



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**  
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**“The peculiar features of mountain scenery on the overland route have often been sketched by pen and pencil. All who are delighted with the grandeur and beauty of nature must feel a thrill of joy as they behold these grand old mountains, beautiful hills, and the wild and rocky canyons. This is especially true of the Christian. He sees in the granite rocks and babbling streams the work of God's all-powerful hand. He longs to climb the lofty hills; for it seems that he would then be nearer heaven, though he knows that God hears the prayers of His children in the lowly valley as well as on the mountaintop.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4 p. 296–297**

**WE BELIEVE:** The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

#### ABOUT THE COVER

**Front Cover Photo:**  
Mount Kilimanjaro.  
Christina McTavish

**Back Cover Photo:** Tanzania,  
Africa. Christina McTavish

**Inside Cover:** Tanzania,  
Africa. Christina McTavish

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- Tel: 905-876-2518
- E-mail: [ismessenger@yahoo.com](mailto:ismessenger@yahoo.com)
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# God's Amazing Animals

In Genesis 1:24–25 the creation story speaks about God creating living creatures after His kind . . . “And God saw that it was good.”

In December my family and I travelled to Tanzania in Africa. We saw many, many different kinds of animals. We were blessed to see such a sight as the Serengeti Wildebeest Migration where we saw what looked like a million wildebeest as far as our eyes could see, as well as zebras and gazelles. It is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the world. As well, there were lots of other animals such as many lions, elephants, hyenas, hippos, monkeys, giraffes, birds and even a



couple leopards, too.

When looking at all the wonderful animals that God created, you have to think how great He really is.

Animals in nature are a wonderful part of life. Sister White writes that the things of nature are given for our

good. They show us God’s love. She also says, “He who loves God not only will love his fellow men but will regard with tender compassion the creatures which God has made.” –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 48

It was an amazing experience to see and be so close to the animals in Tanzania. I wish I could have touched them as well but we always had to be careful and remember that they are wild animals. But in heaven we will be able to live peacefully with all animals, including lions and tigers. On the New Earth there the lion will lie down with the lamb.



My wish and prayer is that we all will be in heaven to experience that wonderful ability to be close to all animals, God’s amazing creatures. There they will no longer be wild. AMEN

**Tiffany Bessec**

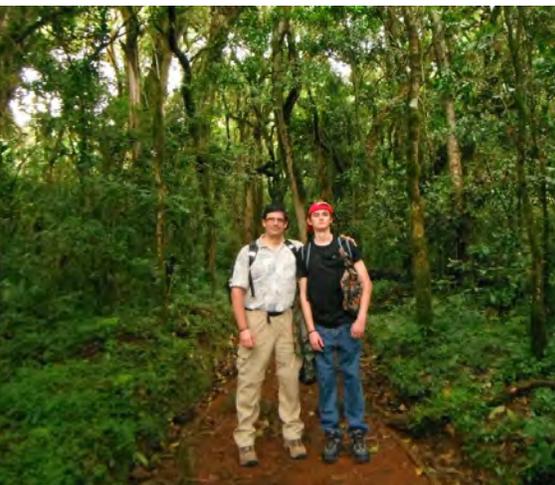




# Climbing New Heights

On December 22, 2011, at 7:00 a.m., I stood with my father on top of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. The height of this mountain is 5,895 metres above sea level. It is the highest point that I've ever been in my life. It was an incredible view of the world from that height. Although I was very tired after having climbed all night, and at times gasping for breath, I felt at peace. I knew that I had made it. I was at the top of the highest point in Africa.

My journey began over five days earlier, at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro. I listened as my guides gave me instructions on what to do and what not to do. They said that if I followed all their instructions then I would be able to make it to the top. If I didn't listen, then there was a good chance that I would not make it. That reminded me of how we, as Christians, are to listen to and follow the words of our Guide, Jesus Christ. If we listen to and obey all of Jesus' words, we will see Him in Heaven.



At first it wasn't easy to follow the instructions of my guide. Right from the start my guide told me to walk "pole, pole," which, in Swahili means "slowly, slowly." I didn't like to walk slowly. It bothered me when other people passed me on the trail. I wanted to go faster. I didn't want to walk at this slow pace, but my guide always would repeat the words, "pole, pole." Two years earlier, I had been to this same mountain with my mother and sister and we were running up this path, but now we had to walk slowly.

During the climb we were only allowed to stop for very short breaks to drink water. We were only allowed longer rest breaks when the guide said we could. Sometimes my father wanted to stop for longer breaks but the guide would tell him to get up and that it was time to go. The guide would say to keep moving, to keep walking, no matter how tired we were. It didn't matter that we were going slow, as long as we kept walking and climbing towards our destination.

On the road to heaven sometimes we get distracted. We get tired and we want to stop and take a break. But Jesus tells us to get up, to keep moving because the journey is still long and the destination is still far away. Sometimes we need encouragement from others so that we will keep moving and so that we don't get discouraged and give up. On our climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro the guide kept encouraging us, and on our journey to heaven, Jesus keeps encouraging us also.

As we were climbing the mountain, one by one, people would give up. Many got very sick. Some would turn around and walk back down the mountain on their own while others had to be evacuated and helped by others. Sometimes I felt a little sick also, but I didn't tell anybody. My dad was having a hard time climbing the mountain, so I tried to encourage him to keep climbing. My dad and I had a secret code. Whenever my dad was too tired to continue and he needed a break, he would say that it's time to take a picture. So we would stop for a few seconds to take a picture and then continued on again.



On our journey to heaven we need each other, to help each other, as we all try to reach the same destination. Things become easier if you are able to share experiences with one another and encourage one another. Even though it sometimes looks very dark, like when the dark clouds came over our path and we could not see very far ahead, as long as we are following our Guide, we know that things will be all right and that we are still going in the right direction.

As we were nearing the top of the mountain, many of those who had passed me during the climb had turned around and were walking back down the mountain. They

had given up. They were so close to the top but they never made it. I wondered if I was going to be able to make it. I was so tired and hurting and I had to stop many times because it was so difficult to keep climbing when there was so little oxygen to

breathe. But I kept moving, going “pole, pole.” Now I understood why the guide wanted us to go slowly from the start. By going slowly we not only conserved our energy but were able to acclimatize to the altitude better and therefore be better prepared for what was to come at the higher altitudes.

Sometimes new Christians are so full of excitement that they want to do everything very quickly. But many also get discouraged very quickly when trials and difficulties come and they end up leaving the church. We need to follow instructions if we do not want to be disappointed in the end. On this trip I learned a lot of patience and that listening and following instructions is really worth it in the end. It’s not always easy to be patient, but if you want to achieve your goal, then it is very necessary.

It was an incredible experience watching the sunrise while still climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. I knew that I was almost there . . . almost near the top. The summit now was so close

but there was still a distance to go. Even though the climb was less steep once we had reached the top of the mountain, we still had to use all our efforts, all our will power and strength to keep going. We couldn’t give up if we wanted to reach our top destination, Uhuru Peak. At times I felt like curling up in a ball and just going to sleep. With so little oxygen up there my brain was playing tricks on me. It felt warm even though it was around -20 degrees Celsius. But our guide kept walking and we kept following.

It made me wonder how many people would give up their journey to heaven even though they could almost see the heavenly gates. The easiest thing to do is to give up and it was sad to see how many people gave up trying to climb to the top. They had paid a lot of money to climb the mountain, but for whatever reason, they gave up. But thanks to the Lord, my dad and I, we didn’t give up. We made it to the peak and there I stood, physically the closest to heaven that I’ve ever been while standing on this earth.

This isn’t the end of my journey, but only the beginning. I hope that my experience inspires you to keep going and to never give up no matter how difficult things may be. If you follow your true guide, Jesus Christ, you will make it to your destination. If you listen and obey all of your Guide’s instructions you will make it to heaven. AMEN

*James Bessec*



**Messenger magazine reaches the top of the world**

“Where are the nine?” Jesus asked. He had healed ten lepers, but only one of them came back to give thanks to Jesus for His gift of healing. Nothing has changed since then. Still today people receive bountiful gifts of the Lord, but how few give thanks to Him for them. Even the professed Christians who have received the



knowledge of salvation and forgiveness for their sins and the hope of eternal life do not thank the Lord according to the greatness of the gifts they have received.

David gave thanks to the Lord in the morning. “But I will sing of Thy power: yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning: for Thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.” Psalm 59:16

Is there reason to thank the Lord in the morning? We read that His mercy is new every morning. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22–23

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Psalm 30:5. David prayed to God also at noon-time and at the evening. “Evening, and morning, and at the noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.” Psalm 55:17

But that was not enough; even at midnight he continued to give thanks to the Lord. “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments.” Psalm 119:62. While others were sleeping, David rose up to give thanks to the Lord.

David recognized that the Lord had put a new song in his mouth. “And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.” Psalm 40:3

This is what the Lord is doing to us also. He is putting a new song in the mouth of the 144,000, who are saved at the time of the end. “And they sang as it were a new

song before the throne.” Revelation 14:3

Paul writes, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20

“If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in

the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies, you will find that He will consider your wants. Pray, pray earnestly and without ceasing, but do not forget to praise.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 317

A thankful person is a happy person. When he receives more than he deserves, it makes him glad and full of joy.

In Nehemiah 8:10 we read, “The joy in the Lord is your strength.” Dissatisfaction is weakness. Misery and complaining makes us victims of Satan. A selfish person is not thankful, neither a proud person. A covetous person is not satisfied with what he has. He complains that God has given to someone else more than to him.

It is sin to receive blessings and gifts from God and not be thankful for them. Paul writes, “Because they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Romans 1:21

People who are not thankful will be darkened in their minds and hearts, and lose the blessings of the Lord.

We are normally thankful to the Lord when our lives are saved by a miracle and a great blessing of prosperity comes to us, but we need to be thankful for small blessings and benefits also. We may be thankful to the Lord if we have a thousand dollars, but if we have only two dollars, should we not be thankful for that also?

Once four thousand men besides women and children had been with Jesus for three days, and instead of sending them home hungry, Jesus asked the disciples how much food they had. They only had seven loaves of bread and a few fishes. Jesus could have said that this is nothing for so many people, but no, Jesus took them and gave thanks to God for them. By giving the little what they had and thanking God for it, they received the blessing of God and it was multiplied, and was enough for everybody.

We need to give thanks for the life that we have, the daily food, the night's rest, the health, rain and sunshine, and a thousand other blessings which we have received daily, besides the great sacrifice that God has made for our salvation. When we realize all these blessings of God, we have hardly enough hours in the day to thank Him for them all.

In the old Israel people brought thanks offerings to the temple. Thanksgiving was not only lip service to them, but it was a sacrifice that they gave to the Lord. We are to express our thankfulness to the Lord also with a sacrifice of money, time, service, and whatever we have.

One of the blessings that we receive from the Lord is the discipline that He has to bring upon us. Often people pray to God to remove it rather than be thankful for it. God said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." Revelation 3:19

Peter valued the trials that we need to go through very highly. "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." 1 Peter 1:7

Paul also understood the value of trials and persecutions. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10

Sister White writes about the sufferings that come upon the people of God. "Of all the gifts that heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honour. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honoured than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.' Philippians 1:29." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 478

On the last page of his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul writes, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:15

The greatest example of thanksgiving is our Lord, Jesus Christ. "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. And He took the bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me." Luke 22:17, 19. Jesus gave thanks that He could sacrifice His body and shed His blood for the salvation of lost mankind.

All through eternity the redeemed children of God will give thanks to Him for His sacrifice for them. If you do not have millions to thank God for, thank Him for the pennies you have. If you do not have good health, thank God that you are still living. If you do not have ten talents, give thanks for the one that you have and use it for His service. Do not have only one day a year for thanksgiving; let every day be a day of praise and thanksgiving, and the Lord will make a note of it and reward you richly for your thankfulness. Let this year, 2012, be a year of praise and thanksgiving and then we can continue it in eternity. AMEN.

*Timo Martin*

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"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." 1 John 1:8-10

"Says John, in speaking of the deceiver that doeth great wonders: He shall make an image to the beast, and shall cause all to receive his mark. Will you please consider this matter? Search the Scriptures, and see. There is a wonder-working power to appear: and it will be when men are claiming sanctification, and holiness, lifting themselves up higher and higher and boasting of themselves.

"Look at Moses and the prophets; look at Daniel and Joseph and Elijah. Look at these men, and find me one sentence where they ever claimed to be sinless. The very soul that is in close relation to Christ, beholding His purity and excellency, will fall before Him with shamefacedness.

"Daniel was a man to whom God had given great skill and learning, and when he fasted the angel came to him and said, 'Thou art greatly beloved.' And he fell prostrate before the angel. He did not say, 'Lord, I have been very faithful to You and I have done everything to honor You and defend Your word and name. Lord, You know how faithful I was at the king's table, and how I maintained my integrity when they cast me into the den of lions.' Was that the way Daniel prayed to God?

"No; he prayed and confessed his sins, and said, Hear O Lord, and deliver; we have departed from Thy Word and have sinned. And when he saw the angel, he said, My comeliness was turned into corruption. He could not look upon the angel's face, and he had no strength; it was all gone. So the angel came to him and set him upon his knees. He could not behold him then. And then the angel came to him with the appearance of a man. Then he could bear the sight.

"**Why is it that so many claim to be holy and sinless? It is because they are so far from Christ.** I have never dared to claim any such a thing. From the time that I was 14 years old, if I knew what the will of God was, I was willing to do it. You never have heard me say I am sinless. Those that get sight of the loveliness and exalted character of Jesus Christ, who was holy and lifted up and His train fills the temple, will never say it. Yet we are to meet with those that will say



## Can We Claim to be Sinless?

such things more and more." —*Selected Messages*, vol.3, p. 353–354 (emphasis mine)

Well then, if it is because they are so far from Christ, that they can claim sinlessness, the question to be asked is: "**what must one who is claiming sinlessness do to find true righteousness?**"

1. See the far reaching claims of the law of God.
2. See their sin as God sees it.

"He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, **by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind.** They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behaviour, by the love of their own opinions, by **justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness.** In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And 'whosoever shall deny Me before men,' He says, 'him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 357 (emphasis mine)

Who can read these words and say that they are without sin? Who can read and try to practice the Sermon on the Mount and say that they are without sin? What can we almost always say when we hear men claiming to be without sin?

From the context of these Spirit of Prophecy statements, we understand that they most probably have a great problem with sin. Although they are perhaps fooling others, they cannot fool themselves, and they certainly are not fooling God. The way that they are fighting so hard against their own consciences to constantly dwell upon the idea that they are sinless, just confirms the fact that they are sinners.

What is more important: that we declare our own righteousness, or that God declares our righteousness?

"I want to say to whomsoever the glory of God has been revealed, 'You will never have the least inclination to say, 'I am holy, I am sanctified.'" —*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 354

“After my first vision of glory, I could not discern the brightest light. It was thought that my eyesight was gone, but when I again became accustomed to the things of this world I could see again. This is why I tell you never to boast, saying, ‘I am holy, I am sanctified,’ for it is the surest evidence that you know not the Scripture or the power of God. Let God write it in His books if He will, but you should never utter it.

“I have never dared to say, ‘I am holy, I am sinless,’ but whatever I have thought was the will of God I have tried to do it with all my heart, and I have the sweet peace of God in my soul. I can commit the keeping of my soul to God as unto a faithful Creator, and know that He will keep that which is committed to His trust. It is my meat and drink to do my Master's will. –*Manuscript 6a, 1886.*” –*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 354

So, what should our attitude be towards our sinful, ugly selves and God's mercy in contrast?

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, ‘These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 1 John 2:1. And do not forget the words of Christ, ‘The Father Himself loveth you.’ John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 64

How frequently will we have to bow down at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes? Often.

“The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you.

“No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine charac-

ter; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ.

“The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 64–65

“But when their sin comes home to their conscience, they see themselves condemned in the light of the holy precepts of God's law; but they do not war against the law which condemns them; they repent of their sin, and seek pardon through the merit of Christ, who died for their sins in order that they might be justified by faith in his blood. They do not avoid confession and repentance when the neglected law of God is brought to their attention, by exclaiming, as do the self-righteous pretenders to holiness, ‘I am sanctified, I am holy, and I can not sin.’ This is the class whom the apostle rebukes; for he says, ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’” –*Signs of the Times*, April 30, 1896

“It is evident that where a claim to sinlessness is made, there the law of God has not been written in the heart; for the commandments of God are exceeding broad, and are discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The apostle speaks words of encouragement to those who realize that they are sinners, and says, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ ‘If we say we have no sin,’ when our thoughts, words, and actions, reflected from the law of God, the great moral mirror, reveal us as transgressors, we make God a liar, and prove that His word is not in us.” –*Signs of the Times*, April 30, 1896

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:7–14

In these verses it is seen that, “Paul waged no war against the commandments of God because of the sharp work they had done in detecting his sin; but, although he was condemned to death by the sentence of the law, he exclaims, ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’

**“Those who wage war against the commandments of God make it manifest that their minds are carnal; for ‘the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God.’ But even when we stand in defense of the law of God, and in opposition to the world, who are making void that law, and who are coming under the temptation of the enemy of God, yet we are not to say that we have no sin, but in meekness repent of sin, and make confession of our shortcoming before the Lord.”** – *Signs of the Times*, April 30, 1896 (emphasis mine)

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. **Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law.** We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.’

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, ‘The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.’ Galatians 2:20. So Jesus said to His disciples, ‘It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.’ Matthew 10:20. Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.” –*Steps to Christ*, p. 62 (emphasis mine)

So, what is the purpose of God’s grace in our lives? We started out with 1 John in this study; please read it again (1 John 1:8-10). He forgives us and then He does what? He cleanses us. He has made a way of escape for us.

When all of the world will be deceived by the mark of the beast, at the forefront of the battle against God’s people will be those who once knew the faith, but have gone into

apostasy. They will never admit that they have apostatized, but very likely will say that they are righteous, perhaps even sinless. They claim sinlessness while it is obvious they are far from being righteous.

“We shall meet with false doctrines of every kind, and unless we are acquainted with what Christ has said, and are following His instruction, we shall be led astray. One of the most dangerous of these doctrines is that of false sanctification. There are those who claim to be holy, and yet are breaking God’s commandments. **Their assertion that they are sinless is false and should not be received.**” – *Evangelism*, p. 595 (emphasis mine)

“Another doctrine that will be presented is that all that we have to do is to believe in Christ—to believe that He has forgiven our sins, and that after we are forgiven, it is impossible for us to sin. This is a snare of Satan. It is true that we must believe in Christ. He is our only hope of salvation. But it is also true that we must work out our individual salvation daily in faith, not boastingly but with fear and trembling. We are to use every power of our being in His service, and after we have done our utmost, we are still to regard ourselves as unprofitable servants. Divine power will unite with our efforts, and as we cling to God with the hand of faith, Christ will impart to us His wisdom and His righteousness. Thus, by His grace, we shall be enabled to build upon the sure foundation. –*Manuscript 27*, 1886.” –*Evangelism*, p. 595–596

The law points out our defects of character, but when we see that we have come short, we shall not feel like berating the law which has condemned our sin, we shall not be disposed to call the commandments of God a yoke of bondage, but, like Paul, we shall acknowledge our sin, and self will die. For “if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

In conclusion: why can’t we claim to be sinless?

Even if we are not outwardly a sinner, how about our thoughts? How about our attitudes of justifying ourselves—or even worse, accusing others, dwelling upon darkness, or foolish speaking? Remember: who is the accuser of the brethren? Certainly not God.

Many of these things are deeply ingrained in our personalities and characters and it takes much time and effort to change the current of our thoughts and attitudes. So we must be patient with one another and God, for sure, but in claiming to be sinless, we give a false impression to others that are struggling against sin.

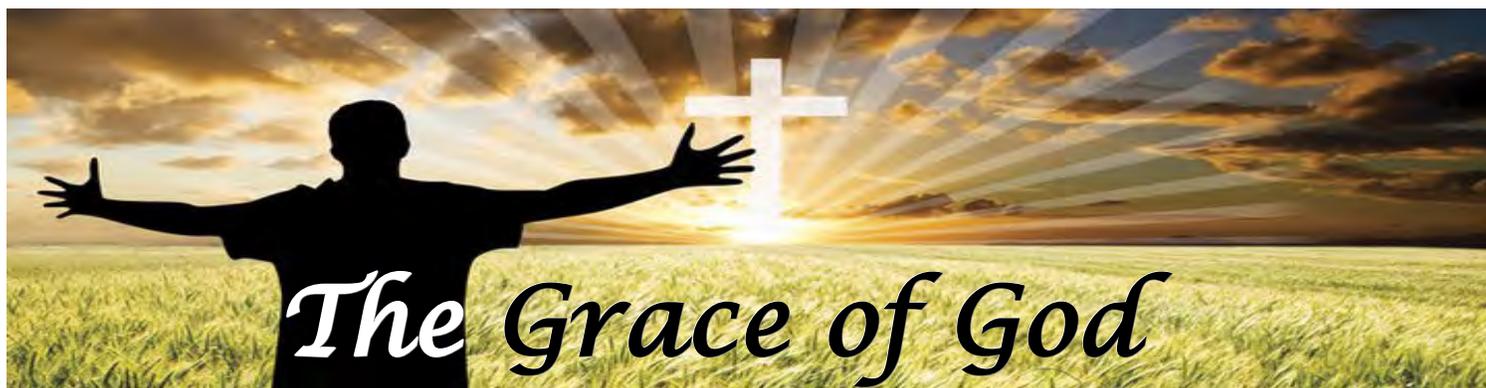
Although it is written, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9); and, “The

strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. No matter how severe the pressure brought to bear upon you, sin is your own act. The seat of the difficulty is the unrenewed heart." *The Adventist Home*, p. 331. "The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 316. Also, "If one sin is cherished in the soul, or one wrong practice retained in the life, the whole being is contaminated. The man becomes an instrument of unrighteousness." *Desire of Ages*, p. 313. However, as was written earlier, "The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in distinct contrast with His perfect character. Be not discouraged; this is an evidence that Satan's delusions are losing their power, that the vivify-

ing influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you, and that your indifference and ignorance are passing away. —*The Bible Echo*, December 1, 1892.

What does it show if we claim to be sinless? How far we actually are away from God. Yes, by all means, let's uplift the righteousness of Christ, and His ability to make us repentant sinners, and hope in His righteousness, but let us be far from claiming to be without sin. God is the one who will defend us against the accusations of the enemy, and He is the one who will declare His people righteous—not we ourselves (read Zechariah 3:1–5).

**Jerry Eaton**



The apostle Peter says: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter 1:2. What a marvelous promise! Grace and peace! As sinners, we are in such need of grace. Our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude for the grace of God in our lives. It is of great significance that the word "gratitude" comes from the Latin word *gratia*, which means "grace." The famous hymn "Amazing Grace" was written by John Newton, on whose tombstone in Olney, England, we find this inscription: "John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy." Newton's was a marvelous transformation. An erstwhile slave ship captain, he surrendered his life to God and became a preacher of the gospel. Now we can understand the verses he wrote in the beautiful hymn that has become a Christian classic: "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see." Because of God's abundant grace we are united in Christ, and we have peace. Peace with God, peace with our fellow humans, peace with our families, peace with ourselves. Describing this marvelous grace in our lives, Ellen G. White says: "There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holi-

ness." *Steps to Christ*, p. 18. Let us all pray that the message of grace will awaken our hearts, our emotions, and our minds and bring us closer to Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

When the Old Testament talks about grace, concepts such as an undeserved favor or gift, a benevolent action in behalf of someone else, kindness, and steadfast love are involved. In the New Testament, grace is kindness and mercy, a special manifestation of God's presence, power or glory, a gift or favour, gratitude, blessing, something pleasant. What a wonderful concept! Scripture is full of references to the freely given unmerited favor and love of God toward us. But let's explore this crucial concept a little further, taking a look at Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

#### **AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD**

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 1:2. Paul starts his letter and ends it (Ephesians 6:24) with the wish that his audience may experience grace. It is a blessing and "a prayer that his readers may know fully the free, undeserved favour of God, restoring them to Himself, and adding to them all that they need." Grace is *from* God, and Paul continues by talking about the "glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6), then adds the expression: the "riches of His grace" (v. 7). But, as if that would not yet sufficiently describe the excellency of God, Paul intensifies his previous statement by talking about "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us." Ephesians 2:7. Thus Paul praises the grace

of God in higher and higher terms.

In the Old Testament God introduced Himself to Moses with the following words: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Exodus 34:6. The writers of the Old Testament again and again return to this self-revelation of God and praise His grace. David states: “But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” Psalm 86:15. Joel calls his people to repentance and declares: “And turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.” Joel 2:13. Jonah, being angry because of God’s graciousness, prays: “I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” Jonah 4:2. Paul may have had God’s self-testimony in mind when he referred to God’s grace. In Ephesians 1:6 he even mentions the concept of grace twice: “To the praise of the glory of His *grace*, in which He . . . [has *graced*] us in the Beloved.”

It is important that we understand **who God is and how He is**. For the perception we have of God determines to a large degree the quality of our relationship with Him and therefore also the quality of our own life. Our God is the God of grace. Grace is part of His divine character. Grace means that God turns His “bright happy countenance” toward us and blesses us with undeserved gifts or favours. We can pray for His intervention, but grace cannot be coerced. It is a freely given benefit, granted by a superior to an inferior party, by the powerful to the weak, and it is engendered by love and pity. Thus grace is not only a favorable disposition to a person or a group, but it becomes active. God helps the poor, the oppressed, the mortally ill, those who suffer. He turns toward those who have needs and fulfills these needs that no one else can meet. His actions involve deliverance and protection, help and empowerment. God is very much concerned with good relationships. His grace is His unexpected and loving decision to forgive our shortcoming and to restore broken relationships.

Someone has said: “When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day’s pay for their time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for their performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for their long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win

no prize, and deserves no award—yet receives such a gift anyway—that is a good picture of God’s unmerited favour. This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.”

#### WE NEED IT

In Ephesians Paul does not only marvel about the “surpassing riches of His grace,” he also lets us know that we really need it. After having briefly described the Christians’ new status, namely their redemption, their acceptance as God’s children and heirs, and their sealing with the Holy Spirit as a result of God’s grace (see Ephesians 1:3–14), in chapter 2 he elaborates on their previous condition and their subsequent salvation. We must know where we came from. We must know who we are, namely sinners and people on death row. Never should we forget this fact, because should we ever lose sight of it, we will stop appreciating our salvation and treasuring God’s goodness and grace. *Please read the great passage of Ephesians 2:4–10.*

Not only does the word “grace” occur several times in this passage, Paul tells us that our human condition is one of desperate need. Without God’s grace we are dead, spiritually dead. We are enslaved and inescapably entangled in the coils of sin. We need liberation. We are in need of being bought back to becoming the sole property of our real owner, our Creator and Lord. New life, and nothing less, is needed. But aside from God’s grace there is no way to get it.



In this passage Paul informs us about three things. *First*, salvation is entirely of grace. The same thought is stressed three times: “By grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:5, 8, NKJV). The second time Paul reinforces this reality by adding “not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” And he goes on to make really sure that we get it: “not of works, lest anyone should boast” (verse 9, NKJV). Salvation is always the free gift of God. If salvation could be earned or if we could add to our salvation, grace would cease to be grace. Oftentimes humans seem to be too proud to admit that they are lost, helpless, and

desperate and cannot contribute to their redemption. Oftentimes they are too proud to accept by faith God's free gift. As much as we admire God's grace, it means that we have to come down from our pedestals and in humility recognize our utter helplessness and dependence on the Lord. Paul tells us: Salvation cannot be paid for. It is undeserved. Good works are a *consequence* of salvation, not the *grounds* for it (Ephesians 2:10).

*Second*, Paul presents salvation as an accomplished fact. Through God's grace we are already saved (verses 5, 8). We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). We have been raised up and seated in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

*Third*, there is also a future dimension. What God has done for believers and what is a present reality will be fully known only in the ages to come. Although we are already saved, the final salvation still awaits us, when we will not only be freed from the power of sin but also from the presence of sin. It is that final consummation to which we are looking forward.

Moving on in Ephesians we detect that God's grace is not limited to our salvation. In chapter 3 Paul talks about the grace of God, who has assigned him a special task and ministry (verses 2, 7). He adds: "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (verse 8, NKJV). The grace of God had made him all that he was, a new person in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:10). But don't get it wrong! God's grace called not only Paul to a specific ministry, but all of us: "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," Paul says in Ephesians 4:7, enumerating a number of spiritual gifts. Through the grace of God each individual believer has received at least one spiritual gift, unmerited, with no place for boasting. These gifts were given to build up the body of Christ, the church, to help it grow spiritually and also numerically, and to foster its unity (verses 12–16). Do we need grace? Indeed, we need it. We need it for our salvation. We need it for our daily life. We need it for our ministry. Grace is the undeserved favour of God that brings to us all that we need for living a Christian life and serving others. We pass it on.

Ellen G. White summarizes grace in a wonderful way: "God loves the sinless angels, who do His service and are obedient to all His commands; but He does not give them grace: they have never needed it; for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it; it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow grace upon all who

hunger and thirst for it, not because we are worthy, but because we are unworthy. Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we shall receive the gift." –*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 519

#### **REVEALED TO US IN CHRIST**

So far we have studied the grace of God and our need for it. Yet the most essential part is missing. God's grace is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, salvation would not and could not be offered to us as an undeserved gift. Therefore, right at the beginning, when Paul addresses the Christians in Ephesus and wishes them grace and peace, he immediately introduces not only God the Father but also "*the Lord Jesus Christ.*" When in Ephesians 1:6 Paul praises the glory of God's grace he hastens to add: with which He has graced us "*in the Beloved.*" The Beloved is no one else than Jesus our Lord. God's grace is bestowed upon us in Jesus and in Him alone. One verse further we are assured that "we have redemption . . . , the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7, NKJV. How? "*In him,*" Jesus Christ our Lord and "*through His blood.*" Salvation by grace is dependent on Jesus. Voluntarily He shed His blood so that we may be freed, an undeserved gift. We were dead in sins. But He saved us. That is grace. Jesus paid the price for our transgressions of God's law. He took upon Him our unrighteousness so that we may enjoy His righteousness. Therefore, God "made us alive together *with Christ* . . . and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places *in Christ Jesus.*" Ephesians 2:5, 6, NKJV.

Paul goes so far as to indicate that the purpose of God for the church reaches beyond salvation and re-creation, beyond its unity and the proclamation of the gospel to the world. The church is to be a demonstration of God's love and grace in Christ to the entire creation (Ephesians 2:7). Notice again, "*in Christ.*" Through Him we are saved by grace and enjoy a new quality of life. Through Him we receive gifts, ministries, and all that we need to grow individually and as a church, to proclaim the everlasting gospel of God's love toward humankind, and to maintain and advance the unity of His remnant church.

Grace is a wonderful attribute of God. We desperately need it. It is offered to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us accept this gift of grace and come to the throne of grace boldly through Jesus our Saviour and High Priest. "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love." Ephesians 6:24, NKJV. To be continued. AMEN!

*In Christ,*  
**Nicholas Anca**



# *Vitamin E: An Important Antioxidant with Multiple Health Benefits*

In Leviticus Chapter 24:2 it is mentioned that the children of Israel were to bring unto Moses pure olive oil. The specific purpose of this pure olive oil was to keep the lamps of the candlestick burning continuously. Within olive oil there is Vitamin E which is a natural antioxidant with numerous health benefits. Each tablespoon of olive oil contains approximately 1.6 mg of Vitamin E, which is 8% of the recommended daily intake for this vitamin (Oliveoilsource, 2011).

It is interesting to note that in this verse in Leviticus, it is clear that the pure olive oil was to be beaten for the light. In most cases, when the children of Israel made olive oil, they used an oil press; however the oil for the sanctuary lamps was an exception. As part of this process, the olives were thoroughly washed of all impurities and then they were beaten and bruised. At this point the olives were left to sit for a while and all the oil was allowed to slowly drain out. Through this process it was impossible to extract the same amount of oil as when an oil press was used. However, the product which resulted from the process of beating the olives was of higher quality and greater purity. The concept of using only the purest and holiest materials and ingredients is seen all throughout the earthly sanctuary. God expected that everything used in His dwelling place (earthly sanctuary) would be of a pure and holy nature, completely uncorrupted and undefiled.

## **FUNCTION OF VITAMIN E IN THE BODY**

Vitamin E exists in eight different forms, with Alpha-Tocopherol being the most active form of Vitamin E in humans. Alpha-Tocopherol also happens to be a very potent antioxidant in the body and effectively prevents the increase of free-radical reactions. Vitamin E works very well with other antioxidants within the body, and combined with the other antioxidants the protection against free-radical reactions is increased (Preventative Health Guide, 2008).

Vitamin E within the body is absorbed in the small intestine and is fat-soluble. In order to be effectively absorbed into the body it needs not only the presence of lipids, but also depends upon normal pancreatic function and biliary secretion. Free radicals within the body can be formed as a part of normal metabolic processes, but also can occur as a result of toxic outside pollutants and cigarette smoke. Vitamin E in the body can be found within the cellular membrane and it protects certain parts of the cellular membrane from being oxidized by free radicals. It plays an important role in protecting polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are also part of the cellular membrane, from oxidization. Other than protecting the health of the cellular membrane, Vitamin E also plays an important role in preventing the oxidization of low density lipoproteins (LDL) (Vitamin Basics, 2009).

There are many health benefits closely linked with the consumption of Vitamin E as an integral part of the diet. For example, research has shown there to be some evidence that Vitamin E can decrease the risk of cancer. Scientists came to this conclusion because, as mentioned before, Vitamin E protects the cell membrane against free radicals and also it boosts the function of the immune system. Therefore, people who have a higher intake of Vitamin E have been shown to have lower incidences of breast, prostate, and colon cancer (Preventative Health Guide, 2008). Another health benefit is that Vitamin E is able to delay the onset of coronary heart disease. It slows down the onset of this disease by preventing the oxidization of cholesterol. When cholesterol is oxidized it becomes much more harmful to the body and this is when it begins clogging the arteries. As the arteries become more and more clogged, this can lead to a heart attack or stroke. In addition, Vitamin E can prevent blood clots; a blood clot anywhere in the body can increase the chance of a heart attack. Vitamin E assists in the process of DNA repair and plays an important role in keeping the hormones balanced, and promotes

the healthy functioning of the reproductive system. Finally, Vitamin E can help the skin recover from scarring and cuts or wounds, and is important in maintaining normal vision. It helps to maintain healthy skin and eyes by controlling the levels of vitamin A within the body (Preventative Health Guide, 2008).

### **HISTORY OF VITAMIN E**

Vitamin E was first discovered by Herbert Evans and Scott Bishop in 1922; however, it was not named Vitamin E until 1924. The scientific name given to this vitamin was Tocopherol, which is a Greek word. The meaning of the word is “childbirth” and “to bring forth”. Therefore, Tocopherol was a very appropriate name to give this vitamin because it was shown to play a very important role in certain animal species being able to reproduce. The last two letters of the word Tocopherol are a reference to the fact that it has alcohol properties (Members Core, 2009).

For a number of years after the initial discovery of Vitamin E, there was very little additional research done, because no reliable source was discovered. However, in 1936, it came to light that wheat germ oil was an excellent source of Vitamin E. Two years later after this discovery was made, Vitamin E was synthesized for the first time. Further research in this area led to the discovery in 1962 that Vitamin E was very valuable as an antioxidant. At this time, the Food and Nutrition Board of the U.S. National Research Council sponsored studies on the effects of Vitamin E deficiency, and this led to vitamin E officially being recognized as an essential nutrient for humans, in 1968 (Vitamin Basics, 2009). These studies helped to reveal that the body cannot manufacture its own Vitamin E, and, therefore, humans must eat foods and supplements containing Vitamin E in order to reap its benefits. The inability of the body to produce Vitamin E is one main reason why it is considered to be an essential vitamin today.

### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF VITAMIN E DEFICIENCY**

Once Vitamin E is stored in the body it takes an extended period of time for these stores to run out. Also, Vitamin E deficiency is, in the vast majority of cases, not caused by a poor diet. In fact, Vitamin E deficiency is, in general, quite rare and is almost unheard of in healthy adults. Even if healthy adults are deficient in Vitamin E, there are no outward symptoms which can be observed (Vitamin Basics, 2009). There are, however, a few certain situations in which a Vitamin E deficiency can occur. For example, it can be seen in persons who are unable to properly digest and absorb dietary fat, and in people who have rare diseases related to the body’s ability to metabolize fats. Also, Vitamin E deficiency can be observed in

babies who are born prematurely and have a low birth weight (E Medicine, 2011).

In individuals who have problems metabolizing fats this most often leads to poor absorption of dietary fat and Vitamin E. There is a rare inherited disorder called Abetalipoproteinemia which has specific symptoms due to the body’s inability to metabolize fats. The symptoms associated with this disorder include, poor transmission of nerve impulses, muscle weakness, and degeneration of the retina, that can ultimately lead to blindness. The treatments most often prescribed by doctors for this specific disorder are special Vitamin E supplements. In addition, there is another rare genetic condition called Ataxia which causes the person to be almost completely unable to absorb Vitamin E. If left untreated this leads to neurological complications; however, it can be treated effectively with large doses of Vitamin E (E Medicine, 2011).

### **VITAMIN E’S RECOMMENDED DIETARY ALLOWANCE**

There are several different forms of Vitamin E, and this means there are also different recommendations and guidelines for each form. Although most recommendations of the daily intake of the vitamin that should be taken are stated in milligrams, many Vitamin E supplements themselves are done in international units. Converting between milligrams and International Units is not always completely straightforward. Also, it must be taken into account that natural Vitamin E is much more potent than synthetic Vitamin E. Due to this discrepancy, a smaller dosage of natural Vitamin E would have the same effect upon the body as a larger dose of synthetic Vitamin E. In addition to this, the amount of Vitamin E needed on a daily basis can certainly vary according to age and sex. Due to these factors, deciding upon the correct dose of Vitamin E can be a challenge (Health Information Brought to Life, 2011).

The generally accepted Recommended Daily Intake of Alpha-Tocopherol in humans is 7–11 mg for children between the ages of 4 and 13 years. For individuals that are 14 and older, it is recommended that they have 15 mg per day. Pregnant women are also recommended to have 15 mg per day, and women that are breastfeeding can have 19 mg per day (Health Information Brought to Life, 2011).

### **RICH FOOD SOURCES OF VITAMIN E**

Vegetable oils which include such oils as olive oil and sunflower oil, nuts, whole grains and wheat germ are among the most essential sources of Vitamin E. Also, mustard greens are one of the foods with the highest content of Vitamin E. Swiss chard is a leafy green which also has a high content of Vitamin E in it. Spinach con-

tains Vitamin E as well as a variety of other antioxidants and essential nutrients; therefore, this health promoting food should be included in the diet if at all possible. Some other specific foods which have a high content of Vitamin E are kale and collard greens, and tropical fruits such as papaya and kiwi, red bell peppers and broccoli. Wheat can also be a fairly good source of Vitamin E; however, when it is processed the germ part is often removed, which is not a positive. The germ part within the wheat contains most of the Vitamin E; therefore, when it is removed, only a small remnant of this vitamin remains in the wheat (Fit Day, 2009).

#### **TOXICITY LEVEL OF VITAMIN E**

When there is a large quantity of Vitamin E in the diet, but the individual is not taking any form of Vitamin E supplements, this has not been shown to lead to toxicity. However, when Vitamin E supplements are taken in very high doses of 3,000 IU or more, this most often does become toxic for the individual. In this case the person can experience a number of side effects such as intestinal cramps, diarrhea, fatigue, double vision, and muscle weakness. The research done in this area has shown that when an individual is taking regular Vitamin E supplements under the level of 3,000 IU there is most often no issue with toxicity (The World's Healthiest Foods, 2011).

Although there are usually very few issues with Vitamin E having toxic effects upon people, there is one particular instance which may cause an issue, and this particular instance is when an individual is very deficient in Vitamin K. If they are deficient in Vitamin K, then taking large doses of Vitamin E can have the negative effects of prolonging bleeding time and interfering with effective blood clotting. The daily intake limit for Vitamin E which was set in the year 2000 by the National Academy of Sciences is 1,000 mg or 1,500 IU of Vitamin E in the form of Alpha-Tocopherol. This daily limit only applies to people who are taking this vitamin in supplemental form and who are 19 years or older (The World's Healthiest Foods, 2011).

#### **SPIRITUAL ALLEGORY RELATED TO VITAMIN E**

Vitamin E within the cells of the body is very effective at protecting the cells against being oxidized by free radicals. Vitamin E is most effective at protecting the body when it combines its forces with other antioxidants. In a spiritual sense Vitamin E is prayer, which is so essential in protecting our spiritual health and life against the attacks of Satan and the temptations of this world. The other antioxidants which Vitamin E combines with are a representation of the other tools we have been given by God in our war against sin and Satan. They represent the daily reading of the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, and us as individuals listening to and following the voice

of the Holy Spirit. Prayer by itself is very powerful and effective; however, when combined with daily reading of The Word and a willingness to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, it becomes even more powerful.

Free radicals occur due to metabolic processes and as a result of outside pollutants and cigarette smoke. These free radicals are a very fitting representation of the external temptations and attacks of Satan and the internal temptations or struggles we must face every day. Just as free radicals sometimes occur due to normal metabolic processes, if the human heart is allowed to choose its own course it will naturally choose a sinful course, and this is an example of the internal struggle we must all face. A heart that has not accepted Christ will naturally follow a course that will lead to greater depths of sin and corruption, and if left unchecked, the cancer of sin will spread throughout the whole body. We know also that free radicals within the physical body are a cancer-causing agent, and if left unchecked can lead to cancerous tumors. Therefore, in order to change the natural course of events in a life without Christ we must fully accept Christ and die to self daily. This dying to self daily involves daily prayer and study of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. Similarly, in order to reduce our risk of cancer and control the free radicals within our bodies, we must daily eat foods such as olive oil, which are rich in antioxidants, including Vitamin E.

The external temptations we must all face are the un-sanctified elements which are all around us in the world today. These include all sorts of worldly entertainment and worldly music and anything which can distract our mind from God and eternal matters. The more we give in to these temptations the weaker we become spiritually, and the more likely we are to give in to these same temptations in the future. As we continue giving in to the same temptations over and over, this can certainly lead to the cancer of sin within our spiritual lives. Similarly, the more often the body is brought into contact with harmful external pollutants, the greater the chance that these pollutants will cause free radicals within the body which can lead to cancer. Also, when our physical bodies are overrun with free radicals it can most certainly weaken them and predispose them to disease. The best remedy in this situation is, again, to eat foods which are rich in Vitamin E and other antioxidants and, if necessary, take Vitamin E supplements. Finally, in order to resist the external temptations which are all around us we must be grounded in prayer and the study of the Scriptures, for this is our only hope.

*Richard Eaton*



# Abram's Four Surrenders

“O Lord, I know, that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23

“A great many people are afraid of the will of God, and yet I believe that one of the sweetest lessons that we can learn in the school of Christ is the surrender of our wills to God, letting Him plan for us and rule our lives. If I know my own mind, if an angel should come from the throne of God and tell me that I could have my will done the rest of my days on earth, and that everything I wished should be carried out, or that I might refer it back to God, and let God’s will be done in me and through me, I think in an instant I would say: ‘Let the will of God be done.’ I cannot look into the future. I do not know what is going to happen tomorrow; in fact, I do not know what may happen before night; so I cannot choose for myself as well as God can choose for me, and it is much better to surrender my will to God’s will. Abraham found this out, and I want to call your attention to four surrenders that he was called to make. I think that they give us a pretty good key to his life.” –Dwight L. Moody

## 1. HIS NATURAL INHERITANCE

In the first place, Abram was called to give up *his kindred and his native country* and to go out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:8 (emphasis mine)

Abram was not like so many men who claim to be servants of Jehovah. He did not refuse to be moved from one place to another, like Moab who “hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.” Jeremiah 48:11. He went out not knowing. . . . He went out of Ur.

Ur was in what we know today as southern Iraq. It was from there that God called him. The city of Ur was in the southern end of the Mesopotamian valley south of Babylon, about one hundred miles west by northwest and upriver from where the Euphrates River joins the Tigris. From there the two rivers meander another forty or fifty miles before they empty into the Persian Gulf. It was from Ur of the Chaldees that Abram was called to go into a land that he had never seen and perhaps had not even heard of before. He went, based on the promise that God made to him that his seed would possess a land where his posterity would become a great nation; that God

would bless him and make his name great and make him a blessing for all the families of the earth. (Genesis 12:2–3)

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” Now notice the promise: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.” Genesis 12:1–4

It must have been several years before this that God first told Abram to leave Ur of the Chaldees. But he traveled only about 700 miles, very likely passing through the city of Babylon on his way to Haran. Now, Haran was about halfway between the northern part of the valley of Mesopotamia and the valley of the Jordan. God had called His servant into the land of the Canaanite, and we can say at this point in the narrative that he went only halfway and stayed there for some time—we don’t know how long, perhaps five years. He had passed through and out of Babylon, but he was only halfway to where God was calling him to be.

There are many Christians whom we might call “Haran Christians.” They claim that they have left the region of Babylon, but they have travelled only as far as Haran; there they remain, feeling saved but never considering that they have obeyed only halfway.

Now, Haran means “parched,” and that is the reason such people never find the full joy of salvation. They are not out-and-out Christians. As God called Abram to leave his kindred and his father’s house, they leave family and friends; but their leaving is only a formality, because they take with them all that they can of the old life. And that causes them to stop halfway. They live in a kind of limbo, with one foot in the old life and the other foot in the new.

Genesis 11:32 says that “Terah died in Haran.” God allowed affliction to come and drive Abram out of Haran. And so it is with a great many of us. We bring afflictions on ourselves, because we are not completely for the Lord. We do not obey Him

fully. God had plans for Abram, but He could not work them out in the parched land of Haran. Affliction came, and then he left Haran and resumed his travel to the Promised Land.

This time he left most of his father's house in Haran, but the Word tells us that "Lot went with Abram." That is the second time we see Lot, and we can say that he was a shadow of and a character weaker than Abram.

When the company came into the land of promise, Abram found it inhabited by great, warlike nations; and it appears that his faith stumbled. What could a solitary man do in such a land? And then his faith was tested further by a great famine that came upon the land. There must have been a terrible conflict within his breast.

What does all this mean? Here I am more than a thousand miles from home, surrounded by a warlike people, and a famine has come. God must have been mistaken; I need to get out of this place.

We have no record that God sent Abram to Egypt, but that is where he went and met another situation perhaps even more dangerous. It seems darkness came upon him in that place, and yet even in his trouble God was seeking to draw Him nearer to Himself.

When trouble and sorrow are permitted to come upon us, that is when we may see the face of God. To be shut up and hemmed in on every side with no earthly support is to come to the place where we MUST trust in Him alone. It was in Egypt that Abram got into trouble by saying that Sarai was his sister. Had he left Canaan because he could not see God's providences, only to end up representing Sarai as someone other than his wife? That is the blackest spot on Abram's character. Have we been betrayed or been a betrayer because we have walked in the sparks of our own kindling and not by faith? Is it not virtually always true that when we go to Egypt for help we always get into trouble?

So we can see that Abram had left his roots and inheritance and even his earthly family, but he had not yet fully surrendered his will to the Almighty.

## 2. HIS RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Genesis 12:17 shows that God delivered Abram out of the trouble he created for himself in Egypt. The pharaoh had also enriched him with animals and servants because of Sarai. But nothing is recorded about there being an altar in his life—not in Haran, not in Egypt, and not in Canaan when he returned. And we read again in Genesis 13:1 that "Lot [was still] with him" when he came "into the south" of Canaan, being "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Genesis 13:2

But as possessions and wealth increased, so too did the strife between their herdsmen. Genesis 13:6. "Their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together."

Here Abram's character shines. Abram and Lot needed to go their separate ways. As the elder, Abram had the right to the best of everything, and Lot would probably not have had much wealth if it had not been for his uncle. Yet Abram, instead of

standing up for *his right* to choose first, surrendered it and said to his nephew in essence: Take your choice. If you go to the right, I will go to the left; or if you prefer the areas to the left, then I will go to the right (Genesis 13:9).

Here Lot stumbles very badly. If there was a man under the sun who needed Abram's counsel, prayers, and good influence, it was Lot. He was a weak character who needed bolstering up. But his covetousness blinded him. His eyes beheld the well-watered plains of the Jordan Valley that reached toward Sodom in the east, and he chose that, separating from Abram so he could pitch his tent toward Sodom (Genesis 13:12).

Perhaps Lot had been influenced by his uncle's failure to completely separate from his father's house when the Lord first called him out. Now he wanted to stay as close to the world as possible to have the benefits but not be right in the world—like so many Christians today. It must be noted that although the Scriptures say that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, very soon he and his family ended up IN Sodom.

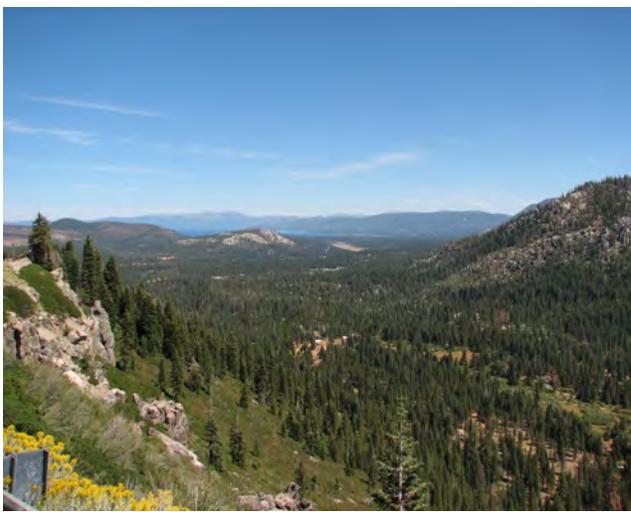
Lot was influenced by what he saw. He walked by sight, not by faith; and many Christians make the same mistake—walking by sight instead of by faith. If he had stopped to think, Lot might have known that it would be disastrous for him and his family to go anywhere near Sodom. Abram and Lot must both have known about the wickedness of those cities on the plains. In fact, the very next verse says: "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Verse 13. Although Lot was already rich, he saw a chance to make good money in the city. But it would have been better for him to stay far away from that wicked city, as the rest of the story of his life reveals.

After Lot left for the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abram was truly alone with God. He moved west, built an altar, and called the place "Hebron," meaning *communion*. It was here that God came to him again and repeated His promise: "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Genesis 13:14–17

"Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." Genesis 13:18

### An eyewitness account of the view

"It is astonishing how far you can see in that country. God took Moses up on Pisgah and showed him the Promised Land. In Palestine, a few years ago, I found that on Mount Olivet I could look over and see the Mediterranean. I could look into the valley of the Jordan and see the Dead Sea. And on the plains of Sharon I could look up to Mount Lebanon and up at Mount Hermon, away beyond Nazareth. You can see with the naked eye almost the length and breadth of that country. So, .



. . . God said to Abram that he might look to the north, and that as far as he could see he could have the land; and then look to the south,

with its well-watered plains that Lot coveted, and to the east and the west, from the sea to the Euphrates.” –Dwight L. Moody

After that, God gave His friend Abram clear title to the land, with no conditions whatever, saying, “I will give it all to you.”

Lot chose all he could get and ended up with nothing. Abram, on the other hand, let God choose for him and was given all the land. Lot had no security for his choice and soon lost everything. Abram’s rights were protected by God the Giver.

The word translated “substance” in Hebrews 11:1 is *hoop-os’-tas-is*. It means “Title Deed.” Thus, God gives the title deed to the Promised Land to all who exercise faith. Unfortunately, the children of Israel never had enough faith to take possession of all the land clear to the Euphrates. If they had had faith, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar would never have taken them captive. That was, after all, God’s promise to Abram: “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.” Genesis 13:14–15. And he could see all the way to the valley of the Euphrates. From that time on, God enlarged Abram’s tents. He enriched His promises and gave Abram much more than He had promised down in the valley of the Euphrates when He first called him out.

When Abram left the choice to Providence and surrendered his way to God, He blessed him by adding more and more to the promise. Psalm 25:12 reads: “What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose.”

Psalm 32:7–8 says that God is our “hiding place” and promises to “instruct thee in the way which thou shalt go.” “O Lord, I know, that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jeremiah 10:23

This was Abram’s second surrender: He surrendered his direction to be guided by God’s hand. He put his hand in the hand of God, and God did not turn him away. Jesus said: “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37

Abram had surrendered his way to the way of God. However, he had not yet fully surrendered his will.

Here we need to return to Lot for a moment, for it is because

of Lot’s choice that we see Abram’s third surrender. Again we emphasize that Lot gained nothing by choosing his own way! He lost everything. And so it is today. You can find thousands of Lots for every single Abram. Most people walk by sight, lured by the temptations of the world. The glitter, the fleeting pleasure, and the desire for this world’s wealth attract them. Someone has said that Abram was a far-sighted man, while Lot was short-sighted; Lot’s eye fell on the land he could see. One thing is obvious: He was so short-sighted that his possessions soon left him. Similarly today, we see that people who are building only for the present time are disappointed.

But if you were to ask the men of their day who was the wiser man, they would have said that Lot was much shrewder than his uncle Abram—that money was to be made in Sodom, not on the plains of Mamre.

And for a while Lot made money very fast and became very “successful.” Later, the angels even found him sitting at the city gates, as if he were one of the principal men of the city. He seemed to be getting on amazingly well and was apparently prosperous.

But one day there was war. If you go into Sodom, you must take Sodom’s judgment when it comes, for it will come. The battle turned against those five cities of the plain, and four warlords took many people captive including Lot and his wife and all that they had; Abram heard about this from a man who escaped and ran to Hebron to tell him what had happened. Abram immediately went into action, taking 318 servants to go after those looting kings. He returned with everything that had been taken from the city and all of the prisoners (Genesis 14:1–16).

### 3. HIS WORLDLY OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVANTAGES

On the way back from delivering Lot and his family, Abram met Melchizedek, who gave him bread and wine. This priestly king blessed the father of the faithful. Genesis 14:18–19. After this, the king of Sodom came and told Abram: “Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.” Genesis 14:21

But Abram replied: “I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.” Genesis 14:22–23

Here was Abram’s third surrender. There was a temptation to *get rich at the hands of the king of Sodom*, but he wanted no compromise or covenant with that world! To have accepted those gifts would have been to say that Lot had indeed made the right choice, because it was for those things that Lot had considered the well-watered plains of Sodom the wiser choice.

But the king of Salem had blessed him, and this world did not tempt him. It tempted Lot, and no doubt Lot thought Abram just made another big mistake when he refused to take this wealth. But Abram would not touch something that had been polluted by blood, and he turned from it. He had more than enough worldly possessions, and besides he was living for another world. He would not be enriched from such a source.

Ephesians 5:11 says we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”

Indeed, everyone stands between the prince of this world and the Prince of Peace. The first one tempts us with wealth, pleasure, ambition, pride, and the lust of the eyes. But the eternal Prince and Priest draws us with His love, character, and forgiving grace! He is always ready to succor and strengthen us in the hour of temptation.

There was a man whose wife was very fond of painting, but for a long time he could not see any beauty in her paintings; they all looked drab to him. One day his eyes were bothering him, so he went to see an optometrist. The doctor looked at him in amazement and said: “You have one near-sighted eye and one far-sighted eye, and that makes everything blurry.” He gave the man eyeglasses to correct the problem, and then he could see clearly. Now, he said, he understood why his wife was so carried away by art. He built an art gallery for her and filled it with beautiful things, because everything looked so beautiful after he had had his eyesight corrected.

Many people have the same problem as this man, and they make miserable work of their Christian life. They keep one eye on the Eternal City and the other eye on the well-watered plains of Sodom. This was Lot’s problem. It would be hard to believe that he would be saved if it were not for the text in 2 Peter 2:7–8, where it says that what Lot saw in Sodom and Gomorrah “vexed his righteous soul from day to day.”

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Genesis 15:1. Abram could have worried that the kings he had defeated might strengthen their forces and come after him, wiping him from the face of the earth. But the Lord came to him again and said: “Fear not, Abram.” This is the first place those oft-repeated words occur in the Bible. “Fear not, for I will be your shield and your reward.”

I would rather have that promise than all the armies and navies of the world to protect me! Think what it means to have the God of heaven as your Protector! He was teaching Abram that He was his Friend and his Shield if he would choose to be guided by the God of heaven and trust in Him for his sustenance and daily bread. God would be his keeper. That is what we want—to surrender ourselves to God’s guidance and protection. And we can have this if we are fully and wholly on His side, not trusting to the world or receiving its praise and gifts.

A mining superintendent in Colorado told of a miner who was offered a promotion. The man came to him and said: “There is a man who has seven children, and I have only three. He is having a very hard time. Don’t promote me; promote him.”

Nothing speaks louder for Christ and Christianity than for a man or woman to give up his or her rights in favour of someone else, “in honour preferring one another.” Romans 12:10

Abram consistently gave up his own interest and trusted God. What was the result? Of all the men who ever lived, he is the

most renowned. He never did anything the world would call great. The largest army he assembled was 318 men. He was not an astronomer, scientist, statesman, or anything the world calls great; but there was one thing he could do—live an unselfish life and waive his rights to have things his way. That is how he became the friend of God. No name in history is as well known as that of Abram. Even Christ is not more widely known, for the Mohammedans, the Persians, and the Egyptians honor Abram.

No one can number the many wonderful people who have sprung from this one man whom God called out of the land of the Chaldees. God literally fulfilled His promise that through him everyone in the earth would be blessed—all because he surrendered his way fully and completely to God’s leading.

God sealed the covenant that He would give to Abram and his seed after him, promising him all the land wherein he was a stranger, and He added, “I will be their God.” Genesis 17:8. It was here that God changed his name from Abram to Abraham.

So now, Abram surrendered his earthly heritage, his right to choose his own way, and any desire and hope of earthly support. But what about his will?

#### 4. HIS WILL

Abraham’s final surrender is the most difficult of all to understand. It did not come until the evening of his life—after his journey of some fifty years. God had been taking him along, step by step, until he had reached a place where he would fully obey God’s voice. The world waits to see what God will do with a man who is perfectly surrendered to Him. Next to God’s own Son, Abraham was one of very few recorded in Scripture as meeting this holy ideal.

For twenty-five years, Abraham had been in the Promised Land; but he did not have the promised heir. Nevertheless God continued to tell Abraham, even in his old age, that he would have a son. Miraculously, that day came. But just as the lad was reaching manhood Abraham received a very strange command, and that was his last surrender—to *be willing to give up his only son* (Genesis 22:2–3).

One can only imagine the father’s thoughts. “Every step that Abraham advanced toward Mount Moriah, the Lord went with him. All the agony and grief that Abraham endured during the three days of his dark and fearful trial, were imposed upon him to give us a lesson in perfect faith and obedience, and that we might better comprehend how real was the great self-denial and infinite sacrifice of the Father in giving His only Son to die a shameful death for the guilty race. No trial, no suffering or test, could be brought to bear upon Abraham, which would cause such mental anguish, such torture of soul, as that of obeying God in offering up his son.” —*The Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875

As morning dawned on the third day, “Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” Genesis 22:5

And then there was his son’s question: “Behold the fire and

the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Verse 7

Did you ever consider how prophetic Abraham's answer was? "My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering." Verse 8. Two thousand years later, God did just that. Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary are very close together, and God's Son was provided as the sacrifice for the world.

"Abraham assured his son that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would rather give his own life than to deprive him of life. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. He told Isaac that God had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured his son that God's promise, that 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,' would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead. He told Isaac that he had hoped that the Messiah would spring from him. In this he was disappointed, and then, that his darling son must die by his own hand, increased his grief a hundred-fold.

"Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. He considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but his Creator had specified him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as a sacrifice; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that God loved him, in that He required him to be consecrated to Himself in sacrifice." —*The Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were spoken by father and son; the last affectionate, filial, and parental tears were shed; the last embrace was given; and the father pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, which was to take the life of Isaac, when suddenly his arm is stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Genesis 22:11–12



Remember Jesus' words: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56. God lifted the

curtain of time for Abraham. He looked into the future and saw God's Son on Calvary, bearing his sins and the sins of the whole world. God gave him that secret and told him how His Son would come into the world to take away sin.

And that is why the apostle Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:2: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them."

When God calls someone to higher service, there is always a conflict with the will. We can fight against it, but we must pray the prayer of Christ: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "Thy will be done." Matthew 26:39, 42, 44. God's will has to be done instead of mine. When you come to Jesus Christ, you surrender your will to take God's will; that is, to let the will of God be done in you, you must surrender your will.

Abraham obeyed God and did not withhold from Him his only child. After that, God expanded his promise once again: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." Genesis 22:15–18

When we have no greater desire than to do the will of God and make a complete surrender to Him, the sweet messages of heaven will come to each of us personally. God will whisper into your soul the secrets of heaven.

After Abraham did what God commanded, God told His friend all about His Son. If we make a full surrender, God will give us more than we have ever known before. We will have a new vision of Jesus Christ and will thank God for it not only in this life but in the life to come. May God help us to make a complete, unconditional surrender to God, fully and wholly, now and forever.

#### **Abram's Four Surrenders:**

1. His earthly inheritance
2. His right to choose his own way
3. His worldly opportunities and advantages—the chance to increase himself at the cost of others
4. His will—like Christ, he prayed "not my will but Thine be done."

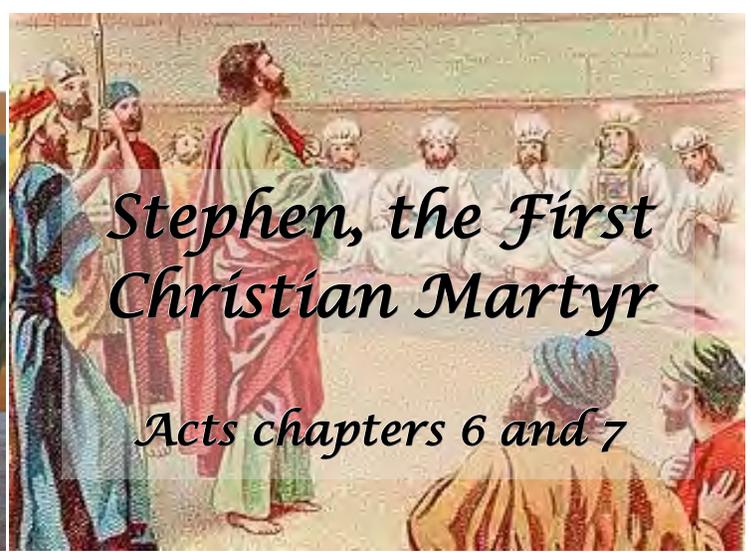
His was a long journey, perhaps 50 years.

Where are you in your journey with God? Still holding out the hope of an earthly inheritance, choosing your own way, or abandoning your world and your will to the provisions of His way and will?

When God calls you, He calls you to die to all those things so that He may resurrect you to a new life in Christ. Choose the way of the Lord!

**Larry Watts**

**Adapted from a sermon by Dwight L. Moody**



## CHILDREN'S CORNER

Stephen was one of the great men of faith in the early church. Though he was not an apostle, he holds a special place in scripture because he was chosen to minister to the widows who were being cared for in Jerusalem. It seems that some of the widows were being overlooked and neglected, so Stephen and six other men who were "full of faith and the Holy Spirit," were chosen to take care of them.

He also was the first Christian martyr. A martyr is a person who holds to a belief so strongly that he/she is willing to die for it. Such was the faith that Stephen had in Jesus Christ.

Stephen was able to work miracles among the people. He began to preach and some of the Jews would argue with him about his beliefs. These evil men persuaded some men to say that Stephen was speaking against Moses and even against God. This wasn't true, but many people got upset about it because they believed it was true.

They took hold of Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish rulers. In the picture you can see him appearing before the group. Directly in front of him is the high priest with the beautiful breastplate on the front of his garment. It contained gold and twelve different precious gems. On each stone was written the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

These were powerful men who were able to make life and death decisions about people. But Stephen was not afraid to speak the truth. As he stood before them, they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

He began to speak to them. He told about the whole history of the Jewish people beginning with Abraham. Then he accused the men, and their fathers before them, of hurting and killing the prophets, and even of killing the Righteous One, Jesus.

The rulers became very angry with him, but Stephen,

looking up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He told the men what he was seeing.

They put their hands over their ears because they didn't want to listen to him. They yelled at the top of their voices. They rushed at him, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him to death.

While they were throwing stones at him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and "Lord do not hold this sin against them." Then he "fell asleep" (died).

He had the same forgiving spirit that Jesus had when He had said the same words when He was on the cross. The young man who was consenting to Stephen's death was Saul of Tarsus.

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Stephen was brave, and he was not afraid to speak the truth.

Suppose you and your friend are in a store, and you see her take something from a display and hide it under her coat. What do you do? Do you also take something to see if you can get away with it? Do you just say nothing? Or do you say to your friend, "You need to put that back. Stealing is not right, and you will be in big trouble when they catch you?" You may lose your friend, but you will be doing her a favour if you can stop her bad behaviour.

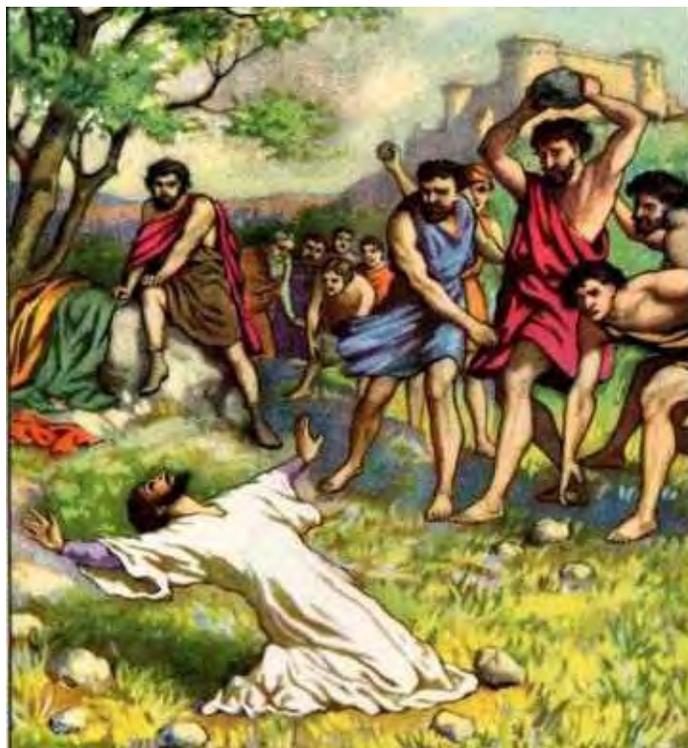
### REVIEW

1. To which group of women did Stephen provide help?
2. How many men were chosen for this work?
3. What do we call a person who is willing to die for his/her faith?

4. What did the evil men say about Stephen?
5. What were the Jewish rulers called?
6. What was on the breastplate of the high priest?
7. How did Stephen's face look when he began to speak?
8. Who did Stephen accuse them of killing?
9. What did Stephen see when he looked up toward heaven?
10. What did he pray?
11. Who had prayed this prayer at an earlier time?
12. Who was approving of Stephen's death?

You can read about Stephen in the Bible in [Acts 6:1-14](#) and [Acts 7:1-60](#)

Submitted by Sister Dina Tran



## *Health Reform Message from Brother Ernie Gale in New Zealand*



Yes, dear brethren and sisters, this is what is needed to go through the coming time of trouble and we have had a taste of this in the last 14 months with five major earthquakes and over 7000 after-shocks in the Christchurch area.

Two of my daughters have had to vacate their homes and my eldest son has had his home and business shop much damaged by the earthquakes. I have also been adversely affected by the earthquakes with the loss of my pet cat, and my next-door neighbour coming to me asking for help and prayer, after having suffered a heart attack. He is now studying our health message together with a study of Revelation chapter 14, and the Second Coming of Jesus.

I have made a concerted effort to contact health professionals here in Christchurch with the study of our health message which has brought a good measure of success.

We have had many reports of approval of our message of natural health principles, and this in turn often leads to discussion of Bible prophecy and the soon return of our wonderful Saviour Jesus Christ. New Zealand is not ex-

empt from trouble and disaster as we have witnessed over the last few months, but at the same time people have become aware of the most important thing in life, to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. One of the most successful books I used in my work is *The Ministry of Healing*, by E.G. White. This is an excellent book to share with family and friends. Isaiah 58:8 speaks of the health reform: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward." To be in good health is a wonderful blessing from the Lord, and by studying this beautiful book and other health literature opens the key to a healthy lifestyle. My goal is to place *The Ministry of Healing* book with as many people who desire to improve their health both physically and spiritually. What I would like to see is a Country Health Retreat established in the South Island with a subcommittee to run it. For further information please feel free to contact me. My address is Ernie Gale, 18 Joy Street, Christchurch, 8061. Telephone: 385 9338. For a donation I will send *The Ministry of Healing* book and other relevant health literature. May the Lord bless you all with good health, dear Brethren and Sisters.

*At the age of 85 Ernie Gale continues to work actively for the Lord. Let us keep him and his work in our prayers.  
(The Editors)*



## Malawi Union Seminar - 2011

In the year 2011, we had a seminar in Malawi and the following is a brief account of what happened during that time.

During the last week of October 2011, beginning on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, the brethren and sisters in Malawi joyfully started welcoming visitors to Blantyre, to the Malawi Union Seminar that lasted for six days. We felt especially blessed to be together with brethren from various countries. Foreign visitors came from Tanzania who were led by Brother Bright Fue, the Tanzanian Union President; Mozambique, by Brother Esaú López, a missionary who oversees God's work in that country, originally from Guatemala. From South Africa we had our dear Brother Paul Katide, who accompanied Brother Idel Suarez Jr., PhD, the President of the General Conference from the United States of America. The main speaker at the seminar was Brother Idel Suarez. We greatly praise the Lord for such a wonderful opportunity to be in His presence and learn at His feet.

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27

On the above date, we started the seminar, led by Brother Bright Fue, who was joined the next day by Brother Suarez after his arrival. In his opening address, Brother Fue welcomed everyone to the seminar and gave greetings from the various countries that he had visited.

Following his introductory remarks, Brother Fue then encouraged everybody to prepare for the soon coming of Jesus. He emphasized that we need to lay hold of the four major principles of our faith. These are: the Sabbath, marriage, health reform, and tithes and offerings. He further talked about the conditions that we must fulfill in order to receive the gift of the Latter Rain. If we are to be among those who will receive the Latter Rain, we need to live prayerful lives, be temperate, be a loving people, and be true Sabbath keepers. In his expansion of these aspects, the emphasis was on temperance. Citing Psalms 139:14–15, he said, since we were fearfully and wonderfully made, we need to know how to use and care for the

“machine” which is our body. He explained that since we were created from the dust, we need also to eat the dust; but how do we do this? It is through eating the plants that take nutrients from the soil. We must keep all the three aspects of our life—the spirit, soul, and body—blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Further, he also read from the book of *Temperance*, p. 11 and *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 17, which tell us that there are laws in the body which, when violated, result in sickness and disease. We also learned that violation of natural laws is the same as violation of the moral law. After such a wonderful lesson he allowed the other brethren from Tanzania to continue to educate us on health issues.

Brother Eli Mugonja spoke on the subject of “Life before and after sin.” His presentation informed us that in order for us to maintain our health we need to know how God created man in the beginning. From nature, there are also herbs that cure diseases, citing Genesis 3:18. After some brief medical missionary experience narration, he called for a personal decision on the part of everyone present to say: “Today I will change my lifestyle in health.”

Brother Nyakeji started by reading from the Scriptures from 2 Kings 6:5 (about the axe that was lifted from the water using a stick), and Isaiah 60:1 (about arising and shining). After a short explanation, he started speaking to us about the danger of soft drinks. He carried out an experiment on a Fanta drink, and the famous Coca Cola; the drinks were divided into three parts, the composition of which contain the substances that are health destroying. He said the reality is that both drinks are harmful to our health, Fanta's effects [unlike what many people believe] take as long to cure just as is the case with Coke. From this it was clear that natural products should always be our option.

Brother Erick Ndimangwa spoke about diseases and their possible causes and gave some examples of natural rem-

edies. He said that one easy way to know which herb can help when a certain part of the body is affected, is to see which leaves resemble the shape of the body part in question. It is likely that that is the remedy for that disease. With this we ended our Thursday meetings.

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28**

Friday morning, October 28, saw Brother Suarez arriving at the church where the seminar was being conducted. He started by conveying the many greetings from his family and the General Conference. This was followed by a short period of distribution of literature to a number of brethren and sisters. The books distributed were: the Spirit of Prophecy—"The History of Redemption"—(a compilation of a number of Sister White's books); "Has the Truth Changed?" and "The Bible Study Handbook".

Following this exercise was a lecture which he called, "Becoming a Pastor." In his address he said Malawi needed pastors; he had come from the General Conference to say Malawi needs more pastors and that the work of God was suffering because of lack of pastors. He said some elders have to become pastors. Quoting Ephesians 4:11-12, he said we need all the offices mentioned in the verse, for the perfecting of the saints, so that sinners can become saints. Also, a minister must minister to the needs of others in all areas.

Brother Paul Katide then brought to us a message about the parable of the hidden treasure. He helped the class identify the elements in the parable and their meaning: The garden, the seeker of the treasure, and the treasure itself. He urged us to hold fast to the truth that we have. In his conclusion he told the story of the great ship, Titanic which no one thought would sink, but it did. The world's richest and most honorable people were on board, and lost their lives. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet lose his own soul?

After a short break, we entered the church again, and Brother Suarez started teaching about "The hygiene wheel." According to Sister White, hygiene should be the first study. He further said that Hygiene was the daughter of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine. He had a staff with two snakes and that is the symbol of medicine today. He presented that the wheel starts with the washing of our hands (Exodus 30:21; 11:32); not like the Pharisees who used a little water, but we must wash them clean with enough water and soap. He taught us how to thoroughly wash our hands in ten steps. He said we also need to take a shower every day and wear the right type of cloth, 100% cotton, 100% wool, 100% linen or 100% silk. These types of clothes help avoid sweating. He talked about water purification and also the proper preparation

of food. He finally talked about making our beds as Jesus did when He rose from the grave, and about clean toilets (Deuteronomy 23:12). "May the peace of the Lord be with you all," he said, and we then rested for a short time. A brief meeting was held to test the health of brethren and sisters. We then closed the day's meetings for Sabbath preparations.

#### **OPENING OF THE SABBATH**

During the opening of the Sabbath Brother Bright Fue re-emphasized his Thursday message about the four pillars of our faith, and the conditions that we must fulfill in order to receive the Latter Rain.

#### **SABBATH, OCTOBER 29**

After a nice Sabbath School which was well attended by over 300 people, Brother Idel Suarez presented the Divine Service. Calling children to come close to him, he told them the story of colors and their meanings, followed by a sermon which he entitled "The Africa for Jesus." His sermon was centered on Simon who helped Jesus bear the cross (Mark 15:21). He was an African from the present day Libya which then was known as Cyrene. Simon was then in Jerusalem. He narrated the story of a dream that a certain pastor had. This pastor saw Christians carrying crosses of different sizes. Some were longer and heavy while others were shorter and lighter. But others, seeing how heavy their crosses were, came up with a new idea of taking a saw and started cutting short their crosses so that they became lighter. But unbeknownst to them, as their journey went on, there was a deep and wide chasm ahead of them, with no bridge to take one to the other side. It required that each one must use his own cross as the bridge. Now, for those who had cut their crosses shorter, it was the end of the road. Only those whose crosses were intact managed to reach the other side—eternity. We need be unified in Jesus; we all have to bear our crosses to the end when we will receive our reward.

In the afternoon Br. Paul Katide presented on the topic "Alas, my Brother." In this lesson the story was told about the old prophet who cheated a young prophet such that he disobeyed the voice of the Lord (1 Kings 12:24). We need men and women who cannot be bought or sold (*Education*, p. 57). The man in the story was a man of God, but why did he die foolish?

(a) Doubted God's word; (b) Accepted new light that contradicted the old light; (c) Forgot that there is more to fear from within than without; (d) Did not live by the Word of God.

Brother Katide ended by warning everybody, that none

need die like the young prophet, but to endure to the end and each of us will be saved.

Connected to this afternoon lesson was a missionary experience by Brother Esau Lopez. He began by citing 1 Peter 2:9, emphasizing that we are the children of light and we have therefore been called by God to a great work. He stated that there is only one church on this earth to restore the keeping of the commandments. He narrated the wonderful work of soul winning in Mozambique, how he began the work, the learning of the language spoken there, and the harvest of souls there. This session concluded the hours of the Sabbath.

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30

Sunday lectures were opened by Brother Bright Fue, then Brother Suarez spoke. It was another precious time to continue learning on health issues. The whole seminar, apart from the union elections was centered on health. This time, Brother Suarez spoke on the subject of "The ABC reasons for vegetarianism." He provided us with reasons as to why we must be vegetarians.

A = anatomy (man's anatomy indicates he is a herbivore, as evidenced from the teeth and the alimentary canal)

B = biochemistry (the chemical composition of meat foods and how the body reacts to them)

C = cruelty to animals (Proverbs 12:10). We need to be kind to animals.

D = disease prevention (Genesis 1:29, original diet for man)

After a ten minute break, Brother Paul Katide spoke on the topic "I will not come down." The main text was from James 4:8. The story was based on Nehemiah 12:5, the question that arises is, if you are tired during the time of peace how shall we stand in the time of the winds? Jeremiah 6:1-2

This ended the day's lessons as the rest of the time was spent on elections.

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1

On this day, we heard from Brother Suarez on the subject of "The nutrition traffic light." In this lesson, the basic illustration is that there are three colors used in traffic. The first is red and means STOP. The second is yellow which means EXERCISE CAUTION, and the green color means GO! On the road, confusing these lights can translate to death. So there are foods which we must stop eating. These are stimulants. Then we have processed foods which need to be taken with caution. Then there are wholesome foods which must be taken liberally.

Brother Paul Katide followed with a message: "Reuben—

A strong weakness." Reuben forfeited his right because of his sin, as he was unstable as water.

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2

On Tuesday, November 2, we heard Brother Suarez giving his last lecture on health. It was entitled: "The food combination cross." He taught us about the right combination of foods. Neutral foods, which can be taken with anything. Fruits, except lemons and avocado, must not be taken with vegetables (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 183). He prayed to God to help us bear the food combination cross. (Matthew 16:24)

Meanwhile, the late afternoon sessions, as noted already, were used for the reorganization of the union. It was a time when the union delegates were meeting with Brethren Suarez, Fue, and Katide for the various activities that were to be carried out by them. After the whole process of elections was done, the results were as follows:

President:	Br. Jacob Martinez
Vice President:	Br. Harold Mateme
Secretary:	Br. Evance Mtikama
Treasure:	Br. Mabvuto Phula
Evangelist & Literature leader:	Br. Ronald Kamanga
Youth Leader:	Br. Shadreck Chamanza
Publishing leader:	Br. Amos Ombalipenga
Good Samaritan leaders:	Sis. Edith Thawi and Sis. Bertha Chunga
Health Leader:	Br. Daniel Madzlo
Education leader:	Br. Zakeyo Mkunika

After having taken the oath before God and the church that they will faithfully work in their respective capacities, the whole church was ready to witness yet another joyous event of ordination of two ministers, which would also be the end of the whole seminar. Brother Suarez spoke from the book of Mark 3:13-14. He said we must follow the example of Jesus who calls people into the ministry and the church simply recognizes the call. He said that ministers need to walk with Jesus. The brethren ordained were Brother Harold Mateme and Brother Evance Mtikama.

Finally, a rather sad moment came. We had to part ways. It was the end of everything that had been prepared for the seminar. The writers of this report pray that the God of peace may bless everyone that participated in this seminar. May His abundant blessings continue to pour upon those who attended the seminar so that the truth they heard may continue to make sense through the Spirit of God. This is our wish and prayer. AMEN.

*Joel Jungubawa Msiska, John Nkhoma, Erick Katuya*



**PASTOR  
BRIGHT FUE**

*Pastor Bright Fue  
speaking.*



PASTOR CHISALE and



Bro. Idel Suárez and Bro. John Nkhoma

**MALAWI  
UNION  
SEMINAR**



**BROTHERS PAUL KATIDE  
& JOEL MSISKA**



*Bro Esau Lopez (far left) sings with brethren from Mozambique.*



**“The merciful provisions of the law extended even to the lower animals, which cannot express in words their want and suffering.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 500. “If even the wants of dumb animals are supplied, can we appreciate the blessings which God will bestow upon the beings formed in his image?” –*General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1899**

