



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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A More Excellent Way

David Clayton



The apostle Paul tells us that all the commandments are fulfilled in one commandment. (Rom. 13:9). Because of the limitations of our minds, sometimes we need to have things spelled out for us, so God has divided up the one commandment into sub-sections. But in actual fact everything is fulfilled in one commandment and this is what Jesus tried to bring out in the following statement:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:30)

Perhaps there is not much difference between the heart and the mind or between the soul and the strength, but Jesus specified each one of these separately, and I believe that the reason He specified each so carefully is that He wanted us to understand that there is no aspect of our being which is not embraced by this commandment. In other words, it is not enough to love God with our mind or to say that we have deep affection for Him, but our affection for

God must include the body and what it does.

The common understanding of love is that it is a feeling of deep affection which leads to commitment and sacrifice. How do we have a feeling of deep affection and commitment to a person with our hands and with our feet, eyes, mouth and ears? Not just with our strength but our mind, our soul, our heart, our all?

Let us focus on a passage in the Psalms which gives us some insight into the importance of a relationship of love with God:

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. (Psa 91:14)

If we ask a favour of God, why does God respond? In the time of trouble that is coming, in the present financial crisis, when I don't have a job, when I don't know how I am going to meet my expenses and I call upon God, what is the basis on which He hears and answers my prayers?

We might say, "He answers for Jesus' sake," and of course this is true. We might say, it is because I am faithful to Him and that is also true, but in this Psalm God says it is due to one single thing.

God says, "the reason I will deliver you and set you on high is because you have set your love upon me." What does it mean to *set* your love upon a person? What does it mean to have your heart wrapped up in Him, what

does that mean? God doesn't just say your mind, but He says your heart and your soul also.

My children are grown up but my feelings are just as intense when it comes to those that I love. Love is not something that we can tell how it should feel, it is a response that comes out of the heart and God says the reason He will deliver us is because we have set our love upon Him. Let us forget about the commandments for the moment, let us forget about our duties and responsibilities and let us focus on the single necessary ingredient and the question of how to obtain it because this, in essence is what lies at the foundation of all true Christian experience. The more I understand what love is and what God says about it, the more I realize that this is the truth

After God's Heart

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. (Acts 13:22)

If we were searching for a good ex-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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ample of a servant of God who would we choose? We might choose Daniel, we might choose Enoch, or we might choose even Moses, but for most of us, David would not be the first choice. Murder is one of the crimes that we abhor in our society, but when we find a person who not only murders somebody but also takes away the man's wife and then in addition tells lies and acts as though nothing is wrong, we tend to think that no punishment is too harsh for such a person.

This is exactly how it was with David. In spite of his profession to be a servant of God he committed these terrible crimes. What kind of hypocrite was this man? For him who had talked so much about God to turn around now to become an adulterer, a murderer, a liar, a hypocrite and a pretender was a terrible betrayal of his faith! Is this the kind of person that appeals to the heart of God?

And yet there is only one person in the Bible that is ever described as being "a man after God's own heart" and it

is David. Of course, Daniel was said to be a man "greatly beloved" (of God) and God refers to Abraham as, "Abraham my friend," but David is said to be a man after God's own heart. What does this really mean? God is saying when I try to find somebody who best expresses how my heart feels and what my heart longs for, David is the man that I choose. Why was this? What was there about David that was so unusual that God could say, "he is a man after My own heart," in spite of the terrible things that he did?

When we examine some of the things which David wrote we find a clue as to why David possessed the attributes which God highly prizes. In Psalm 27, David wrote:

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. (Psa 27:4)

In essence David is saying, "there is only one thing I want of God, one thing I have longed for, one thing I have wished for," and what is that one thing? It is something so boring to the common heart that most of us cannot understand it. David says, "That is the thing I am going to seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple."

I believe that this was an expression of the heart of David. If you go through the psalms, one thing jumps out at you, the psalms are about love and passion for God. As we examine the Psalms, we find this pattern of love. For example David says,

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. (2) My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? (Psa 42:1-2)

When we see an animal with its tongue sticking out of its mouth, desperately

thirsty for water, it is easy to understand how great its desire is. David was saying, "oh God that's how I feel about you. I want to constantly be where you are finding all my happiness in just looking at you." Is this the way we feel about God? Is this the condition of our hearts when we seek Him in prayer? This might seem like a trivial question but it is probably the most important question which we will ever hear concerning prayer. Those of us who have forgotten this principle will find that our prayer life is wearisome and difficult.

First Love

When I first became a Christian, I found that my experience with God was wonderfully satisfying. I count those years among the best I ever had in my entire life. Many of us can testify to the same thing. The Bible talks about something called "the first love." (Rev. 2:4). At that point when we had this "first love," we never understood one hundredth of the doctrines that we know today, so how is it possible that our experience with God could have been better? I remember that back in those days, as a young Christian, all I was obsessed with was the issue of the mark of the beast. I was constantly studying about the mark of the beast and prophecy in general. Years afterwards, my focus changed and I began to focus on the truth about the godhead. Now for the past few years my emphasis has been on the truth of righteousness in Christ. But at different stages during my life, regardless of what doctrine I was focusing on I found times when I was very close to the Lord and there were times when I was not so close. For a while I thought it was the doctrine, that made the difference. But I have learned that in the relationship with God, doctrines are only important if they cause us to love God more, and enable us to see Him more clearly.

Looking At God

There is a saying that goes like this:

"when a man draws near to God in prayer, he forgets about prayer and he remembers God."

The first purpose of prayer is to look upon God. One of the phrases that I used to love to quote was a statement that was made by the reformers back in the 16th century, they asked the question, “what is man’s chief purpose?” Their answer was, “Man’s chief purpose is to enjoy God and to glorify Him forever.” The reason man exists is to enjoy God and to glorify Him forever. If this is not at the center of our religion we will find that our religion deteriorates into dryness and boring formalism.

Why is it that we have such a problem with surrender to God? It is because we are not seeing God. When we are overcome by temptation what is the reason? The little temptation is bigger than God because we are not seeing God, it is as simple as that. When a person truly looks upon the glory of God, nothing in this world has the power to draw him away. We come short because we have learned to look upon earthly things and this is why Jesus says that the great commandment is to love God with all the heart, soul mind and strength. When this is a reality, every other requirement in Christianity is automatically fulfilled. This is why God could say of David, “I know him, I know that he will carry out my commandments,” because when a man’s heart is wrapped up in God, God does not have to worry about such a person.

Yes it is true that for one moment in his life David took his eyes off God, he took his eyes off God badly, he allowed a woman to grab his attention. It is more than likely that during that period of his life David stopped praying, or maybe if he was still praying, his prayers became nothing more than dry empty formalism. He was falling asleep on his knees, his mind was drifting all over the place because he could not look into the face of God and continue along the path that he had taken, so he went through the routine of worship but he was not really looking at God. A person cannot look upon the face of God and have sin ruling in his life at the same time. But David’s moment

of shame does not change the fact that the greatest desire of his heart was to know God, to see Him continually and to be with him always. David could honestly say,

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. (Psa 84:2)

Admiring God

It is not unmanly to say, “I love the Lord,” it is not unmanly for tears to come to our eyes when we think about Him, it is not unmanly to say, “I desire you my Lord,” we don’t have to be so correct and proper and guard ourselves when it comes to God, it is okay to allow our hearts to melt when we think about Him and the kind of person He is. The truth is, God appreciates it. That’s the kind of attitude that God really appreciates, and that’s what makes us people after God’s own heart.

Moses’ intimate relationship with God was what led him to make the great request to God, “...I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” (Exo 33:18)

Why did Moses want to see God’s glory? When we examine the context in which Moses made this request, it becomes clear that he asked because he wanted to know God better.

What kind of person is it that brings this kind of reaction out of us? It’s the person who has traits that we admire. Normally when we meet a person who has traits which we don’t admire, we don’t really want to have too much to do with the person, but when you see something in a person which we admire, it attracts us to the person, we want to know more about the person.

Moses had a relationship with God and he saw certain things which made him think, “I want to know this person better,” and one day he got to the place where he knew God so well he dared to say, “I beg you, show me your glory.” He had seen much of God, but what he saw made him realize that

there were many more wonderful things to learn about this person. That is what happens when we truly get to know God.

Each week we may visit the place of worship, but if this is the pinnacle of our relationship with God, we are truly suffering. Those who have come to understand the wonderful person that God is will want far more than the formalism associated with public worship. They will have a constant hungering and thirsting for a closer, more intimate walk with Him - one which is on the personal level of heart-touching love. That was the kind of relationship David had with God.

Now Moses asked God, “I beg you, show me your glory,” and God happily answered him.

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (Exo 33:19)

God Revealed

Let us notice that when God talks about the things about Himself that are most important He talks about His goodness, His character. It is very helpful to think about God’s greatness, it is often a blessing to look at and think about the infinity of God’s creation. But God holds up His character before us as the greatest revelation of His glory. He says, “this is what you really need to understand,” and what was true for Moses is also true for us.

Now to those of us who have the same desire as Moses, to those who say, “I beg you show me your glory,” here is what God says:

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

worlds; (Heb 1:1-2)

In the past God tried to make Himself known through prophets, but a prophet is not the best person to tell us what God is like because all the prophets could do was give us second-hand information. Their representation of God was always limited and to some extent, distorted. A prophet could **tell** us about God, but could never **reveal** God. So if we want to truly understand the kind of person God is we have to look at Jesus. Jesus is God's final word.

It is interesting to note that Jesus never emphasized the creative ability of God or the almightiness of God in seeking to reveal Him to the world. While He performed many miracles, what Jesus focused on most of all, was God's love, God's character. In John 17: 4-6 He declares that in revealing God's name (character) to the world He had finished the work which God had given Him to do.

Now what especially did Jesus reveal about God?

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (1 John 4:8)

The most important attribute that we see in Christ is the attribute of love, let's just remind ourselves of how important love is:

A More Excellent Way

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. (1 Cor 12:31)

Paul tells us that we are to covet the best gifts, but then he says that there is a more excellent way, a way which is better than the gifts of the spirit. It is good to desire to be able to raise the dead or to heal the sick or to speak in tongues, but there is a better way. There is a more excellent way. In this verse God is showing us that there is only one thing that is really vital. What is this more excellent way?

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become

as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (1 Cor 13:1)

And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Cor 13:13)

Charity (love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. (10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor 13:8-10)

What is the perfect thing? it is love, our partial prophesying, our partial speaking in tongues, our partial knowledge is intended to bring us to a certain place. If God is love, what is the pinnacle of human experience? It must be to experience true love, for God is love. That's what Paul is saying. When we experience perfect love, the more excellent way, then prophecy becomes unnecessary because when we have found love, we have already found the experience to which prophecy is intended to bring us. No wonder the Bible says that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

The truth is that many of us have become too obsessed with doctrinal fine points to the detriment of our relationship with God. Our doctrinal understanding may change, but one thing must remain constant and steady and that is the relationship of love with God which stems from constantly looking at His revelation in Christ. That is what true Christianity is about.

Do we truly love the Lord in this way? Do we desire to love the Lord in this way? How can we maintain this relationship of love with God when we have found it? The Lord Himself points out the way to us:

The Way of Love

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)

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

The promises given here are wonderful. Jesus promises that He will manifest Himself to us and that He and His Father will come to live with us. This is what David was praying for when he expressed the desire to abide in the house of the Lord for ever. That is what Jesus says He will do for us. He says, "I will come and make my home with you if you love me and keep my commandments." Many Christians, have missed the point of this verse because they have believed that when Jesus mentioned the keeping of the commandments here, He meant the observance of the ten commandments including the command to observe the Seventh day Sabbath. But when we look at what Jesus says in this same passage we recognize that this is not what He had in mind.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. (11) These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. (12) This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (John 15:10-12)

(John 15:17) These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Here Jesus makes it clear that He is speaking of a specific commandment when He makes these precious promises. He is really saying, "if you want to be drawn close to God, if you want to have the constant manifestation of the presence of God and His Son, you are to love one another."

The natural desire of one person who loves another is to do something for the one who is loved, to do something to make the person happy. Is this the kind of attitude that we have towards God? A great many people think only of their own happiness when they consider the Christian life. The focus is on what makes *them* happy. This is the reason for their worship - a way of seeing if they can get God to make them happy. But the relationship based on love for God which desires *His* pleasure is the kind of relationship that really satisfies God.

But if we do love God, what can we do for Him to express that love? God says, if you truly love me, it will be not only with your heart, but with your strength, that is, my hands, my ears, my lips, my nose, my mouth, my entire body. How do I love God with my body?

Through God's Eyes

Here is the truth which God wants us to understand: God Himself needs nothing from us. There is nothing which we can give to God and in fact, all that we possess are only ours because He has lent them to us., But although we can do nothing for God Himself, we can do for others what we would like to do for God. We can pour out what we feel for God upon others. Maybe I find it difficult to love you because you are so quarrelsome and difficult. Maybe if I set out to love you and I look at you, the only thing I will see is a bad character. But when I look at you through the eyes of God, I can express my love for Him to you. ***I can love you because I love Him*** and that gives me a reason for ignoring everything negative that I can see in you. If I don't love you for yourself I can love you for God's sake, and He says that if I do this, He will teach me how to love you for your sake. I can start with doing it for God's sake, until I can see you as He sees you.

Christ Alone

I once read a statement by a Christian which challenged me to the depths of

my soul. When I read it I felt as if a piece of ice was wrapped around my heart. The statement went something like this:

"Let me desire to be unloved, unrecognized and unknown in the world for your sake."

I put myself into that statement and something cold clamped around my heart. Am I to preach the word of God and nobody ever to know that it was I who preached? Am I to write books and articles and never put my name there? Am I to share these wonderful truths and nobody know that I had a part in searching them out? Am I to go down to my grave having spent my life for the cause of truth and nobody ever to give me credit for anything? Is this really what I must desire as a Christian?

What if I were to labour with all my might and the only consequence of all my labour is that people should come to know the name of Jesus and nobody ever hear my name? When I thought about it I had a strange lost feeling. But it brought home to me the reality that every Christian really is a part of Christ. When the Christian life is properly understood and experienced then we will realize that we no longer live, but that it is Christ who lives and that He alone is worthy to live. It is His name alone which is worthy to be exalted.

If I should happen to die today the universe would not even miss a heartbeat. The world would continue on its merry way without even a slight hiccup, and although I have friends here, if I am buried in the grave tomorrow, how much poorer will the world be? Not one iota poorer. I am nobody really, I am only important to me and maybe my wife and children. Humanity gives us this self inflated concept of self and so we center the world around ourselves and seek our own glorification all the days of our lives, but when we finally find our true place in Christ, only then do we find the true meaning of our existence in this universe.

One Person, and only one Person is fit

to live, and when I recognize this, when my whole desire morning noon and night is the glory of this person, then I have found my destiny.

This is the only way that we can really learn to love other people. When we stop loving ourselves supremely, when we realize that we are not really at the center of the world and that the universe does not turn around us, then we can begin to truly care for others. When I am living in Jesus and for Jesus, it doesn't matter what other people do, it doesn't matter how they treat me, it doesn't matter. I am nobody and it doesn't matter, what they do cannot hurt Christ; it can only make Him love them more. When I understand this I am free to love others without reservation because I am not loving them as myself, neither am I loving them for myself, Christ is loving through me and He says, "when this is your experience, you have reached the pinnacle where God truly will reveal Himself in your life, where your life will be just an extension of My life and you will know what it is to be truly happy."



THINK ABOUT IT

What is the difference between the would-be Christian, who knows the law, but does not keep it and the worldling who does not keep the law and does not acknowledge that it is good?

If one is going to sin, is it not better to be the worldling who does not know that there is such a thing as liberty than to be the man who knows that there is liberty but cannot get it? If it has got to be slavery, if we must live in the sins of the world, then it is better to be in the world, partaking of its pleasures, than to be in a miserable bondage and have no hope of a life to come. (*Bible Studies on the Book of Romans by E.J. Waggoner - p.54*)

Romanian Report

Vlad Ardeias

I am so happy that I have the opportunity of writing to you again! As most of you already know, we were blessed again by the Lord with a new opportunity to study the Word of God during the period December 31 – January 4, and I am happy to let you know that the Lord worked with great power among us! Although many began to be a little scared because of the present economic crisis, the Lord succeeded in turning their eyes to Him and to the everlasting truth. I would like to briefly share with you the main ideas that I was able to share at this meeting.

The first topic was entitled “*Do you have the wedding garment?*” which focused on the parable that Jesus presented in Matthew 22. The emphasis was on verses 8 to 14.

We are part of these “many” that were invited to the King’s wedding and we have rejoiced to accept the invitation, thus entering into the King’s palace. We have been rejoicing indeed over the past several years by the wonderful news that was brought to us by the King’s messengers, wondering sometimes: “How can it be that a wretch like me has been invited into God’s family, being given the very life of God’s Son?” We find ourselves in the same position as “the publicans and the harlots” that Christ was speaking about. But I have noticed that, at least here in Romania, with the passing of time, some people began to forget a major, very important thing:

Anyone can enter indeed, but not **anyhow!** In order to experience the joy of the wedding we need to have just one thing: The wedding garment!

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: (12) And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (13)

Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few are chosen. (Mat 22:11-14)

Since this garment is so vital, we are deeply interested then in finding out what this garment really is! We, as Adventists already have an answer to this question: The garment is Christ’s righteousness, which is a perfect answer! Yet I wanted to find a less theological answer to this question, a more direct and plain answer!

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal 3:27)

Yes indeed! This is the answer, the garment is Christ Himself! In order to actually be a part of God’s family we need to be born of God, to have His very life, that is to have Christ Himself! Here is a vivid description of this experience:

“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” (COL - 311)

Oh, what an experience to live this life! What a privilege we have been given: to really have Him instead of us! The Bible is full of this reality. The very garment that is required, the very thing that the King is looking for in His investigative judgment before the beginning of the wedding is Christ Himself.

“Full provision has been made that man shall become one with Jesus Christ. Life and immortality are brought to light through Christ. The truth is to make a

deep imprint on mind and character. As we see Christ and contemplate his character, and identify ourselves with him, we know God. Our knowledge of God is measured by our knowledge of Christ.” (ST.1897-04-15.013)

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Rom 13:14)

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph 4:22-24)

Yes, my dear brothers, that is the truth: we have the unbelievable privilege to die and to be born again, to have the very mind and heart of Christ, to identify ourselves with Him, for He is the only One that can be accepted by God in the Heavenly Courts. The entire humanity has this privilege, and for the ones that want to enter into the wedding, it is a must have! This is a precious lesson that we must not forget: **Anyone, but not anyhow!**

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The next two presentations were focused on the signs of the end of the world, since this was a subject which was widely discussed among us.

I presented the idea that it is not the prophecies that determine the coming of Christ, but rather His coming determines the fulfilling of the prophecies. In 1888 when the most precious message came, there was a motion by Senator Blair calling for a Sunday-law which was discussed in the US Senate during that same period of time. When the rejection of the message became a fact, the bill vanished. How did

that happen? It is very simple and plain: When there is a people, ready for the storm, the storm will be released; but as long as God's people are not ready for the coming of the Saviour, Satan has no reason to begin persecution.

The world has passed through terrible global crises, yet the end did not come! We have no reason to link an actual global crisis with the second coming of the Lord! On the contrary, the verses which describe the condition of society in the last days reveal that life will continue just as in the time of Noah with the people apparently having nothing to fear! (Luke 17:26-30, 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4). We need to understand all the details of God's plan, otherwise we will face sad deceptions, like Jonah who had confused ideas about God, although he was His messenger, or like the disciples that expected the Lord to become the King of the Jewish nation in a matter of days! Although they understood some things, they had not been totally open to His plans and so were not ready for the actual events that took place.

But in Matthew 24 we have the exact answer to our question which is the same question which was stirring the disciples' minds as well:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Mat 24:3)

Jesus began to answer this question by warning them (and us today).

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (Mat 24:4)

So, there is a danger if being deceived on this subject. Many are falling into it by pushing the day of His coming further and further into the future, as Peter predicted would happen in his second epistle chapter 3, verses 3 and 4! But there is also danger of being deceived in another way on this point: Jesus continued by saying:

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (8) All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Mat 24:5-8)

Jesus describes a society that is in great pains, receiving strikes from all possible angles, and yet He says "but the end is not yet", or as it is stated in Luke 21:9, "but the end is not by and by!" How is it possible that when a Christian sees all these things happening he can think that these are the signs that Christ is about to return, when Christ Himself said that this is not the case?

But Christ continues by directly addressing this issue. In answer to the question, "and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?", He gives us two signs:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30)

This is an astronomical sign which will appear just before His coming, and it is not dependent upon the behaviour of men here on this earth.

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The second sign is given us in verse 14:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Mat 24:14)

This verse was the basis of my final presentation which was entitled "**The Everlasting Gospel**". Oh yes, this is the verse that we have been hearing

over and over again since we became Christians! Today, incredible tools have been developed by which the good news of God's love can be spread all over the Earth with incredible speed: Books, tracts, the internet, television, satellites etc, are all used for this single great purpose, the spreading of the doctrine of God's love towards mankind, and yet, Jesus still seems to tarry!

As I was thinking and praying more and more on this issue, trying to clear up this mystery, one basic question came to my mind: what in fact is the gospel of the kingdom? I started to study the Bible trying to get a clear and straight answer to that basic question. As I studied, clues and details about this gospel of the kingdom began to appear.

First, Jesus said:

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. (Luke 16:16)

Young's Literal Translation puts it this way:

The law and the prophets are till John; since then the reign of God is proclaimed good news, and every one doth press into it;

The German, Romanian and Hungarian translations carry the idea that since John, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God has been preached!

This was a striking idea for me. I had always thought that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and all God's children from Old Testament times had encountered the Gospel, yet the text says that only since John the Baptist has the Gospel been preached! This made me even more anxious to understand what is the particular Gospel that the Bible refers to here!

As we all know, this word "Gospel" means "good news." Talking about it, in Galatians 3:8 Paul tells us that the Lord brought the good news to Abraham, and in the same chapter, a few verses later, Paul reveals what this

good news actually was.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

This was a promise of God to mankind through Abraham, and because Abraham believed it, he was blessed. The fulfilling of the promise came later on by the incarnation of God's Son. Then the gospel that was announced to Abraham materialized. It passed from words to reality "in Christ."

So we understand that the Gospel is not simply spoken words, but much more than that:

*In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fulness of the Godhead. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character. Every page of the New Testament Scriptures shines with His light. Every text is a diamond, touched and irradiated by the divine rays. **The Gospel is Christ unfolded, and Christ is the Gospel embodied.** (ST.1898-11-24.001)*

*Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:26,27)*

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (Romans 1:16)

This is the power of God, His mystery "which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is **now** made manifest to his saints." This "now" refers to the time, "since John": It refers to the time since the coming of Christ, the Son of God! The Gospel is

not words, but the actual, living Word of God, which is His Son!

Once I understood this, a series of new questions came into my mind and one of them had to do with Peter's statement in 2 Peter 3:11:

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:11)

Up to this point, I had thought that I could hasten the coming of the Lord by going everywhere and telling everybody **about** Christ, for when "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; ... then shall the end come." But now I finally understood why Christ's coming has been delayed for so long: the world is fed up with words, explanations and doctrines; **the world needs to see Christ Himself, not to hear about Him!** So, the only way we can truly, really hasten the coming of the Lord is by allowing Him and only Him to fully live within us! Then and only then will He be able to take full control. When He has full control, He Himself will very quickly finish His own work in this world.

Bearing this in mind, let us carefully read the following advice:

Seek Jesus, brethren, confess your sins, plead with God day and night, until you know that for Christ's sake you are pardoned and accepted. Then will you love much because you have been forgiven much. Then you can point others to Christ as a sin-pardoning Redeemer. Then you can present the truth from the fullness of a heart that feels its sanctifying power. I fear for you, my brethren. I counsel you to tarry at Jerusalem, as did the early disciples, until, like them, you re-

ceive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. ... If we have the spirit of Christ we shall work as He worked; we shall catch the very ideas of the Man of Nazareth and present them to the people... The message borne in the love of Christ, with the worth of souls constantly before us, would win even from worldlings the decision: 'They are like Jesus.'" (ST.159)

The greatest evidence which makes me believe that we are living in the time of the end is that God, outside of any human organization, has started to spread all over the world this message which brings Christ Himself into the life of the believer. Please think about this; what can possibly be more important than Christ Himself? All God's messages and reformations in all ages were designed to correct some error or errors **about** Him; think about Luther, the Baptists, Adventists and other reformers! But now, this message is bringing not only information, but the living Person Himself! That's why, we too are to, "tarry at Jerusalem, as did the early disciples, until, like them, you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit" that is the personal presence of the Savior, Who only is able to perform the wonderful final work on this Planet.

Indeed, after the third angel's message in Revelation 14, verse 12 says "Here is the patience of the saints"! Yes, we are living in this time when we need patience for there is a delay; but after this delay, there is nothing else but the glorious coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven!

Till then, we are not told to do anything else but to hasten His coming by preparing ourselves in surrendering fully to Him and thus receiving Him fully into our lives!

In closing, I would like to share a very recent experience that I had. Three nights ago I was asking the Lord if He really needs me for His work in the

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The Tree of Life

Lenworth frankson



In Genesis chapter three we read about the tree of life that God placed in the garden of Eden but later removed after Adam sinned. John explains in Revelation twenty-two that this tree is in heaven, bearing twelve different kinds of fruit with the river of life flowing through the middle of it. It is interesting to note that “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” What a blessing to know or be reminded that in time, the redeemed will be **healed totally** from all maladies. Ellen White had this to say after one of her visions

“On either side of this beautiful river is the tree of life. And the redeemed saints, who have loved God and kept his commandments here, will enter in through the gates of the City, and have right to the tree of life. They will eat freely of it, as our first parents did before their fall. The leaves of that immortal wide-spread tree will be for the healing of the nations. All their woes will then be gone. Sickness, sorrow and death they will never again feel, for the leaves of the tree of life have healed them.” {YI, October 1, 1852 par. 3}

I say hallelujah and amen! I can hardly wait to experience this. The problem however, is that we are not yet ready to live among holy beings in God’s presence. God is merciful and long-suffering, patiently waiting for us to fully reflect the character of his Son before granting us the privilege of experiencing this type of life. Until then, we will have to live in this world with our sinful, degenerate bodies, making the best of our present situation. The wonderful thing however is that we can in this life, enjoy reasonably good health. God

has given us health laws to follow and many healthy foods which can help to keep our bodies in vibrant health and “tip top” shape.

There is a special plant here on earth that has caught my interest which has numerous health benefits, although in the past it has had negative reports due to heavily biased research. This plant is none other than the Coconut, scientifically named *Cocos nucifera* but also called “**The Tree of Life**” in some Asian and Pacific populations.

The early Spanish explorers called it coco, which means “monkey face” because the three indentations (eyes) on the hairy nut resembles the head and face of a monkey. In Sanskrit, the coconut palm is known as *kalpa vriksha*, meaning “tree which gives all that is necessary for living,” since nearly all parts of the tree can be used in some manner or another. For many, the coconut provides a nutritious source of food, juice, milk, and oil which has fed and nourished populations around the world for generations. The coconut is very nutritious and rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. The oil is of special interest to many because it has healing properties far greater than any other dietary oil and is extensively used in some countries.

It was not until recently that modern medical science discovered the secrets of the coconut’s amazing healing powers but it is well known and has been used extensively in some cultures for folk medical remedies for centuries. In many countries around the world, the coconut is used to treat a wide variety of health problems such as abscesses, asthma, baldness, bronchitis, bruises, burns, colds, constipation, cough, dropsy, dysentery, earache, fever, flu, gingivitis, gonorrhea, irregular or painful menstruation, jaundice, kidney stones, lice, malnutrition, nausea, rash, scabies, scurvy, skin infections, sore throat, swelling, syphilis, toothache, tu-

berculosis, tumors, typhoid, ulcers, upset stomach, weakness and wounds.

Modern medicine is now confirming the use of the coconut in treating many of the above conditions. Published studies are now showing that the coconut does provide a wide range of health benefits to mankind.

It is the oil of the coconut however, that makes it a truly remarkable food and medicine. Dr. Bruce Fife, a naturopathic doctor and author of the book “The Coconut Oil Miracle” says, “*Coconut oil is the healthiest oil on earth*”. This is quite a statement. It was once believed to be unhealthy because of its high saturated fat content, however research has now shown that the fat in coconut oil is different from nearly all other fats and possesses many health giving properties.

So what makes this fat from the coconut so healthy? Well the difference is in the fat molecule. All fats and oils are composed of molecules called fatty acids. Fatty acids consist of long, medium or short chains of carbon atoms with hydrogen atoms attached. Coconut oil is composed mostly of medium-chain fatty acids.

Most of the fats and oils in our diets, whether they are saturated or unsaturated or come from animals or plants, are composed of long-chain fatty acids. It is said that about 98 to 100% of all the fatty acids the average person consumes are long chain fatty acids. These types of fatty acids are not the healthiest for us. Both the saturated and unsaturated fat found in meat, milk, eggs, and plants (including most all vegetable oils) are composed of long chain fatty acids.

The size of the fatty acid is extremely important because our bodies respond to, and metabolize each fatty acid differently depending on its size. The saturated fatty acids in coconut oil however are mainly medium-chain

fatty acids and they do not have a negative effect on cholesterol and help to protect against heart disease and arteriosclerosis.

The water from the nut, especially the younger ones, also has life giving properties and has the same level of electrolytic balance as we have in our blood. It has been called “the fluid of life” by many. During the Pacific War of 1941-45, coconut water, siphoned directly from the nut, was used to give emergency plasma transfusions to wounded soldiers. Here are some interesting statements I found about “the fluid of life”:

- Coconut Water is More Nutritious than whole milk - Less fat and NO cholesterol!
- Coconut Water is More Healthy than Orange Juice - Much lower calories
- Coconut Water is Better than processed baby milk- It contains lauric acid, which is present in human mother’s milk
- Coconut water is naturally sterile – Water permeates through the filtering husk!
- Coconut water is a universal donor – It is identical to human blood plasma
- Coconut Water is a Natural Isotonic Beverage - The same level we have in our blood.
- Coconut water has saved lives in 3rd world countries through Coconut IV.

Mortin Satin, Chief of the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization had this to say concerning the water from the coconut “Coconut water is the very stuff of Nature, biologically Pure, full of Natural Sugars, Salts, and Vitamins to ward off fatigue...”

It is said that coconut water contains more potassium (at about 294 mg) than most sport and energy drinks (117 mg) and has less sodium (25mg) where sports drinks have around 41mg and energy drinks have about 200 mg. It has 5mg of Natural Sugars where

sports and energy drinks range from 10-25mg of altered Sugars and it is very high in Chloride at 118mg, compared to sports drinks at about 39mg (data is based on a 100ml. drink.)It might be a little difficult for some people in the U.S.A to get 100% pure unadulterated coconut water but most people in the Caribbean should be able to acquire this life supporting liquid easily. I think it is reasonable to suggest that we should drink more of this “fluid of life” and less of the other liquids we drink that are not the most healthy for our system. Here are some other reasons why.

Coconut water is low in carbohydrates, low in fat, low in natural occurring sugar, keeps the body cool and at the proper temperature, effective in the treatment of kidney and urethral stones, a natural drink for feeding infants suffering from intestinal disturbances, maintains the human body’s natural fluid levels, kills intestinal worms, aids the body in fighting viruses that cause the flu, herpes, and AIDS, helps prevent osteoporosis, helps control diabetes, promotes bowel movements, promotes healthy thyroid function, improves digestion, provides quick energy ,helps in gallbladder disease and helps in keeping the skin soft and smooth. This definitely is good stuff, let’s drink more of it.

The leaves from this palm tree are used to make baskets, the trunk is used to make furniture and boats and the husk that covers the nut is used in gardening and agriculture projects. In addition the water, oil and flesh from this nut has so many other interesting and healthy benefits, it would be difficult to mention all here in this article. In all, the coconut is definitely one of nature’s life sustaining and remarkable plants and I hope it will be one of the trees in God’s new creation. Wherever and whenever available let us drink freely and use abundantly the products from this blessed plant. We know that the coconut is not the Tree of Life mentioned in the Bible, but here on earth this Cocos nucifera plant certainly in some ways, reminds me of it.

Some benefits of the coconut

- Kills viruses that cause influenza, herpes, measles, hepatitis C, SARS, AIDS, and other illnesses.
- Kills bacteria that cause ulcers, throat infections, urinary tract infections, gum disease and cavities, pneumonia, and gonorrhea, and other diseases.
- Kills fungi and yeasts that cause candidiasis, ringworm, athlete’s foot, thrush, diaper rash, and other infections.
- Expels or kills tapeworms, lice, giardia, and other parasites.
- Provides a nutritional source of quick energy.
- Boosts energy and endurance, enhancing physical and athletic performance.
- Improves digestion and absorption of other nutrients including vitamins, minerals, and amino acids.
- Improves insulin secretion and utilization of blood glucose.
- Relieves stress on pancreas and enzyme systems of the body.
- Reduces symptoms associated with pancreatitis.
- Helps relieve symptoms and reduce health risks associated with diabetes.
- Reduces problems associated with malabsorption syndrome and cystic fibrosis.
- Improves calcium and magnesium absorption and supports the development of strong bones and teeth.
- Helps protect against osteoporosis.
- Helps relieve symptoms associated with gallbladder disease.
- Relieves symptoms associated with Crohn’s disease, ulcerative

colitis, and stomach ulcers.

- Improves digestion and bowel function.
- Relieves pain and irritation caused by hemorrhoids.
- Reduces inflammation.
- Supports tissue healing and repair.
- Supports and aids immune system function.
- Helps protect the body from breast, colon, and other cancers.
- Is heart healthy; improves cholesterol ratio reducing risk of heart disease.
- Protects arteries from injury that causes atherosclerosis and thus protects against heart disease.
- Helps prevent periodontal disease and tooth decay.
- Functions as a protective antioxidant.
- Helps to protect the body from harmful free radicals that promote premature aging and degenerative disease.
- Does not deplete the body's antioxidant reserves like other oils do.

- Improves utilization of essential fatty acids and protects them from oxidation.
- Helps relieve symptoms associated with chronic fatigue syndrome.
- Relieves symptoms associated with benign prostatic hyperplasia (prostate enlargement).
- Reduces epileptic seizures.
- Helps protect against kidney disease and bladder infections.
- Dissolves kidney stones.
- Helps prevent liver disease.
- Is lower in calories than all other fats.
- Supports thyroid function.
- Promotes loss of excess weight by increasing metabolic rate.
- Is utilized by the body to produce energy in preference to being stored as body fat like other dietary fats.
- Helps prevent obesity and overweight problems.
- Applied topically helps to form a chemical barrier on the skin to ward off infection.

- Reduces symptoms associated with psoriasis, eczema, and dermatitis.
- Supports the natural chemical balance of the skin.
- Softens skin and helps relieve dryness and flaking.
- Prevents wrinkles, sagging skin, and age spots.
- Promotes healthy looking hair and complexion.
- Provides protection from damaging effects of ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- Helps control dandruff.
- Does not form harmful by-products when heated to normal cooking temperature like other vegetable oils do.
- Has no harmful or discomforting side effects.
- Is completely non-toxic to humans.

Isn't it amazing that the coconut has so many health benefits?



Campmeeting Reminder

The 2009 Jamaican campmeeting will be held from **Thursday April 9 – Monday April 13**. This year we return to the **Youth With a Mission campsite** near Cross Keys in Manchester which has been our campsite for the past four years (with the exception of 2008 when the campsite was damaged by hurricane Dean).

Our theme for this year is **“Families United in Christ.”** This year we focus on the family recognizing that the spirit of Christ will bring unity and harmony among His people on all fronts.

Guest speakers already confirmed are

Dr. Steven Burks from Ohio, USA and Elder Ken Corklin of Pennsylvania, USA. Our focus on Christ remains undiminished and with the signs of the times so rapidly multiplying, we are expecting a wonderfully spiritual and solemn time. We encourage all who can attend to make every effort to be at this campmeeting.

As usual those attending will have the option of sleeping in the dormitories or of pitching their own tents. There are two dormitories, one for men and one for women so married couples who desire to be together are advised to take a tent and sleeping bags.

The camp fee is \$800.00 per night (US\$10.00) and this will provide ac-

commodations as well as a cooked lunch and light supper. Children 6-12 years old will pay \$400.00 while there will be no charge for children under 5 years.

The campsite is in very windy area and sometimes it does get chilly in the evenings. It would be advisable to at least take a jacket in case it gets cold.

Visitors from outside of Jamaica who wish to attend, please call 1(304)932-4543. We will make arrangements for pickup at the airport and accommodations, and to get you to the campmeeting.

God bless you. We expect to have a great blessing and we look forward to seeing you there.

Romanian Report

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circumstances in which I now find myself, or if it is just my personal desire which has placed me here, without His direction.

The very next day I went to the forest with my father-in-law with the tractor and the trailer to pick up some trees for firewood. Later, when the trailer was full of heavy wood, we started back for home with me driving the tractor, and my father-in-law walking behind the trailer. After driving 100 meters I came to an abrupt slope; I proceeded slowly in first gear, but the weight of the trailer was so heavy, that it pushed the tractor forward and I began to pick up speed! There was a stretch of 40 meters at the end of which the road turned a tight corner, with a precipice

directly in front.

I realized that I would not be able to negotiate that corner because the speed was too high and I was helpless; I had just enough time to cry to my Heavenly Father for help. Then, without any reason, almost instinctively, I pushed the brake a little bit and turned the wheel to the left a little bit. As a result, the trailer slid on the right side, overturned and acted like a huge brake which stopped the tractor just a few meters away from the precipice!

Usually when there is an accident in the mountains with a tractor, very rarely does it end with wounded, almost always there are dead. I had not even a tiny scratch!

Isaiah 55:9 says

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways

higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

I recognized that if God had not intervened promptly in that accident, I would have been dead now. God taught me that the most difficult situations that we face in our daily life are nothing but tools in His hands for the single purpose of increasing our faith in Him for the days to come!

Let us rejoice for these precious gifts and let us give them all to the One who was never taken by surprise!



Open Face

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