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## Christian Character

{Review & Herald, December 8, 1891}

Without Christ they can do nothing! Those who do not gather with him scatter abroad. Their thoughts and actions will not bear the right character, and their influence will be destructive of good. Our actions have a twofold influence; for they affect others as well as ourselves. This influence will either be a blessing or a curse to those with whom we associate. How little we appreciate this fact. Actions make habits, and habits, character, and if we do not guard our habits, we shall not be qualified to unite with heavenly agencies in the work of salvation, nor be prepared to enter the heavenly mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare; for no one will be there except those who have surrendered their will and way to God's will and way. He whose character is proved, who has stood the test of trial, who is a partaker of the divine nature, will be among those whom Christ pronounces blessed.

Without Christ we can do nothing. The pure principles of uprightness, virtue, and goodness are all from God. A conscientious discharge of duty, Christ-like sympathy, love for souls and love for your own soul, because you belong to God, and have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, will make you a laborer together with God, and endow you with persuasive, drawing power. You must respect your own faith in order successfully to introduce it to others. By example as well as precept, you

must show that you reverence your faith, speaking reverently of sacred things. Never allow one expression of lightness and trifling to escape your lips when quoting scripture. As you take the Bible in your hands, remember that you are on holy ground. Angels are around you, and could your eyes be opened, you would behold them. Let your conduct be such that you will leave the impression upon every soul with whom you associate that a pure and holy atmosphere surrounds you. One vain word, one trifling laugh, may balance a soul in the wrong direction. Terrible are the consequences of not having a constant connection with God.

Abstain from all evil. Common sins, however insignificant they may be regarded, will impair your moral sense, and extinguish the inward impression of the Spirit of God. The character of the thoughts leaves its imprint upon the soul, and all low conversation pollutes the mind. All evil works ruin to those who commit it. God may and will forgive the repenting sinner, but though forgiven, the soul is marred; the power of the elevated thought possible to the unimpaired mind is destroyed. Through all time the soul bears the scars. Then let us seek for that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that we may represent the character of Christ to the world.

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## BOM MISSION

Our Mission is to proclaim the third angel's message, the binding off message, that is to prepare a people for the coming of our King. The soon return of the bridegroom to take the bride is imminent even at the door. The people can only prepare for this event by acquiring the needful oil, an understanding of the prophetic word intellectually and spiritually, while it is still day. The night cometh when no man can work. By pen and voice we are to direct the sin-sick soul to stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel.

Binding off Messengers fully subscribe to the foundational truths as held by the Pioneers of Adventism. The ministry is actively fulfilling its mandate through organising monthly convocation, annual camp meetings, distribution of publications and sharing bible studies on youtube and social forums.

### Upcoming Events

2<sup>nd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Aug

**Kakuma**

Camp Meeting

30<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Kaimosi**

Camp Meeting

Aug

**Kisii**

Camp Meeting

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**(PART ONE)**

Robert Kariuki

**T**he principle work that Seventh-Day Adventists have been raised to perform in these last days is to proclaim the three angels' messages as presented in Revelation 14:6 – 7.

*In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import--the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. {9T 19.1}*

Inspiration goes a step further to tell us that "nothing else is to be allowed to absorb our attention". In that case, the duty to explain to the world how they can live righteous lives and where they live in sacred history in respect to the great work of judgment as comprehended in the first angel's message, to both identify Babylon and explain the reasons that occasion its fall as proclaimed by the second angel, lies at our doorstep. The bulk of these two messages has been done by our spiritual forefathers, the Millerites, and the pioneering Seventh-Day Adventists. We are however told by inspiration that we are to continue sounding them.

*God has given the messages of Revelation 14 their place in the line of prophecy, and their work is not to cease till the close of this earth's history. The first and second angel's messages are still truth for this time, and are to run parallel with this which follows. {1888 804.3}*

For those of us who live at the end of the world, the light of the third angel is what squarely lies on us. With knowledge about the first and second angels' messages, we are to move forward in understanding and proclaiming the third angel's message. It is this third message that we have been specially bequeathed by the Lord, to understand and proclaim to the world.

*In many of the large cities of the East the first and second angels' messages were proclaimed during the 1844 movement. To us, as God's servants, has been entrusted the third angel's message, the binding-off message, that is to prepare a people for the coming of the King.*

*We are to make every effort to give a knowledge of the truth to all who will hear, and there are many who will listen. All through the large cities God has honest souls who are interested in what is truth. {9T 98.1}*

The third angel's message is called the binding off message, that is to mean, the message that finishes the work of salvation. This concept is borrowed from agriculture and especially from Christ's parable of the wheat and tares, where at harvest, a most important work of separating the wheat from the tares happens, by binding each of the plants separately, the wheat for the heavenly garner and the tares for the fires. It is, therefore, the proclamation of this third message that is specially designed to distinguish the true worshippers of God from the pretentious worshippers, depending on how they understand and respond to the issues brought out in the message of the third angel.

*I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, "Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention." {EW 118.1}*

With such grave importance attached to the third angel, how solemnly and carefully should we seek to correctly understand the message it bears, both for our salvation and for those whom we have been assigned to labor for!

*Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*



## **Revelation 13 and the Third Angel**

The third angel's message contains threats of punishment to those who "worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark." The logical question to ask ourselves at this point would be, who is this beast, its image, and mark? The definitiveness with which the angel gives reference to the beast and its image and mark suggests that it has already been mentioned somewhere before. The only such place where we find the beast, its image and mark mentioned and expounded in Holy Writ is in Revelation 13. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that the subjects presented in Revelation 13 are the substance contained in the third angel's message, which we are supposed to "engage our whole mind and attention".

Revelation 13 has a 'leopardlike beast, in verse 1 – 10, and a lamblike beast in verse 11. The lamblike beast is said to make an image of the first beast – the leopardlike beast – in the latter part of verse 11 - 14 when it assumes dragonlike characters. This change from a lamblike beast to one that speaks as a dragon constitutes the formation of the image of the beast. Since a lamb is a contrast to a dragon, this prophecy predicts that the nation represented by the lamblike beast will adopt a character that is opposite to its professions.

The lamblike beast is the United States of America when it was rising

*What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America. . {GC 440.2}*

The lamblike beast points to the character possessed by the United States of America when it was coming up, as enshrined in the two principles upon which the United States Constitution was founded, Protestantism and Republicanism.

*"And he had two horns like a lamb." The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as "coming up" in 1798. Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance*

*were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of **civil and religious liberty**. Their views found place in the Declaration of Independence, which sets forth the great truth that "all men are created equal" and endowed with the inalienable right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." **And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth. {GC 441.1}***

The above quote expresses in itself, in a way that this written material cannot exhaustively cover, that Republicanism and Protestantism relate to civil and religious liberties, respectively. Thus the lamblike character of the USA is the principles that its constitution is based upon. For it to become dragon-like, would mean that it would need to repudiate these principles. We will begin to look at what these principles relate to, and what inspired the founding fathers of the US to make them the pillars of the constitution.

It is also important to note that the work of preaching the third angel's message requires us to become constitutional experts.

This piece will begin examining the principle of Protestantism, borrowing from two major histories, the Protest of the Princes, and the establishment of the state of Rhode Island and the Plantations of Providence. While the latter most directly motivated the inclusion of the principle in the Constitution, the former forms the basis of Protestantism.

### **The Protest Against a Church**

Protestantism as a word, as is today understood, has its foundation in events that transpired in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The first was a protest that was waged against a church that claimed to have supreme ecclesiastical authority, and which placed its traditions and man-made customs above God's word. This began with the Englishman John Wycliffe and was succeeded by many great men across the



religious world of Europe. But perhaps the greatest one was Martin Luther, who presented the “Ninety Five Thesis”, a ninety-five point document that he pinned on the wall of the church in Wittenburg, 1517, in protest against the heresies promoted by the Catholic Church. This is what is known in more definite terms as the Protestant Reformation. This particular protest was on a purely religious matter, between two religious parties.

### Protest of the Princes

The second event that gives meaning to this word is what transpired in 1529, in a meeting of German princes, at what was called the Diet of Spire (or Speyer). This was a meeting of princes, a word which today would better be understood as governors, from across the German empire. In it, Emperor Charles V, through his representative King Ferdinand, wanted to extend government machinery to enforce the religious ideas of the Catholic Church. It was calculated to undo the resolutions of a previous meeting held in 1526, which granted the different states under princes, “full liberty in matters of religion”. With this, many of the different states allowed the Protestant Reformation against the Catholic Church to spread.

*The Diet of Spire in 1526 had given each state full liberty in matters of religion until the meeting of a general council; but no sooner had the dangers passed which secured this concession, than the emperor summoned a second Diet to convene at Spire in 1529 for the purpose of crushing heresy. The princes were to be induced, by peaceable means if possible, to side against the Reformation; but if these failed, Charles was prepared to resort to the sword. {GC 197.3}*

In the Diet of Spire, the civil government, influenced by the Papal church, sought to compel the states and all persons under its jurisdiction to submit implicitly to Catholicism, and stop the reformation. It wanted to not only become an arbiter in religious matters but also to openly promote one set of religious ideas against another.

The meeting was broadly divided to two camps, the papal party – the princes who were in favor of bending the policy of the empire in favor of Catholicism, and the evangelical party – those who favored religious liberty and respect for individual conscience within the empire. This latter group was made up of both princes who subscribed to the ideas of the Reformation, and those who though not “reformers” themselves, were in favor of religious toleration.

The issues discussed were not necessarily religious but related to policies that the civil government should adopt towards religious matters.

It was discussing civil matters related to religion. The religious extraction of those who participated cannot be ignored, but it should never be confused with the specificity of the matters decided upon in the diet of Spire.

*Religious toleration had been legally established, and the evangelical states were resolved to oppose the infringement of their rights... {GC 198.3}*

*The priests demanded that the states which had accepted the Reformation submit implicitly to Romish jurisdiction. The Reformers, on the other hand, claimed the liberty which had previously been granted. They could not consent that Rome should again bring under her control those states that had with so great joy received the word of God. {GC 199.1}*

A proposal from the papal party was that the provisions of the Edict of Worms, which stipulated restrictions to the spread of the ideas of the reformation to new areas, be adopted. It passed with a majority of votes from the delegates of the diet.

*As a compromise it was finally proposed that where the Reformation had not become established, the Edict of Worms should be rigorously enforced; and that “in those where the people had deviated from it, and where they could not conform to it without danger of revolt, they should at least effect no new reform, they should touch upon no controverted point, they should not oppose the celebration of the mass, they should permit no Roman Catholic to embrace Lutheranism.” --Ibid., b. 13, ch. 5. This measure passed the Diet, to the great satisfaction of the popish priests and prelates. {GC 199.2}*

This fact, that the majority of delegates accepted the provisions of the Edict of Worms, forms the next important pillar in the development of this principle of Protestantism – the authority of the majority over the minority.

*“Happily they looked at the principle on which this arrangement was based, and they acted in faith. What was that principle? It was the right of Rome to coerce conscience and forbid free inquiry. But were not themselves and their Protestant subjects to enjoy religious freedom? Yes, as a favor specially stipulated for in the arrangement, but not as a right. As to all outside that arrangement, the great principle of authority was to rule; conscience was out of court; Rome was infallible judge, and must be obeyed. The acceptance of the proposed arrangement would have been a virtual admission that religious liberty ought to be confined to reformed Saxony; and as to all the rest of Christendom, free inquiry and the profession of the reformed faith were crimes, and must be visited with the dungeon and the stake. Could they consent to localize religious liberty? To have it proclaimed that the Reformation had made*



*its last convert? Had subjugated its last acre? And that wherever Rome bore sway at this hour, there her dominion was to be perpetuated? Could the Reformers have pleaded that they were innocent of the blood of those hundreds and thousands who, in pursuance of this arrangement, would have to yield up their lives in popish lands? This would have been to betray, at that supreme hour, the cause of the gospel and the liberties of Christendom.”--Wylie, b. 9, ch. 15. Rather would they “sacrifice everything, even their states, their crowns, and their lives.”--D’Aubigne, b. 13, ch. 5. {GC 200.1}*

The evangelical party rejected the proposal, on the basis that religious toleration was a legal right, and in rejection to the assumption of the majority to exercise authority over matters of conscience.

*“Let us reject this decree,” said the princes. “In matters of conscience the majority has no power.” The deputies declared: “It is to the decree of 1526 that we are indebted for the peace that the empire enjoys: its abolition would fill Germany with troubles and divisions. **The Diet is incompetent to do more than preserve religious liberty until the council meets.**”--Ibid., b. 13, ch. 5. **To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the state, and this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion. Every secular government that attempts to regulate or enforce religious observances by civil authority is sacrificing the very principle for which the evangelical Christian so nobly struggled.** {GC 201.1}*

In Protest to what had been passed, the princes affirmed that in certain matters, individuals have rights that can never be taken away from them by anybody – including the majority, one of them (and most importantly to the context) being in matters of conscience.

The king determined to have his way, passed the majority resolution, and refused the evangelical party further audience on the matter.

*In the presence of the Diet the king at last announced to the elector and his friends that the edict “was about to be drawn up in the form of an imperial decree,” and that “their only remaining course was to submit to the majority.” Having thus spoken, he withdrew from the assembly, giving the Reformers no opportunity for deliberation or reply. “To no purpose they sent a deputation entreating the king to return.” To their remonstrance he answered only: “It is a settled affair; submission is all that remains.”--Ibid., b. 13, ch. 5. {GC 202.1}*

With the matter having been decided, the evangelical party, appealed to a national council and here presented their convictions in a document that summarised their beliefs. This celebrated document covered two main issues that had formed

the basis of the Protest, the proper place of the state in religious matters, and the only infallible authority over matters of conscience. The first opposed the intrusion of the civil authorities in religious matters, defining their role as that of protecting the rights of individuals to practice religious liberty, and the second establishing the Bible as the only rule of faith as opposed to the traditions and declarations of the church.

*As Ferdinand had refused to regard their conscientious convictions, the princes decided not to heed his absence, but to bring their Protest before the national council without delay. A solemn declaration was therefore drawn up and presented to the Diet: {GC 202.3}*

*“We protest by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and for our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatsoever to the proposed decree, in anything that is contrary to God, to His holy word, to our right conscience, to the salvation of our souls.” {GC 202.4}*

*“What! We ratify this edict! We assert that when Almighty God calls a man to His knowledge, this man nevertheless cannot receive the knowledge of God!” “There is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the word of God. . . . The Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine. . . . The Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; . . . this Holy Book is, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness. We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His only word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testaments, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.” {GC 203.1}*

*“For this reason we reject the yoke that is imposed on us.” “At the same time we are in expectation that his imperial majesty will behave toward us like a Christian prince who loves God above all things; and we declare ourselves ready to pay unto him, as well as unto you, gracious lords, all the affection and obedience that are our just and legitimate duty.”--Ibid., b. 13, ch. 6. {GC 203.2}*

Two issues against religious intolerance established the protest, one against the civil power in the Diet of Spires of 1529, another against the arbitrary authority of the pope over God’s word, most prominently in 1517.



*“The principles contained in this celebrated Protest . . . constitute the very essence of Protestantism. Now this Protest opposes two abuses of man in matters of faith: the first is the intrusion of the civil magistrate, and the second the arbitrary authority of the church. Instead of these abuses, Protestantism sets the power of conscience above the magistrate, and the authority of the word of God above the visible church. In the first place, it rejects the civil power in divine things, and says with the prophets and apostles, ‘We must obey God rather than man.’ In presence of the crown of Charles the Fifth, it uplifts the crown of Jesus Christ. But it goes farther: it lays down the principle that all human teaching should be subordinate to the oracles of God.”--Ibid., b. 13, ch. 6. The protesters had moreover affirmed their right to utter freely their convictions of truth. They would not only believe and obey, but teach what the word of God presents, and they denied the right of priest or magistrate to interfere. **The Protest of Spires was a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.** {GC 203.4}*

The last part of the quotation above is important as it specifically points out the matter that was being decided in the diet of spires: the establishment of

religious tolerance “and the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of conscience”.

### **In Conclusion**

Protestantism embraces two ideas, maybe related by history, but essentially different. One is a protest against Catholicism and its religious beliefs, the other is the rejection of the right of civil powers and the majority to exercise authority in matters of conscience. The latter establishes religious liberty and recognizes the right of individuals to determine how they will conduct their worship. It does not impose the religious ideas of those who protested against Catholicism, however true they may be, but recognizes people’s right to become Catholic, Lutheran, Atheist or Muslim, freely. This part of the Protestantism should not be confused with Protestantism relating to protestant churches.

The Protestantism that is a foundational principle to the constitution of the USA does not relate to protestant churches, but to the responsibility of the government to promote, enforce and maintain religious liberty, recognizing the inherent right of every human being to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, be it Catholics or evangelicals, Christian or Muslim, atheist or a worshipper of God(s).

## UNDERSTANDING EZRA 7:9 (PART I)

Fred Ombati

### **INTRODUCTION**

The correct Understanding of the book of Ezra during the great awakening of 1840-1844, helped the Millerites to correctly comprehend the prophecy of 2300 days. This understanding helped them to explain the disappointment in April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1844 and confidently predict 22<sup>nd</sup>, October 1844 as the time when 2300 days prophecy would terminate.

### **HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE BOOK OF EZRA**

The three books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, which cover about 100 years, form the closing section of the Old Testament. They tell the story of the Jews return from Babylon, or the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem, and of the reestablishment of the Jews’ national life in their homeland. The last three Old Testament prophets - Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi - lived and worked in the same period.

The setting of Ezra is the postexilic era when the faithful Israelites were returning from Babylon to Judah, so they could reestablish their temple worship. The temple and temple worship are vital subjects in all the books written during the postexilic period (1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). The people who returned

to the land of Promise were publicly acknowledging that they believed God would reestablish the nation and usher in a time of kingdom blessing

The three primary leaders of the return from exile were Zerubbabel (who rebuilt the temple), Ezra (who rebuilt the spiritual integrity of the people), and Nehemiah (who rebuild the wall around Jerusalem; see the Book of Nehemiah).

The first group of returning Jews was led by Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel under the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars believe Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were one and the same, but it’s more likely that Zerubbabel was the active leader, while Sheshbazzar was more of a figurehead.

This initial group numbered about 50,000. As they set to rebuilding the temple, severe opposition arose. Eventually, the building was complete, but only after a 20-year struggle, with the work coming to halt for several years.

The second group of returning Jews was sent by Artaxerxes I under Ezra’s leadership some 60 years later. When Ezra arrived back in Jerusalem with another 2,000 men and their families, he discovered that God’s people had compromised their faith by



intermarrying with pagan neighbors. This practice was forbidden because it tainted the pure, covenant relationship they shared with God and it placed the future of the nation in danger

Deeply burdened and humbled, Ezra fell to his knees weeping and praying for the people (Ezra 9:3-15). His prayer moved the Israelites to tears and

Egypt was surviving the famine because of Joseph's wisdom in storing food during the preceding good years. Joseph, having revealed his identity to his family, forgave his brothers, welcomed them to Egypt, and settled the family in the Egyptian territory of Goshen.

When Jacob's family settled in Egypt, they fared well under Joseph's administration. Joseph's power

## EZRA

	<b>Construction</b> Leader: Zerubbabel		<b>Reformation</b> Leader: Ezra	
CHRONICLES	CENSUS AND JOURNEY	Temple Foundation Opposition Determination Completion	CENSUS AND JOURNEY	Revival Condition Confession Covenant Cleansing
	CHAPTERS 1-2	CHAPTERS 3-6	CHAPTERS 7-8	CHAPTERS 9-10
<b>Emphasis</b>	Construction of the temple		Reformation of the people	
<b>Persian King</b>	Cyrus	Darius	Artaxerxes	
<b>Scope</b>	National	General	Personal	Specific
<b>Theme</b>	Revival and reformation			
<b>Key Verses</b>	1:1-4; 3:2; 7:10			
<b>Christ in Ezra</b>	His birth anticipated in the preservation of the Davidic line and the remnant's return to the Promised Land; His work as spiritual rebuilders and restorer pictured in Zerubbabel and Ezra; His mediating presence and glory pictured in the altar and the temple			

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they confessed their sins to God. Then Ezra guided the people in renewing their covenant with God and separating from pagans

### THE HISTORY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT WE LEAD TO CAPTIVITY

The people of Israel (also called the "Jewish People") trace their origin to Abraham, who established the belief that there is only one God, the creator of the universe. Abraham, his son (Isaac), and grandson Jacob (Israel) are referred to as the patriarchs of the Israelites. All three patriarchs lived in the Land of Canaan, that later came to be known as the Land of Israel. They and their wives are buried in the Ma'arat HaMachpela, the Tomb of the Patriarchs, in **Hebron** (Genesis Chapter 23).

Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Israel, was sold to slave traders by his brothers, yet with God's help, Joseph rose to power in Egypt. His brothers were driven there by a famine which Joseph had foretold.

was immense in Egypt, so the Israelites prospered in that land under his protection, and made it their home. However, they would be reminded that their people's eventual home was not to be Egypt but rather Canaan, the land God had sworn to give their descendants to possess. Between the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, is a long gap.

The introduction to Exodus informs us that "the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty so that the land was filled with them." After the death of Joseph, however, the descendants of Jacob were made slaves of the Egyptians as had been foretold (Genesis 15:13-16).

This happened because "a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:8). This Pharaoh (possibly Rameses II) not only made slaves of the Israelites but took drastic steps to stem their increase. He decreed that all their male children be slaughtered at birth. It is in that context that Moses began his life, and his adventures occupy another





lesson.

God sent a message to His ancient peoples through Moses and his brother Aaron. “Therefore say to the children of Israel: “I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and *I will redeem you with an outstretched arm* and with great judgments. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God ...” (Exodus 6:6-7).

### THE SEVENTY YEARS OF BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

The Babylonian captivity refers to the time period in Israel’s history when Jews were taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon. It is an important period of biblical history because both the captivity/exile and the return and restoration of the Jewish nation were fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies. God used Babylon as His agent of judgment against Israel for their sins of idolatry and rebellion against Him. There were actually several different times during this period (606-586 B.C.) when the Jews were taken captive by Babylon. With each successive rebellion against Babylonian rule, Nebuchadnezzar would lead his armies against Judah until they laid siege to Jerusalem for over a year, killing many people and destroying the Jewish temple, taking captive many thousands of Jews, and leaving Jerusalem in ruins. As prophesied in Scripture, the Jewish people would be allowed to return to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile. That prophecy was fulfilled in 536 B.C., and the Jews were allowed by King Cyrus of Persia to return to Israel and begin rebuilding the city and temple. The return under the direction of Ezra led to a revival among the Jewish people and the rebuilding of the temple.

Under the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar II, the Babylonian Empire spread throughout the Middle East, and around 606 B.C., **King Jehoiakim** of Judah was forced into submission, becoming a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar (**2 Kings 24:1**). It was during this time that Nebuchadnezzar took many of the finest and brightest young men from each city in Judah captive, including Daniel, Hananiah Shadrach, Meshach and. After three years of serving Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim of Judah rebelled against the Babylonian rule and once again turned to Egypt for support. After sending his army to deal with Judah’s revolt, Nebuchadnezzar himself left Babylon in 598 B.C. to deal with the problem. Arriving in Jerusalem around March of 597 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, taking control of the area, looting it, and taking captive with him Jehoikim’s son, Jehoiachin, his family, and almost all of the population of Judah, leaving only the poorest people of the land (**2 Kings 24:8-16**).

At that time Nebuchadnezzar appointed **King Zedekiah** to rule as his representative over Judah, but after nine years and still not having learned their lesson, Zedekiah led Judah in rebellion against Babylon one final time (**2 Kings 24–25**). Influenced by false prophets and ignoring Jeremiah’s warnings, Zedekiah decided to join a coalition that was being formed by Edom, Moab, Ammon and Phoenicia in rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (**Jeremiah 27:1-3**). This resulted in Nebuchadnezzar again laying siege to Jerusalem. Jerusalem fell in July 587 or 586 BC, and Zedekiah was taken captive to Babylon after seeing his sons killed before him and then having his eyes plucked out (**2 Kings 25**). At this time Jerusalem was laid to waste, the temple destroyed and all the houses burned. The majority of the Jewish people were taken captive, but, again, Nebuchadnezzar left a remnant of poor people to serve as farmers and vinedressers (**2 Kings 25:12**).

The books of 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings deal with much of the time leading up to fall of both the Northern Kingdom and Judah. They also cover the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah was one of the prophets during the time leading up to the fall of Jerusalem and the exile, and Ezekiel and Daniel were written while the Jews were in exile. Ezra deals with the return of the Jews after 70 years as promised before by God through the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah. The book of Nehemiah also covers the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem after the exile was over.

### DECREE OF CYRUS-DARIUS-ARTAXERXES

Three Persian decrees played roles in the restoration of God’s people from the captivity the Babylonians had instituted.

**EZRA 6:14** And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished [it], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

“In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. Verses 12-26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built ‘**according to the commandment [“decree,” margin] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.**’ These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. “{Great Controversy, 326.3}



## DECREE OF CYRUS

But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; and said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time, even until now, hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished. Now therefore, if it seem good to the king let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter." Ezra 5. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 35.1}

Ezra 1:1-3

### When was this decree issued?

**In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia," B. C. 536, Daniel was greatly troubled for the work and cause of God in the world. Dan. 10:1. In the first year of Cyrus that king had issued a decree for the return of Israel to their own land and to rebuild the temple of God in Jerusalem.** When the heathen who were in the land were not allowed for their own bad purposes to join in the building of the house and city, they hired counsellors at the court of Cyrus to prevent the building of the Temple at all. And these counsellors were kept at the court of Persia all the days of Cyrus. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 35.1}

## DECREE OF DARIUS HYSTASPES EZRA 6:1-12

"Moreover," Darius continued, "I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons." Ezra 6:7-10. {PK 579.2}

## Reason for this decree?

The Decree of Darius. - The decree of Darius stands next in order. It was occasioned by the following circumstances: The next year after the Jews had commenced the work under the decree of Cyrus, the enemies of the Jews made request that they be permitted to join them in work. This the Jews refused to grant, whereupon these enemies set themselves to work to trouble them in their building and to frustrate them in their purpose, "all the days of Cyrus, . . . even until the reign of Darius, king of Persia." Ezra 4. {1898 UrS, LUJ 183.1}

Seven years after issuing his decree, Cyrus died, and was succeeded by Cambyses, called in Ezra 4:6, Ahasuerus, who reigned seven years and five months, and who was in turn succeeded by Smerdis the Magian, called in Ezra 4:7, Artaxerxes, from whom the enemies of the Jews obtained an edict prohibiting the further prosecution of the work at Jerusalem. Ezra 4:21-24. But the land being smitten with barrenness, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, having made known to the Jews the cause of this calamity, exhorted them to resume the work of building the house of God, which they accordingly commenced again B.C.520. {1898 UrS, LUJ 183.2}

Again their enemies endeavored to hinder and stop them, and appealing to another Darius, who had come to the Persian throne, he caused search to be made among the chronicles of the kingdom, and finding the decree of Cyrus, reaffirmed it, with some provisions of his own; and thus the work went forward prosperously again. {1898 UrS, LUJ 183.3}

### When was the decree issued?

There are but four events which can be taken as answering to the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. These are, 1. The decree of Cyrus for the re-building of the house of God, B. C., 536. 2. **The decree of Darius for the prosecution of that work which had been hindered, B. C. 519.** 3. The decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra, B. C. 457, Ez.vii, and 4. The commission to Nehemiah from the same king in his twentieth year, B. C. 444, Neh.ii. {July 21, 1863 JWe, ARSH 60.23}

## THE DECREE OF ARTAXERXES LONGIMANUS

**The decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus for the restoring and building of Jerusalem, the third issued since the close of the seventy years' captivity, is remarkable for its expressions regarding the God of heaven, for its recognition of the attainments of Ezra,** and for the liberality of the grants made to the remnant people of God. Artaxerxes refers to Ezra as "the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments



of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel;" "a scribe of the law of the God of heaven." The king united with his counselors in offering freely "unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem;" and in addition he made provision for meeting many heavy expenses by ordering that they be paid "out of the king's treasure house." Verses 11, 12, 15, 20. {PK 610.1} "Thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counselors," Artaxerxes declared to Ezra, "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand." And he further decreed: "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?" Verses 14, 23. {PK 610.2}

In giving permission to the Israelites to return, Artaxerxes arranged for the **restoration of the members** of the priesthood to their ancient rites and privileges. "We certify you," he declared, "that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them." He also arranged for the appointment of civil officers to govern the people justly in accordance with the Jewish code of laws. {pk 611.1}

### When was the decree issued?

The decree of Artaxerxes went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C. {GC 327.1}

Our calculation of the prophetic time was so simple and plain that even children could understand it. From the date of the decree of the king of Persia, found in Ezra 7, which was given in 457 before Christ {CET 49.2}

That commandment went forth in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 457 B.C., as recorded in Ezra 7. {1905 JNL, GSAM 109.2}.

### Content of the decree

This auspicious moment seems to have been seized by Esther to bring Ezra and his people to the favorable notice of Artaxerxes; and under this potent influence, for the hand of God was in it, the king and his seven counselors (compare Ezra 7:14; Esther 1:14) made great and costly offerings to the house of God, and granted to Ezra, whose great piety and worth were probably known to them, all the power that he could ask or use for the restoration of Jerusalem. This decree of Artaxerxes embraces the following important matters: {1865 JNA, CRBJ 46.1}

1. It renews the original grant of Cyrus relative to the return of the Hebrews, and allows everyone in the Persian empire to return with Ezra if so disposed. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 47.1}

2. It expressly recognizes the legal existence of

Jerusalem; or, rather, it confers legality upon the existence of that city, by sending Ezra to inquire concerning it, according to the law of his God that was in his hand. That law designated the place which God should choose, which proved to be Jerusalem, as that locality in which he should worship on earth. Deut. 16; 1 Kings 8. This was directly designed to make Jerusalem in this respect what it had been before its ruin. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 47.2}

3. It directed Ezra to carry the large sum which the king and his officers and such of the Israelites as did not go up, gave to the God of Israel. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 47.3}

4. After making ample provision for the sacrifice of the altar and for the maintenance of the worship of God in his temple, the king granted Ezra power to do **WHATSOEVER** should seem good to him and his brethren to do with the rest of the silver and gold; a grant that Ezra understood to authorize him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra 9:9. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 47.4}

5. Ezra was directed to deliver the golden vessels which the king had given, in the house of God. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 47.5}

6. The King makes such provision for beautifying the house of God, that Darius had finished seventy years before, as to justify the statement of Ezra 6:14, that it was finished "according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes, king of Persia." {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.1}

7. All the treasurers in that part of the king's domains, were required to fill Ezra's orders for a large sum in addition to that which Ezra took with him. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.2}

8. He was required to see that the worship of God was diligently maintained in Jerusalem. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.3}

9. The king takes off all toll, tribute and custom, from those engaged in maintaining the worship of God. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.4}

10. He authorizes Ezra to appoint all the magistrates and judges on that side of the river, probably in this case the Jordan, and gives him great power to compel men to acquaint themselves with the law of God. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.5}

11. He makes the law of God the civil law of Jerusalem, clothing it with all the power of the Persian Empire. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 48.6}

### Conclusion

In the next issue of the magazine we will deal with the book of Ezra 7:9 in the light of millerite history, more specifically the seventh-month movement which was led by the man of God Samuel Sheffield Snow.



# THE MUSTARD SEED

Lucy Kahura

We have been dealing with a series of parables in the previous issues in this column. So far we have realized Christ was using parables to illustrate the spiritual things using the natural phenomena that was common to the people, unknown using the known, the unseen using the seen.

**In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar. {COL 17.1}**

In this monthly issue, we will delve into the parable of the mustard seed, a natural story with great spiritual lessons which are applicable for our time.

What prompted Christ to use a parable of a mustard seed?

**... The proud, caviling Pharisees looked around upon the vast numbers gathered to hear Jesus, and noted contemptuously how few there were who acknowledged him as the Messiah. There were many educated and influential men who had come to hear the prophet whose fame had spread far and near. Some of these looked with curious interest upon the throng, which was composed of all classes of society and every nationality. There were the poor, the illiterate, the ragged beggar, the robber with the seal of guilt upon his face, the sick, the maimed, the dissipated, high and low, rich and humble, jostling each other for a place to stand and hear the words of Jesus. {2SP 245.1}**

As they gazed, they asked themselves incredulously, **Is the kingdom of God composed of such material as this? Jesus read their thoughts, and replied to them by another parable:-- {2SP 245.2}**

**Mat 13:31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:**

**Mat 13:32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.**

A grain of Mustard seed is the least of all seeds,

but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs.

As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant



Mustard Seeds



Mustard Tree

could be seen far and near, lifting itself above the grass and grain, and waving its branches lightly in the air. Birds flitted from twig to twig, and sang amid the leafy foliage. Yet the seed from which sprang this giant plant was among the least of all seeds. This is a natural story that all could see and understand.

This figure was indelibly written upon the minds of hundreds who listened to the words of Jesus. Never would they behold the rank-growing mustard, so plentiful in that region, but they would be reminded of this parable of the Saviour, and their hearts would remember the lesson that he taught. The mustard that grew so luxuriantly about them furnished a lesson for all.

**God created the seed, as He created the earth, by His word. By His word He gave it power to grow and multiply. He said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it was so. . . : And God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:11, 12. It is that word which still causes the seed to grow. Every seed that sends up its green blade to the sunlight declares the wonder-working power of that word uttered by Him who "spake, and it was"; who "commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:9. {COL 80.2}**

A mustard seed is buried to the ground, springs up, it grows and waxed into a great tree, it bears fruit and then its ready for harvest. The birds then get chance to lodge on its branches. When the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutriment, and it speedily develops a sturdy growth. This is a gradual development from seed time to harvest time.

At least what we can agree upon is the fact that every step of the growth of any plant from seed time to harvest time happens naturally. The soil is readily provided with nutrients by the creator. Nothing can be done by human hands or human efforts to control the gradual development. It's a natural seed that



develops into a huge tree.

We cannot deny the fact that there are also other herbs that grow alongside the mustard plant. The herbs too need nutrients to sustain their growth. We have at least two plants competing for nutrients. The mustard plant and other herbs. Interestingly, from a little seed the mustard grows to become the great among herbs. This is a notable characteristic we need to store in our memory bank.

With a correct understanding of the rules of parables, the spiritual must have same characteristics as the natural. Thus, since Christ is likening a natural story with a spiritual story we should expect a similar growth process of the kingdom of God as illustrated in the growth of the mustard seed.

As a student of Bible prophecy I expect to see two things illustrated. A kingdom represented by the Mustard seed and another kingdom represented by other herbs. As the natural, so is the spiritual. A little seed represents humbleness. Therefore we expect to see a kingdom sown in humbleness, growing gradually from seed time to harvest time.

Since Christ is likening the Kingdom of God we are bound to see another kingdom that is represented by other herbs competing for nutrients. Since Eden we have had two Kingdoms; The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The kingdom of God is controlled by the wisdom and strength of God. Satan manifests his kingdom through humanity, so by contrast the kingdom of Satan is controlled by humanity and neither under the wisdom of God.

***The germ in the seed grows by the unfolding of the life-principle which God has implanted. Its development depends upon no human power. So it is with the kingdom of Christ. It is a new creation. Its principles of development are the opposite to those that rule the kingdoms of this world. Earthly governments prevail by physical force; they maintain their dominion by war; but the founder of the new kingdom is the Prince of Peace. . . . Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. . . . {AG 172}***

***The people look upon the mustard, growing so vigorously about them, and their minds are vividly impressed by the illustration Jesus has used to point the truths of his doctrine. He thus declares that not by force of arms, and the pomp and heraldry of war, is the kingdom of Christ to be set up. But the work is of gradual development. Though the beginning may be small, it will grow and strengthen till, like the grain of mustard seed, it will reach, through imperceptible stages of development, the majesty of greatness. {2SP 246.1}***

***The kingdom of Christ in its beginning seemed humble and insignificant. Compared with earthly kingdoms it appeared to be the least of all. By the***

***rulers of this world Christ's claim to be a king was ridiculed. Yet in the mighty truths committed to His followers the kingdom of the gospel possessed a divine life. And how rapid was its growth, how widespread its influence! When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a few Galilean peasants to represent the new kingdom. Their poverty, the fewness of their numbers, were urged over and over again as a reason why men should not connect themselves with these simple-minded fishermen who followed Jesus. But the mustard seed was to grow and spread forth its branches throughout the world. When the earthly kingdoms whose glory then filled the hearts of men should perish, the kingdom of Christ would remain, a mighty and far-reaching power. {AG 173}***

***So the work of grace in the heart is small in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the soul, an influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can measure its results? . . . {AG 174}***

This can be clearly seen in the ministry of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist starts his ministry before Christ, preparing the path for the Messiah. It starts with John as an individual then Christ. Christ gave the parable to show how the Christian church—a symbol of his kingdom—would be established and grow. Christ further collected the disciples, apostles who were to be used in the gospel ministration to the gentile world. This is a gradual development from a single individual to a multitude of people represented by the Christian Church.

In the Millerite history, we have Miller first proclaiming the second Advent of Christ. He wins the souls of associates by the message and then we have the Millerite as a group. So does the call of Abraham. God calls him as an individual but his descendants grow to a big nation of Israel. This is an interesting pattern that can be seen in these different histories.

***Not only is the growth of Christ's kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated. For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work. The truth that is hid from the worldly wise and prudent is revealed to the child-like and humble. It calls for self-sacrifice. It has battles to fight and victories to win. At the outset its advocates are few. By the great men of the world and by a world-conforming church, they are opposed and despised. See John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, standing alone to rebuke the pride and formalism of the Jewish nation. See the first bearers of the gospel into Europe. How obscure, how hopeless, seemed the mission of***



**Paul and Silas, the two tentmakers, as they with their companions took ship at Troas for Philippi. See "Paul the aged," in chains, preaching Christ in the stronghold of the Caesars. See the little communities of slaves and peasants in conflict with the heathenism of imperial Rome. See Martin Luther withstanding that mighty church which is the masterpiece of the world's wisdom. See him holding fast God's word against emperor and pope, declaring, "Here I take my stand; I can not do otherwise. God be my help." See John Wesley preaching Christ and His righteousness in the midst of formalism, sensualism, and infidelity. See one burdened with the woes of the heathen world, pleading for the privilege of carrying to them Christ's message of love. Hear the response of ecclesiasticism: "Sit down, young man. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine." {COL 78.2}**

God first raises a human agency that He gives his message as the seed. The message is counteracted by the evil agencies of the time. Its bearers are ridiculed and forced to make their stand. Though at first those who accept or receives the message are few, the message springs and convicts many souls despite the presence of the ridiculing Pharisees. The seed then become a great tree among herbs.

**In this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little seed will become a tree. The last message of warning and mercy is to go to "every nation and kindred and tongue" (Revelation 14:6-14), "to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14; Revelation 18:1). And the earth shall be lightened with His glory. {AG 17.5}**

**The great leaders of religious thought in this generation sound the praises and build the monuments of those who planted the seed of truth centuries ago. Do not many turn from this work to trample down the growth springing from the same seed today? The old cry is repeated, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow [Christ in the messenger He sends], we know not from whence he is." John 9:29. As in earlier ages, the special truths for this time are found, not with the ecclesiastical authorities, but with men and women who are not too learned or too wise to believe the word of God. {COL 79.1}**

We are living in the time of the end during the dispensation of the last generation. We are to expect nothing less of the same experience illustrated in the previous histories. In 1989, the light of the present truth, Dan 11:40-45, was opened to the Adventist church and few accepted it. The Ecclesiastical authorities did not accept it because it didn't come as they were expecting. God used another agency which was ready for service.

Since 1989, more light has continued to be unsealed and many people have been drawn into the ministry of Christ. Unfortunately, 30 years since the message was unsealed it has neither been acknowledged nor proclaimed by the Ecclesiastical authorities of our time.

The last vision of Daniel by the River Hiddekel reveals the last work of the man of sin and his final destruction. The message of Daniel 11:40-45 is calculated to gather those who will be subjects of the Kingdom of Glory. It is also the last message of warning and mercy.

Those who accepted the message of Christ entered with Christ in the Holy place while the Jews remained offering sacrifices that were no more important after the death and ascension of Christ. Likewise, those who believed the Millerite message entered with Christ unto the Most Holy Place, the ridiculers remained offering their prayers to the Holy place where Christ had already left. Finally, a similar experience will happen to those who fail to recognize the message that ends with the work of Christ in the Most Holy place Dan 11:40-45. They will be left offering their propitiation when probation has closed. They will be found wanting and get no place in the Kingdom of Glory.

Despite the rejection of the message victory is promised in the parable, "*Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof:*" The truth of Dan 11:40-45 will remain to be present truth that God will use to gather the 11th hour workers from the fallen churches, represented as birds in the parable.

***In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. {CET 204.1}***

From the work of seed sowing and the growth of the plant from the seed, precious lessons may be taught in the family and the school. Let the children and youth learn to recognize in natural things the working of divine agencies, and they will be enabled to grasp by faith unseen benefits. As they come to understand the wonderful work of God in supplying the wants of His great family, and how we are to cooperate with Him, they will have more faith in God, and will realize more of His power in their own daily life. {COL 80.1}

Cynthia Mokeira

## 6. Fatigue

When you're hydrated, water moves into the bloodstream into the cells to help maintain the right amount of blood to regulate blood pressure. When you're dehydrated, blood volume- and in turn blood pressure- drops, reducing the amount of oxygen content in the blood as well. This lack of oxygen slows the muscle and nerve functions, making us easily fatigued.

## 7. Body overheats

The body requires adequate water to regulate body temperature. When we overheat, we sweat. Sweat helps the body to lower its temperature through evaporative cooling. Because sweat is mostly made up of water, when you're dehydrated, you won't sweat much, and can quickly overheat.

## 8. Dry mouth

An obvious indicator that the body is desperate for hydration is a dry mouth and slightly swollen tongue. Your mouth is a naturally moist environment, so when it's dry, it's time to drink more water.

## 9. Muscle cramping

Adequate hydration and electrolyte balance is essential for proper muscle contraction. When you're dehydrated, your electrolyte balance is affected. When sodium and potassium stores are low, you can end up with painful muscle spasms. If fluid levels are low, a muscle or even just a section of a muscle can contract or spasm involuntarily. Hydrating can help prevent continued cramping.

*Many make a mistake in drinking cold water with their meals. Food should not be washed down. Taken with meals, water diminishes the flow of the saliva; and the colder the water, the greater the injury to the stomach. Ice-water or ice-lemonade, taken with meals, will arrest digestion until the system has imparted sufficient warmth to the stomach to enable it to take up its work again. Masticate slowly, and allow the saliva to mingle with the food. CTBH 51.2*

In as much as we need to drink more water, it should be drunk between one meal and the next and not with meals. This improves digestion greatly.

*I have recently left off the use of all liquids, such as homemade coffee, with my meals. I eat my food as dry as possible. The result is excellent. In the morning I take lemon and water. I drink nothing between meals unless it be occasionally some lemon and water... 21MR 290.6*

*The more liquid there is taken into the stomach with the meals, the more difficult it is for the food to digest; for the liquid must first be absorbed.....But if anything is needed to quench thirst, pure water is all that nature requires. Never take tea, coffee, beer, wine*

**T**hroughout health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. MH 237.1

Dehydration is simply when the body does not have as much water and fluids as it should. Water makes up 60-80% of our entire body mass, so it makes sense that when we don't consume enough, a number of issues start to occur.

Consuming plenty of water each day is critical for the body to work at its best; otherwise, the body sends a whole range of signs that shows the need to top up.

### 1. Pounding head

The body is constantly using up the liquid in the body; consisting not just of water, but essential mineral salts such as sodium and potassium.

When the hydration levels drop, a chemical reaction occurs in the blood which the brain is highly sensitive to; and the brain reacts by triggering a headache.

The more the water lost, blood volume drops, the less oxygen flows to the brain. This causes the blood vessels to dilate and the headache to get worse.

### 2. Clogged pipes

Water helps move food waste through the bowels and out the body. If there is dehydration, food waste will not move out efficiently, resulting in constipation.

### 3. Increased hunger cues

Early signs that one needs to drink more water can be as subtle as feeling peckish more often. If you've eaten enough food during the day but still feel the need to keep snacking, especially on water-based foods such as a fruit, this is your body's gentle indicator that you don't actually need more food, you're just dehydrated. Try a glass of water instead.

### 4. Dizziness when standing up

Without enough water in the system, the blood volume and pressure drops causing one to feel light headed or dizzy. One of the key signs of dehydration is when you stand up quickly and get a sudden rush of lightheadedness.

### 5. Extra yellow pee

An obvious sign of dehydration is when the pee has turned a darker shade of yellow. This means the urine is over-concentrated with waste. This happens because water helps to flush out waste efficiently. When you're fully hydrated, there's a higher ratio of water to waste, turning it a lighter colour, and flushing out your system more effectively.



or any spirituous liquor. CTBH 51.3

Pure water should be the drink taken to quench thirst and not any other.

*But if anything is needed to quench thirst, pure water, drunk some little time before or after the meal, is all that nature requires. CD 420.1*

Water should be drunk approximately 30 minutes before meals or not less than an hour after the meals.

The toxicity level in the body is reduced greatly with enough intake of water. As good stewards of our bodies, let's drink enough water at the right time. Our bodies and eventually the mind will be healthy and fit to study God's Word.

## THE LATTER RAIN MESSAGE

Lameck Ombaba

**W**hat is the message that will awaken God's people and fit them for the latter rain?

*That is the case, it is termed by the spirit of prophecy as a "solemn, fearful message"; a startling denunciation, and it is designed to arouse the people of God to discover their backslidings and lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favoured with the presence of Jesus and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel.*

*To answer this question, I will majorly base my thoughts from the church of Laodicea. The message to the church of Laodicea is a three-fold message just as that which was given in the garden of Eden.*

*The message that is to arouse God's people is that which was promised for the fallen pair in Eden, "The Everlasting gospel or a three-step testing prophetic message": the same message is styled as a remedy to Laodicean church.*

**Oh, for a religious awakening! The angels of God are going from church to church, doing their duty; and Christ is knocking at the door of your hearts for entrance. But the means that God has devised to awaken the church to a sense of their spiritual destitution have not been regarded. The voice of the True Witness has been heard in reproof, but has not been obeyed.** Men have chosen to follow their own way instead of God's way because self was not crucified in them. Thus, the light has had but little effect upon minds and hearts. {5T 719.2}

*From the above quote it can be seen that the Laodicean Message is designed to awaken the church to the sense of their spiritual destitution.*

*Just as Adam, Eve and their descendants after their fall were to be reconciled to God based on their acceptance of a prophetic message, so it is to be with unfaithful Adventism for God never changes. God's covenant is to be renewed for the last time with a remnant that will be sealed. Those that would be participants in this final covenant with the final remnant people must learn what the prophetic testing message for this time is and live up to it.*

### THE MESSAGE

**3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 3:15I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.**

**3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 3:17**

**Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (Revelation 3:14-18)**

*Laodicea =G2993 "Justice of the people"*

*The message to the church of Laodicea brings to view the closing scenes of probation. It reveals a period of judgement. It is the last stage of the church. It applies to believers under the third message, the last message of mercy before the coming of Christ (Rev 14:9-14) DAR*





*Despite the condition of the Laodicean church it is clear from the verse that it has a faithful and true witness, this makes it worthy to consider.*

**42:5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. Jeremiah**

**14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. Proverbs**

*The above verses show that the faithful witness is GOD.*

The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal. {4T 87.1}

**What Is the Condition of The Laodicean Church?**

The words from the true witness is that he knows the works of the Laodicean church.

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

*The true witness describes the Laodicean church as being in a lukewarm condition. Despite them having works there is too much needed to be done and many things that they do will be dropped by heeding to the counsel of the true witness.*

*Three words are used to describe the condition of this church, that is **hot, cold and lukewarm**. It is prudent to define them all as used in the Bible in order to understand what it means to be in a lukewarm condition.*

*Strong's definition for **cold** is: in mind; of one destitute of warm Christian faith and the desire for holiness.*

*Strong's definition for **hot** is; fervent in spirit, said of zeal for what is good.*

*Therefore, **Lukewarm** should be a condition in which one lacks this zeal, a state in which heart and earnestness are wanting.*

**Sins exist in the church that God hates, but they are scarcely touched for fear of making enemies.** Opposition has risen in the church to the plain testimony. Some will not bear it. They wish smooth things spoken unto them. And if the wrongs of individuals are touched, they

complain of severity, and sympathize with those in the wrong. As Ahab inquired of Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" they are ready to look with suspicion and doubt upon those who bear the plain testimony, and like Ahab overlook the wrong which made it necessary for reproof and rebuke. When the church depart from God they despise the plain testimony, and complain of severity and harshness. **It is a sad evidence of the lukewarm state of the church.** {2SG 283.3}

*A further pronouncement by the true witness to the Laodicean church is **that he will spue them out of his mouth because of their condition.***

To those who are indifferent at this time Christ's warning is: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." **Revelation 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.** {6T 408.2}

*One should tremble at such a startling disclosure of his condition and heed the message lest he be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord.*

*According to the Laodiceans they think they are in a good condition but the view of the true witness to them is contrary. They see themselves as being rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.*

*But the true witness describes them as being **wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked**. It is not a coincidence that the true witness chooses five words to describe their condition. As far as the usage of Biblical numbers is concerned the number 5 (five) denotes foolish or wise virgins. This analogy is derived from the parable of the ten virgins in Mathew 25 as it involves 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins, in this case they will represent the foolish virgins because they are in a bad condition. This articulate that the Laodicean condition discloses to us the true condition of the Adventist church before God.*

**I was shown that many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians, who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They**



have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life. {3T 253.1}

**The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease. {4T 87.2}**

The testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. **The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded.** This testimony must work deep repentance, and all that truly receive it will obey it and be purified. {1T 181.2}

### **THE COUNSEL OF THE TRUE WITNESS**

**3:18I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. Revelation**

**The true witness provides a remedy that is three-fold;**

Gold tried in fire; White raiment; The eye -salve

### **GOLD TRIED IN FIRE**

*Gold literally considered, is the comprehensive name for all worldly wealth and riches. Figuratively it denotes that which constitute spiritual riches.*

Fearful is the power of self-deception on the human mind! What blindness! setting light for darkness and darkness for light! The True Witness counsels us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eye salve. **The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love.** {4T 88.2}

**1:7**That the **trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire,** might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 1peter

**5:6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but **faith which worketh by love.** Galatians

### **WHITE RAIMENT**

*According to Thayer definition the word white G3022 in Revelation 3:18 denote "of white raiment as the sign of innocence and purity of the soul". So, white refers to a soul that is pure in that context.*

*Raiment G2440= a garment of any sort*

*A garment i.e the cloak or mantle and the tunic.*

The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience {4T 88.2}

**61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels. Isaiah**

**64:6 But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Isaiah**

**19:8**And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Revelation

*From the above verses, it's clear that white raiment represents righteousness.*

*Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." (Romans 1;16-17)*

*Noah had a warning message for the world. None who rejected his message were saved; and I suppose he preached many a stirring message about the necessity of coming into the ark or being lost; but when his work was summed up by the Apostle Paul, in Heb. 11:7, it is said that "He condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Without the righteousness of God applied by faith, his preaching, though theoretically true, would never have warned the world. Just so with the "Everlasting gospel" of Rev. 14. The power of the gospel—the righteousness of God, must accompany the warning.*

**Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without.** He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. **The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.** {RH, June 4, 1895 par. 7}

*We should make a full surrender and believe the promises of God in order for us to have righteousness imputed and righteousness imparted.*



## EYESALVE

The word eyesalve which in Strong's dictionary is code G2854 is defined by Thayer (a concordance) as "a preparation composed of various materials and used as a remedy for tender eyelids".

Here eye salve is used figuratively representing spiritual discernment.

**The eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.** {5T 233.2}

**The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind.** Upon its correct view of things, the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends. The "eyesalve," the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application; for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. The sinner, beholding himself in God's great moral looking glass, sees himself as God views him, and exercises repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ... {7BC 965.5}

**The Laodiceans were not entirely blind, else the eyesalve would have done nothing to restore their sight, and enable them to discern the true attributes of Christ.** (RH Nov. 23, 1897). {7BC 965.6}

**The eyesalve is the true spiritual discernment** that is so wanting among us, for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (RH April 1, 1890). {7BC 965.1}

*From the above quotes it is clear that we are in this sad experience because the Laodicean remedy has not been applied. The eye salve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them.*

### Is There Hope for The Laodicean Church?

But the counsel of the true Witness does not represent those who are lukewarm as in a hopeless case. **There is yet a chance to remedy their state, and the Laodicean message is full of encouragement; for the backslidden church may yet buy the gold of faith and love, may yet have the white robe of the righteousness of Christ, that the shame of their nakedness need not appear.** Purity of heart, purity of motive, may yet characterize those who are half-hearted and who are striving to serve God and mammon. They may yet wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (RH Aug. 28, 1894). {7BC 966.7}

**There is hope for our churches if they will heed the message given to the Laodiceans** (MS

139, 1903). {7BC 966.8}

*This remedy is the same as what was given in the garden of Eden after the fall of man.*

**The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is the everlasting gospel, the same gospel that was declared in Eden when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).** Here was the first promise of a Saviour who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. {2SM 106.2}

*The message that was given in Eden is styled as the everlasting gospel. The everlasting gospel is a three-step prophetic testing message just like the Laodicean message is a threefold message*

### What Is the Result of Those Who Have Heeded the Message?

**Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.** {1T 187.1}

*It can be observed from the above quote that full heed to the counsel of the true witness is necessary to receive the latter rain. From the above statement it would seem that the latter rain has some part in fitting us for translation. Another statement has a similar bearing*

As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised. {RH, March 2, 1897 par. 7}