves to be free men, yet Jesus stated otherwise.

Under their cloak of supposed holiness they hid many sins. They were in bondage to sin. Their system of human works–invented to promote the keeping of the law–proved a complete failure. The law of God condemned them as sinners. They were in bondage to sin. The law of God is holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12), but approaching it in a self-sufficient manner leads to bondage.

“For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” Galatians 4:25. Old Jerusalem with her children, the Jews, was in bondage. The system of human works and lives of hypocrisy were a spiritual bondage. “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Galatians 4:26. We are to be children of the New Jerusalem—the heavenly Jerusalem. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You need to be born from above,” He was talking about this heavenly rebirth.

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” Galatians 4:30, 31. We are to be free people. The slave or the bondman cannot possess anything. He has no control over himself. This is the dis-
tistinguishing characteristic of a slave. In a spiritual sense, he is like a person with no self-control. He is a slave to sin and inevitably will perform the acts of sin. On the other hand, the freeborn son is the heir to all things. He has dominion over everything. In a spiritual sense, he has victory over himself. He has self-control. He is free from sin, and his destiny is the assurance of eternal life.

“The apostle when speaking of Hagar and Sarah says: ‘These women are two covenants.’ These two covenants exist today. The two covenants are not matters of time, but of condition. Let no one flatter himself that he cannot be bound under the old covenant, thinking that its time has passed.” –E.J. Waggoner, The Glad Tidings, pp. 100, 101.

We can be bound under the old covenant. It only takes a moment for us to lose our way and turn our eyes away from Christ. Some think they can generate righteousness of some kind on their own and mingle this with expressions of faith. The Scriptures tell us that this is hopeless. There is much written in the Scriptures about regeneration, being born again, and being a renewed man. The real work of the Holy Spirit must take place in the heart for there to be genuine righteousness.

The Pharisees sought to make themselves righteous. They did this with pride in their hearts. Spiritual pride caused them to take the law a step further than their neighbors. They had no concept of righteousness by faith in Christ. They believed that they were righteous by fulfilling the actions which they had been commanded to do. They thought that if they stretched and extended the law they would be even more righteous. They considered themselves superior to their neighbors who were not as “advanced.” They created a legal minefield that was painful and perilous to negotiate and set neighbor against neighbor in a spirit of judgment and criticism. It took their minds far from God and His love for them.

This proud spirit of clothing oneself in one’s own righteousness extended to Sabbath keeping to the point where the Pharisees believed that the Messiah violated the Sabbath—according to their manmade precepts. Matthew 12:10; Mark 3:2; John 9:14-16. Jesus died without sin, so therefore the “standards” of the Pharisees were proven to be out of touch with the Author of the law. They considered their own righteousness to be superior to that of God Himself. Their attempts to define how God’s law should be kept were a complete failure.

A truly righteous person would never claim to be holier than others. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” Luke 18:11, 12. The Pharisee tells God how he’s so much better than others, especially because he does lots of extra things, such as fasting not only on the Sabbath but also on one other day of the week. He pays the tithe on herbs (Matthew 23:23), the growth of mint, parsley, and other small herbs in his garden. He goes the extra mile. Yet God resists him, and he is not justified or even counted as righteous. Luke 18:14. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” James 4:6. God resisted the spiritual pride of the Pharisees. If we have any element of spiritual pride, God will also resist us and we will be left to ourselves to make the same experience as did the Pharisees.

It is only by the grace of Christ that we can be righteous people. If we think we can improve ourselves and do not seek help from Heaven, we are no better than any other sinner.
It has been said that the above passage is as difficult to understand as any in the book of Revelation. Yet this passage begs to be interpreted. Why? Because, first, the phrase “here is the mind which hath wisdom” (Revelation 17:9, King James Version) makes it a puzzle to be solved; and, second, to definitely identify the great adversary of Christ and His church at the close of history, right before Armageddon and the seven last plagues, is to know the true identity of the antichrist. The images also hark back to ancient Babylon and its opposition to God and His people, as vividly told in the books of Genesis and Daniel. These representations also call to mind the apostate church’s use of the political powers during the Middle Ages as it sought to enforce its religious doctrines, dogmas, and agendas through the military might of the nations. As it reads, the passage strongly implies that this power will rise from a deadly wound at the end to persecute objectors once more; but the faithful are to be comforted with the thought that—dreadful though this period will be—it will endure but for a short time: This power “must continue for a short space,” and those with him will have power for only “one hour with the beast” (or a brief period of time). Revelation 17:10, 12. Here, too, is the key to understanding the passage, as we shall see.

The most sticking identifying mark of this power is its resurrection from the dead. It also mimics the God of the universe in another way, because it “was,” and “is,” and “is to come.” This echoes the descriptions of the Creator found in Revelation 1:4 and 4:8: “Him which is, and which was, and which is to come…” and “which was,

*Apocalypse 17:9-11, Knox Bible (KNOX), Copyright © 2012 Westminster Diocese. Published by Baronius Press. All rights reserved.
and is, and is to come.” From this we know that the antichrist is not JUST an end-time phenomenon. From his time perspective, the prophet John states that this power would have a long-term, worldwide influence; then it would have a time of non-activity or influence; and then, in the time of the end, it would rise again and be re-inaugurated for a short period of time. It is this observation that makes the passage intriguing for those who believe we are living in the end of time, just before the return of Jesus.

In his well-known book, Daniel and the Revelation, Uriah Smith understood and explained this passage from the perspective of John and in the following way:

“The Seven Heads—The seven heads are explained to be ... the seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman empire, [and they] are usually enumerated as follows: (1) kingly; (2) consular; (3) decemvirate; (4) dictatorial; (5) triumvirate; (6) imperial; and (7) papal. Kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, and triumvirs [five] had passed away in John’s day. He was living under the imperial form. Two more were to arise after his time....” –Daniel and the Revelation (1897), pp. 704, 705.

When the American Union of the International Missionary Society first published the Bible Study Handbook with the above interpretation, the brethren in Europe pointed out that they understood this passage differently. They accepted another Adventist pioneer’s prophetic interpretation. Stephen N. Haskell outlined the passage thus:

“Throughout the history of the first five heads [Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece], [where] paganism was the prevailing element; in the sixth [the Roman Empire], it was still the ruling principle; during the papacy, the seventh, it disappeared to all outward appearances, but was nevertheless the controlling power, for the papacy is [but] baptized Paganism.” –Story of the Seer of Patmos, © 1908 Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C.

Some years ago, a friend sent me a copy of Time of the End, by George McCready Price (1870-1963). As I was preparing this article, I was impressed to open this book, where I found the following observations:

“Until recently the seventeenth chapter of Revelation was the most mysterious of all in this book, if not the entire Bible. Our pioneer prophetic expositor, Uriah Smith, had very little to say about it.... Its numbers and other details have been a complete enigma for even Seventh-day Adventists. Even the last part of the chapter, about the ten kings coming to one mind and agreeing to give their power to the beast, has been misunderstood as referring to the Middle Ages, in spite of the plain statement of Ellen G. White assigning this to the confederacy of the very last hours of time....” –Time of the End (copyright © 1967, Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee), p. 38. (G.McR. Price references Sister White’s Manuscript 24, 1981.)

Price goes on to say that “for many years the Catholic Church has had her own interpretation of this chapter, as will be found in her notes of her Douay Bible.... They have always thought they had to bring in Egypt and Assyria to lead off the list....” That makes pagan Rome “no. 6 in the series. Of course, the next one would be the horrible antichrist. This was also the teaching of the early church fathers,” who believed that it was possible for Christ to return in their day, and that is what they sought to understand from the passage. –Time of the End, p. 39.

In fact, some early Christian expositors conjectured that the seven kings were actually the emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Titus (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius being regarded as usurpers). A popular legend held that Nero was not really dead, or would come to life again, and he would be one of the seven and yet, as reincarnate, count as an eighth. A variation of this idea suggested that the short reign of Titus was the seventh king, and that his successor, Domitian, was the reincarnation of Nero, whose persecuting policy he revived.

In every period of severe persecution, Christians have looked to the passages of Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 as pointing to the soon coming of Jesus. But we have more than “the signs of the times” as evidence that we live in the time of the end. We can truly say that we live in the time of the end because the book of Daniel is now opened. “Understand, O son of man, that...
the vision is for the time of the end.” “It pertains to the appointed time of the end.” Daniel 8:17, 19, Revised Standard Version. And “the books of Daniel and the Revelation are one. One is a prophecy, the other a revelation….” –Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 971. Therefore, we need to see that to understand one is of necessity to understand the other. And “the more firmly we stand under the banner of the third angel’s message, the more clearly shall we understand the prophecy of Daniel; for the Revelation is the supplement of Daniel….” –Selected Messages, book 2, p. 114.

Those who support the idea that pagan Rome is no. 6 (by adding Egypt and Assyria to the list) are promoting an idea invented to blunt the plain word of God that points to the inventor of that idea as the antichrist. “The advocates of Egypt and Assyria disregarded the plain statements of the prophecy that no. 7 of the series would have only a very brief career—‘and when he cometh, he must continue a short while’ (verse 10),… or ‘his stay must be brief’ (Goodspeed).” –Time of the End, p. 40.

To identify the symbols of Revelation 17 correctly, it is necessary to know the time period under consideration in this chapter. If the prophet is speaking from the perspective of his own time, then the symbols must be understood as pointing to individuals or structures related to his day; this is what some early church expositors did, including Uriah Smith. To bring in Egypt and Assyria to fill out the number is to wrest the passage out of its own context; besides, Babylon predated Egypt and Assyria and began in the time of Nimrod. Thus, if we consider this scripture in its proper setting, pointing to end-time events, then another understanding is required. In this article, the writer takes the latter approach for the following reasons:

1. The last half of the book of Revelation deals with end-time events. John, for example, is called upon to describe the seven last plagues in the preceding chapter and then to look at the very end of the great controversy just a few chapters later. Revelation 16:1-21; 21:1, 2, 9, 10.

2. Revelation 17:1-3 references “the judgment of the great whore,” and the time of judgment began after the time of the end began in 1798, when the church was emerging from the wilderness.

3. The four beasts and the ten horns of Daniel 7 are related to the seven heads and ten horns of the dragon (Revelation 12) and the first beast of Revelation 13, which rises from the sea. One interesting detail about this beast is the appearance of royal crowns. However, these crowns do not appear on the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. This signifies a period of time distinct from the periods of the dragon (imperial Rome) and the first beast of Revelation 13 (papal Rome during the 1,260 years). Since World War I, all the monarchies of Europe (the ten kings) have either disappeared or become mere figureheads.

4. The phrase “was, and is not, and yet is” of Revelation 17:8 is simply another way of saying, “one of his heads [was] as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed:…” Revelation 13:3.

This confederacy brings to “perfection” Babylon the Great and will last for just a short time, since both of these powers will be destroyed at the second coming of Jesus.
Adventists have been taught and have taught that the deadly wound was healed by the Lateran Treaty of 1929. But that was only the first step of three. Revelation 13:2 states that “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority:”

1. **“Power”–February 11, 1929–Lateran Treaty**–Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri, on behalf of the Holy See, and Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, on behalf of the nation of Italy, signed the Lateran Treaty, which stipulated that the Vatican could exist on condition that it would respect Italian law.

2. **“Seat”–January 10, 1984–First U.S. Ambassador to Rome appointed**–Diplomatic relations were established between the U.S. and the Vatican for the first time when U.S. President Ronald Reagan appointed the first U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican.

3. **“Great Authority”–December 28, 2008–“Vatican divorces from Italian law”**–On Friday, January 2, 2009, BBC News reported that “Vatican City State, the world’s smallest sovereign state, has decided to divorce itself from Italian law.” With this declaration, the Vatican placed itself outside the terms of the Lateran Treaty and thus above the Italian state.

   **“His Power, and His Seat, and Great Authority” (Revelation 13:2)**–In 1929, the Vatican received “power” again. In 1984, it received its “seat.” And in 2008/2009 it assumed “great authority.” Thus, after 210 years (1798-2008), the deadly wound was fully healed.

   Revelation 17:11 reads like this in the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB): “The beast that was and is not, is himself an eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction.” The Contemporary English Version (CEV) reads: “You also saw a beast that used to be and no longer is. That beast is one of the seven kings who will return as the eighth king, but only to be destroyed.” Therefore, we can conclude that the following compose the full list:

1. Babylon
2. Medo-Persia
3. Greece
4. Pagan Rome
5. Papal Rome until 1798
6. Papal Rome wounded
7. Papal Rome healed
8. One world order under the leadership of the papacy and the United States

   Soon all who dwell on the earth whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life will worship this power. “Since the middle of the nineteenth century, students of prophecy in the United States have presented this testimony to the world. In the events now taking place is seen a rapid advance toward the fulfillment of the prediction.”


   Don’t just get ready, but “be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” Luke 12:40. How is one to get ready? Get right with Jesus. Don’t be one of those who focus on earthly advantages and profits. Bond with Jesus. “They that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” Revelation 17:14. SW
“... When He was alone, Peter, John, James, and Andrew came to Him as He sat upon the Mount of Olives. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?’ Jesus did not answer His disciples by taking up separately the destruction of Jerusalem and the great day of His coming. He mingled the description of these two events. Had He opened to His disciples future events as He beheld them, they would have been unable to endure the sight. In mercy to them He blended the description of the two great crises, leaving the disciples to study out the meaning for themselves.” –The Desire of Ages, p. 628.

**The Destruction of Jerusalem**

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<th>Sign</th>
<th>Fulfillment</th>
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<td>1. “For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” “… And false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders;….” Matthew 24:5, 24.</td>
<td>A.D. 31-67</td>
<td>The Desire of Ages, pp. 628, 631.</td>
<td>“The same deceptions practiced prior to the destruction of Jerusalem have been practiced through the ages, and will be practiced again.” –The Desire of Ages, p. 628.</td>
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**Jesus’ Coming and the End of the World**

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<td>1. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be…” Matthew 24:21, 22. See Mark 13:19, 20.</td>
<td>538-1709</td>
<td>The Desire of Ages, p. 630; The Great Controversy, pp. 54, 55.</td>
<td>“Ninety thousand persons are supposed to have been lost on that fatal day.” –The Great Controversy, p. 305.</td>
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<td>3. “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;…” “… The sun shall be darkened,….” Luke 21:25; Mark 13:24-26.</td>
<td>May 19, 1780</td>
<td>The Great Controversy, pp. 305-308.</td>
<td>“May 19, 1780, stands in history as ‘The Dark Day.’ Since the time of Moses no period of darkness of equal density, extent, and duration, has ever been recorded.” –The Great Controversy, p. 308.</td>
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<td>4. “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” “… Before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:37-39. See Luke 21:34-36.</td>
<td>Today</td>
<td>We are eyewitnesses</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14.</td>
<td>The church’s responsibility today</td>
<td>“Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, declared that the gospel was preached to ‘every creature which is under heaven.’ Colossians 1:23. So now, before the coming of the Son of man, the everlasting gospel is to be preached ‘to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ Revelation 14:6, 14.” –The Desire of Ages, p. 633.</td>
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“... When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Luke 21:31.

“Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.” Mark 13:30. See Luke 21:32; Matthew 24:34.

“Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. He says of those who see these signs, ‘This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord’s coming is at hand. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ He says, ‘but My words shall not pass away.’…”

“By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory.” –The Desire of Ages, pp. 632, 633.
“And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.” Judges 7:4.

According to Jesus’ words in the New Testament, “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.” Obviously the fisherman who puts out his net and takes in a huge haul of fish is delighted at his success. But, as Jesus pointed out, that is the point at which the work begins. “Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” Matthew 13:47, 48. In the next verse, Jesus said that that process is an illustration of what the angels will do at the end of the world—gather the good into vessels and cast the bad away.

Explanations such as “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son”; “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:7, 27); “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3); and the beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12 are provided to show the holy principles and the end result for that holy place. But there are also some very interesting accounts in the Scriptures showing how Heaven does more than simply determine who will inhabit that holy place. God turns sinners into saints.

What were the characteristics that God was looking for in those who would join Gideon to fight against the huge force of the Midianites and Amalekites? It was Israel’s following false gods that caused God to withdraw His protection from them and allow the enemies to ravage the land. How was He to find anyone who would view matters as He did? Viewed humanly by numbers, even after tens of thousands of Israelites came in response to the call for soldiers to come and fight for Israel, Gideon was at a huge disadvantage. But God saw things differently. He said the soldiers were too many for Him to entrust the victory over the Midianites to them. Why? Because they would “vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.” Judges 7:2.

So the tests began. The first one was about courage, or faith. All who were fearful or afraid were dismissed. Twenty-two thousand soldiers went home, leaving ten thousand. But God said they were still too many.

The next test was to take the soldiers to the water and see how they drank. Those who got down on their knees to drink, as opposed to those who quickly drank from their hand, were dismissed. Nine thousand seven hundred soldiers were dismissed, leaving three hundred to fight the battle of the Lord. “Those who in time of peril were intent upon supplying their own wants were not the men to be trusted in an
emergency. The Lord has no place in His work for the indolent and self-indulgent. The men of His choice were the few who would not permit their own wants to delay them in the discharge of duty. The three hundred chosen men not only possessed courage and self-control, but they were men of faith. They had not defiled themselves with idolatry. God could direct them, and through them He could work deliverance for Israel.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 549, 550.

After God gained the victory for Israel with this little band of faithful men, others in Israel joined to drive the Midianites from the land. But they were followers, not leaders.

God placed the men of Gideon’s time in circumstances to reveal their inner character. For sure, He knew already whom He could use to do His bidding, but He carried out a process through circumstances—giving everyone a chance to make a choice—so that all Israel could see who was best suited for the battle of the Lord. This story is for us today, giving us the opportunity to examine our own hearts and to trust God to determine and reveal to whom He will give His kingdom.

Now let’s look at another example, for a similar process occurred after Saul was selected to be Israel’s first king. Viewed outwardly, he was qualified to be king. But when tested, his inner character was revealed for all to see. He had been king for about two years when a time came to face the Philistines in battle. The prophet Samuel had given Saul exact instructions from God what to do. The king had the opportunity to choose one of two ways. God “brought them [the king and people] into close places, that they might be convicted of the folly of depending on man, and that they might turn to Him as their only help. The time for the proving of Saul had come. He was now to show whether or not he would depend on God and patiently wait according to His command, thus revealing himself as one whom God could trust in trying places as the ruler of His people, or whether he would be vacillating and unworthy of the sacred responsibility that had devolved upon him. Would the king whom Israel had chosen, listen to the Ruler of all kings? Would he turn the attention of his faint-hearted soldiers to the One in whom is everlasting strength and deliverance?

“With growing impatience he awaited the arrival of Samuel and attributed the confusion and distress and desertion of his army to the absence of the prophet. The appointed time came, but the man of God did not immediately appear. God’s providence had detained His servant. But Saul’s restless, impulsive spirit would no longer be restrained.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 618.

Clad in armor and carrying weapons of war, Saul called the soldiers and offered sacrifice to God. Samuel came right after that and asked Saul what he had done. His dishonest answer not only demonstrated a complete lack of faith but also included the lie, “I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.” 1 Samuel 13:12. He viewed the sacrifices in the same way as the idolaters viewed their pagan sacrifices—as external necessities to gain the favor of a deity, not in repentance, faith in the Redeemer, and full dependence on God, to whom all glory belongs.

“If Saul had shown a regard for the requirements of God in this time of trial, God could have worked His will through him. His failure now proved him unfit to be the vicegerent of God to His people. He would mislead Israel. His will, rather than the will of God, would be the controlling power. If Saul had been faithful, his kingdom would have been established forever; but since he had failed, the purpose of God must be accomplished by another. The government of Israel must be committed to one who would rule the people according to the will of Heaven.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 621.

Saul’s lack of humility and spirituality here and ever afterward presented “a sad example of the power of early wrong habits. In his youth Saul did not love and fear God; and that impetuous spirit, not early trained to submission, was ever ready to rebel against divine authority. Those who in their youth cherish a sacred regard for the will of God, and who faithfully perform the duties of their position, will be prepared for higher service in afterlife. But men cannot for years pervert the powers that God has given them, and then, when they choose to change, find these powers fresh and free for an entirely opposite course.” —Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 622.

It is the same now. It is natural for a church to rejoice when someone wants to join its ranks.
Heaven itself rejoices “over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke 15:7. However, everyone who comes to a knowledge of God and links up with the church brings with him or her a whole set of inherited and cultivated characteristics. He may agree with the teachings of the church, but that agreement is worthless if it does not link him to God for the transformation of character. Soul winners and church leaders have an enormous responsibility to connect every soul to Heaven so that he chooses of his own free will to love, obey, and depend fully on God.

Throughout his life, everyone is brought by circumstances to one testing point after another so he can see who he really is and cast his helpless soul at the feet of Jesus. Each circumstance is divine training and preparation for eternity. As in the time of Gideon, as in the time of King Saul, and all down through history to our day, “too many” glorify themselves, other human beings, or even governments—not God—for the great things He has done, thus darkening their own souls and the souls of others. Every victory belongs solely to God; it is not attributable to any person or even to one’s God-given abilities. The Creator and Sustainer of all things alone is to be glorified and exalted every moment.

In summary, the “too many” are fearful, faithless, lacking in principle, self-indulgent, rebellious, and proud. Such people center in self, not God. For sure, God would love to take the whole world into His eternal kingdom. But it won’t happen. If it did, the eternal kingdom would be just like this world. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8.

Furthermore, God will not change sinners into saints without their choosing. He invites everyone to come to Him and drink of the living water. He performs miracles of all kinds for those who accept that invitation—divine cleansing from sin, the righteous character of Jesus implanted in the soul through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and many, many more. Whether this happens, or not, is up to every person. But one thing is for sure: All praise belongs to Him alone!

Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honor for gifts that are Heaven-bestowed. The true Christian will make God first and last and best in everything. No ambitious motives will chill his love for God; steadily, perseveringly, will he cause honor to redound to his heavenly Father. It is when we are faithful in exalting the name of God that our impulses are under divine supervision, and we are enabled to develop spiritual and intellectual power.

Jesus, the divine Master, ever exalted the name of His heavenly Father. He taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.” Matthew 6:9, A.R.V. And they were not to forget to acknowledge, “Thine is ... the glory.” Verse 13. So careful was the great Healer to direct attention from Himself to the Source of His power, that the wondering multitude, “when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see,” did not glorify Him, but “glorified the God of Israel.” Matthew 15:31. In the wonderful prayer that Christ offered just before His crucifixion, He declared, “I have glorified Thee on the earth.” “Glorify Thy Son,” He pleaded, “that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.” “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:4, 1, 25, 26.

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

“I will praise the name of God,... And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.”

“I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: And I will glorify Thy name forevermore.”

“O magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together.” Psalm 69:30; Revelation 4:11; Psalm 86:12; 34:3.

–Prophets and Kings, pp. 68-70.
“E"very man wants to be free.” Songs are written with such titles, but what is freedom? For that matter, what is the liberty made so famous in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”? *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* gives a primary definition of “liberty” with a few refinements: The quality or state of being free (the power to do as one pleases; freedom from physical restraint; freedom from arbitrary or despotic control; the positive enjoyment of various social, political, or economic rights and privileges; the power of choice).

The meanings of “freedom” are similar: The absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action; liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another.

In Greek culture, freedom is synonymous with independent self-determination, while popular western culture has over the last few decades been moving more and more in the direction of “No one can tell me how I am going to live my life.” Obviously, the more people there are who have this attitude, the more chaotic society will become. “Tolerance” then means that people cannot object to whatever someone else feels like doing, regardless of the impact on others. At this point, the concept moves closer to “license,” or an abuse of freedom.

In the Holy Scriptures, freedom often referred to release from some kind of bondage or involuntary servitude. In fact, after Israel left Egypt under God’s direction, they were given definite statutes concerning relationships; these included the command that a person was not to be kept in involuntary servitude for more than six years. He was to be released the seventh year, just as the land was to be left to lie fallow the seventh year! See Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12.

By virtue of creation, God says, “the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.” Psalm 50:12. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,...” Haggai 2:8. On that basis alone, He is in charge. But notice that He gives man, who was created in His image, the responsibility for making decisions concerning his own life. In Deuteronomy 30:15-19, He had Moses lay out the alternatives and the consequences for the people of Israel before they crossed over the Jordan River into the promised land: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, 

“God's government is a government of free will, and there is no act of rebellion or obedience which is not an act of free will.” –Signs of the Times, June 5, 1901.
lust, or pleasure seeking, no such conversation is possible; there is no free will. He is not free to communicate with the Almighty, much less to do righteous things. All of the distractions of this world are designed to keep this conversation from taking place and hence to keep a person enslaved by his own instincts, impulses, and desires—actually, by the wicked one. Author and consultant Skip Moen puts it this way: “Whatever freedom we have is a gift, not a right. He [God] is the master and the owner, not us. True freedom is not that delusion of self-determination. True freedom is remembering who we are and who God is, and choosing to serve Him.”

A child is fully dependent on his or her parents and happily goes about his life, knowing that he will be taken care of. That is the picture Jesus gives of how one should trust the God of heaven, who lovingly cares for and shelters the human family. “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” Luke 18:17.

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matthew 6:30-34.

Divinity forces no one. But what wonderful freedom, joy, and fulfillment one may have when he loves God’s kingdom and makes it primary in his life! Then he gives the really important things the attention they deserve; the mind and heart grow through their connection with Infinity; and everything that one needs is added to that by the Father, who provides what is best for every person. That is real life, both temporal and eternal!

Jesus’ entire mission was about freeing people from the bondage of sin—actually putting them in the position where they can make a choice.

—Hope of the Ages, pp. 43-46. This book is available from Religious Liberty Publishing Assn. SW
## Liberia update

By the grace of God, we successfully held our first camp meeting December 24-30, 2012. Nightly PowerPoint presentations were given to the community on health and prophecy based on Daniel 2. On Sabbath, December 29, 2012, seven souls who have been studying with us and one visitor from the nightly lectures were baptized by Pastor Gwina. The membership in Liberia is now 101 with 36 interested souls.

—John K. Mussah
Mission Field Secretary

## Help received in Congo

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

The funds sent from the Good Samaritan Department to support our brethren and sisters in the war-torn state of North Kivu have been received with much thanks to God. We are indebted to you for your great interest toward us in our urgent need of shelter, food, and clothing in these restless days.

May God help you and bless you till His appearing!

—Brother C. Mukendi

In January, new interested souls came from Namibia and Guinea Bissau.

## News from India

January 11-18, 2013, missionary visits were made in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu to follow up on contacts referred by our brethren in Berlin, Germany. Church dedication services were held in Chattaram and Ambur, Tamil Nadu, and plans for evangelism in 2013 were made with the believers and leaders in India.

During part of this visit, Sister Marianne from Germany traveled with Brother Douglas Francis on his last visit in India.

Peace and love be unto you and greetings with Galatians 6:10: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

## BAMI classes begin

On February 1, 2013, Berea Adventist Missionary Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, began its fourth class. We have ten students—two from Burundi, one from Malawi, four from Tanzania, and three from Zimbabwe. We expect more
students, by God’s grace, but some of them need sponsors. Pray for the success of BAMI’s fourth class. We have emphasized humility in service. Almost all of the previous graduates are now working in the mission fields of Burundi, Rwanda, and other countries. We thank God that we can advance the work by training workers for His vineyard. God remember us.

Sevith Moyo, BAMI Director

A contribution to BAMI will change, not just one life, but many lives, and hasten the day of the Lord. Donate today. School fees are US $400 per semester, and the full course is for two years (four semesters).

Aid for Philippines after the typhoon

We had the opportunity to visit our brethren in northeastern Mindanao who were severely impacted by super typhoon Pablo, which destroyed their houses and livelihood in just two hours. They told us that their only safety was in earnest prayer to our dear Saviour Jesus Christ. Government relief projects provided food and shelter, but it was very hard for vegetarians because the food relief was mostly canned fish and meat. Our leaders from Mindanao, led by Pastor Arnofo Cortes, visited the believers and distributed food and clothing bought with funds given by the General Conference Good Samaritan Department. We are very thankful for this support.

All that was left of the church building were a few pieces of wood. So, several weeks before our visit, the Mindanao Field used funds from the Good Samaritan Dept. to purchase lumber, cement, blocks, and roofing. By the time we arrived, the foundation had been completed by the members; we were able to begin construction of the roof and gather for worship.

While we were there, we conducted a health clinic. We checked the participants’ blood pressure, distributed clothing and food, and gave needed supplies to both members and non-members. Funds for this assistance were provided by the generous brethren of the Timog Church, Angeles City, Luzon.

May the Lord bless His work in the Philippines and especially in Mindanao.

–Dr. Roland de la Paz
GC Medical Missionary Leader

Brother Crosswell Rimsu sent this picture of a conference in northern India

The church in northern Mindanao is being rebuilt after the typhoon

Monks attack churches in southern Sri Lanka

On December 9, 2012, a mob of about 1,000 people, led by about eighty Buddhist monks, stormed the Jeevanalokaya Sabhawa church in the Weeraketiya area of Southern Province’s Hambantota district during worship on Sunday morning, vandalized the property, and assaulted the pastor and two police officers. The day before, the Buddhist monks had given notice that the church must close

Report from Ivory Coast

From Tuesday to Sabbath, January 1-5, 2013, interested souls studied lessons on the seven churches. On January 12, Brother Kouadio Goke Francois, a 57-year-old Ivorian, was baptized. He is inviting some of his friends to the church to receive the present truth taught by the IMS.

On January 17, Brother Agbobli Yawo and I traveled from Ivory Coast to meet up with Brother Idel Suarez, Jr., General Conference President, in Ashaiman, Ghana, on Sabbath, January 19. For the next two days, Brother Suarez shared many subjects, including church history, true and false reformations, the message of Christ Our Righteousness, Seventh-day Adventists and war, the ’51 movement, and more. He stressed the importance of loyalty and commitment to God’s work. We thank the General Conference for these clear studies.

Before leaving on Tuesday, January 22, Brother Suarez completed the purchase of a building to be used as headquarters in Ghana as well as the location of the West African Missionary School.

May God bless us all as we labor together with Him in His vineyard!

–Theo T. Animley
down. Estimated damage to the church was US $4,000.

Earlier, Buddhist monks forcibly occupied a Seventh-day Adventist Church and converted it into a Buddhist temple. On August 9, 2012, a mob attacked the pastor of an Assemblies of God Church, his wife, and a female worker of the Methodist Church in Deniyaya.

More than 70 percent of the 20.4 million people in Sri Lanka are Buddhist, mostly from the dominant Sinhalese ethnic group, according to Operation World. Christians are estimated to be 8.4 percent of the population, with more than 40 percent of Protestant Christians being from the minority Tamil ethnic group.

New believers in Benin

Before leaving for Ghana, we held a seminar in Potor Morvo with a new group of 23 interested souls. This was the first time I had met them, as they attend different churches. A pastor from one of their churches was the one who organized this seminar. Pray with us to see what God will do for this group.

–Brother Mohammed

From the Morning Star News

It is not currently possible to do any evangelization work in Sri Lanka, since Buddhist extremists have issued a warning to all Christians that they cannot conduct any religious or missionary activity, including house-to-house visits, prayer meetings, etc. These extremists are not against the Catholics and mainstream churches but are angry with small groups, believing that a lot of Buddhists have joined these churches.

One of our brothers had a narrow escape recently. A group of Buddhists found him distributing leaflets at a bus stop. They wanted to beat him, but the police arrived in time and took him to the Police station. He was treated well by the police, but they told him not to engage in any religious activity in public, even though the country’s constitution provides for freedom of religion. By the grace of God, our brother returned home with the help of the police. Let us pray for the Christians in Sri Lanka, especially those of the household of faith. May God bless you.

–Douglas Francis
GC Treasurer/Director, Asia Division

The Greatest Missionary Work

We should remember that God has honored the young. He chose Joseph in his youth to do a special work in behalf of His people. He accepted Samuel when his mother dedicated him to His service, and passed by the aged priest who had neglected to fulfill his solemn, sacred charge, and had failed to train his children in the right way. The Lord communicated a solemn message to the boy Samuel. The Lord has died for children, and He is ready to do a great work for them if parents will cooperate with Him in training and educating their children according to the instruction that He has given. The character in childhood of John the Baptist should be an encouragement to parents in the training of their children.

To bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is the greatest missionary work that parents can perform. The mother is entrusted with a greater work than is the king upon his throne. She has a class of duty to perform in connection with her children that no other one can perform. If she daily learns in the school of Christ, she will discharge her duty in the fear of God, and care for the children as the Lord’s beautiful flock.

Mothers should forbear from fretting and scolding. It is not safe to practice habits of fretting and scolding, for you will become unpleasant and harsh in your home, and will be likely to burst into a passion at anything that displeases you. This would greatly injure your soul, and injure the souls of your family. Be patient, be kind, be gentle. Gain the confidence and love of your children, and it will not be difficult to control them. Never fret, never threaten, never make a promise to your children that you cannot fulfill. Your lack of fulfilling your word will weaken the confidence of your children in you.

Children are exhorted to obey their parents in the Lord, but parents are also enjoined, “Provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.” Do not treat them in such a way that they will think that there is no use trying to be good and to do right, for they are treated with injustice and in an unreasonable manner. Children born into the world in this age have many difficulties to encounter. Sin will lie at the door of parents unless they
take themselves in hand and qualify themselves to become wise, safe, Christian teachers. No doubt you will see faults and waywardness on the part of your children. Some parents will tell you that they talk to and punish their children, but they cannot see that it does them any real good. Let such parents try new methods. Let them mingle kindness and affection and love with their family government, and yet let them be as firm as a rock to right principles. Oftentimes the waywardness of children is due to the mismanagement of parents.

When children have done wrong, they themselves are convicted of their sin and feel humiliated and distressed. To scold them for their faults will often result in making them stubborn and secretive. Like unruly colts, they seem determined to make trouble, and scolding will do them no good. Parents should seek to divert their minds into some other channel.

But the trouble is, parents are not uniform in their management, but move more from impulse than from principle. They fly into a passion and do not set an example before their children that Christian parents should. One day they pass over the wrongdoings of their children, and the next day they manifest no patience or self-control. They do not keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are often more guilty than are their children.

Some children will soon forget a wrong that is done to them by father and mother, but other children who are differently constituted cannot forget severe, unreasonable punishment which they did not deserve. Thus their souls are injured, and their minds bewildered. The mother loses her opportunities to instill right principles into the mind of the child, because she did not maintain self-control and manifest a well-balanced mind in her deportment and words.

Let fathers and mothers make a solemn promise to God whom they profess to love and obey, that by His grace they will not disagree between themselves, but will in their own life and temper manifest the spirit that they wish their children to cherish. The manifestation of anger on account of the misdeeds of your children will never help them to reform. Parents may manifest sorrow on account of the wrongs of their little ones, and at the same time show love for their children. Let parents set before their children their errors and wrongs not in a spirit of harshness, but in love. Let them seek to reach the tender heart of the erring one, that he may feel he has grieved Jesus who loves him more than his earthly parents can. But while it is the duty of parents to teach love to their children, they are not to indulge them in wrong habits, or in yielding to their evil inclinations. The manifestation of this kind of love is cruel.

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