



Open Face

Delivered From The Law

David Clayton



we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom 7:6)

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Gal 5:18)

Most often when Seventh-day Adventists are called upon to explain these verses they try to explain them by using a popular illustration. The explanation has been that being, “under the law” simply means to be under the **condemnation** of the law and the illustration used is, if a man goes through a red-light, he comes under the condemnation of the law because the law finds him guilty. If he does not go through the red-light, he is not under the law but the moment he goes through the red-light, he immediately comes under the law.

A DIFFICULT PASSAGE

But this is not at all what it really means to be under the law. The idea of being under the law implies far more. Let us take a close look at 2 Corinthians 3:7-13:

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: (8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (9) For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (10) For even

that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. (11) For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. (12) Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: (13) And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (2 Cor 3:7-13)

There can be little doubt as to what Paul was talking about here. What was it in the time of Moses that was engraven in stones? It was the 10 commandments. The rest of the law was written with the hand of Moses, but that which was written and engraven in stones was specifically the 10 commandments.

He goes on to say, (“if that was glorious,”)”how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” In these verses Paul is contrasting two things. He’s setting two things in opposition to one another. One is the ministration of the law of the 10 commandments, which he calls the ministration of death and he says that it was glori-

There are certain verses in the Bible, especially in the New Testament which most Seventh-day Adventists find difficult to explain. My father who used to be a Seventh-day Adventist minister told me that he had once overheard one of his fellow ministers say that sometimes when he thought of some of the things which Paul wrote, he wished that he was able to give him a beating. You see, Paul says some things that seem to be very much against our concept of the law, and as an Adventist minister he sometimes felt very frustrated in dealing with some of these statements. Here are examples of some of these statements:

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom 6:14)

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein

Also in this issue:

The Age of The Earth	6
The importance of faith	8
More on Second Death	10
If thou wouldest believe	11

Open Face
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

July, 2005

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.

Open Face is published at least once quarterly, and is sent free of cost to all who desire to receive it.

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ous, but he says there is something else that is even more glorious and he calls that the ministration of the spirit.

Again in verse 9 he refers to the 10 commandments as being the *ministration of condemnation* and the ministration of the spirit as being the *ministration of righteousness*. Finally he caps his argument by saying,

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. (2 Cor 3:10,11)

When I was a young Christian some Jehovah Witnesses came to have studies with me and we had this debate about the law back and forth. Finally they took me to this passage and they asked, "is this talking about the 10 commandments?" I said, "yes," I could not deny it. Then they took me to this verse, "*that which is done away was glorious, much more what remains is glorious...*" and they asked the question, "what is it that was done away?" I confess that at that stage of my Christianity I didn't have an answer. The passage seemed to be telling me that it was the 10 commandments that were done away and for a while I just sat

there looking at these people. Finally I said something like, "well, I cant explain it. I know the law is still binding, but I cant explain it." And I went home with my head bowed and ashamed.

But later I went back to the passage and read it over and over and something jumped out at me that I had missed. There is a critical word in the passage which had escaped my attention. This word is the word "*ministration*." Verse 7 says very clearly that what Paul is speaking about is the ministration, which he calls "the ministration of death."

What is the meaning of this term "*ministration*" as used in the passage? Instead of saying "*ministration*" Paul could have said "*administration*," or "*government*". That is what the term means in this passage. An 'administration' is a system of control or of government. It determines the way people behave and operate.

UNDER MY PARENTS' LAW

When I was a boy I did not control how my life was run. My mother and my father made those decisions and they had some ideas that I didn't like. My mother for example believed in cornmeal porridge. She thought cornmeal porridge would make us strong and healthy so every morning we had to drink cornmeal porridge, and I grew to detest cornmeal porridge. But my mother was a no-nonsense woman. She would put the porridge on the table and it did not matter whether we liked it or not, my mother's word governed what we ate.

She had another rule which, as a small boy I found unreasonable. This rule was that I should bathe everyday and most of the time I couldn't tell why, because when I looked at myself I seemed to be pretty clean. But she said I had to bathe everyday and whether I liked it or not I had to obey, because my mother's word governed the way I behaved. Her word was the law that governed my life.

But because it was her law and not mine, do you know what I did sometimes? Sometimes when she wasn't looking my brothers and I would throw the porridge out to the dog. We did not obey properly because it was not our

desire, it was not our rule. I can even remember times when, as a small boy I did not bathe properly. I just did enough to get by my mother's inspection!

There's an important point that I'm trying to make. When we were under my mother's government, because it was not our wish, because it was contrary to what we desired, we obeyed as much as we had to and no further. We did not like some of the rules and those that we did not like we would only obey as far as we had to. We did only what we had to do to get by. Our obedience was not perfect, it was not from the heart.

Was there anything wrong with drinking cornmeal porridge? What about bathing everyday? There is absolutely nothing wrong with these things, and in fact they are very necessary things. At least regular bathing is. But I prayed for the day when I would be grown up and could do as I pleased. Well the day finally came when I was out from under my parents' government. I started working and I was earning my own money and buying my own clothes and at last I was free to stop bathing, I was free to stop drinking cornmeal porridge! But the amazing thing is, in fact sometimes I bathe twice in a day now, even though I am no longer under my mother's control!

As I grew older and I became mature in my understanding my attitude changed, even my taste changed. As I came to understand about hygiene and health I learned to appreciate a bath and now, everything that I would not do as a boy I find myself doing as a man without my mother having to keep watch on me. I am no longer under her government and the truth is, I don't need it anymore.

THE REAL PROBLEM

This has helped me to understand what the Bible means when it says we are not under the law. When I was a boy, there was a serious problem, but where did the problem lie? Why is it that it was so difficult for the law to work when I was under my mother's administration, and so easy now that I am free from her government?

Paul explains the problem in Hebrews

8:7-10.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. (8) For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: (9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. (10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Heb 8:7-10)

He says clearly that there was a fault with the first covenant and this is why there had to be a second covenant. That is what the verse says but the person who says the law is abolished will say, "see! Something was wrong, God had to do away with the law, He had to abolish that covenant and He had to put something else in place." But let us notice exactly where the fault was. It says, "*for finding fault with them. . .*" Who was the "them" referred to? It was the people! The problem with the covenant was not the law, the problem with the covenant was the people. When I was a boy and my mother said, "drink porridge," this rule that my mother gave me brought such a conflict that I threw the porridge to the dogs. What was wrong between me, the porridge, my mother and the rule? What was wrong? Was the porridge bad? Was my mother's rule bad? What was bad? The fact is, my nature was out of harmony with my mother's law, something was wrong with my nature as it related to porridge, as it related to bathing. Something needed to be changed.

Now the Bible says this was the problem with the first covenant. God found fault with the people. And so He prom-

ised that He would change the system. He would make a new covenant in which the laws would be written on their hearts and minds, rather than on tablets of stone.

Which laws would He write into their minds and hearts? ***The same laws that they would not keep.*** God says that something had been wrong with the system, it was not working, they were not doing what they were supposed to do. But there was only one possible way for God to deal with the problem and that was to work on the ***people.*** Could God have dealt with the problem in any other way? What about simply changing the law, since obviously, keeping it was such a trial and a burden to the people.

Well, you know, that would have been like my mother saying, "I've tried with these children to get them to bathe everyday and it wont work, you know what, from now on nobody in this house will have to bathe anymore and that will solve the problem." That would have solved the conflict between my mother and me. Then I would not have had to bathe and she would not have had a problem with me being disobedient. However she would have done the wrong thing. In taking such a step she would have encouraged a state of uncleanness. She would have destroyed a perfect principle. In attempting to solve the problem in that way, she would have created a greater problem.

WHAT HAD TO CHANGE

No, it would not have been right for my mother to change her rules, the thing that needed changing was my mind. Something had to happen to me before I could come into harmony with that bath rule and that porridge rule. I needed to grow up. This is exactly what God said He was going to do, He was going to bring about a change where His people would find themselves in harmony with what they used to hate, with what used to be contrary to them. He would give them a new mind and a new heart, He would write the law in their minds and in their hearts.

So the Bible says that sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). To be under the law

means to be under a system where your motivation for doing something is **law**. Why do I do this? Because the law says so, why do I do that? Because the law says so.

THE LAW VS THE NEW NATURE

Jesus said we should love our neighbours as ourselves, He goes even further to say we should love our enemies. So a Christian starts out by saying, "I will love my enemy." But why will he love his enemy? Is it because the word says so, because the rule says so? Is that the reason why Jesus loved His enemies? Was it because the law commanded it or was it because His nature led Him to do it? And why does God love His enemies? Is it because there is a rule that tells God to love His enemies? The answer that I'm looking for and that I'd like you to consider is that God loves His enemies because He cannot do otherwise, because it is what He is. You cannot be other than what you are.

One of the things that I detest most of all is homosexuality. The very thought of it makes me shiver. If somebody ever suggested that one day I would commit a homosexual act I would think of that person as an enemy, because I so much despise the idea. This is in my nature, I'm like that and I cannot be otherwise. I don't need a rule to tell me, "you must not be intimate with another man." You would almost insult me to give me a rule like that because it is so abhorrent to my nature. Similarly, God does not need a rule to tell Him to love anybody, He cannot do otherwise, it is what He is.

Now is it God's plan that Christians should produce righteous behaviour because there are rules hanging over our heads? Because there are penalties waiting to slap us? Absolutely not. Christians *will* walk in harmony with the law, Christians *will* obey the law and they will do it perfectly when they are under the right government. The Lord says He will give us a new heart and this is what will produce righteousness. But as long as our motivation is law, as long as we obey **because** the rules say so it means that our nature has not been changed. We are operating from external motivations and the history of God's people has demon-

strated that this will not work.

Pigs are not very popular among people who come from a Seventh-day Adventist background, but pigs have their place, they have their duty to scavenge and clean up the place. One of the things a pig likes best of all is a good roll in the mud. It's his nature, he was born that way. You can't blame him for what he is. But let us say you were to get a pig from he was very young and you sent him to school where everyday he was taught "thou shalt not roll in the mud." You send him to school for ten years and everyday he learns "thou shalt not roll in the mud." Then after ten years, now educated, and graduated, the pig comes out and he is walking down the road. He has been taught for ten years not to roll in the mud and he comes upon a puddle of mud. What will he do? Why does he cast off his jacket and tie, throw all his education to the wind and take a good roll? Because from the day he was born there was something inside his little piggy heart that was saying, "mud is the best thing in the world." That was built into him, it was bred into him and you cannot educate that out of a pig.

In the same way, sin cannot be educated out of the sinner. A sinner may be told over and over, "you must stop drinking alcohol, you must stop beating your wife, you must stop fornicating or you will go to hell." He can be rebuked, educated and beaten with that law and do you know what will happen? He will feel more and more and more guilty but he will not stop, because law cannot change a person's nature! All law can do is tell you, "you are condemned, you are going to die" the law can only say, "you shall not steal," and when you steal it condemns you: "thief! You're going to die!" It says, "thou shalt not kill," so you kill, "murderer! You're going to die!" It cannot help you one bit, it can only tell you where you are wrong. The law can define sin, it can condemn the sinner, but it cannot help him.

So for a carnal person, being under the law means being under the government of something outside of you, something which is compelling you to behave in a certain way which is contrary to your nature. But the Bible says that we

Christians are not under the law, we are not governed by law, we are not ruled by law. What is it that controls the Christian and determines how he behaves? It is the spirit of God. We have a new mind, we have the mind of Christ. Jesus did not need a rule to tell Him how to do good, how to love people. He simply lived His normal life according to the love in His heart, and lo and behold, righteousness appeared everywhere He went. He could not do otherwise and he promises, "I will give you my heart and my mind, so that the things that you could not do, you will be able to do naturally (Romans 8:4)."

Perhaps with the rapid advancement of technology it might one day be pos-



sible to get hold of a cat, take out its brain and transplant it into the head of the pig. And so without a single day of education, this pig with the cat's brain goes walking down the road and he comes upon a puddle of mud. He walks like a pig, looks like a pig, he might even have the tone in his voice of a pig though he might try to say "meow." He comes to this puddle of mud and what does he do? Very carefully he avoids the mud because although he has a pig's body he has a cat's mind. He has had a brain transplant or a mind transplant. The body looks the same but because the mind is different and the mind controls the body the pig avoids the mud, you don't

have to tell him anymore, "thou shalt not roll in the mud." He has no desire to do it and if you throw him towards the mud, to your amazement he will do all kinds of acrobatics in an attempt to avoid it.

So the Bible emphasizes that the critical thing is the kind of nature that we have. Many, many Adventists have made the mistake of trying to obey the law, of trying to obey the rules, of trying to be governed by what the law says and the rules say and they concentrate more on doing this, doing that, than upon developing a relationship with God and His Son which would result in their natures being transformed. They put the wrong thing first. All that the law can do is educate us and help us to understand a little better what pleases God or does not please God but it cannot help us and should not be the governing force in our lives.

We have seen it with our children, we tell them to do something that pleases them, something that is in harmony with what they want to do and we have no problem, but when we tell them to do something that they don't want to do they will grumble and they will drag their feet because they are being governed by a rule that is contrary to their will. The law of God is contrary to the carnal human heart and the Bible says that God knew that this kind of program would not produce what was truly good. It did not bring the right results, although it brought cosmetic obedience. When Moses or one of the prophets was around or they felt that God was watching, they tried to obey but when they felt that they could get away with it they went back to being their natural selves.

Perhaps a man starts coming to church who has been an alcoholic and you know, these church members get on at him about drinking alcohol and insist that he must do better. They mention the suffering his wife and children have been going through, and he thinks, "you know, I'm going to do better, I'm going to try, I'm going to work hard." So he joins *Alcoholics Anonymous* or something. By dint of willpower, he might stop using the liquor but when he passes by the bar it's almost like a magnet is dragging him that way because his nature has not been changed.

That is not the kind of victory God wants us to have.

NOT MADE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

There is an interesting verse in 1 Tim. 1:8,9 which reads as follows:

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; (9) Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; (1 Tim 1:8-10)

People who reject the Sabbath often use this verse, and they say, "you see, here this says the Sabbath is not made for the righteous man, so if you are a Christian, the law is not for you." For a time I did not understand what the verse was saying, but I would resist that idea that the law was not made for Christians. But you know, properly understood what they are saying is right, because the Bible says so, "the law is not made for a righteous man." But the question is, what does that really mean? Well here is another illustration that I believe will bring out the idea clearly.

In Jamaica, where I live, in Manchester, the dirt is red and when it gets on to your clothes you have a hard time getting it off. There is aluminum in the soil and aluminum soil is usually very red. When it rains and it gets muddy, if you walk outside and get this dirt on the floor it almost stains, and it is difficult to get it off. The wives detest getting red dirt on the floor and sometimes if there are visitors around and it rains, my wife will put a sign on the door that says, "REMEMBER TO WIPE YOUR FEET."

Now I've noticed that it is only when certain people are around that she puts up the sign. the rest of the time she doesn't bother to put it up. Why is that so? The reason is that there are some

people who are not accustomed to wiping their feet. The sign, or the law became necessary because there were some people who, by nature were contrary to the law. Their attitude made the rule necessary in order to prevent the place from getting dirty.

However there are some people who always wipe their feet or, they take off their shoes before entering, especially whenever there is mud about. These people do not need a sign. It is when the others come who will not do it that she puts up the sign. So I saw that the law is not made for the righteous person, he does not need the law to tell him how to behave because he has the changed nature. It is not law that rules him. He doesn't need somebody to walk behind him with a big stick and say "you must bathe, you must drink your porridge, you must wipe your feet etc." Because he already has the nature which makes him do the things that are right.

But the person who does not have the changed nature needs rules. Society has to be kept in some kind of order and discipline, otherwise anarchy would take over the world, and so God has made law, first of all to make us know what sin is, and secondly, to establish a standard of behavior so that even in this ungodly system some kind of order and discipline can be maintained. But God's ideal for His people, and that which will save us is not that kind of obedience. It is not the kind of obedience where your body does one thing and your heart does something else. Does God expect us to compel our bodies to behave in a way that is contrary to the desires of our hearts while frustration eats out our souls In order that we may make it to golden streets and ivory palaces? What kind of deliverance would that be? Is that what God means when He talks about victory? Absolutely not.

UNDER GRACE

So Paul says we have been delivered from the law, he says we are not under law but under grace and what is grace? We have said that grace is God's undeserved favor, but most of the time we have limited this grace to just an attitude of goodwill. However, the grace of God includes every gift

that comes from God doesn't it? Which of God's gifts is it that we deserve? Is the gift of God's Son a part of the grace of God? Is God's attitude of goodwill a part of His grace? What about His Holy Spirit? All these and everything else which God has provided are included in the grace of God. Under grace we have the life of God, we have the power of God, we have the mind of God. ***Under grace sin will not have dominion over us.*** When we are controlled by the spirit of God, it will be more difficult for us to sin than it would be for me to become a homosexual. Sin is so abhorrent to Christ that when His mind is really your mind, sin becomes by nature, your enemy, your heart does not desire it. The Bible said of Jesus, "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity." When His mind is our mind, we also will love righteousness and hate iniquity. In one stroke, what two thousand years of education has not been able to do for the church, God will do for those of us who will allow Him to come and live inside.

Being under the law leads many Christians to believe that the way to victory is to imitate Christ. They say, look at what Jesus did and if you can imitate it, if you can do it, if you can do everything in the same way, then you will overcome sin. But this ignores one vital element and this is the fact that our heart is different from what Christ's heart was, and is. What we need is not to imitate Christ, what we need is to have Christ substituted in our hearts. Christ says, "you can't do it but I will do it in you. If you let me I will come into your heart and I will do for you what you cannot do." We don't need imitation, we need to have a substitution made. His life for our life, His mind for our mind. No matter how perfectly we understand the law and no matter how the law is preached at us, and no matter how guilty we feel and how much our conscience beats us, we will never do better unless we receive the new heart, the gift of God. And so the Bible says, "if any man is in Christ he is a new creation. Old things are passed away and all things are become new."



***Faith is the daring of the soul
to go farther than it can see***

The Age of The Earth

Several hundred years ago Bishop James Ussher did a study on the age of the earth (1650 – 1659) and concluded that the world was (at that time) nearly 6000 years old. According to his calculations the world was created in 4004 B.C. and the end of the sixth thousand year from creation would have been the year 1997. Some time ago I also did my own study of the age of the earth and ended up with numbers which indicated that the world was 6127 years old!

The cycles of seven in the Bible have suggested to many Christians that the world may last in its present state for 6000 years, with the next 1000 years being spent in heaven. The Bible does not say this, but seems to suggest it and of course, Ellen White makes several statements which support the idea of the world being 6000 years old at the time of the return of Jesus.

The Bible has revealed God to be a Person of precision, One whose timing is always accurate to the very day. If the 6000 year theory is valid, then we may expect that God will act precisely at the end of the 6000 years. But according to James Ussher, we are now eight years past the 6000 mark, and according to my early calculations we are more than a hundred years past 6000!

Of course, the best we can do is come to an approximation of the end of the 6000 years because even as we trace through Bible chronologies we will lose or gain several months which may add up to a few years. For example, we may be told, "David reigned over Israel for forty years." This does not necessarily mean that he reigned for exactly forty years. He probably reigned for forty years, plus or minus a few months. Forty years is a rounded off number, so as we go through many numbers like this in the Bible we will probably get thrown off by a few years. However, we can still get a fairly good idea of how close we are to the end of

the six thousand years.

I recently discovered that there were some problems with my earlier calculations. Actually, there was some information which I did not have at the time. So I recalculated and came up with a number much more in keeping with the 6000 year theory. I have outlined my new calculations below. Please bear in mind that these findings, even if they are faultless will probably be out by a few years, and that God has never said specifically in the Bible that the world will come to an end after 6000 years.

ADAM TO THE FLOOD

Genesis chapter five gives us Adam's genealogy and tells us the age of each father at the point when each son was born. This leads to the conclusion that the flood took place 1656 years from creation.

THE FLOOD TO TERAH

Again this is easy to follow. Genesis chapter 11 takes us from Arphaxad who was born two years after the flood, to Terah, the father of Abraham. This period was 222 years in length.

ABRAM TO ISAAC

There is a problem with this period. Genesis 11:26 says that Terah was seventy years old when he had Abram, Nahor and Haran. Does this mean that they were triplets? No, but the writer of Genesis tells the age of the father when the first Son was born and adds all the others who were born to that parent. In a similar way we are told that Noah

Adam to the flood		
Creation - Adam	0	
Adam - Seth	130	Genesis 5:3
Seth - Enos	105	Genesis 5:6
Enos - Cainan	90	Genesis 5:9
Cainan - Mahalaleel	70	Genesis 5:12
Mahalaleel - Jared	65	Genesis 5:15
Jared - Enoch	162	Genesis 5:18
Enoch - Methuselah	65	Genesis 5:21
Methuselah - Lamech	187	Genesis 5:25
Lamech - Noah	182	Genesis 5:28
Noah - The Flood	600	Genesis 7:6
1656		

Flood to Terah		
The flood - Arphaxad	2	Genesis 11:10
Arphaxad - Salah	35	Genesis 11:12
Salah - Eber	30	Genesis 11:14
Eber - Peleg	34	Genesis 11:16
Peleg - Reu	30	Genesis 11:18
Reu - Serug	32	Genesis 11:20
Serug - Nahor	30	Genesis 11:22
Nahor - Terah	29	Genesis 11:24
222		

Terah to Isaac		
Terah - Abram	130	Gen. 11:26,32; Acts 7:4
Abram - Covenant	99	Gen. 17:1-15
Covenant - Isaac	1	Genesis 21:5
230		

Isaac to Exodus		
Isaac - Jacob	60	Genesis 25:26
Jacob - Egypt	130	Genesis 47:9
Egypt - Exodus	239	Exodus 12:40,41
429		

Exodus to Rehoboam		
Exodus to Solomon's 4th	480	1 Kings 6:1
Solomon's 4th - Rehoboam	36	1 Kings 11:42
516		

Rehoboam to Today		
Rehoboam - Babylonian Captivity	344.5	
Babylonian Captivity - AD 1	586	
AD 1 - Today	2005	
2935.5		

was five hundred years old when he had Shem, Ham and Japheth, but Genesis 11:10 shows us that Shem was 98 years old at the flood while Noah was

600 years old (Genesis 7:6). So Shem must have been born when Noah was 502 years old and not 500.

So the question is, how old was Terah when Abram was born? In Acts 7:4 Stephen tells us that Abram left Haran after the death of his father Terah and Genesis 12:4 tells us that at that time, Abram was 75 years old. We also know that Terah died when he was 205. So when Terah died at age 205, Abram was 75. To find out how old Terah was when Abram was born we subtract 75 from 205 which gives us 130.

JACOB TO THE EXODUS

Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 years old, and he went into Egypt when he was 130. So that period from Isaac to the Egyptian sojourn was 190 years. At that point, we would normally add 400, or 430 years, because in Genesis 15:13, God had told Abraham that his seed would be afflicted in a strange land for 400 years. Stephen also corroborated this in Acts 7:6. However, in Exodus 12:40,41 it states that the children of Israel had been in Egypt for 430 years and in Galatians 3:17 Paul corroborates this. It seems that they were to be strangers in a foreign land for 430 years, but that the period of affliction would last for 400 years of that 430.

However, there is still another problem. Four generations of Israelites passed through the Egyptian captivity. In Exodus 6:16-20 we are given Moses' genealogy: Levi begat Kohath, Kohath begat Amram, Amram begat Moses. Their ages were as follows:

- Levi 137
- Kohath 133
- Amram 137
- Moses 120 (80 at the Exodus)

The total of their ages up until the Exodus is 487 years. However, that time is drastically reduced when we remember that these men did not become fathers in the final year of their lives. The probability is that they fathered their sons before they were even fifty years old, but let us say that each one

had his son when he was 80 years old. How much time does that give us between the four generations? Let us see:

- Levi - Kohath 80
- Kohath - Amram 80
- Amram - Moses 80
- Moses - Exodus 80
- Total 320

In actual fact, as we can see, the children of Israel spent considerably less than 400 years in Egypt. How do we explain this? It is interesting to note that the Septuagint states in Exodus 12:40,41 that the period of 430 years was spent in *Canaan and Egypt*. This is in harmony with what Paul says in Galatians 3:8,17.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. . . . And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. (Gal 3:8,17)

Notice Paul says that the law (which was given the year of the Exodus) was given 430 years after the covenant was confirmed with Abraham. What event is this referring to? There are several places in Genesis where God made promises to Abraham of multiplying his seed and of blessing all nations through him. However, the most striking of these occasions and the one on which the covenant was ratified was in Genesis 17:1-15 where Abraham's and Sarah's names were changed and God gave them the rite of circumcision. Abraham was at that time 99 years old. Apparently, it is from this time that we are to start counting the 430 years of the sojourn of Israel in a strange land. The period of affliction apparently started 30 years later, even before they went down into Egypt.

EXODUS TO SOLOMON

The next stage is an easy one. The

Bible tells us simply in 1 Kings 6:1 that there were 480 years from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon. Solomon reigned for 40 years, so from the Exodus to the end of his reign was 516 years.

REHOBOAM TO BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

After Solomon's death the kingdom was divided into the northern kingdom under Jeroboam and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) under Rehoboam. The respective reigns of these kings is given in the book of Kings and the total reign of the kings of Judah comes to 393.5 years. However, when the reigns of the kings of Judah are compared to the reigns of the kings of Israel (the Northern kingdom) there seems to be many discrepancies. An Adventist scholar by the name of Edwin Thiele did a very careful study into the chronology of these kings and discovered what the problem was. Some of these kings had overlapping reigns where in some cases a king ruled for several years co-jointly with his son. When these overlapping reigns are taken into account, we end up with a period of 344.5 years instead. This takes us to the final Babylonian captivity.

BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY TO AD 1

This final captivity took place in the year 586 B.C. and is a well established historical date, so we know that from that time to the year 1 AD is 586 years, and of course, from then until today is a period of 2005 years. When all the sections are added up, it comes to

5988.5 years, which would suggest that there are still 11.5 years to go before we get to the 6000 year mark. Let us remember however, that there is a lot of room for error in these calculations. The end is nearer than we think.

1656
222
230
429
516
2935.5
5988.5



The Importance of Faith

Chris Walega

Lately, I've been deeply impressed on the importance of faith, that is, why God puts such a high premium on faith, that faith — that *trust* — that God is wholly and always benevolent. And I know I've been blessed with a better understanding, and yet one that is still maturing, and I think much of this understanding was made available to me after having my own child. I have experienced a lot of feelings, that, I believe with all my heart, are very similar to the feelings that my heavenly Father has for me.

Jesus posed the question: *“when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”* And so, many would respond: “of course, He will find at least 2.5 billions!” Some protestants, judging that the protestant faith is more likely to be the faith spoken of here by Jesus, would say: “of course, He'll find at least 900 millions!” Some Adventists, judging that theirs it actually that faith that Jesus would be pleased to encounter, would say: “of course, He'll find at least 13 millions!” On the other hand, some reform-movement Adventists would say; “of course, He'll find exactly 144,000!” But, who would, or could, say that they are *sure* that Jesus will be pleased to encounter their faith upon His return? Who could say it? Do you wonder if Enoch had this wonderful confidence that God was pleased with His faith? or was he forever second-guessing? When faced with adversities, was he always remembering to trust God — only after other avenues had proven themselves unfruitful?

You know, today I planned on changing the oil in my car — something I always do myself, except during the winter, because it's simply too cold in Minneapolis! So this was the first time doing it myself after having had it done by a shop a few months ago. And you know, These guys put the bolt so tightly into the oil pan - there was simply no way to get it loose — none. Dasha,

who was standing by, cheerfully encouraged me to pray, but I must admit, I felt like I would rather continue struggling on my own, than to bother the Sovereign of the universe with such petty trivialities — it would be the pettiest thing I've ever prayed for. Finally I relented, however I was aware that there was an element of faith lacking in my prayer — I was lacking the faith that God, who is constantly inundated with supplications from countless people who are suffering great and terrible things, would also see to it that my bolt would turn loose. God, understandably, did not honor my prayer, and it stung me later on when I considered the reason — His own child had “limited the Holy One of Israel.” What a disappointing thing it must be for God, when His own children cannot trust His benevolence enough to find the ability to turn a bolt — let alone move mountains! Where are the mountain-movers? will Jesus find any when He returns?

You know, the shameful thing is that I had long before made a *mental* assent that God cares for even our smallest matters, but once again, my heart has been slow in catching up to my mind. I so want to have a faith that is comfortable with asking God to consider all my petty needs, and not only approach Him with the big matters! I want my heart to be that close, that genuinely unreservedly close to my Father! And that brings to mind another important thing, and that is, that mental knowledge alone will not avail us much, and it cannot do much to please God.

I thought on something a while back, about how I had, before I became a Christian, devoted so much time and effort in learning *evil*. You know, I learned how to be skillful at petty theft, how to play wicked music on the guitar, how to hook up with women to fornicate. So much of my precious life has

been wasted on watching pornography and other wicked movies, learning dirty jokes, memorizing vain and/or wicked things and engaging in activities that are brutally destructive to the character. And I wondered: “Have I yet partaken of the things of God to the same extent?” The answer is: No, I haven't. I haven't been a Christian nearly as long as I've been a sinner. And this was saddening to me — I wished that now the years would just speed by so that the life of sin would be the far smaller segment on my life's time-line. I even realized that (at least for me) knowing how to *do good* is not inherent in sinful man. We have to be taught how to do the good that God would have us do!

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well [good]...” (Isaiah 1:16,17)
“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?” (Jeremiah 13:23)

Thanks be to God, that He is willing to teach us, because the goodness of God is infinitely greater than any goodness we have ever witnessed in the world around us! We are so pitifully deficient in the knowledge of God - but I realized that it is not reason to fret, because knowledge, even knowledge of good, is not what's going to redeem us to *God*. Consider the angels — these vastly superior beings that have resided with the almighty God for thousands — or perhaps even millions — of years, learning of God. What happened to a third of them? They ceased to believe wholly in the benevolence of God, and it proved to be their utter ruin. Do you not find it astonishing that beings created to possess such an exalted level of mental excellency will be destroyed for the same reason that

lowly man will be destroyed?

Herein lies the mighty advantage of faith, it is that single virtue that gives everybody the opportunity to be exactly what would totally please God, With faith, the publican is not worse off than the scribe, the woman is not worse off than the man, the child is not worse off than the sage, the Gentile is not worse off than the Jew, the human is not worse off than the angel! In fact, Jesus set forth a child as an example of what kind of person could possibly enter into the kingdom of God. You know what's different about a child? A child would feel completely comfortable about asking his father to help turn the bolt loose on the oil pan! — there's no hesitation from a child! Here is a verse we're all familiar with

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Galatians 4:6)

I've learned that this word “abba” actually means something like “papa” or “daddy” — I think there are a lot of people who could never bring themselves to address the Almighty as “Papa” or “Daddy” — they would think it sacrilege. Obviously, there is a reason why this is in the word of God. Lets earnestly pray that we might be there some day, where we can freely and genuinely call Him “abba” “Papa,” or “Daddy” because I truly believe this is where God really wants us to stand with Him. When I look at my own child, I see that she **trusts** me — even at this very young age, she trusts me — there is no apprehension, no reserve, no doubt — not a trace. If only we were this way with God, what kind of people He would raise us up to be! We could have that experience with Him we've been longing for.

You know if my child trusts **me**, how much more reason do I have, to trust God. Isn't God infinitely more trustworthy and benevolent than I? I was born having a sinful nature, and in addition I have this mind and heart, this character, that's been so ravaged by years of sinful living, and yet I love my child —

I've purposed in my heart that I will do everything in my power to see to it that this child will live knowing God, delighting in God, trusting God, and finally be saved by God. That's **my** will — the will of an imperfect parent. How much more determination, and better **intentions** rest in the heart of Him, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning? God wants each and every one of us saved more than the sum of all the desire for good that we human parents have ever wanted for our children.

Every now and then, something happens that challenges our faith that God really loves us. It may be that because of adversities, we wonder: “Where is God?” Or sometimes we wonder if His pardon for us still stands. Or it may be that we have suddenly found that we feel we have wandered from His presence. Or it may be that we doubt that He takes any pleasure in us any more, and has any purpose for us any longer. I remember a period of my Christian life, during which I dreamt night, after night, after night loathsome and agonizing recounts of my most shameful sins. Man, it broke my spirit. I felt as if God was saying: “Your wickedness is too great — depart from Me and drink your cup.” The heaven above was as brass, and the earth beneath like iron — it felt like His pardon had evaporated. That nearness I had been used to feeling was gone. Then I was praying one day during this trial, and that familiar nearness came back just for a moment. And I felt like God spoke to my heart — no, I didn't hear any voice — but I felt really sure that He sent a message to my heart, and it was: “Remember My promises and stand upon them.”

The remedy that healed my faith in this trial was **remembering** - remembering **what** kind of God our heavenly Father had so often **already** proven Himself to be. I think our faith is nourished by this alone. You know what was that problem for the Israelites in the desert? They did not remember what God had done for them. It seems like God would do such amazing things for

them - things that had never before been witnessed or even dreamt about, and after a few days, or a few weeks, they would lose their faith and be **destroyed**. Before I go on, I want to emphasize that there is a profound difference between **remembering** and not forgetting Not forgetting who God is, is not enough! We have to **remember** who He is! If we want our faith to grow and even flourish through the adversities, **we** must sayour the memories of all He has done for us, of all He has promised us, of all His mercies toward us. We must remember and rejoice, because if we will but remember, we **will** rejoice! Look now at a psalm that illustrates this truth:

*“I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. **They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness** The LORD is gracious) and full of Compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works,” (Psalm 145:1-9)*

Every time I read this, I cannot help remember the great things God has done for me, and my heart is encouraged. If we will but remember the LORD, we will find it easy to praise the LORD. And when we praise the LORD, our heart will be mightily strengthened with faith.

There is another psalm I want to mention — it's Psalm 107. In this psalm,

Continued on page 12

Correspondence on Christ Dying the Second Death

I am so shocked at what was published that I have to ask that this no longer be sent to me. (The main pillar of truth that the Bible teaches was denied) Thank you....

you clearly do not know your Bible, and you certainly do not understand "death" in the Bible when it concerns Jesus. To state such lies I have requested that I be dropped from all email, and mailing lists. Thank you.

PS Shame, shame for not studying your Bible more carefully

United States

Please allow me to share my thoughts on the "which death" article:

The Trinity doctrine denies the death of the Son of God. The question is: Which death?

Christ is said to have been slain before the foundation of the earth and I've often wondered what it really meant. When the divine Son of God laid his divine form, I propose this is the death of the Testator spoken of in Hebrews 9. The Testator was a divine being which we can describe as divinity clothed with divinity.

What the Trinity doctrine fails to establish, referred to as "subversive of the Atonement" by one of our pioneers, is that according to the Covenant made by the Testator, something divine had to be laid off permanently - forever. A divine life had to die forever.

The question is: Does the death of Christ on the cross satisfies the death of the Testator?

Yes and no. I submit that our understanding might be incomplete.

"The darkness rolled away from the Saviour and from the Cross. Christ bowed His head and died. In His Incarnation He had reached the prescribed limit as a sacrifice, but not as a redeemer." E.G. White Manuscript Releases Volume Twelve, p. 409.

Yes - the sacrifice but no - as redeemer. The death of the Testator - the divine life - completes the picture - that of the Re-

deemer. By his infinite divine life, man can be redeemed. This is the 'second death', if we can apply it as such.

We only see the human Son of God but we might have ignored the divine Son of God's eternal death before the foundation of the world!

Hebrews 9:16,17

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator: 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

The Son of God had to give up something permanently which is like the second death where there is no resurrection. The Son of God, by giving up his divine existence - the life that the Father gave as "original, undervived, unborrowed" makes it possible for him to be resurrected for the value of the life of this divine being is infinite - more than the value of ALL human life combined.

By giving this life forever, even if he died on the cross, the divine life he gave up is more than enough to give life to any human being who will receive this gift of life - including Christ himself - especially when he didn't sin.

I'm not sure I've made any sense but I just want to share these with you. I'd appreciate your thoughts and comments.

..... One of the reasons I share this is from an encounter with an atheist in a message board. He said something like "Where is the sacrifice if Jesus was only going to be dead for only a little over 24 hours?"

It seemed like a farce to this atheist the death of Christ on the cross. My answer was that, contrary to what most Christians teach, the sacrifice was more than the death of Christ (which he really died when he became totally human) but that he will always be forever a human being.

The Trinity doctrine teaches, of course, that this 'sacrifice' was just a human 'body' where the 2nd person of the Trinity lived in. I didn't hear back from the atheist. I hope that seed that was planted would bear fruit.

So, to recap:

The change I was referring to was not at Calvary but before Christ becoming human. That is forever lost and given up. Eternal death, you could say, as existing as a divine being.

And we can only thank God for sending his only begotten Son and for Jesus for humbling himself and be made of a woman!

Continued blessings,

My brother in Christ,

Thank you for sending me the latest Open Face. As much as it goes against my feelings of friendship with you, I must very respectfully disagree with your position on the second death in your article in Open Face magazine.

Please don't think I'm being critical in a destructive way. I am only trying to express that I am not convinced that your position is theologically correct. It is entirely possible that my own position is not correct also, but I would like to present it, very respectfully to you please.

My Bible study shows me that the second death is not the lake of Fire. The lake of fire is simply **the means** by which the second death takes place for the wicked at the end of time.

Christ died the death of sinners - the second death from which there is no "waking up", but He didn't die that death in the fire. He died the sinner's death on the cross.

Rom 6:23. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The death was the same - eternal separation from the Father - but the method of death occurring was different. Christ went through his own "hell" on the cross. The Father separated Himself from His Son and this was what resulted in the Son's heart physically bursting, causing His death.

The fact that unrepentant sinners will die this same death in the lake of fire, and not on a cross, doesn't alter the fact that it is the same death.

Please investigate this further. If my understanding on this is incorrect, then I

would like to find where my error is.

I often think of you and pray for you. Thank you so much for the wonderful material you send and for your willingness to share your study results with us. I am very grateful.

Kindest regards,

Australia

Hi David:

I have been reading your article on the type

of death that Christ died. There is yet another consideration that you could bring into discussion. That is the fact that Christ could have died eternally as a man and been resurrected as the son of God, a being that is of the substance of God, not human. Thus he would have faced the eternal death as a man without himself going into oblivion. The converse, is that he could have ceased to exist as a being that was strictly of the substance of God and be forever relegated to the realms of man

after his death on the cross.

I have no fixed opinion on this but feel that this perspective is worth exploring as the real penalty for sin is the eternal death. If this were not so, then Christ need not have died as we all could have died and then be resurrected having paid the penalty for sin.

Jamaica



If Thou wouldest Believe

The following short article is a reproduction of a letter which was written to a brother encouraging him in a time of bereavement and grief. The author gives the following background:

"It was written from last year for a church brother and good friend of mine who is from His 19 year old son followed a friend to one of those violent areas in Spanish Town and has never returned home since then. The father was very sad and bitter towards others because no one offered any answers and the police did absolutely nothing to help. He said that the letter helped him in ways that he cannot explain and ways that I may never understand. Today, I was feeling a little down and reading it brought comfort to me too. I have modified it somewhat but it is my prayer that it may be a blessing to someone else in need.

.....
Nothing is impossible with God! "... If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." (St. John 11: 40). At the moment when Martha was overwhelmed with grief because the seemingly irreversible has happened, she was reminded of the power of God. Lazarus has died. Her heart was filled with sorrow and saturated with disappointment. Her saviour who she has trusted so dearly was not present when she needed Him most. In spite of all this, Christ asked her, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

Is Christ asking us this very same question today? Is Christ echoing these words to you? Martha believed and, indeed, she did experience the glory of God through the resurrection of Lazarus. This promise will no doubt be fulfilled in our own lives if we claim it as Martha did. There is just about no limit to what Christ would readily do on our behalf if we would but only trust Him. If only we would surrender our desires, our cares, our burdens, our entire life to Christ, what a splendid opportunity that would be for the saviour to lavish His glory upon us.

After being sold into slavery by his very own brothers, Joseph spent years in prison for a crime he did not commit. At the same time, however, he never ceased to believe in the benevolence of God and in return God was faithful in blessing him abundantly. At the end of it all he exclaimed to his brothers, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Genesis 50:3).

No evil can befall any of God's children unless it is divinely allowed. Neither will God allow us to endure unnecessary pain. If God could have done the ultimate in sending His Son to die in order to rescue us from sin, what could He possibly hesitate to do for us today? Similarly, nothing is beyond the scope of our father's infinite power. No burden too heavy that He cannot bear. No heart is so broken that He cannot mend; no life in such turmoil that He cannot re-

shape. "... With men this is impossible; but with God, all things are possible." (St. Matthew 19:26). There is absolutely no situation, no problem that the miraculous hand of our saviour cannot remedy.

At the same time, there is undoubtedly no problem so trivial to be overlooked by our loving Father. He knows our veiled wounds. He feels our pain and hurt that no one else cares to notice or understand. He recognizes the anguish too bitter to be uttered and the tears that no one sees. Whatever we are experiencing, whatever our needs are – God knows. He knows and he understands. He can and he shall supply them. All He requires is for us to trust Him.

Christ can slay the giants in our lives. He can calm the roaring tides of sorrow and woe that threatens to engulf us. He can extinguish the furnace of contempt and strife around us and kindle flames of brotherly love in our hearts. Yes, Christ can do it all. If only we would trust Him. He can convert our greatest obstacles into stepping stones, our temptations into inspirations and our weaknesses into strengths. We can overcome all sinful thoughts and deeds; but we can only do it through Christ. Christ is anxious to make your impossibilities into possibilities- if thou wouldest believe... If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God!



The Importance of Faith

Continued from page 9

we read about these people that are just like any one of us. God has done great things for them, but as time goes on, they are beset by trials and tribulations, and not a few are afflicted because of their own mistakes. And in each of these scenarios, the people are brought to despair, even to their “wit’s end” and they cry unto God as *if* He would scarcely hear them. In each scenario, the psalmist sets forth the sure remedy: “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” Oh! If only they would do It! If they were ever praising the LORD, they could never enter into despair. Hopefully we will all learn this and not be as those who died in the desert because of unbelief — “whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of

the LORD.” {Psalm 107:43} Let us be wise and observe it now and forever!

Let’s make it a point to devote our time *not* to, not-forgetting., but *remembering* the LORD for all He has done for us, and praise Him — praise him with our lips, in our hearts, with our minds. When you eat, savour the taste of the food, and know that it is God that gave you taste buds, it is our Father that opened His holy hand and put food on the table. When you rise up in the morning, listen to His birds, His creatures that delight in singing to Him, and remember that it is God who formed the ear. He formed the eye that rejoices to see the many wonders He has made. Don’t go to bed without looking for the stars — and remember, “He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names.” And when you are beset by the weight of

temptation, remember that your Father has loved you so much, He has called you by your name and promised to *always* be with you. Remember the measureless price He has already paid for our redemption, and be encouraged that what cost so much to God cannot be forgotten by Him.

Remembering the LORD and praising the LORD is our livelihood. If we would do these things our faith would never falter nor fail.

“I will sing unto the LORD} as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.” (Psalm 104:33)



Open Face

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