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**FATH** **ON THE LINE**  
**DARE TO STAND**

# The Exercise of Faith

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:1, 6*

After the 1993 meetings with Walter Veith in the Massey Theatre in New Westminster, BC, Amazing Discoveries planned another series by Walter Veith for 1996. We planned to contact all the local churches in the area to participate in this Greater Vancouver outreach. But none of the churches would support this evangelistic endeavor. Back then, evangelism was looked at as a pastoral duty, not the laity's duty, and so opposition was high against this series.

After much prayer and sadness, we decided on a Friday evening to comply with the wishes of the Conference and churches, thinking that it must not be God's wish that we proceed. The next day, Sabbath morning, we went to church, and there was a guest speaker at our local church. Wenzel was very discouraged and sad about the decision we had made. His mind was filled with thoughts of doubt and despair. Was this really God's will that we stop the series from going forward? His mind was not on the sermon as he was deep in thought.

Suddenly, the speaker arrested his attention. He was telling the story of Winston Churchill who was once invited to give a speech at a school. When Churchill came up on the stage, he made a simple statement, "Never give up!" And then he sat down. The students were shocked at Churchill's short speech. So Churchill got up again, and went to the microphone, and this time said, "Never give up. Never give up." Then he sat down again. A third time, Churchill got up to give the same message, repeating it three times: "Never give up. Never ever give up. I say, **never** give up." Wenzel knew that this was a message from God for him. He became convicted that God did not want this series to be cancelled. And so, we went ahead with plans to have Walter return in January 1996.

Our aim is to urge men and women to stand for truth and resist error. We pray that in times of serious compromise our ministry will equip you with solid information on current end-time issues and trends, and encourage you to live a life apart from worldly influences.

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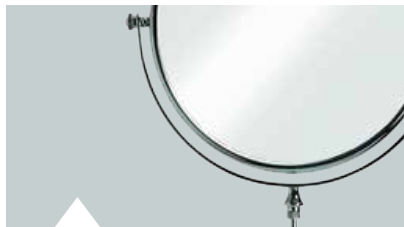
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Amazing Discoveries





This time Amazing Discoveries booked a hall at the Jericho School for the Deaf and Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby—only ten minutes from the location of the original series. The school had fabulous closed-circuit TV facilities in every classroom.

At first, we only booked the 860-seat theatre. But a few days later, Wenzel Goubej had a feeling that he needed to contact the theatre manager to ask for more space. Upon hearing that there indeed was an overflow room

available for 200 more people, he asked her to add it to our reservation. A few days later, he felt compelled to ask her for more rooms. This time he booked 6 classrooms that could each hold 50 people. The next day, to the manager's surprise, Wenzel called yet again, asking, "Do you have any more overflow room available?"

She said, "But you've already booked the hall, an overflow room, and several classrooms. How many people are you expecting?"

He replied, "I don't know, but I know I need more. Please, do you have anything else we can book for those dates?" She responded that there was still a cafeteria available that could house another 200 people with closed-circuit television, but that was all she had. He asked her to book that room too. Now we had enough seating for 1560 people.

A few days later, the manager called to let Wenzel know that the facility was not available on Sabbath, January 20—an important day of our series. The series ran every weekend—Friday, Saturday, Sunday—and a couple weekdays. To the Goubej family, still relatively new to evangelism and working for God, this was a distressing problem! Wenzel

booked 3 whole weeks of nights and that surely our large number of nights should give us priority over the nights available. Surely some event on a single Saturday couldn't be as important as the events that were using up 3 whole weeks of this theatre's bookings! But the manager wouldn't budge. January 20 had been booked for quite some time, in fact to the Symphony Orchestra, and there was no chance that we were going to get that night.

We were not happy about it, but there was nothing further we could do. Opening night came, and Wenzel's premonition was realized. Every single seat in every single room was filled to capacity. Over 1500 people came to hear the Professor from South Africa speak about evolution and creation and truth that matters. We thanked God for the urging of the Holy Spirit on Wenzel's heart to go back to the manager three times to get every available space. Our faith had been rewarded. The manager was amazed, and asked Wenzel during opening night, "How did you know? You kept asking me for more and more rooms and I thought you were crazy!"

Wenzel replied, "God knew."

But there was still that issue of the unavailable date of January 20. We had our regular meeting on Friday evening, January 19, and all was well. But in the early morning hours of Sabbath, January 20, it began raining. By morning, the water that had fallen on the city streets became frozen solid in bitter cold. Even the churches were closed for Sabbath services that morning due to the poor road conditions. By evening, the roads were still impassable. The entire city was shut down. We were thankful we didn't have to go out in this weather on those slippery and icy roads. Sunday was our next meeting date, and on that day we arrived back in the theatre for our next night of presentations. The manager came rushing to meet Wenzel. "Do you remember, Wenzel, how you argued with me about getting the booking for Saturday, January 20, and how I told you that it had been





taken by the orchestra? Well, God must have known about it and made sure you didn't get that night, because the ice was so bad that the symphony orchestra had to cancel that night too. It never took place! Aren't you glad now that you never got that date for your meetings?"

The circumstances of this series show us that God was indeed involved and blessing this evangelistic series. As a result of the meetings, over 60 people made a decision for further study and possible baptism. I remember distinctly the last night's altar call. The auditorium had tiered seating and Walter Veith spoke on a stage with several ascending stairs. It was not easy to get to the front. But the first person who responded to the altar call was a young man not older than 20. He resolutely walked to the front, and his courage to do this in such a large auditorium touched my heart.

Many more responded that night, and tears of joy filled our eyes as we saw the fruits of God's Word not returning to Him void. It was heart-warming to see the podium filled with people wanting to commit their lives to Christ.

Amazing Discoveries faced challenges in those early days with these new converts, since no local pastors would support the series and follow up the interests from their area. But, God knows each and every one of those souls.

Those early days of evangelism were a learning experience for us as lay people. There were no schools of evangelism back then, and lay evangelism was not popular. That was reserved for only pastors and evangelists. But God blessed our efforts and recognized our desire to serve Him even with what little experience we had.

And the same goes for anyone who wishes to work for the Lord. Talents are helpful, but not essential. Whomever the Lord calls, He equips and makes able. Evangelism is the antidote to a lukewarm Christian walk and the privileged duty of every Seventh-day Adventist regardless of circumstance, occupation, gender, or age.

God can and will use your desire and efforts to tell others about Him. It just requires a little step of faith, like asking for more rooms than you apparently need. And perhaps too someone can learn from our story of Saturday, January 20—the date we will always remember as a sign of God's leading. Don't let ice, snow or apparently missed dates discourage you. God knows the end from the beginning. He will use situations you think are mishaps for His will. May God bless you as you step out to work for the Lord while there is still day. "For the night cometh, when no man can work." ■

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Corinthians 5:7

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# The True Nature of Islam

Insights from a former Muslim

By Shahbaz

**A**s an ex-Muslim I find myself challenged to the core by a teaching that is being promoted in the Seventh-day Adventist church and by individuals who mean well but who are genuinely mistaken. This teaching challenges our traditional perspectives about 1) the nature of God, 2) the person and mission of Jesus Christ, 3) the authority of the Bible and 4) the method of evangelism. This teaching is not as widespread as its proponents would like it to be but in recent years it has gained momentum and the support of some of our leaders. Below I will

focus on this false teaching and attempt to provide facts that will correct this error.

## Islam: An Abrahamic Tradition?

The teaching that Islam is inherently an Abrahamic tradition is not supported by the Bible or by logic. Just because some Arab tribes in the Middle-East are of the lineage of Abraham does not give legitimacy to the idea that Islam is in harmony with the faith of Abraham. Some reason that since Arabs are the descendants of Abraham, Islam, the religion of the Arab world, must be an extension of Abraham's faith. This

leads many to conclude that Islam is fundamentally good. That Abraham had anything to do with the formation or practice of Islam is an impossibility since Islam did not even arise until 2000 years after the time of Abraham. Therefore, the conclusion that Islam is somehow endorsed by Abraham is erroneous.

## What We Have in Common with Islam

What about the notion that the Seventh-day Adventist church has much in common with the Muslim faith? Actually, on the substantive doctrines of Scripture, we have very little in common with the Muslims. True, we don't eat pork and we abstain from alcoholic drinks, but Islam has never had what we call a "health message" as we do in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Muslims can smoke cigarettes and freely partake of the flesh of camels, crabs or any other form of scavenging sea creatures. In Islam, diet restrictions are of little consequence with the exception of eating swine's flesh which, incidentally, in times of dearth is permissible according to Shari'ah law.

The idea that the "prophet" of Islam was at one time a "chosen" vessel, a "reformer," or even a "true prophet" is Biblically unsupportable. The "prophet" of Islam early set himself on the opposite side of the Gospel. If Mohammad had the spirit of prophecy, surely he would have supported the most basic fundamental doctrine of the Bible. He would have pointed to Jesus as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world," but he did not do that.

## Are Allah and God the Same?

What about the teaching that is going viral in Adventism today that Allah is the same God the Christian worships. My answer to people who think this is simple. If Allah is the God of the Bible, then he would agree with His own words which He spoke testifying about Jesus saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17), or "This is my beloved Son: hear him." (Luke 9:35).

What about the teaching that makes Islam somehow a "forgotten blessing" because Islam was used as a scourge against the Papacy in the Dark Ages? Didn't God use many nations to both bless and curse Israel and to oppress and punish Israel's enemies? Cyrus, the Persian king, was used to bless Israel while Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, was used to punish Israel. We

The teaching that Islam is inherently an Abrahamic tradition is not supported by the Bible or by logic.

don't credit Persia and Babylon with any more than they deserved for their role in the lives of God's ancient people. Why do we give so much credence to Islam when all they did was fulfill God's providence in the lives of His people living during the time of the Reformation?

## Our Traditional Position in Regard to Islam

As a Seventh-day Adventist I want to defend our traditional position in regards to Islam which teaches that Islam is a false religion and its error needs to be overthrown. Here is the only statement on the religion of Islam from the pen of inspiration:

*Mohammedanism has its converts in many lands, and its advocates deny the divinity of Christ. Shall this faith be propagated, and the advocates of truth fail to manifest intense zeal to overthrow the error, and teach men of the pre-existence of the only Saviour of the world? O how we need men who will search and believe the word of God, who will present Jesus to the world in his divine and human nature, declaring with power and in demonstration of the Spirit, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." O how we need believers who will now present Christ in life and character, who will hold him up before the world as the brightness of the Father's glory, proclaiming that God is love! (The Home Missionary, September 1, 1892)*

This was our denomination's position during the time of Ellen G. White and our pioneers, and it ought to be our position today.

## Islam's True Purpose

These are very subtle teachings that are being promoted by well-meaning individuals who do not understand the real purpose of Islam – **to make of no effect the Gospel of Jesus Christ**. This, I submit, is the real reason for the existence of Islam. If God chose to use Islam as a scourging agent during the Dark Ages, that does not make the religion of Islam a blessing. That Islam was used as a scourge in the hand of God to punish the enemies of God only proves God's sovereignty over the entire affairs of man. Just as God used idolatrous Babylon to punish or bless Israel, God also has used Islam.

Below I will attempt to compare the Koran to the Bible and focus on the truth found in Scriptures that will undoubtedly help clear the misconceptions that are being taught in our church today.

In 1 John 4:1 we read, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

If we are going to take the apostle's counsel seriously, then we must look at what it is that Islam teaches and compare it with the Bible so we won't be deceived. Let's compare the spirit of Islam with the Spirit of God because John has admonished us to do so.

*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ*

*is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:2-3).*

## What the Koran Says about Jesus

Advocates of Islam may say, "Islam is not an antichrist religion because it teaches Jesus was chosen by Allah to be his prophet and that Jesus came in the flesh according to the Koran." Now, it's true that Islam teaches that Christ was chosen, but only as a prophet and not the Son of God. Jesus is only mere flesh, according to the Koran. Look at the following statement taken from the Koran: "...the example of Jesus, as far as Allah is concerned, is the same as that of Adam; he created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was" (Surrah 3:59). According to Islam, Christ was created from dust just as Adam was. This, my friends, is blasphemy!

There are many Surrahs in the Koran that talk about Jesus. Some of them talk about His birth. Others talk about His character, His mission and teachings. But the big question is, do these verses in the Koran agree with the Bible?

John the apostle, in 1 John the fifth chapter, has much to offer that is important to us as Christians seeking how to relate to Muslims. In fact, I believe the first thirteen verses in 1 John 5 are buffers placed in the Word of God to protect His church from any false advances against the truth, and that includes the Koran.

Let's look at these verses and do a comparison.

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that*

According to Islam, Christ was created from dust just as Adam was.

If God chose to use Islam as a scourging agent during the Dark Ages, that does not make the religion of Islam a blessing.

*loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him (1 John 5:1).*

Right at the start John expounds on eternal truths that are central to Christianity. According to John, if we say we are believers we must 1) believe that Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah, 2) believe that Jesus is born of God, 3) love "him also that is begotten" (Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God), if we love "him that begat" (here, "him" refers to the Father). All this Islam denies.



God's commandments. If we are "born of God" (see verse 4), we overcome the world through faith. And what helps us to overcome the world? Unless we believe that Jesus is the Son of God we cannot overcome the world. No wonder Islam teaches violence at its core; Islam denies the Sonship of Jesus and therefore cuts itself off from the Source of power and love.

Let's read another verse from the Koran:

*Creator of the heavens and the earth. How should He have a son when He had no consort? He created all things, and He has knowledge of all things. (Surrah 6:101)*

And yet another verse:

*Allah forbid that He should have a son! (Surrah 4:171)*

Let's continue with the rest of what John has to say:

In the Koran Surrah 19:90 we read these startling words:

*Those who say: 'The Lord of Mercy has begotten a son,' preach a monstrous falsehood, at which the very heavens might crack, the earth split asunder, and the mountains crumble to dust. That they should ascribe a son to the Merciful, when it does not become the Lord of Mercy to beget one!*

The **antichrist** sentiments in the preceding Koranic verse could not get any clearer or stronger.

*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:2-5)*

In the preceding verses John focuses on the most powerful expression of who God is, and that is love. As we surrender to Him, He causes to grow in us love for God and love for the "children of God." This God-given love helps us keep

*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth (1 John 5:6).*

## What the Koran Says about the Cross

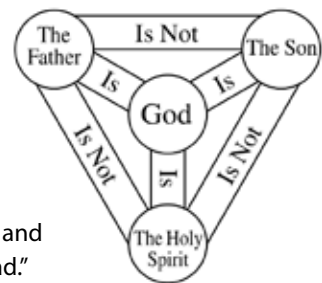
Islam denies that Jesus ever died on the cross. This is an attempt to undo the plan of salvation and make it appear that it was never God's plan to offer Jesus for the salvation of humanity. Salvation in Islam is merited by good works and not by faith. Let's read from the Koran the account that denies Jesus' death on the cross:

*And for claiming that they killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. In fact, they never killed him, they never crucified him - they were made to think that they did. All factions who are disputing in this matter are full of doubt concerning this issue. They possess no knowledge; they only conjecture. For certain, they never killed him (Surrah 4:157).*

What the Bible says about the Godhead:

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (1 John 5:7-8).*

Islam is opposed to this important truth about the nature of God which teaches of the unity between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and whom the Bible refers to as the "Godhead."



Here is another verse from the Koran that teaches against the Godhead:

*People of the Book (in the Koran, Christians and Jews are referred to as the "people of the Book"), do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but the truth about Allah. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was no more than Allah's apostle and His Word which He cast to Mary: a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His apostles and do not say: "Three." Forbear, and it shall be better for you. Allah is but one God (Surrah 4:171).*



About the Sonship of Jesus to the Father, John warns us not to receive the witness of men over the witness of God.

*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son (1 John 5:9-10).*

Let's read more:

*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11-13).*

**Islam is a false religion and its Allah and Isa al Masih are false gods similar to what other pagan religions have.**

With the overwhelming evidence provided in this paper, one must conclude that the Jesus of the Koran is an impostor. And the Allah of the Koran is not the Ancient of Days, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot use the "Isa al Masih" (Jesus Christ) mentioned in the Koran to convert Muslims to Christ. Yes, Jesus and Mary are mentioned in the Koran, but we cannot use the Koranic Jesus as a bridge to Muslims. The Jesus of the Koran is a false christ. He denies the position the true Biblical Jesus claims as His own, that of being One with the Father. Islam is a false religion and its Allah and Isa al Masih are false gods similar to what other pagan religions have. You can't use a false christ and convert people to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

If a Muslim accepts present truth and the Biblical Jesus as his Savior and is born again, he will no longer be a Muslim. He will be a born-again Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Islam is not a culture. It is a religion. And today God is calling His children to come all the way out of fallen and false religions.

## 20/20 Evangelism: How Shall We Work with the Muslims?

When we consider modes of evangelism, there seem to be as many ideas out there as there are church denominations. It seems everyone wants to be original and come up with a fresh way that no one else has tried before. Please do not misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with trying to learn of ways that can help us in our outreach to others. Choosing how to do evangelism becomes even more problematic when we consider Muslim evangelism. There are so many ideas about how best to reach Muslims with the Gospel that the choices can be baffling. If we're going to accomplish anything for God, it must be as Jesus leads us.

**If we're going to accomplish anything for God, it must be as Jesus leads us.**

What did Jesus mean when He said to His disciples, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28: 19, 20)?*

We are supposed to go into all the world and teach the people. But, what method do we use, and where can we go to learn the methods? Who has the final say on matters like this anyway?

## A False Christ

Islam is bent on destroying Christianity at its very core, and it does so by subtly attacking it on three fundamental points, the eternal truths that make Christianity what it is: The Sonship of Jesus Christ to His Father, His divine character and Oneness with God, and His death upon the cross as a substitutionary offering on behalf of mankind. Take away these fundamental truths and what do we have left to stand upon? What hope is left to us? If Jesus is not the Son of God, He ceases to be our advocate. If you take away Jesus' divine nature, He suddenly becomes incapable of being the One that alone can save us to the uttermost. Finally, if you take away His great sacrifice for humanity by dying on the cross, then you take away any hope for the salvation of man.



It's really simple. Jesus clearly has shown us the correct method for evangelism both in His own life and that of His apostles. One famous Christian writer and an authority in the area of evangelism wrote:

*Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.' (The Ministry of Healing, 143).*

The statement above is really the recipe for success. If Jesus is our great pattern, then we must always endeavor to copy Him; we must become familiar with His teachings and example. We do not necessarily learn about evangelism by only reading books or learning theories. The best way Jesus taught His disciples was through modeling. He was an ever present example to them. His disciples saw Him work in the lives of the people around them. They saw Him minister to the needs of old and young alike; they saw Him deliver the people from their bondage to sin. His love and care for the masses was unmatched. Experiencing Christ's methods of evangelism first-hand prepared the disciples of Jesus to become the apostles of the church of Christ on earth.

When considering evangelising the Muslim world, it is expedient that we continue the Biblical tradition. To put it mildly, let's not deviate from the methods of Christ, our pattern.

Some try to use Paul's experience on Mars Hill to say it is okay to contextualize the Gospel so it is palatable and easily understood by Muslims, or any other difficult to reach people groups. But what was it that Paul said and did on Mars Hill that would give such an impression? It seems some evangelists would like us to believe that Paul's attitude toward

evangelism was that "the end justifies the means." Was that Paul's attitude? Does the end really justify the means?

Let's pick up the story in Acts 17:16. Paul was in Athens waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him. While he was waiting for them his "spirit" was "stirred in him," because "he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." At this point Paul could have contextualized the message and delivered an Athenian version of the Gospel so the people of Athens could better relate to him. But Paul didn't do that. Instead, as we see in verse 17, Paul went out and disputed in the synagogues and in the open markets of Athens: "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" (Acts 17:17). The Greek word "disputed" in verse 17 is *dialehomai* where we get the word "dialogue" which means conversation. The word *dialehomai* literally means "to reason with, reason, preach unto, preach, speak, to ponder, to converse, argue, discuss".

**The best way Jesus taught His disciples was through modeling. He was an ever present example to them.**

While Paul was busy disputing, "certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, met with him." (See verse 18.) Right from the top, those philosophers had a difficult time understanding Paul's message to them. Paul told them things they had never heard before. "He preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection," and not some twisted form of the Gospel so he could build a bridge to the Athenians. In fact, Paul openly promoted Christianity to the idolatrous people of Athens. In verse 19, when the Athenians made further inquiry of Paul, they did so with the intent of wanting to know "what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is....". Obviously, what Paul was telling the philosophers was radically different than what they were used to hearing. Paul in no way changed the Gospel or gave them a different variation of it, or mixed it with the Athenian doctrines, so as to make it easy for them to understand. He plainly told them about Jesus and the resurrection. The confusion of the Athenians testifies of Paul's plain delivery of the message. "And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:19-20).

Paul took in the situation. He saw the people were starving for new ideas. (See verse 21.) He saw their lost condition. He saw his chance and seized the moment. He fearlessly told them they were "superstitious" people. (See verse 22.) Then in verse 23 Paul carefully pointed the Athenians to their own altar, which they had erected to the Unknown God.

*For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*

Notice Paul did not ascribe an Athenian name to God. He did not point to the great number of idols sitting close by, but instead he pointed the people to the Unknown God. Why the Unknown God? Wouldn't it have been easier to tell them about the common points between their idols and the God of heaven? After all, wasn't Paul trying to bridge the gap between himself and the Athenians? But Paul did not do that for a singular reason.

Paul being an educated man, a man of reason and intellect, of great wisdom and understanding, chose to deal with the Athenians through the unknown. But why the Unknown God? It was because that title was neutral. It was not ascribed to any other deity. There was no room for misunderstandings and misapplications.

## Should we be less cautious and ascribe to the God of universe the attributes of the god of Islam?

Paul could, through that name, reason with the people and awaken in them a greater desire to want to know the Unknown God. By ascribing a neutral name to God, Paul was able to turn the attention of the Athenians to the God of creation without smearing God's character, honor and glory. The Athenians had no presuppositions about this Unknown God. To them He was simply the unknown. This was a redemptive act on the part of Paul which did not compromise principle. In the verses that follow, Paul further expounded on who this Unknown God is, being ever careful not to ascribe to God any of the characteristics that, in the minds of the people, belonged solely to the idol deities they worshiped. Should we be less cautious and ascribe to the God of universe the attributes of the god of Islam? God forbid! Let us stand unmoved by this type of reasoning.

### The Power of Love

How do we then minister to Muslims or any other people groups? Following are two testimonials that highlight my work for Muslims. These personal stories tell how God condescended to use my family and me to touch the lives of three Muslim families. These stories can easily be applied to anyone or any people group no matter what their religious or cultural persuasion. Love knows no boundaries; all come to the foot of the cross the same way.

While in [Country], I met Shahram\* and his wife Shirin\*, an Iranian Muslim couple who had immigrated there a few years earlier. I remember the beautiful late summer morning. After I had finished my personal devotions, I felt a strong impression that I should go out and share my faith. I told my wife of my plan and we prayed together for God's blessing and protection. As I rode my bike through the streets leading to the shopping mall, I could feel God's special presence with me, sustaining me, telling me He was with me. Filled with love for Him, I arrived at my destination armed with my Bible and several tracts in Persian and other languages, in case I met people from other countries.

Almost immediately, I began my search for Iranians in the crowd. There weren't too many of them there that day, and yet I had the privilege of sharing my faith with several people of other nationalities. Eventually, I found a good spot on the second floor of the mall near one of the exits; there I took my position. I scouted the surrounding area and the stores to see if I could spot any Iranian people that might pass my way. I waited awhile but didn't see any.

Just then, out of the corner of my eye, I spotted a man holding the hand of a boy who obviously was his son. The man appeared to be in his late thirties, and they were heading in my direction. I felt a strong impression to talk to this man. I stood there until he reached me, and as he passed by I stepped forward at an angle next to him and politely asked him if he was an Iranian. He told me he was. Then I said, "Jesus loves you." He thanked me. Then I quickly pulled a Persian tract out of my pocket and handed it to him. He received it, glanced at it for a few seconds and thanked me for it.

For the next few minutes we talked about the love of God and the end of the world. He was especially interested to know more about the end of the world and appeared very attentive to what I shared with him. As I continued to talk with him, he interrupted

me and asked if I would be willing to come to his house and bless it with what he called "these wonderful words." Although ecstatic, I carefully did not betray my true feelings right then. He told me his name, Shahram. After we exchanged phone numbers, we said goodbye.

The next day I called Shahram, and we agreed to meet at his home on Thursday that week. Of course, according to Persian culture, going to his home also meant having dinner. So he asked me what I wanted to eat that night. Knowing Iranians are meat eaters for the most part, and knowing my answer could be problematic, I had to think quickly. "I am a vegetarian," I told him. "What—you are a vegetarian?" He was surprised. I was probably the only Iranian he had ever met who was a vegetarian. This presented a challenge for both of us; would he reject the whole idea of my going to his home? Or would he be considerate and receive me just the same? The Lord gave me the right words to say, and he graciously promised to prepare the only vegetarian dish he knew—an Asian dish made with vegetables.



When I arrived at Shahram's home the whole family gave me a warm welcome. After more formalities and getting acquainted with Shahram's wife, Shirin, they led me to the living room where they lavished me with their Persian hospitality. It seemed Shirin would never take her place with us and sit down. She made several trips to the kitchen and each time more treats were set on the coffee table. Everything that could be offered to please the appetite was set before me.

Continued on next page



## To God be the Glory ...for His Fruit



My husband and I first heard about Amazing Discoveries and Walter Veith's DVD's in 2010 through a man we met in the town where we live in West Virginia. This man is not a Seventh-day Adventist but is very interested in prophecy, world events, and end times. He offered these Veith DVD's to us, among other DVD's that discussed similar subjects. I have been a Seventh-day Adventist since the age of twelve, and some of the titles of Walter Veith's DVD's made me think that he was also Seventh-day Adventist.

My husband was raised Catholic until the age of eleven, at which time he decided that he did not want to confess his sins to any man and noticed that Mary seemed to be the main focus instead of Jesus Christ. Afterwards, he was skeptical of any organized religions.

Early in our marriage, I used to tell him that one day our freedom of religion would be taken away and we would not be able to worship on the true Sabbath. He laughed and said, "You don't think that after all that we have learned, we would ever go back in time and persecute people again, do you?" He always kept up with the news and I prayed that my husband would one day see that what God said would happen would happen, no matter how things appeared at present. I prayed that he would join the church and believe in the prophecies.

In 1970, my husband and I attended a Revelation seminar. He was baptized though he was not convinced about the mark of the beast or how Catholicism would cause us to lose our religious freedom here in America. Even after being baptized, my husband still did not study the Bible on his own, nor did he seem interested in religion. But when we started watching the Walter Veith DVD's that changed. At nights when my husband could not sleep, I would awaken to find him out of bed and in the living room watching Professor Veith's lectures. I thanked God that He was using Professor Veith's lectures, personal experiences, and his way of presenting God's information, to speak to my husband's heart.

Even though we were already vegan, the scientific research that Professor Veith has done and the information shared in his DVD, *Udderly Amazing*, which linked dairy to many lethal diseases such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis, asthma, leukemia, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis, was absolutely amazing and kept us spellbound.

We could not wait to see the man who'd given us the DVD's so we could get more. The more we talked to him about what we knew, the more curious he became about how we related current events to what would happen in the future. We told him that the Bible tells us about the future through prophecy. This man is now visiting the SDA Church in our town and attends the Supper Club. My husband and I invested in our own set of the Amazing Discoveries DVD's and we share them with others. We pray that souls will be found in heaven as a result of the work of Amazing Discoveries and Walter Veith's DVD's, and that we will meet Professor Veith there as well.

B.G.

Continued from previous page

Finally, Shirin did take her place with us in the living room, and just then Shahram stood up and informed me that he was brewing some tea in the kitchen and that he would be back with some shortly. Although I am not opposed to drinking a hot refreshing cup of herbal tea from time to time, I am, however, careful not to drink black tea, which is saturated with caffeine. I knew beforehand that my Iranian hosts would be drinking tea just like the other 99% of Iranians around the world.

Trusting in the Lord, I exercised every ounce of amiable talent I possessed, and I carefully informed my host: "I don't drink black tea!" I will never forget the puzzled look on Shahram's face.

"You don't drink tea? I have never heard of such a thing before; all Iranians drink tea! You are an Iranian, aren't you?" I assured him I was an Iranian.

"Then why won't you drink tea?" he exclaimed.

I knew my refusal to accept his courtesy would strike a sensitive nerve, but I also knew that no Iranian in history had ever lost consciousness over someone else's refusal to accept their tea. I briefly explained my position on the issue, and with uncertainty, he offered me a glass of orange juice instead which I gladly accepted. The rest of the time we spent talking about the Bible. I was pleasantly surprised by this Muslim family; they were more interested to hear about the Bible than they were to tell me about the Koran. The vegetarian meal was very good, and we managed to talk more and get more acquainted with each other. Before I left that evening, Shahram invited me to come back again for more Bible studies.

For the next seventeen months, I made many visits to share Jesus with Shahram and his family. We spent hours talking and studying the Bible together. In all our conversations, only once did we talk about Islam. One evening I shared an important Bible truth with my hosts and felt it would be appropriate to end the study with a call for them to consider the truth they had learned and to embrace it wholeheartedly. I was surprised when Shahram informed me about his wife's fears over making such a commitment. I asked Shirin why she was so afraid and she told me she was concerned with retribution from Imam Ali who, according to Shiite tradition, replaced Muhammad after his death.

I was not at all prepared for this situation. I didn't know how to respond to her. I prayed for wisdom and

received the impression, "Leave it alone for now." Although Imam Ali has been dead for almost 1,400 years, Shirin was seriously afraid of him. I wanted so much to tell her that "The dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). I had, however, received my orders to hold my peace and to "leave it alone for now."

Our families became very close as we continued to spend more time together. The Holy Spirit was working upon the hearts of Shahram and his family and perhaps more upon my heart and also of my family's hearts. This was a two-way street because as we ministered to them, the blessing only increased for us. As we ministered to their needs, they began to see in us something they had never before seen in anyone else. They saw a family truly interested in them. They knew that our profession was real, that we were truly concerned for their salvation. They understood that we loved them deeply, and all this gave power to our witness to them. Unbeknown to us, Christ was giving them a practical view of the Gospel.

I also told him that he too could have this happiness in his life if he would decide to follow Christ.

On one occasion while Shahram and I were talking, he asked me why my wife and I were such happy people; he wanted to know why our faces shone. I didn't know how to reply. I reminded him that it was not us but Christ in our lives. I also told him that he too could have this happiness in his life if he would decide to follow Christ.

Toward the end of our stay in Europe, as my family and I were preparing to return to the US, I knew that Shahram and his wife needed to make a decision. Were they going make a decision to follow Jesus? We had spent seventeen months ministering to this dear family. The thought of their missing eternity troubled me greatly. I longed to see them surrender all to Jesus, but I had time for only one more visit.

I can recall the events of that day very well. On this occasion Shahram came to our place and picked up my son and me so we didn't have to take the bus to their home. Later that evening after we had finished our dinner, we were sitting at the dining room table while Shahram washed the dishes. As we talked over important spiritual matters, I knew in my heart that my time with them was nearing its final moments. I spoke up.

"Shahram, Shirin, you know you are very precious to Christ. He loves you and He died to save you from eternal death. Now, as we get ready to say goodbye, will you make the decision to surrender all to Jesus and follow Him?"

It was my last heartfelt plea to both of them. The atmosphere was intense. Important decisions with eternal consequences had to be made that night and the Spirit of the Lord presided powerfully over us all. It seemed that the angels of light were involved in an intense battle with angels of darkness. What was at stake? The salvation of a whole family.

Shahram turned toward me while holding a dish cloth in his left hand; I could see he was perplexed. He glanced at his wife, then at me, and said, "My wife is afraid of Ali, that he will punish her for turning from Islam."

It was that same old fear that had kept Shirin under cruel bondage, but the Lord had impressed me not to deal with this issue months before. This time was different. My whole being filled with a freedom I had not sensed before when dealing with this subject. I knew the Lord was giving me permission to address the issue once and for all. As I began to speak, the Lord showed me through impressions what I should and should not say to them.

I turned to Shahram and then to his wife and asked them a simple question. "How many people did Imam Ali kill during the time he served Islam?" The two of them were silent for some time. They looked at each other as though I had asked a question I should be able to answer myself.

"It's simple," they said, "Ali killed thousands upon thousands."

I then asked them a second question, "What was the weapon he used to do the slaughter?" They answered simultaneously, "A double-edged sword." Again, I was impressed to ask them another two-part question, and this time about Christ. "Do you know how many people Jesus killed during His life on earth? And what type of weapon did He use?"

This time they were unable to answer my question. They pondered it for awhile and looked at each other hoping one of them knew the answer. Then, looking at me, they shrugged their shoulders and said, "We don't know."

I knew in my heart that God was leading our conversation and my thoughts. Those questions were so calculated that, rightly comprehended, they would cut through any superstition and unbelief. Since they had hit dead end and didn't know how to answer the questions I had asked them, I continued to answer the question myself.





"In all His lifetime, Jesus never killed anyone; He had come to save." I continued, "And the only sword He ever used against His enemies was the Word of God."

At this Shahram turned to his wife and with an agonizing plea asked, "What else do you want to hear? What else do you want to know?" His wife said nothing. She sat in her chair and gave no opposition at all. She appeared to understand the response I had given to the questions addressed to them; however, she seemed unable to overcome the fears that were controlling her.

I knew she would not make the decision to follow Christ and be saved. So I turned my attention to her husband Shahram, and asked him, "Will you give your heart to Jesus?"

He looked at me and asked, "What must I do?"

I asked him if we could go to a private place and pray. In a moment we were kneeling inside his son's bedroom. I led him through the prayer. He confessed his faith in Christ, asked to be forgiven for all his sins, and invited Jesus to come into his life.



After our prayer, I looked upon Shahram and what I saw filled me with joy inexpressible. For the first time in seventeen months Shahram's face shone with a light expressive of the peace he now felt. He had a smile on his face I will never forget. He had truly surrendered all to Jesus, his Savior.

When we walked out of the bedroom, we found his wife clearly agitated and confused. She had rejected the greatest opportunity of her lifetime. The two paths they had chosen were representative of the choice of two paths the whole world faces. A husband and a wife - one basking in the sunlight and peace of Jesus' great love and the other held in bondage, fearful and uncertain.

As Shahram prepared to take me back home, he asked, "What happens to people after they die?"

"The Bible says there is no knowledge in death. The righteous will receive their reward when Christ returns to the earth the second time, and

the wicked will receive their reward at the end of the one thousand years," I explained. The answer satisfied him, although we did not spend too much time studying this subject.

At my home, I embraced Shahram once again and wished Him God's blessings and with tears of joy we bid each other farewell. A few days later my family and I were on board a plane heading back to America.

It was the summer of 2000 when we returned to California. I wondered about Shahram. We didn't communicate much during those first few weeks after we left. Shahram had gone to Iran to visit his aging parents, and we were trying to settle in back home. Around forty days after we had returned to the US, Shirin called me. She sounded frantic. I tried to understand her words in between her bouts of sobbing. She finally said, "Shahram is dead!"

"What?" I demanded. "What do you mean he is dead?"

She related the events leading up to his death. He had gone back to Iran and was traveling around the country visiting relatives and loved ones. At the time of our first meeting, Shahram had been ill for a few years and was taking heavy medications. While visiting in Iran, he had had a heart attack and died instantly.

I felt overcome; I didn't know what to say. I wept! After hanging up the phone, I went to my room and knelt down to pray. "Why Lord? Why did you allow Shahram to die?"

I waited for God to answer me, and He did. I was impressed to read the following text from 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18:

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

I stood up thanking God for His great heart of mercy. I understood now God's purpose. He had allowed Shahram to go to sleep so that his life would be sealed for the resurrection morning. Although difficult for us to comprehend, God had made the best choice for Shahram. Also, as difficult as it would be, I felt I needed to tell Shirin about God's providences.

I called her and shared with her the Bible verse God had given me. I realized this would be hard for her to grasp, but I wanted her to know that the death of her husband was not Ali's revenge but God's design. I reminded her of the resurrection morning when Jesus will return to take His own back to heaven with Him. Again, I asked Shirin to reconsider her decision and to follow Jesus as her husband had done. She told me she could not do that because she feared the retribution of Imam Ali. I have now lost all contact with Shirin and her son, but I feel a great burden to share the Gospel with Shahram's son who knows very little about his father's conversion to Christianity. Perhaps the Lord will open that door for me and help me find him one day.



## Two Families One Destiny

About two years after the death of Shahram, we returned to [Country] once more. I planned to continue my work for Iranian immigrants living there.

I decided one day to go back to the same mall where I had first met Shahram, again armed with many tracts in several languages. After about an hour of pacing back and forth through the mall looking for Iranians, I stopped and prayed that God would lead me to whomever He had prepared for me to meet. Just then I noticed two women walking at a far distance from me; they had their children with them. I somehow knew they were Iranians and felt I needed to reach them quickly.

After catching up to them, I cautiously approached and greeted them. I asked if they were Iranians. They said they were. I gave them a copy of the little tract which I had given to Shahram. One of the women, whom I will call Shahla, said she thought she had seen that tract somewhere before. I could not remember ever meeting them and told them they probably got it somewhere else. We talked for about twenty minutes about the love of God and the signs relating to Christ's coming. They were very interested in what I had to say.

Shahla told me that she and her husband had studied with some Jehovah's Witnesses. She said they had a difficult time understanding them because of the language barrier. In fact, they were dissatisfied with the little they could understand about their doctrines. I was pleasantly surprised when Shahla asked me if I would go to her home and study the Bible with them. Of course she had to get her husband's consent first. Mehri, Shahla's friend, and her husband were staying at Shahla's home for the next two weeks. I gave the ladies my phone number and said goodbye. All the way home I praised God for His great providence.

Later that evening, Shahla called me and told me I would be welcome in their home for a Bible study the following week on Tuesday. Since their home was close to my work I decided to go alone. I arrived at their apartment on time but to my surprise, the women's husbands were not there which was rather strange. Shahla told me that their husbands did not care too much to meet with me, but that they had their permission to study the Bible with me. I silently praised God, and we had our first Bible study that day. They had so many questions for me. We studied for about three hours. I found out

later that each time I studied the Bible with them they would rehearse everything they had learned to their husbands when they returned from the park where they had taken their daughters to play.

I studied the Bible with these ladies for about a month at least twice a week. Sometimes we studied two lessons in one day. It was a wonderful experience. The Lord had orchestrated it so well that, although I had never met their husbands, I studied with them through their wives. Finally, the day came when I met the two men who so graciously allowed their wives to study with me. Ali and Amir were gentle in appearance. These two families were true seekers after knowledge, and God had seen it and now honored them.

Only six weeks after we met, Shahla and her husband Ali were baptized at the local Seventh-day Adventist church. About one month later Mehri and her husband Amir were baptized at the Adventist church in their own town. Today, Shahla and her husband Ali have moved to another country where they are keeping their faith and attending the Seventh-day Adventist church. Mehri and her husband Amir still live in the same country and continue to attend church and keep the Lord's Sabbath. ■

\*All names in this article have been changed and do not reflect the real names of the characters mentioned.

Brother Shahbaz is Speaker/director for Advent Lighthouse International—an outreach evangelistic media ministry committed to the task of proclaiming the Three Angels' Message around the world. Shahbaz is a dedicated evangelist committed to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and has been working in the field of evangelism in North America, Europe and Asia since 1999. Shahbaz first became a Christian at the age of 18 through a series of providential events that culminated with a dream that revealed to him the identity of God's last-day remnant church. Shahbaz lives with his family in North America.



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# REALITY CHECK

By Daniel Pel

**A**s an international speaker, traveling on planes has become a routine. Besides the mundane things that come along with flights, now and then my wife Silvia and I bump into interesting people resulting in interesting conversations about life. Some time ago we checked in for another flight. Silvia got a seat beside a man and it did not take long before they had delved into a conversation about Christianity. I must say that it is very easy to get into a spiritual conversation when 99% of the flights we are on have a mission-oriented project as our destination. Questions regarding our destination or occupation naturally lead to spiritual discussions. The man did not claim to be a Christian or to believe the Bible, but liked to talk about these things and had some questions. The man and Silvia ended up talking about creation, and he found out that Silvia actually believes in a literal six-day creation. He was a bit puzzled

*“Christianity began in Palestine as a fellowship, moved to Greece and became a philosophy, moved to Italy and became an institution, moved to Europe and became a culture, moved to America and became an enterprise.”*

*“I know many Christians, but you are the first Christian that I’ve met that actually believes the Bible.”*

for a moment, and though the conversation had been both friendly and respectful, he could not hide his utter surprise. The next thing he said we would never forget: “I know many Christians, but you are the first Christian that I’ve met that actually believes the Bible.”

## **Bible-Believing Christians a Growing Minority**

This blunt and candid statement made me think. Though we know thousands around the world that believe the same about the Bible as

we do, that it is indeed the inspired Word of God and its revelations are not contrary to science or reality, his words were nonetheless alarming. Bible-believing Christians are clearly becoming a minority in secular Europe. In our western society Christianity has become more of a tradition than anything else. Many Christians go through certain motions at certain periods of life. For many Christians, the “practice” of Christianity might

start with baptism as a baby, followed by confirmation as a boy or girl, a wedding as a young man or young lady, and finally - to close it off - a Christian might end up in a church graveyard. Between these events, the Bible is the book that contains the Christmas story that might be read once a year. Oh, and it also says something about Easter besides the rabbits and eggs. I think you get my point. A quote I came across by author Sam Pascoe, put it this way: “Christianity began in Palestine as a fellowship, moved to Greece and became a philosophy, moved to Italy and became an institution, moved to Europe and became a culture,

moved to America and became an enterprise.”

Why is it that so many Christians no longer believe the bold claims of the Bible? The late Methodist preacher, Leonard Ravenhill, said, “One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed.” Maybe the problem lies deeper than we think. Maybe many Christians, and we can include ourselves here, often live in two worlds.

## **Just In Case Theology**

Let me try to explain what I mean. There is the “real” world – the tangible things around us of which the sum makes up our lives. This is everything from food, clothes, relationships, education, work, and so much more. Then there is the “Biblical world” of faith, which we enter now and then, particularly once a week when we go to church. Here we read and hear about God, angels, miracles, eternal life, and such. Many of us have learned from a young age to compartmentalize these two

worlds and live in one while believing, somewhat, in the other. But they stay two distinct worlds and rarely do they interact or merge with each other. As Christians we now and then visit the world of the Scriptures, but that is exactly what it is, a world for itself. Subconsciously the Scriptures describing the “Biblical world” end up in a place of fiction rather than reality. It happens so easily that we buy into, what I like to term, the “just in case” theology. We want to get the best out of this world while still believing the Gospel, just in case. We put our bets on heaven. After all, the description of heaven is amazing. But we also put our bets on earth. After all, if what the Bible says is not true, at least we had a good life down here. We put one foot in this world and one foot in the Biblical world. We separate our “spiritual lives” from our “normal lives” – just in case! But the fundamental question remains: Are there two worlds? Can we live two lives?

Paul, the apostle, writes that we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men (1 Corinthians 4:9). In other words our lives, lived on this earth, are on display for an on-looking universe. According to Scripture, God and innumerable angels, see all we do. We might at times attempt to live in two worlds, but if we truly believe Scripture there is only one reality. It’s the one the Scriptures reveal. Everything we do and everything we are is part of this one reality. Paul, in another place, writes to the early believers in Corinth and says, “If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

## Two Realities?

**Sadly, millions go through life unaware of the only real world, which is the Biblical one.**

Paul identifies an enemy in the picture. The “god of this age,” who in other places of Scripture is identified as Lucifer, the fallen angel, the one who instigated the great controversy between good and evil. This being seeks to blind the minds of people from a revelation of the Gospel, which is a revelation of the character of God. We can see that this being has succeeded in blinding

the minds of millions in our world today as to the reality of this great controversy we are all living in. Sadly, millions go through life unaware of the only real world, which is the Biblical one. A fake reality has been created that excludes God as creator, Lucifer as deceiver, a great controversy, the Gospel, the

Ten Commandments as a moral foundation, eternal destinies, and so much more. We live our lives in a world surrounded by people that have a fundamentally different understanding of what constitutes reality. In many instances the life of the Christian has adapted to a reality without God. And yet, in order to soothe the conscience, the Biblical reality is not fully removed, but merely designated to certain times and places where others believe as we do. If this in any way reflects your life right now, don’t despair. We have all bought into this at one point or another. And more importantly, we are not left without precious instruction from the only place where the real world is described—the Scriptures! In Romans, 12:2, it says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”.

**We look at the world around us with the eyes of faith. Our glasses, you could say, are the Scriptures.**



No doubt, as Christians we are not exempt from being conformed to this world. This includes the thinking of this world and the reality that this world projects on us. And yet the Spirit of

God wants to transform and renew our minds! Once this happens our eyes are no longer blinded, but we see as God sees. We look at the world around us with the eyes of faith. Our glasses, you could say, are the Scriptures. They interpret the world and the universe as it really is, a battle zone between Good and Evil. When we go through life with this continual awareness we will want to prove what is good and acceptable, and what is the perfect will of God. His instructions will matter to us. Not only once a week in Church, but in every instance of our lives. With the awareness that innumerable angels are watching our lives, we can gain assurance that we are not alone in the challenges we face. The cross of Jesus is suddenly not just a relic of the past. Our lives change when we are fully aware that the



tomb is empty and that Jesus is alive and accessible to us through prayer. We gain confidence and boldness once these reali-

ties become real to us! And this "reality check" is not to happen once, but by God's grace, we can experience it day-by-day. Listen once again to the words of Paul:

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).*

Let's abandon the "just in case" theology and embrace the fullness of Gospel living, looking for things which are not seen. Let's experience a radical reorientation by the renewing of our minds. May we all, day-by-day, experience a reality check and then by the power of God live according to it. ■

Daniel Pel has traveled extensively to present relevant and engaging topics from the Scriptures. Born in New Zealand, Daniel has spent most of his life in Europe.

## BIBLE TRIVIA CORNER



1

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# To God be the Glory

## ...in His Fruit



I thank God so much for using AD to share the message that opened the eyes of many (including myself and my wife) to the current deceptions that surround us.

This is a life-changing message. I earned a scholarship named "Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship" to leave Rwanda and study in the USA, where I earned a Master's degree in Business Administration. I then become a Rotary Ambassador, but unknowingly, God was preparing me to be His ambassador.

During my studies, I made many presentations to Rotarians throughout America, whose aim is to build peace on earth. They were happy to hear me say what my country went through so that they could show how peace is needed worldwide. Now I understand what this means: *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts [Psalms 28:3].* For giving these presentations, I received a Paul Harris Fellows Award "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among people of the world."

One day, I was speaking to around 800 people, mostly businessmen, generals, and politicians. Many of them were visibly uncomfortable when I said the genocide that took place in my country was the result of a "divide and control" mentality that Roman Catholic priests had sown among Rwandans many years ago. I was troubled by their faces, but God was preparing me to find the truth. A few days later, a member of my SDA church lent me Walter Veith's Total Onslaught DVDs. Although I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family and grew up as an SDA, I had never understood the message quite as I did after watching Total Onslaught. The DVDs connected with my experience and answered most of my questions. I started to diligently study the books of Daniel and Revelation, and the Bible became a new book to me. The struggle in my heart still existed, but now in a different form.

Instead of struggling to know the truth, I was struggling with how to separate myself from Rotarians. I was challenged by one of your DVDs where Walter Veith quotes Ellen G. White saying, "Those who bind themselves in secret societies will not receive the seal of God." I was still going to Rotary meetings in Chicago to secure financial prosperity and honor through the connections the Rotary Club offers, but God was continuing to convict me that I had to separate myself from them.

I moved from Chicago to Washington, DC where I was using the Rotary network to find a nice job because I knew they control world finances behind the scenes. I attended a Rotary Club meeting in Washington, DC where I met with top leaders of big institutions in the capital. The next day, I went to another Rotary Meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland where God showed me that the enemy is in our ranks.

After arriving at the meeting, I introduced myself to the members and they introduced themselves to me, as is their custom.

After hearing that I am from Rwanda, one man told me he had been to a Seventh-day Adventist University in Rwanda. I asked him if he was a Seventh-day Adventist. He said yes, he was retired, and had been the Executive Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty at the General Conference. He also informed me that the man seated on my right was the current Executive Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty. My heart was troubled. I asked myself, Why are these Seventh-day Adventists a part of the Rotary Club? And if they are part of this society, why are they permitted to be leaders in the Church? Don't they know that we should not be joined with secret unions?

After the meeting, I approached the retired Executive Director and asked him, "You're a Seventh-day Adventist, what do you think about the ecumenical movement?"

He responded, "We signed a contract that we will never teach a message that offends others."

This raised another question in my heart. Normally, when you sign a contract, there must be two sides. Which two parties signed the contract? For what reason?

Since then, I know that the war between good and evil is at its peak. When I see what Rick Warren and Tony Blair are doing in Rwanda and elsewhere, plus some in my own church and many other such speakers, I continually ask myself this question:

Can we let the enemy deceive the very people whom Jesus died for?

We have to go forward in faith with the Three Angels' Message to win this war between good and evil. From a human standpoint, this seems impossible, but by faith it is possible, because Jesus, who defeated the enemy, has already guaranteed our victory.

By God's grace, today my wife and I have started a ministry called Precious Present Truth that distributes DVD sermons and seminars throughout Central Africa from Seventh-day Adventist preachers who do not fear to call sin by its right name. The DVDs are being translated into the local African dialects so that as many people as possible can hear the Good News and begin a relationship with Christ.

A.N.



by Tammie Burak

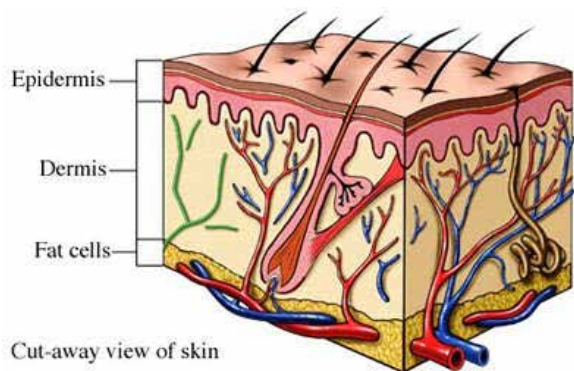
# Healthy Skin: It's up to you

Skin problems don't begin in the skin. They begin inside your body. If you've got spots and blemishes on your skin, it is a sign that your stomach, liver, and bowels are not in good condition.

## You Can Change Your Skin

The good news is, if you have poor skin, you can rebuild it. It takes 30 to 45 days for new basal skin cells to move to the surface and become the cornified layer, which is the skin we see. Make changes to your lifestyle now, and you'll notice the results in your skin after about a month.

When construction workers build a new house, they start at the basement, not the roof. If you want to have beautiful skin, you must start at the basal layer and provide your body with the right materials for building perfect new skin cells.



Skin cells created under poor conditions have abrasions, discoloration, and age spots. You might think that age spots and blemishes occur because of damage that happens on the surface of the skin, but usually the trouble begins when the skin cells are being formed in the basal layer.

Changing your skin begins with changing your diet and lifestyle. If your skin needs improving, begin by improving what goes into your body and give it the best ingredients for making healthy skin cells.

## What Causes Poor Skin?

What is happening in the body that causes the skin cells to appear wrinkled, blemished or spotted?

### 1 Breaks in the Cell Walls

Skin cells that cannot hold water cause your skin to look damaged. When you provide your body with the right materials for making new cells, you will begin to produce skin cells with no breaks in the cell wall. Your skin cells will function optimally while appearing healthy and youthful looking.

### 2 Lack of Essential Nutrients

People usually accept poor skin as a part of aging, but your skin can look healthy at any age.

*Leviticus 17:14 says, "For the life of all flesh is the blood thereof." Science has shown that the body is able to convert skin cells into blood, when necessary. A study done at McMaster University found that it is possible to turn skin into blood without the skin cells first returning to the stem-cell state.<sup>1</sup>*

So, if you're not giving your body the right materials to build with, the body will use skin cells to make the cells it needs. When your body uses skin cells as basic building materials for its other organs, your skin may look tight, discolored, or old as a result.

### 3 Poor Waste Management

Your largest organ—your skin—plays an important role in your body's excretory system. When your colon and other excretory organs are not doing a thorough job of removing waste from your body, your skin begins to do more of the waste removal work.

Acne, pimples, and blemishes result from waste passing through the skin's pores. Unhealthy eating and poor elimination of the body's waste cause the skin to look unhealthy and old.



## Cosmetics

*Many are ignorantly injuring their health and endangering their life by using cosmetics. They are robbing the cheeks of the glow of health, and then to supply the deficiency use cosmetics (Healthful Living, 189).*

You might be shocked to learn that many cosmetics use poisonous substances that go into your blood through the pores of your skin. If, while waiting for your skin to become the type of skin that doesn't need cosmetics, you choose to use cosmetics, be sure to use products that are made of natural ingredients.

Remember, if you wouldn't eat it, you shouldn't put it on your skin.

## Supplements

Some supplements can work wonders in promoting skin health:

- **Antioxidants** not only repair the skin but also slow the aging process while feeding and protecting the brain from free radical damage.
- **Vitamin D3** helps the bones to build healthy blood cells but also helps to strengthen the immune system and lift the spirit during winter months. If you're outside 15 minutes, you get 10 000 IU of Vitamin D. In winter when you don't have enough sunshine, start supplementing. Rudy Davis, ND, recommends 10 000 units of Vitamin D3 per day.
- **Silica** is necessary for healthy skin and bone regeneration. It produces a matrix for calcium and magnesium deposits. Apples, raisins, cucumbers, and strawberries contain silica, and supplements are also available.
- **Fiber** helps keep your colon clean. Waste materials from all over the body are deposited in the transvers colon. For perfectly healthy skin, keep your bowels moving and your internal tissues clean.



## Oils for Your Skin

Apply these oils to your skin for lasting benefits:

- **Vitamin E oil** is one of the most potent antioxidants that you can apply externally, feeding your skin from the outside in.
- **Grapeseed oil** is also high in antioxidants.
- **Frankincense oil** can prevent and reduce wrinkles:
  - To remove warts, apply three times per day until the wart is gone.
  - Apply undiluted to remove sun spots.
  - Rub on stretch marks to repair them and new cell growth.
- **Sacha inchi oil** has the highest omega 3 content of any oil—54%—and can be applied topically and taken internally.
- **Virgin coconut oil** can be applied directly on the skin to provide healthful fats that keep the skin smooth and healthy; it can also be eaten in small portions, remembering that it is a saturated fat.



## Dry Skin Brushing and Washing

Whatever you put on your skin goes into your blood. You should only put on your skin what is safe to go into your mouth.

*The little mouths in the skin, through which the body breathes, become clogged, thus making it impossible to eliminate impurities through that channel. This throws a double burden upon the other excretory organs, and disease is soon produced (Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 101).*

Up close, skin cells look like they have little mouths. Those pores are holes that go inside your body.



## Keep Your Pores Open

Your skin expels three per cent of the carbon dioxide produced by your body. And about three per cent of the oxygen used by your body enters through pores in your skin. It is very important that you keep your pores clean and open.

When young woman was covered in gold paint for a movie part, after only a few hours, she had to be taken to hospital. Another young woman took her place on the movie set.

This time, a small area of skin was left unpainted just to keep her alive. Even so, she only lasted a couple of hours before she too began to get sick and had to be cleaned off. This story shows how important it is to keep your pores unclogged.

## Dry Brushing

Did you know that 80% of house dust is made up of dead skin cells sloughed off by our bodies? Dead skin cells must be removed daily to keep the skin clean and the pores open.

You might think that the best way to be clean is to use lots of soap and water. But, when you put soap on your skin, the soap creates a film through which dead skin cannot slough off. Soap also causes your skin to feel tight and forms a layer of material that prevents skin from breathing.

Continued on next page

Dry brushing is an excellent alternative to using soap, and has these benefits:

- Removes dry, dead skin cells.
- Helps to keep pores unclogged and open.
- Allows skin to breathe properly.

When you dry brush, remember the following:

- Dry brush your skin before you exercise in the morning.
- Use a softer complexion brush for your face.
- Use a good quality brush. Bernard Jensen brushes are well made and use vegetable fibre bristles, which don't cut the skin.

## Hand Baths

*Upon rising in the morning, most persons would be benefited by taking a sponge or hand bath. This will remove all impurities from the skin, and keep it moist and supple, thereby aiding the circulation (Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 107).*

The simplest way to wash the skin is with a hand bath. A hand bath is simply putting water on the skin with your hands and wiping it off with your hands. The skin of the hand gently cleans the skin of the body.

## Showering with a Loofah Sponge

A loofah sponge is a tropical or subtropical fruit like a cucumber. Once the fruit is dried, it becomes fibrous and can be used in the shower to remove dead skin. You can buy loofahs in stores that sell natural bath products.

For best results:

- Scrub the skin toward your heart. Stroke the body from the head down toward the heart and from the arms up toward the heart. Stroking toward the heart stimulates your lymphatic system.
- Keep the water as hot as you can stand it, but at the end of your shower, turn on the cold water to further stimulate the lymphatic system.
- After showering, make a fist and tap your breast bone in double strokes, thirty times. This super-activates your immune system, stimulating the production of disease fighting blood cells.

## What Skin is Made of

If you want to improve the appearance of your skin, you need to learn what skin is made of and how new skin cells are formed.

**Elastin** is a protein in connective tissue. Elastin helps skin to return to its original position when it is poked or pinched.

**Fibrin** is a long protein produced from the blood protein fibrinogen.

**Collagen** is mostly found in fibrous tissues, such as tendon, ligament and skin. The fibroblast is the most common cell which creates collagen. Collagen is necessary to rebuild your whole system.

Take between 5,000-10,000 milligrams of vitamin C daily in the form of calcium ascorbate

## Dry Skin Brushing

The skin is the largest organ of the body. Although you might not give your skin much thought, it detoxifies 25% of the body's toxins each day. The skin breathes through its pores, or little mouths, throwing out the body's impurities to keep the body healthy. If the mouths cannot breathe properly, the skin's detoxification work must be placed upon the other detoxification organs and systems which include the kidneys, liver, bowels, lungs, lymph and blood.

### How to Help Your Skin Breathe

Just a little attention from you will keep the millions of little mouths in your skin breathing healthfully and happily. Here are some things you can do to keep your skin's pores functioning optimally:

- Regularly breathe fresh outdoor air,
- Bathe regularly,
- Drink plenty of clean water,
- Exercise vigorously to induce sweating,
- Use only natural skin care products,
- Do not wear restrictive clothing, and
- Practice dry skin brushing.

Dry skin brushing is helpful because it improves circulation to the skin by removing dead skin cells and accumulated toxins from under the skin that collect in the lymph glands. About 70% of your lymph system lies directly below your skin, allowing easy access via dry skin brushing, which basically is a lymphatic cleanse.

### Dry skin brushing also:

- Tightens the skin,
- Aids in digestion,
- Assists in reducing cellulite pockets,
- Increases skin cell renewal,
- Stimulates the lymph glands and nerve endings, and
- Energizes the nervous system.

### Get the Lymph Moving

The lymph system has no pumping mechanism by which to move lymph fluid as the vascular system which has the heart to pump blood. A light application of skin brushing for five to seven minutes, just prior to showering helps get the

or magnesium ascorbate, and your body will be able to produce eight times more collagen than it would without the vitamin C.

## Massage

A massage therapist who knows the skin can help you rebuild elastin, fibrin, collagen, and the fibroblast cell.

Proper skin massage stretches the skin and provides small breaks in the elastin network. This causes the blood to produce more fibrin to build up the collagen and elastin in the massaged area. This in turn gives a younger, smoother look to the skin.

by Janie Unruh, BSN, MPH, CDE

lymph moving. Along with the above mentioned lifestyle principles, dry skin brushing synergistically improves health.

### Get the Right Brush

A natural-bristle dry skin brush can be bought at most health food stores or online. Do not use a body brush on the face, neck, or breasts. Instead, look for a facial brush made specifically for facial skin. Do not purchase synthetic brushes, as they are more likely to scratch the surface of the skin.

When you first start brushing it may feel like the bristles are too hard, but after four or five days, your skin will adapt. You will actually start to enjoy it and look forward to it. If you prefer not to purchase a brush, you may also use a dry washcloth.

### How to Do It

Brush gently, avoiding broken skin and varicose veins. Brush in sweeping strokes several times over each area, not in a scrubbing motion. Remember: Always brush towards the heart.

Follow these steps to complete a full-body dry brushing.

1. Start with the bottom of one foot, move to the ankle, calf and inner and outer thighs.
2. Brush the other foot and leg in the same way.
3. Brush along stomach and buttocks.
4. Move from one arm to the other starting with the hands, moving upward, including the underarms.
5. Use circular motions on your face, neck and around soft breast tissue but not the nipple.
6. Jump into a warm shower
7. End your warm shower with a cold shower to close all your wide open skin cells.

### Cleaning Your Brush

To clean your brush, simply rinse it under running water every few weeks and air dry. If the brush is oily, soak it in lemon water for 20 minutes, rinse well and air dry. ■

Janie Unruh, BSN, MPH, CDE is a health professional and a contributor at Amazing Health.

If you really want to see a dramatic change in your skin, have a good massage every second day for three months while eating the right diet.

## Diet

Nutrients that enter your body are sent to the body's internal organs. Then, if there are nutrients left over, they are sent to the skin.

The typical dietary regime of North Americans does not provide enough nutrients to rebuild the inner organs. With inadequate nutrients to feed the internal organs, nothing is left to feed the skin.

Try these skin-nourishing foods:

- **Apricots** maintain youthful skin and regenerate your body's fluids. Dried apricots enable every cellular structure in your body to hold proper amounts of moisture to maintain normal cellular function.
- **Nuts** are a good source of fats for your skin. Eat a handful each day. Get a good variety.
- **Berries** are rich in antioxidants which repair the skin, help slow down the aging process, and prevent skin damage
- **Goji berries** are also especially rich in essential amino acids, aid muscle regeneration, and improve digestion.
- **Cacao** is the highest known antioxidant food. It contains tryptophan and serotonin which greatly enhances brain function.
- **Freshly-squeezed vegetable and fruit juices** flood your body with the extra nutrition it needs to feed your skin and organs. Drink eight to sixteen ounces. Try different combinations and remember to use more vegetable juice than fruit juice.



Healthy skin requires a nourished, active, and thoroughly clean body, inside and out. ■

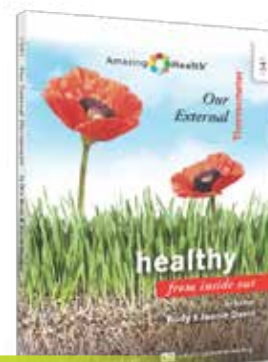
Tammy Burak is a contributing author and copy editor at Amazing Discoveries.

This article is adapted from Dr. Rudy Davis' lecture "**Our External Thermometer**", which is part of a 14-DVD series: "**Healthy From Inside Out**".

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DVD #341





# The Gift Less Loved

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**H**ave you ever received a gift from someone that you knew from the start you would never use? Where did it end up? On a shelf in your closet? The Goodwill store in some far-off city where the giver of the gift would never know you discarded it? Or maybe you misused the gift.

When I was a young boy, my dad gave me \$5 to buy my mom a Mother's Day gift. To make a long story short, I ended up spending over \$4

on a toy I thought I couldn't live without. With the remainder of the money I got from Dad, I bought a ten-cent card and a fifty-cent hat pin for Mom. I believe we often do some of the same kinds of things with the precious gifts God offers us.

## A Misunderstood Gift

There is one gift in particular that quite often seems to be misunderstood, misused, and laid aside. It is spoken of in Acts 5:31: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." No, I'm not focusing on the wonderful gift of forgiveness, but rather, repentance, the gift that often seems to be "less loved."

There are two irreplaceable ingredients for anyone to have a vibrant and healing salvation experience through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is one of those ingredients. We read of these necessary ingredients

in Acts 20:21, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (emphasis added).

These same ingredients are seen in the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus Himself was preaching.

Notice the words of Christ found in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Do you see it? Jesus specified repentance and faith as requirements for entering the kingdom of God. "Repent and believe (have faith)," He said.

Do you desire to grow in your saving love relationship with your Saviour? Along with faith, repentance must be an integral part of your experience.

## A Necessary Gift

What's so wonderful about this gift? When properly understood and healthfully used, it actually enables us to make

healing, godly changes in our responses to things that trouble us (including sin).

*Steps to Christ* gives us a simple picture of true repentance:

*Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life (23).*

The original Greek word from which the word *repent* is translated into English, means "to think differently" or "change one's mind for the better." So the first thing to understand is that repentance is a change in thinking, which means a change of heart. Healing repentance is a gift from God because He's the only One who can change our hearts.

True godly repentance then, must begin in my thinking. It begins with a willingness, by faith, to resolutely turn away from my sinful way of thinking about the people and situations in my life, and, by faith, determinedly replace that unhealthy way of thinking with Christ's way of thinking. God has given us His Word, the Bible, so we can know exactly what repentant thought He would have us replace each of our unhealthy sinful thoughts with.

## Receiving the Gift

When you are convicted of sin (see John 16:8-9) and turn to God in prayer with heart sorrow for your sin, when you earnestly



There is one gift in particular that quite often seems to be misunderstood, misused, and laid aside.

desire to turn away from your old damaging way of thinking and begin replacing those sinful thoughts with God's thoughts found in the Bible, then you are cooperating with the Holy Spirit and can receive God's wonderful gift of repentance.

Notice this precious description of godly repentance found in 2 Corinthians 7:10–11:

*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye **sorrowed** after a godly sort, what **carefulness** it wrought in you, yea, what **clearing of yourselves**, yea, what **indignation**, yea, what **fear**, yea, what **vehement desire**, yea, what **zeal**, yea, what **revenge**! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (emphases added).*

## Repentance is a Process

A vital insight for us as growing children of God is that repentance is a process, not a one-time event. As we've just seen in Mark 1:15, Jesus came preaching repentance towards God and belief in the Gospel. What's so interesting about this text is that both verbs "repent" and "believe" in the original Greek are in the present tense. Present tense in the Greek means not only that the action of the verb is taking place at the present time, but also that the action is linear or continual! We must continually turn away from unhealthy thoughts to believe (trust, put our faith in) and practice the new Christlike replacement thoughts that the Lord showed us from His Word.

Simply put: belief and repentance are not one-time events. They are ongoing processes. Why must repentance and believing be a process? Because physiologically, to change an old unhealthy habit of thinking to a new healthy Christlike habit of thinking takes time and practice. Just as it takes time for a little child to learn by practice how to walk using two limbs instead of four, with some falls along the way, so it is with godly repentance.

## Pitfalls to Misunderstanding the Gift

When we don't understand this process of repentance, we often fail to experience the transforming repentance of God. We worry and fret and fear ourselves out of a healing relationship with Jesus in two ways:

- 1** We change outward actions without changing our thoughts about the temptation. Yet without a godly Biblical renewal in our thoughts about the tempting situation, the change is only outward, often to guard our reputation or to protect ourselves from the negative consequences of getting caught. This often leads to thinking it isn't possible to live victoriously.
- 2** We respond to the convictions of God's Holy Spirit and sincerely turn away from saying or doing something sinful and then a short time later, fall back into the same sin like a child learning to walk. This troubles us because we were very sincere when we repented, but because we fall back into the old sinful habit, we wonder if our repentance was real. What tripped us up? Quite often we carry the idea that repenting once means never repeating that sin again.

And in some cases, this is true. However, many of us were never taught that cooperation with the Holy Spirit's empowering grace to eternally change a sinful way of thinking and responding to be like Christ requires a repeated and faith-filled resolute turning away from the old sinful path of thinking and responding, and by faith, determinedly practicing the new Christlike way until it becomes the new dominant habit of thinking and responding. (See Ephesians 4:22–32; Colossians 3:8–10.)

For many of the sins the Lord convicts us to lay aside, just as a little child learns to walk by imitating his parent, there will probably be some falls along the way, in our sincere and best efforts to copy Christ. That is why repentance is a process and not a one-time event.

Does the Spirit of Prophecy verify this? Yes! *Signs of the Times* tells us: "repentance is a daily, continued exercise, lasting until mortality is swallowed up of life" (November 26, 1894, par. 7).

*SDA Bible Commentaries* shares this important concept in this way:

*Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life. It is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects. In Christ all fullness dwells. Science that is not in harmony with Him is of no value. He teaches us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is the highest science that any man can reach (emphasis added, SDA Bible Commentaries Volume 6: 1068).*

*Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life.*

*SDA Bible Commentaries* also says this:

*The life we live is to be one of **continual repentance** and humility. We need to **repent constantly, that we may be constantly victorious**. When we have*

*true humility, we have victory. The enemy never can take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises (emphasis added, SDA Bible Commentaries Volume 7: 959).*

To “repent constantly” means to keep bringing our thoughts back to think Christ’s thoughts about anything and everything we daily face. This is the healing precursor to a Christ-like outward response to people and situations. (See also Philippians 2:5; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5.)

### The Role of the Will

Now here’s an important point: as sincere children of God in our efforts to **think** like Jesus (Philippians 2:5) and **walk** like Jesus (1 John 2:6) in true God-given repentance, we have no more desire to



sin than does a child desire to fall down while learning to walk like his dad. Attractive as it may be, the idea that it will be OK to knowingly continue choosing to sin, to continue to remain crawling on all fours, is not in the mindset of someone experiencing God’s true gift of repentance.

Though he may be strongly tempted, in the heart of the child of God who is in the grace-empowered faith practice of thinking and walking like Christ, there will be no desire to blame others for his falls. That humbled child of God is freed from excuse-making. Any reasoning that condones continuance in sin will not be considered in that repentant individual’s heart (Romans 6:12–15.)

Oh, and one more thing. In a child’s sincere desire and efforts to practice walking like his daddy, his father does not condemn him for his falls; and neither does God condemn you in your sincere desire and faith-filled efforts to think and walk like Jesus. (See John 8:11; 1 John 3:20.)

And remember, it is not how far you have advanced in your ability to think Christ’s thoughts or to walk as He walked that counts with God, but your sincere and willing mind to do the best you can with the knowledge and strength you have to continue learning and practicing Christ’s ways of responding to life and people. (See 1 John 2:6.) Repentance is a vital ingredient in this healing experience.

*Faith and Works* shares this hope-filled reality in this way: “Christ looks at the spirit, and when He sees us carrying our burden with faith, His perfect holiness atones for our shortcomings. When we do our best, He becomes our righteousness” (102, see also 2 Corinthians 8:11–12.)

### Our Feelings and Repentance

What role do feelings have in true godly repentance? This is an important thing to understand. Repentance is not dependent upon experiencing some kind of feeling or emotion. There may or may not be feelings connected with true repentance, but feelings are not solid evidence that someone has truly repented.

A bank robber might feel extremely bad for robbing a bank and getting caught. But those bad feelings are not proof that he’s changed his mind about stealing. Until that thief is willing to surrender to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and by faith, make a heart decision to accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord and cooperate with the Lord’s empowering grace to resolutely change his way of thinking about banks and the wealth they contain, he has not truly repented.

## To God be the Glory ...for His Fruit

I first heard about Amazing Discoveries through a business colleague who isn’t a Seventh-day Adventist. He went on the website and passed it on to me. I began looking up practically everything, beginning with Walter Veith’s Total Onslaught series. My wife and I, along with our two children, watched two lectures each night. Veith’s messages on Biblical prophecy, Christ, and the connection between world institutions and the occult really spoke to me. It felt like boom, in your face with the truth Veith was presenting, and it sparked a total awakening for my wife and I, of whom neither of us had been to any church in a while.

I grew up in the Catholic faith and my wife was a Jehovah’s Witness. Prior to our marriage, we both gave up our faith and found common ground as Pentecostals. After watching Veith’s Total Onslaught series, I told my wife, “We have to seek out a church that is keeping the Sabbath.” My wife suggested we go to an Adventist Church, which is where we were baptized nearly two years ago. ADTV has been a true blessing that I am eager to share with others on my home island of Dominica. I have visited one local community already to show Walter Veith’s lectures on a large projection screen and to give out your website address. I hope to visit more places soon to pass on the life-changing message to others that a colleague first passed on to me.

A.D.







*Selected Messages* gives us a caution:

*A repentance caused by a spasmodic exercise of the feelings is a repentance that needs to be repented of; for it is delusive. A violent exercise of the feelings, which does not produce in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness, leaves you in a worse state than you were in before (volume 1: 108).*

Ministry of Healing explains why:

*It is not wise to look to ourselves and study our emotions. If we do this, the enemy will present difficulties and temptations that weaken faith and destroy courage. Closely to study our emotions and give way to our feelings is to entertain doubt and entangle ourselves in perplexity. We are to look away from self to Jesus (249).*

*Many who claim to be Christians are in danger of rending their garments, **making an outward show** of remorse and repentance, **when their hearts are not softened or contrite**. This is the reason why so many continue to make failures in the Christian life. An outward appearance of sorrow is manifested for wrong, but their repentance is not that repentance that needeth not to be repented of [2 Corinthians 7:10] (emphases added, Manuscript Releases volume 12: 403) .*

## Esau's Mistake

Hebrews 12:17 speaks of Esau who "found no place of repentance, though he sought it bitterly with tears" (Genesis 27:30–41). The reason? There was no Christ-like change in his thinking.

## How does someone get trapped into finding no place of repentance?

How does someone get trapped into finding no place of repentance? Our archenemies, Satan and his evil angels, plant unhealthy ideas and even feelings into our minds, knowing that if we start dwelling on those ideas and feelings, they will grow stronger and stronger until they overwhelm us and lead us into doubt, fear, and ultimately, into thinking there is "no place of repentance" for us. Just as a

mustard seed of faith can grow into a mighty healing plant of courage and hope, so a tiny seed of doubt can grow into a devastating weed of fear and hopelessness.

Here is how *Steps to Christ* describes Satan's way of working to trap and destroy us:

*When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life's cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices. Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory (71).*

## Getting Free of Satan's Trap

But praise God, we do not have to stay trapped! Listen to how inspiration communicates this reality:



*There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men; but **if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful**, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence (Review and Herald, March 27, 1888.)*

*We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you (Steps to Christ: 72).*

Continued on next page

## Motivation Found in Love for Christ

Dear friends, I'm convinced that this victorious healing process of godly repentance can only be sustained if we are motivated by love for Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:14–15.) And this empowering motivation can only be acquired through the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts as we daily take time in the Word of God to behold the life of our sacrificially loving Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to know Him as He really is. (See 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 17:3.)

*Repentance is born in the heart by beholding the love of Christ, who gave His life to save the sinner. It is the goodness of God, manifested in Christ, that softens the heart. It is the virtue that goes forth from Jesus that inspires the purpose of the soul to turn away from sin. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but God reveals his love to us*

*Are you longing to personally experience this heavenly calling? Lay claim upon the wonderful gift of Spirit-inspired repentance!*

that we may repent. Thus repentance is not the ground of God's love toward us, but the fruit of that love ("General Conference Bulletin," December 1, 1895).

By determinedly taking time daily in God's Word to dwell upon Christ Jesus, His life of loving service, His death, His intercession for us, we are placing ourselves in a position for the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts to be like His, filled with the love of God (See 2 Corinthians 3:17–18; Isaiah 53). And the more our hearts are transformed by the Holy Spirit, the more freedom we can experience from doubts, anxiety, fear, sadness, sorrow, damaging anger, and "finding no place of repentance." That is why Jesus told us in John 8:31–32, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

## God's Call for Your Life

Beloved, here is God's call for our lives, 2 Corinthians 7:1:

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (See also 1 John 3:2–3).*

Are you longing to personally experience this heavenly calling? Lay claim upon the wonderful gift of Spirit-inspired repentance!

I hope these insights will be an encouragement to you, precious reader. Repentance, the gift "less-loved" by some, can truly become one of the gifts "best-loved" by us in our journey of becoming more like our "most-loved" friend Jesus. (See 1 John 2:5–6.) If we are willing to diligently practice thinking His thoughts and responding in His ways, our loving Saviour will bring us off more than conquerors in this battle for our minds. We will be eternally grateful for His amazing gift of repentance.

Courage!  
Pastor Dan ■

Single Sermon by **Dan Gabbert:**



### 981 - Watch and Pray

Just before the hour of Jesus' greatest trial, the disciples were given counsel that was intended by Christ to prepare them to face the temptation that they would face, seeing their Master being crucified. "Watch and pray that you may not fall into temptation". Why was it important for the disciples to pray? Dan Gabbert believes that this counsel is valid for us today. (60 min)



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Where were Paul and Silas put in prison?

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*do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.*

At the same time, however, we find that “God’s servant,” who “weakened the nations,” is identified with Lucifer in Isaiah 14:

*That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! ... How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

How is this conflict resolved? In Jewish tradition, despite the fateful part he played in Judah’s history, Nebuchadnezzar is seen in a predominantly favorable light.<sup>2</sup> The Talmud states that Nebuchadnezzar started his “career” as a young scribe in the administration of the previous Babylonian king,

Merodach-Baladan, who had an alliance with King Hezekiah of Judea.<sup>3</sup>

The Talmud also mentions that Nebuchadnezzar was a rather short guy, a dwarf:

*As a dwarf, others underestimated him. When he took power, he showed them that he may have been small of standing, but tall of stature. As part of his psychological makeup to compensate for his physical image, he had immense courage. For instance, he trained a lion in the palace and rode upon it bareback. He played with poisonous snakes. Once in a while he’d let a boa constrictor eat one of the courtiers in the palace that he did not feel so pleasantly disposed toward that day.<sup>3</sup>*

According to other sources,<sup>4</sup> Nebuchadnezzar had the Hanging Gardens built around 600 BC for his wife, Amytis. Allegedly, Amytis was homesick for her mountainous home, and rather depressed living in flat and arid Babylon. An elaborate garden was therefore constructed to replicate her lush homeland and cheer her up.

Nebuchadnezzar’s policy was to control the population via terror. He appointed new governors who were loyal to him. The population did not have to be moved. It only had to be beaten into submission.<sup>3</sup> Despite his cruelty, Nebuchadnezzar was considered a genius of the gentile world; not only was he the monarch of the greatest nation of that time, but he was also eminently wise and had an innate sense of justice and right.<sup>5</sup> We now understand that this monarch displays

# NEBUCHADNEZZAR:

## From Arrogance to Righteousness

by Michael E. Fassbender, Ph.D.

**K**ing Nebuchadnezzar II (or Nebuchadrezzar II, 630–561 BC) is probably the most famous Bible character of Gentile origin. He reigned from 605–561 BC and was the second and greatest king of the Chaldean dynasty of Babylonia. He was known for his military might, the splendor of his capital, Babylon, and his important part in Jewish history.<sup>1</sup> The Bible is one of the only sources on the personality of this mighty and influential ruler.

### Nebuchadnezzar, the “Destroyer of Nations”

The Book of Jeremiah contains a prophecy about the arising of a “destroyer of the Gentiles” (Jeremiah 4:7 KJV; see also Jeremiah 52) or the “destroyer of nations” (NKJV). In Jeremiah 43:10, on the other hand, this “destroyer” is also called “God’s servant”:

*And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.*

Jeremiah 39:11–12 tells us that Nebuchadnezzar protected Jeremiah the prophet:

*Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, Take him, and look well to him, and*



a type of dual nature: He was the author of the prototype engine of conscience control and persecution. But, he was also an attentive listener to God's prophet Daniel.

## God's Light Shines into Babylon's Darkness

Nebuchadnezzar was a proud ruler with some good character traits. Perhaps God looked at Nebuchadnezzar's innate sense of justice. You remember that Solomon was also commended for his "understanding to discern judgment" (1 Kings 3:11). But the Lord of Hosts had to break Nebuchadnezzar's pride first. So, God started communicating with Nebuchadnezzar and sent him a message. He revealed to him all earthly superpowers and the coming of His ultimate Kingdom. But the message was "encrypted" and it required the prophet Daniel to "decrypt" this message to the king.

There is a very important principle in this interaction between God, the king, and Daniel, which can be better understood with a background knowledge of the system of the Babylonian religion. The Babylonian religion was a system of secrecy and mysteries<sup>6</sup>:

*All knowledge, sacred and profane, came to be monopolized by the priesthood, who dealt it out to those who were initiated in the "Mysteries" exactly as they saw fit according as the interests of the grand system of spiritual despotism...The priests were the only depositaries of religious knowledge...and without blind and implicit submission to them, what was necessary for salvation could not be known...In that system, secret confession to the priest, according to a prescribed form, was required of all who were admitted to the "Mysteries"...Their silence in regard to everything they were commanded to keep secret was secured both by the fear of the penalties threatened to a perjured revelation, and by the general CONFESSIO exacted of the aspirants after initiation—a confession which caused them greater dread of the indiscretion of the priest, than gave him reason to dread their indiscretion.*

According to Hislop, to drink "mysterious beverages" was mandatory to all who sought initiation in these Mysteries.<sup>6</sup> These "mysterious beverages" consisted of "wine, honey, water, and flour," and they were of an intoxicating nature.

In the Babylonian system of religion, knowledge was only revealed to the "initiated," who drank from the "golden cup." Remember Belshazzar's feast in Daniel 5, where the elite drank from the vessels brought from the temple. Furthermore, the Chaldeans entertained a wide-spread spy network operating in secrecy, where the "initiated" had to give up their privacy to the superiors under threat of penalty and were thus kept in check. Chaldean priests were advisors (Daniel 2:2), maybe even "father-confessors"



(verse 4) to king Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he usually would confide his dreams.

From this perspective, you now understand Daniel much better when he says "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Daniel 2:22). This is a strong reference to the Babylonian mysteries, since Daniel was versed in the "learning" of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:4). In the "meeting" between God, the king, and God's messenger Daniel, the system of secrecy and darkness is exposed by the system of revelation and light. When Daniel went ahead and identified the king with the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar was certainly pleased. He was, however, not too excited about verse 39. It is important to note at this point that God revealed the remaining political history impacting God's people to a Gentile king. Not to king David were world politics revealed, but to this arrogant and cruel builder of the neo-Babylonian empire.

The king's submission to Daniel (see Daniel 2:46–47) indicates that his pride had gotten its first blow. Nebuchadnezzar had to face the fact that his all-knowing Chaldean system of darkness and secrecy was inferior to God's government. But was he really converted yet? Not so. He was actually filled with fear that someone was trying to overthrow his kingdom. In today's jargon, he was deeply worried about the national security of Babylonia.

## Nebuchadnezzar's Instruments of Terror

The king resorted to a number of totalitarian instruments to sustain the security of his government, much like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and other dictators would do later. He knew

first-hand from divine revelation that his government would eventually be replaced by something else. Yet he thought he could defy God's prophecy. In an aggressive campaign, the king sought to manipulate people into believing the lie that his kingdom would last forever. He invested money and resources in erecting an all-golden image (Daniel 3:1), and he instilled blind government obedience via propaganda and indoctrination. Note how his subordinates saluted the king (see Daniel 2:4; 3:9; 5:10), as opposed to the Hebrew boys, who never greeted the king this way.

Similarly, Adolf Hitler had a dedicated department for the purpose of propaganda and indoctrination, and the brilliant speaker Joseph Goebbels was his Minister of Propaganda. In his "total war" speech he succeeded to rouse the Germans to the fanatical idea that they could easily win the war. Goebbels defied the uncomfortable truth that the tide of World War II was already turning against Germany.<sup>7</sup> In the Book of Revelation, forces of propaganda and indoctrination are depicted as "frogs" since they catch their prey with the tongues (Revelation 16:13).

Remember that Nebuchadnezzar's golden image did not stand for the country. Its purpose was to represent the government—"Thou art this head of gold"—and there is a difference. Nebuchadnezzar now feared a *coup d'état*, and he designed a test to find out who was loyal to his government and who was not on his side (Daniel 3:5). We know that Daniel's friends did not participate in this "pledge of allegiance" (Daniel 3:12).

And here we learn about another instrument of totalitarian terror. It is one that has been utilized by Hitler's Nazi Germany and Communism alike: spying on a government's own citizens. Erich Mielke's *Staatssicherheit* (state security) of the former German Democratic Republic was probably the most sophisticated modern version of this kind of surveillance terror. The Chaldean initiated priests were not only advisors of the king; they also utilized their intelligence network to pinpoint and accuse opponents (Daniel 3:8).

Individuals who did not follow the "flutes and harps" in *Kadavergerhorsam* ("obedience of the corpse"), as Heinrich Himmler, the head of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), called this reflex-like submission to government forces, were reported to the king. He most likely suspected involvement of Hebrew "dissidents" in a coup.

The next totalitarian tool in Nebuchadnezzar's national security state is obvious from Daniel 3:20: physical terror of the elite police force and cruel punishment of regime dissidents.

But by God's grace, here the king received his second major blow to his pride. He was allowed to witness the rescue from on high, the arrival of Jesus Christ Himself to deliver His children (Daniel 3:24–25). It is important to see what the Spirit of Prophecy says in this context:

*How did that heathen king know what the Son of God was like? The Hebrew captives filling positions of trust in Babylon had in life and character represented before him the truth. When asked for a reason of their faith, they had given it without hesitation. Plainly and simply they had presented the principles of righteousness, thus teaching those around them of the God whom they worshiped. They had told of Christ, the Redeemer to come; and in the form of the fourth in the midst of the fire the king recognized the Son of God (Patriarchs and Prophets, 509).*

Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar was impressed and praised God again. But was he converted yet? Unfortunately, he was still an oppressive and selfish ruler. Still a pagan in his heart, he now tried to enforce external respect for the Hebrew religion with state power, a type for end-time events (Revelation 13:14). More precisely, he enforced censorship, and he limited freedom of speech (Daniel 3:29), which is yet another totalitarian tool. In order to efficiently implement censorship, the terror of the all-knowing Chaldean intelligence network of informants still had to be firmly in place.



Next, the God of Heaven sent the third and final blow to Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance—his madness. In Daniel 4, the pen of inspiration recorded Nebuchadnezzar's final testimony.

## Nebuchadnezzar Replaces Sin with Righteousness

Daniel 4 is worth a closer examination. If you read Daniel 4:1–3 (KJV) and compare the king's statement to Psalm 145:12–13, you will find astonishing parallels. The phrase "mighty wonders" corresponds to "mighty acts." Both authors, kings David and Nebuchadnezzar, praise God's "everlasting kingdom" and "dominion" from generation to generation. It appears that

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3

From what place did Jesus ascend into Heaven?



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both monarchs were driven by the same Spirit. Could it be that Nebuchadnezzar was familiar with the Psalms of David?

Nebuchadnezzar's Psalm-inspired declaration of God's omnipotence follows the description of the seven years of madness (Daniel 4:16). If you compare Daniel 4:16 with Psalm 12:3–6, you will see that the "seven times" bear the symbolism of purification:

*The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: ...The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

Naaman had to dip in the water seven times to get purified (2 Kings 5:14); similarly, Nebuchadnezzar experienced mental agony over seven times until he was purified. The "seven times" also shed light on the fiery furnace, which was heated "one seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (Daniel

3:19). Scientifically, from the standpoint of thermal physics, this does not make much sense. There is, however, a strong symbolism behind it. The young men's faith was tested and tried as "gold tried in the fire" (Revelation 3:18). It follows a reiteration of the king's experience, and then Daniel's interpretation. In Daniel 4:27 comes Daniel's rebuke:

*Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility (emphasis added).*

In other words: Repent and live "righteousness by faith!" One can be praising God for His greatness all day long and still not be saved. But the one thing that tells us Nebuchadnezzar was finally saved is that he put on the righteousness of Christ in faith. Let's look at verse 35:

*...he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among inhabitants of the earth.*

What does this remind you of? "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Nebuchadnezzar unknowingly includes an element of the Lord's Prayer. This tells us that the Holy Spirit had finally taken residence in his heart. Further, we read in verse 37, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (compare Deuteronomy 32:4, Job 40:11). Had Nebuchadnezzar become a diligent Bible student? The Spirit of Prophecy reads (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 521):

*The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God; the tyrannical, overbearing ruler, a wise and compassionate king. He who had defied and blasphemed the God of heaven, now acknowledged the power of the Most High and earnestly sought to promote the fear of Jehovah and the happiness of his subjects.*

Thus, the king of Babylon had come "out of Babylon" (Revelation 18:4).

## The Golden Cup Full of Abominations

The story of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar bears the typology of the final religious conflict immediately prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Book of Revelation mentions the antitypical Babylon that is active in the last days. This end-time financial, religious, and military superpower is portrayed as a geopolitical system working against God's people and against the truth of salvation. Knowledge, be it of journalistic, scientific or religious nature, will again be monopolized, censored and distributed by a centralized system of "one mind" (Revelation 17:13). In this mind-controlled new world order, basic rights like diversity, privacy, liberty of conscience and

## To God be the Glory ..for His Fruit

I grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church but became disenchanted with it for a number of reasons. I left the church in 1990 and did my own searching for truth, as it felt like nobody was talking about anything that really mattered, or they were saying the same thing over and over. I continued to study the Bible on my own and visited other churches of various denominations, including a Native American service, looking for more substance. At the time, I was fairly naïve as to all the different messages I was hearing, and I am grateful that God protected me from getting caught up in false teachings.

When I moved into a friend's house, that's when I got introduced to Amazing Discoveries. My friend had ADTV and 3ABN on all the time. Walter Veith in particular riveted me. He was intense and a little overwhelming at first, but I kept listening as I knew immediately this was the truth I was searching for and needed to hear. Walter Veith spoke clearly, not giving any watered-down version of God's message. I knew this was the real thing, and his own background as an atheist-turned-Christian further validated his reasons to believe in God, Creation, and His hand throughout history. Veith's presentation on the Sabbath was a fresh, deeper insight than any I'd heard before. I listened to his Reformation and Creation series, as well as his lecture about the founding fathers of the United States and their connection with secret societies. This was a real eye-opener and answered a lot of questions I had previously been ignorant of until then.

I felt that my ignorance had previously put me in jeopardy, and now that I was more informed, I had a better ground to understand and talk with people who are involved in these sorts of societies and groups.

The health messages by Dr. McDougall and the Davis' have also been meaningful to me as I have suffered from fibromyalgia symptoms and diabetes but am doing a lot better now.

Since discovering your ministry, I came back to the Seventh-day Adventist church in fall 2011, where I am now involved as a deaconess and help lead the song service. God has really spoken to me through the straight testimony of AD speakers and presenters, which, at my 64 years of age, I've come to learn is not just information to listen to for the sake of acquiring knowledge, but life-transforming truth that, if you let it, can change every part of who you are—and all this by the power and grace of God and His messages.

M.M.



Answer: 150 (Gen 7:24)



religion, will slowly disappear. Freedom becomes insignificant. End-time Babylon consists of three parts (Revelation 16:19). Out of this context, we can deduce that these three parts, or three governing entities, are the Dragon, the Beast, and the image of the Beast, or the False Prophet (Revelation 13; 16:13). The Spirit of Prophecy in *Great Controversy*,

443, identifies these three entities as spiritualism, the Papacy of Rome, and apostate Protestantism.

What then is the antitypical meaning of the “golden cup” that played a key role in the initiation ritual of the Babylonian mysteries of old? This is a complex issue and there is more than one possible answer to this question.

The Bible gives implicit clues. Jeremiah 51:7 associates the golden cup with wine and drunkenness. Revelation 17:4, on the other hand, presents the golden cup as filled with abominations and filthiness of fornication. Furthermore, Revelation 18:3 links this wine of fornication with the power of the kings of the earth and with the super-rich merchants of the earth. The “merchants” are mentioned three more times in the same chapter (Revelation 18:11, 15, 23). Revelation 18 suggests that money or the love of and infatuation with money, markets, and merchandise may be a key characteristic of Babylon’s fornication. In fact, the banking system and capitalism itself as we know it today has its roots in ancient Mesopotamia.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, “fornication” in Revelation 18 could be interpreted as an alliance of the political and spiritual with the super-rich elite, all being under the control of the spider web of secret societies. This secrecy web, in turn, is run by the antitypical counterparts of the “Chaldean initiated advisors” and “father-confessors,” by the leadership priesthood of the sea beast power (Revelation 13:1–2). The super-rich elite, which have been accumulating tremendous wealth by skillfully extracting funds out of the global conglomerate of financial markets, does have the power to manipulate nations and people

into financial dependency. They are indeed the “great men of the earth” (Revelation 18:23). Individuals and families are ruined when they become entangled in the snare of debt. Whereas it was always God’s plan to finally relieve indebted families (Deuteronomy 15:1–6), Babylon will never set anyone free who is paralyzed by debilitating debt. It even ensnares young adults in credit card

debt they will never be able to pay off for the rest of their lives.<sup>9</sup> This is the cruel, dragon-like character of the financial system of modern Babylon.

Moreover, the “kings of this world,” a world powered by money and markets, install centralized, all-knowing tax collection agencies with virtually unlimited authority. Levying exaggerated penalties for trifle tax offenses is a tool of terror to destroy dissidents. Jesus explains that it is our duty to pay taxes (Matthew 22:21). All-powerful tax agencies under complicated laws may, however, misapply their authority to make “a dunghill” out of the “houses” (Daniel 3:29) of small businesses and families who dare to speak against the system. In present-time language, those who will speak against the “image of the Beast” may be subject to intimidation, raid, and seizure.

Financial dependency will finally go so far that people will be willing to take upon them the “mark of the Beast” just to maintain market share and buying power (Revelation 13:17). The Spirit of Prophecy clearly interprets the mark of the Beast as Sunday worship (*7 Bible Commentary*, 976). Will Adventists forgo observance of the seventh-day Sabbath for the sake of securing some buying power and market share “for one hour” (Revelation 17:12)?

Similar to Nebuchadnezzar (the king of typical Babylon), the rulers of antitypical Babylon will destroy sovereign nations and “beat” them into submission in order to install a worldwide, oppressive police state of totalitarian nature under the control of the “man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This “son of perdition” will be the head of the final eighth beast power controlling the ten kingdoms (Revelation 17:10–11).

But prophecy is not there to scare us; the purpose of God’s prophetic message is to encourage you and me, to give us the assurance that no matter how powerful any political system will be, God will ultimately come to the rescue. Daniel’s announcement, “He revealeth the deep and secret things,” echoes down to our age. And the Lord Jesus confirms that no secret abides (Luke 12:2). His brightness shall destroy the depression, humiliation, and sin of Babylon. Christ Himself will come to consume the man of sin “with the spirit of his mouth” and shall destroy him “with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). He shall deliver His people (Daniel 2:44).

### Living the Three Angels’ Messages

As seen earlier, Ellen White states that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah lived the truth and the character of God as a testimony to the Babylonian king. Nebuchadnezzar was then able to recognize the Son of God as the fourth Man in the fiery furnace. You may be well familiar with the “big picture” typology in Daniel’s story, where God shows us the ulti-



mate delivery of His Church from the oppression of a satanic geopolitical power.

However, there is also a very personal typology in the story of Daniel, his friends, and the mighty Gentile ruler. In this typology on a personal level, individual members of the remnant Church who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” who “fill positions of trust,” give a powerful testimony to a high ranking official of the system of end-time Babylon. The amazing result is that this high-ranking official, may it be an elite politician, a military general or even the head of a government, will be called “out of Babylon the great” to become a humble child of God. The Bible says in Matthew 10:18, “And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.”

What powerful testimony is there? The character of God is equal to the glory of God (see Exodus 33:18,19). Giving “glory to God” is thus equal to longing for a Christ-like character. This was the source of power in the case of Daniel and his friends. It is the message of the Three Angels as given in Revelation 14:6–12: not just preached, but lived. This final message to the world, as a truth represented before them “in life and character” and practiced as a living testimony of “what the Son of God is like,” will be the light and brightness that will shine into the darkness of fallen Babylon.

And the greatest privilege of all is evident from the typology of the fourth Man in the furnace—that Jesus Christ Himself, or a representative of His highest ranking angelic forces (Daniel 9:21), will come to the rescue of you and me to deliver us from the terror of Babylon as a testimony against “the governors and kings” and the Gentiles. I encourage you today to proudly identify yourself with the Hebrew boys in the king’s court who steadfastly pledged allegiance to the God of Heaven. May the peace and tranquility of God be with you! ■

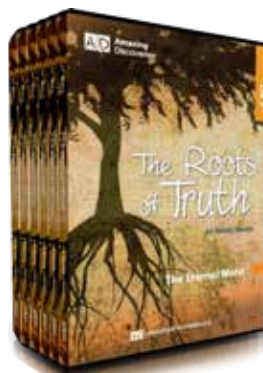
Michael E Fassbender, Ph.D., is a nuclear scientist. Originally from Germany, he spent a three-year stint in South Africa. He now works for the US Government and lives with his wife and two daughters in New Mexico. Michael and his wife are members of the Texico Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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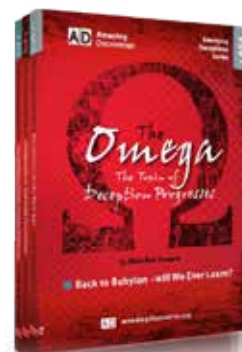
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# ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

## you asked:

**Q:** *I'm in discussions with a Muslim man who is using the Bible to justify certain of his beliefs. I'll mention a few. Deuteronomy 18:18-19. He says this verse is the Bible testifying of Mohammad as the descriptions fit no one else. What I would like to know is WHO exactly was that prophecy referring to? Also, Muslims believe it wasn't Jesus on the cross, but someone who took his place. They suggest two possibilities: Simon of Cyrene or Judas, who they say Jesus made to look like him. What I would like to know here is when did Simon of Cyrene hand the cross back to Jesus? They say that they are the people referred to in Deuteronomy, chapter 33. They say that of the three manifestations, the third (Mount of Paran) refers to the prophethood of Mohammad because the Mount of Paran was situated in the country of Hijaz, the country in which Mohammad was born and lived. They also use Matthew 21:42-44 as a basis to say that only the Quran claims to be ONLY the word of God and not of man. One last verse is Genesis 17:20-21. They say that this applies to Islam because Mohammad and the Arabs are descendants of Ishmael. Is this true?*

Here are some answers to each of his points:

**Q:** Deuteronomy 18:18-19. He says this verse is the Bible testifying of Mohammad as the descriptions fit no one else. What I would like to know is WHO exactly was that prophecy referring to?

**A:** "... Moses had pointed Israel forward to Christ as that Prophet whom they were to hear; how all the prophets had testified of Him as God's great remedy for sin, the guiltless One who was to bear the sins of the guilty." *Acts of the Apostles, 451*. The Prophet of whom Moses spoke was the "seed" that was to crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15), who would come from the lineage of Abraham, through the son of the promise (meaning via Isaac, not Ishmael). So Deut. 18:18-19 does not refer to Mohammed, nor is Mohammed ever referred to in the Bible. The Bible's focus is the Savior—no one else. Salvation comes through no one but Him.

**Q:** Also, Muslims believe it wasn't Jesus on the cross, but someone who took his place. They suggest two possibilities: Simon of Cyrene or Judas, who they say Jesus made to look like him. What I would like to know here is when did Simon of Cyrene hand the cross back to Jesus?

**A:** The Bible does not record when the soldiers took the cross from Simon in order to nail Jesus to it. That detail is not necessary. It is evident that it was Jesus on that cross, for He had prophesied of His death on that very day, and it is He who addressed His Father, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Only He could say, with prophetic meaning, "It is finished." The Son of man had accomplished what He had come to do—die a sinless sacrifice for a sinful race. No other being could have taken His place, and certainly not a sinful human!

**Q:** They say that they are the people referred to in Deuteronomy, 33. They say that of the three manifestations, the third (Mount of Paran) refers to the prophethood of Mohammad because the Mount of Paran was situated in the country of Hijaz, the country in which Mohammad was born and lived.

**A:** Deut. 33 records the blessings of Moses upon the individual tribes of Israel before his death. They are named specifically. And the chapter ends with an overall blessing on the nation of Israel. There is no basis for misinterpreting this clear passage.

**Q:** They also use Matthew 21:42-44 as a basis to say that only the Quran claims to be ONLY the word of God and not of man.

**A:** We do not see any basis for that claim, nor do we believe any part of the Scriptures is uninspired. Regarding Matthew 21:42-44, it is true that the Jews lost their position as God's chosen people to whom the "oracles of God" were committed. They had proven false to their trust, and for that reason, Jesus established His church (Mat 16:18), of which He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The church referred to is the Christian church. It is not without its faults, as the history of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 will attest, but it is the only church through whom our Lord works today, because they are the only ones who present Christ as Savior of the world from their sins. The Christian's only safety is in the Word of God, not in the traditions of men.

**Q:** One last verse is Genesis 17:20-21. They say that this applies to Islam because Mohammad and the Arabs are descendants of Ishmael. Is this true?

**A:** Yes, this claim of your friend is true. God had promised Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, that He would "multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." (Gen 16:10). Chapter sixteen goes on to describe Ishmael and his descendants: "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (verse 12). The names of the twelve sons of Ishmael are given in Gen. 25:12-16, yet notwithstanding that, Isaac was the son of the covenant, the "son of the promise." Isaac's descendants, also twelve tribes, became numerous enough to possess the land of Canaan. "The later history of the two sons fully justifies God's selection of the one and the rejection of the other" (Bible Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 324).

Final comment: We are not yet aware of specific resources to help you deal with every argument or claim your Muslim acquaintance might raise, because misunderstandings are so multiplied. If possible, avail yourself of an Ellen G. White Comprehensive CD-Rom (only \$20 or so—available at most Adventist book stores). It not only has the KJV Bible on it (by inserting chapter and verse or by key words), but also almost all of her writings, organized by key words, topics and Scripture reference so you can see what she wrote regarding specific passages or topics. You will find it most helpful. An SDA Bible commentary is also helpful. May God give you wisdom, patience, common sense, and love for all people. ■

## BIBLE TRIVIA

CORNER

4

What number of days were the waters on the face of the earth during the flood?

A4

For correct answer search pages for this icon:



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