SABBATH – Following Jesus in Everyday Life

(Memory Text) Luke 17:5 – "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."

How do we and do we increase our faith?

> (Romans 10:17) So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

By reading, studying and listening to the word of God – the Bible. We must have a daily routine of delving into God's word. If we only literally fed our bodies once a week, we would surely get sick and die. And in the same manner if we only spiritually feed our bodies once a week with only a few crumbs at the Sabbath morning church service we will surely decay and die spiritually.

We must also, by faith, obey all that we learn.

> (Matthew 7:21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
>
> (Galatians 5:6) but faith which worketh by love.
>
> (Romans 6:17) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Any deed, even though it may be a good thing in of itself, if it is not done by faith and love for Jesus Christ, it is by definition an evil work. This is why Paul said in…

> (Romans 3:20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The keeping of the law cannot justify us, as Christ can only do that and He give it freely to anyone who comes to Him. But the deeds of the law, by faith and love, will sanctify us.

> (2 Thessalonians 2:13) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

A Note of Caution: In the second to last paragraph of the page is the following statement: "*No amount of outward goodness or doctrinal perfection can take the place of total allegiance to Christ and His will*."

This comes across as very confusing and seems to be downplaying doctrine. "*Total allegiance to Christ and His will*," as the lesson says, is to following his teachings.

Does doctrine save us? Just about all would say it has nothing to do with salvation. Notice these Bible texts:

> (Romans 6:17) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Notice how the correct doctrine is connected with becoming perfect and coming into the fullness of Jesus Christ:

> (Ephesian 4:13, 14) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Notice how people's characters will be changed for the worse and will be lost because of not receiving the correct doctrine:

> (2 Timothy 4:3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Those with correct doctrine are not corrupt:

> (Titus 2:7) In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in **doctrine** shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

This would imply that those with incorrect doctrine are corrupted.

Having correct doctrine will save our souls:

> (1 Timothy 4:16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Why does the Bible say plainly that if we continue in the correct doctrines we will save ourselves and those we teach? It's simply because all doctrine comes from God. If we reject the teachings of Christ we cannot be His disciple.

> (Hosea 4:6) My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: **because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee**, that thou shalt be no priest to me:

The doctrine in of itself does not save. It's only when we are joined to Jesus and accept His revealed truth is when we can be his disciple. When we reject/ignore a doctrine of Christ's we are rejecting him because it's a part of him.

The Holy Spirit is Jesus' representative on earth. He sends the Spirit to us from the Father:

> (John 15:26) But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sends, guides us into ALL truth.

> (John 16:13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Rejecting the advances of the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven:

> (Matthew 12:313) Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

As we can see doctrine is a very important part in the Christians life. There is a "ministry" out there called The One Project, they say they will only preach Christ and no doctrines. How can the One Project obey the command of Jesus when he said:

> (Matthew 28:19, 20) 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 <u>all things</u> whatsoever I have commanded you**: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Summary: We can only be a follower of Christ by accepting all that he teaches us in his word – the Bible.

> (Review and Herald, December 18, 1888) It does not seem possible to us now that any should have to stand alone, but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate.
>
> (Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 707) And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth.
>
> (The Great Controversy, p. 625) Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be overcharged with the cares of this life and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief.

Sadly the majority of Seventh-day Adventists are right now preparing themselves, by not reading and studying the word, to receive the mark of the beast. It is not enough to just claim you know Jesus. You must know all about him and what he teaches, and we must be willing to submit to the truth.

(John 17:17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

SUNDAY – Flee Pharisaism

This lesson is titled "Flee Pharisaism," but instead it presents the subject as cautioning us (the Seventh-day Adventist Church) to not go down this road of Pharisaism.

Unless we realize and admit that we have been diagnosed with the same condition of the Pharisees, how can we expect to correct our condition and go to heaven? Take for instance an alcoholic, the first step to recovery is to realize and admit you have a drinking problem. This is what Laodicea must do as this is her real problem.

> (Revelation 3:17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; **and knowest not** that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

The Faithful Witness says that this last church's biggest problem is not that she is wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked – no. Her biggest problem is that she does not think she has these problems. In other words Laodicea has a pretty high opinion of herself. But the message to the Laodicea church tells us she has a Pharisee problem.

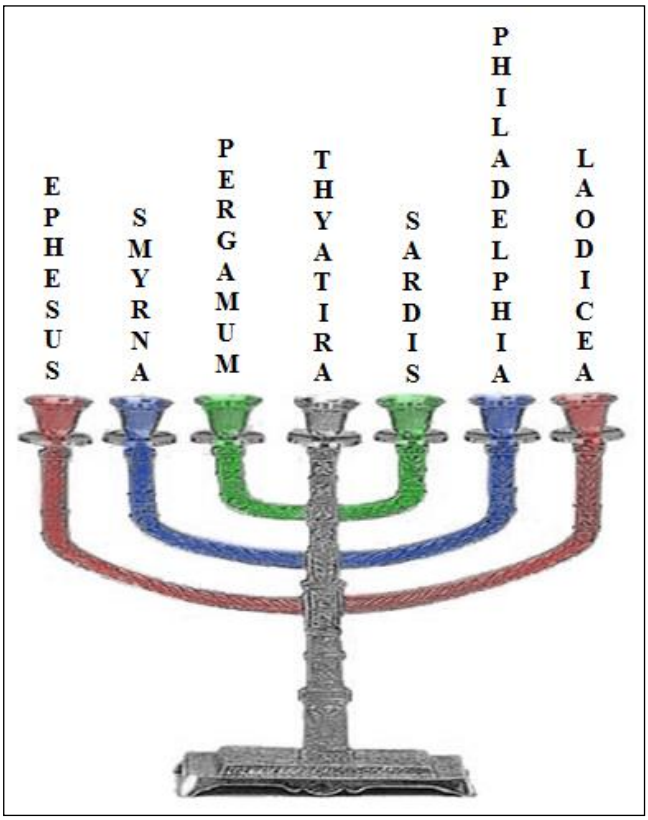
The structure of the seven churches will tell us that Laodicea has a Pharisee problem. Jesus is seen walking amongst the seven candlesticks in the introduction to the seven churches.

> (Revelation 1:12, 13) And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man**, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Jesus is walking among the seven candlesticks. What do these candlesticks represent?

> (Revelation 1:20) The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and **the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches**.

Now we know the seven churches symbolize the seven churches. Notice the following diagram:



The branches have been color-coded to help us illustrate our point.

Notice how branch #1 (Ephesus) connects to branch #7 (Laodicea).

Branch #2 (Smyrna) connects to branch #6 (Philadelphia).

Branch #3 (Pergamum) connects with branch #5 (Sardis).

Does this mean anything? Yes indeed.
God is telling us that these churches that are connected on the same branch have similar traits.

For example: Smyrna and Philadelphia, which are on the same branch, the Lord has nothing bad to say about either church. These are the only two that nothing bad is said about.

Pergamum and Sardis have something in common. Pergamum is the period of Constantine the Great which led the church to compromise the principles of Christianity and allow paganism to come into the church. Whereas Sardis is the period of the Protestant Reformation at its latter stage when it was losing steam and starting to compromise its teachings that made it so strong.

If you notice Thyatira, which is the Dark Ages period when the Roman Catholic Church ruled the world, she is on her own branch because there is not another like her.

Now what about Ephesus and Laodicea, as they are on the same branch? If we could just find out Ephesus' problem we would get a good idea of what Laodicea's problem.

The following statement from the Spirit of Prophecy is about the church of Ephesus. The section is titled "A Warning from the Church of Ephesus.":

> (Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 422) In every city the work was carried forward. Souls were converted, and in their turn felt that they must tell of the inestimable treasure. They could not rest till the beams of light which had illumined their minds were shining upon others. Multitudes of unbelievers were made acquainted with the reason of the Christian's hope. Warm, inspired, personal appeals were made to the sinful and erring, to the outcast, and to those who, while professing to know the truth, were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.
> But after a time the zeal of the believers, their love for God and for one another, began to wane. Coldness crept into the church. Differences sprang up, and the eyes of many were turned from beholding Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith. The masses that might have been convicted and converted by a faithful practice of the truth, were left unwarned. Then it was that the message was addressed to the Ephesian church by the True

> Witness. **Their lack of interest in the salvation of souls showed that they had lost their first love**; for none can love God with the whole heart, mind, soul, and strength without loving those for whom Christ died. God called upon them to repent and do the first works, else the candlestick would be removed out of its place.

And now she will correlate this to the church today.

> Is not this experience of the Ephesian church repeated in the experience of the church of this generation? How is the church of today, that has received a knowledge of the truth of God, using this knowledge? When its members first saw God's unspeakable mercy for the fallen race, they could not keep silent. They were filled with longing to co-operate with God in giving to others the blessings they had received. As they imparted, they were continually receiving. They grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. How is it today?
>
> (Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 66) The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent.
>
> (Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 357) The True Witness says of a cold, lifeless, Christless church, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15, 16). Mark the following words: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Here is represented a people who pride themselves in their possession of spiritual knowledge and advantages. But they have not responded to the unmerited blessings that God has bestowed upon them. **They have been full of rebellion, ingratitude, and forgetfulness of God; and still He has dealt with them as a loving, forgiving father deals with an ungrateful, wayward son. They have resisted His grace, abused His privileges, slighted His opportunities, and have been satisfied to sink down in contentment, in lamentable ingratitude, hollow formalism, and hypocritical insincerity. With Pharisaic pride they have vaunted themselves till it has been said of them, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."**

MONDAY – Fear God

Fear God, as the lesson points out cannot mean to be afraid of God as Psalm 2:11 would not make sense:

> (Ps. 2:11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

How could we be afraid of something and yet be joyful about it at the same time?

Do we want wisdom? Then we need to "Fear God"

> (Prov. 9:10) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

What does "Fear God" mean? It can mean respect, awe, reverence, and worship. (Ps. 33:6-9, Jer. 10:6-7, Deut. 28:58-59)

But most of the Bible texts that mention "Fear God" refer to willing obedience. Notice Romans 3:10-18:

> As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known:

And after describing all this wickedness - notice the summary in verse 18…

> There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Here are several other examples:

> (Deut. 5:29) O that there were such an heart in them, that they would **fear me**, **and keep all my commandments always**, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

> (1 Sam. 12:14, 24-25) If ye will **fear the LORD**, and serve him, and obey his voice, and **not rebel against the commandment of the LORD**, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

Other notable texts are: Deut. 8:6; 13:4; 10:12-13, 2 Corinth. 7:1, Eccl. 12:13-14, Prov. 8:13; 16:6; 3:7, Job 1:8-9, and Ps. 111:10

God promises "long days" for those that fear him and obey his commandments.

> (Prov. 10:27) The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

What does "long days" mean? It means eternal life with Jesus.

> (Rev. 22:14) Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

TUESDAY – Be Prepared and Watchful

We must be prepared, as Christians, at all times, but what does it mean for us to be watchful or to watch? Luke 12:35-53 is recommended for study. Notice a couple of verses from these passages where Jesus speaks about the thief that comes at night:

> (Luke 12:39, 40) And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

When does the thief come? At night, and this is a very important detail. Jesus illustrates the thief coming in the night when everybody in the house is sleeping.

When a thief comes and you're not watching, he comes and enters your house and does what he does and leaves. Do you know that the thief has visited you? No, all night you're sleeping; you don't know it and you're totally unaware of it. The hours of the night go by because you're sleeping.

When do you find out? When is the rude awakening that the thief has come? It's when you wake up in the morning and find all of your stuff gone. It is only then that you realize that the thief came.

Is this the same case with Jesus? When Jesus closes the door of probation this is the coming of Jesus as a thief. And most of the world is going to be oblivious to the fact that the door of probation is closed. They won't know it. But when will they know it? When Jesus returns literally in the sky. The coming of the thief actually has two stages:

1. He comes but people are unaware
2. People realize they're lost at his appearing.

Other stories point this out:

The Jewish nation – Probation had closed on them in the year 34 AD – but the sentence was not executed until the year 70.

Sodom and Gomorrah - You have a closing of the door before the cities were destroyed.
Remember when the angels pulled Lot into the house and shut the door? That's not a coincidence! When the angels pulled Lot into the house and shut the door probation was closed for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In other words there was no more grace. Likewise at the end of time we will have the same scenario. We'll have the door of probation closing, everybody's case will have been decided, and then Jesus will return.

The Ten Virgins – Were the Ten Virgins sleeping when a loud cry is made? And at what time was that cry made? It was at midnight.

> (Matthew 25:10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were **ready** went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Did they physically go to the wedding in heaven or did the wedding take place in heaven while they were on earth? This is another fundamental misconception of the Christian world (including most Seventh-day Adventists). They believe the wedding is the Second Coming. The wedding takes place in the heavenly sanctuary before the Second Coming of Jesus. And Luke 12 tells us this very thing:

> (Luke 12:35, 36) Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, they may open unto him immediately.

Where are the Lord's people when he gets married? His servants are here on earth but where is the marriage taking place? It's in heaven because he's returning from heaven.

What are his servants supposed to be doing while he's in there at the wedding?
They're supposed to be ready and having their lamps trimmed and burning.

Now Jesus gives the lesson of the parable of the Ten Virgins in verse 13:

> **Watch** therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man **cometh**.

Coming to where? He's coming to close the door. And isn't that what the parable says?

> "…the bridegroom came… and the door was shut." (vs. 10)

So what was the moment of "the coming"? It's when the door was shut.
The coming referred to here, when the door is shut, is the close of probation and not the actual Second Coming.

We have a confirmation from the Spirit of Prophecy.

> (Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 190-191) Jesus has left us word: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

Now we would assume that is speaking of when it says "for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh… lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." we would say this is the Second Coming. But now notice the Spirit of Prophecy's remarks…

> We are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping.

Now here comes the key part…

> **What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary**, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

It doesn't get any plainer than that.

> When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. **Probation closes; Christ's intercessions cease in heaven. This time finally comes suddenly upon all**, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. **They became weary of waiting and watching**; they became indifferent in regard to the coming of their Master. They longed not for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching.

Notice that she doesn't say they rejected the truth or stopped believing it.

> They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there was time enough yet to arouse. They would be sure not to lose the opportunity of securing an earthly treasure. It would be safe to get all of this world they could. And in securing this object, they lost all anxiety and interest in the appearing of the Master. They became indifferent and careless, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried up in their worldly gains, the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary, and they were unprepared.

We must be prepared – meaning living for Jesus ALL the time not most or some of the time, and we must be always watching lest probation closes on us unawares. Sadly this will be the fate of many Seventh-day Adventists. What a sad time this will be.

WEDNESDAY – Be a Fruitful Witness

The lesson says in paragraph 1 *"the good news of the cross must be told to everyone in the world. The responsibility of that witness is placed on every Christian."*

This too can be a statement of concern. We have a much larger message, a much larger responsibility, than just telling people about the cross. The Protestant Churches were doing this and pretty well I might add. So if this were all that were needed to proclaim to the world – why would God raise up another church to do the same exact thing? Yes the cross is key to our work but the message doesn't stop there for Seventh-day Adventists.

The cross was only part of the work for man's salvation:

> (The Great Controversy, p. 489) **The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross**. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the veil, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. The salvation of man is accomplished at an infinite expense to heaven; the sacrifice made is equal to the broadest demands of the broken law of God. Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, **and through His**

<u>mediation</u> the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God.

Some observations about this passage:

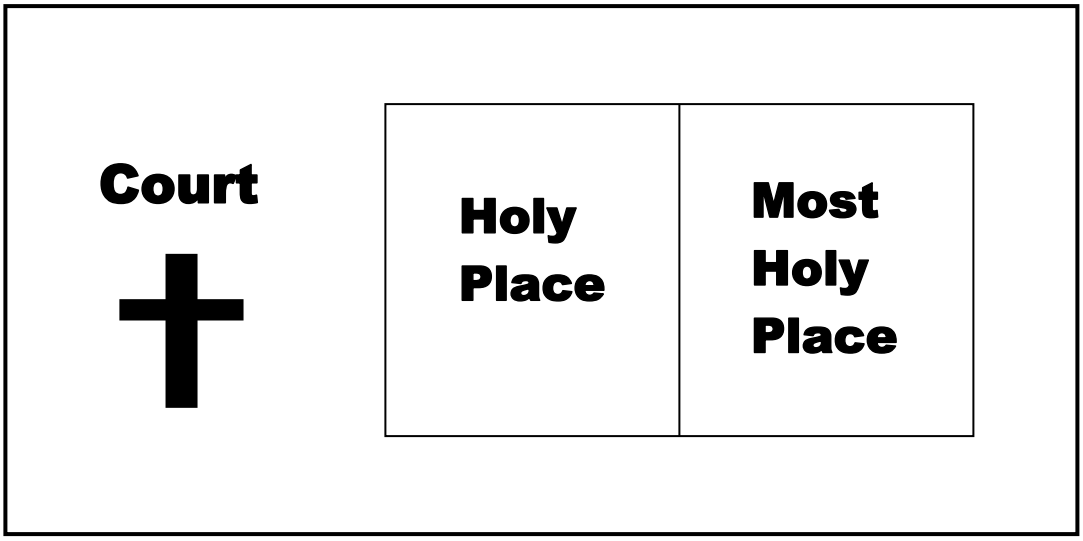
1. Jesus work in the heavenly sanctuary is just as important for our salvation as was his death on the cross. In other words we would be lost without this work being performed.
2. The atonement was <u>not</u> completed at the cross.
3. His death was the beginning of his work for man.
4. The ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the rest of that work for man.
5. Calvary's light is reflected in the heavenly sanctuary.
6. We can gain a clearer insight of salvation by looking into (entering in) the heavenly sanctuary.
7. It is through this mediation that we can be presented to the Father.

About point #2: The atonement was not completed at the cross.
We don't need Ellen White to prove this point (as many out there would accuse us of). Just a simple glance at the Jewish Feast days and the sanctuary service will demonstrate to us this point.

There are three areas to the sanctuary:

1. Court
2. Holy Place
3. Most Holy Place

An illustration of the sanctuary:



All we have to do is realize Jesus was sacrificed in the area of the Court. If the atonement was completed at the cross – we have a problem. The life and ministry of Jesus is parallel to that of the sanctuary service. If Jesus went to the cross in the Court, what about the Holy and Most Holy Place ministries? This proves to us that the cross is not the end of the work of Jesus for the salvation of man as there are two more phases of ministry.

This is one aspect – another is the messages of the Three Angels. As we tell the world about Jesus and everything he has done and is doing on our behalf we are to say and explain to these same people the following (found in Rev. 14:6-12):

1. What does it mean to Fear God?
2. What does it mean to give glory to God? (this would include the health message)
3. Tell them the judgment hour message and that Jesus is performing an investigative judgment and that it will soon switch to the living.
4. Worship the creator – which is a special emphasis on the Sabbath
5. Explain who or what is Babylon
6. Explain how and why Babylon has fallen, and what her wine is.
7. Explain who the beast power is
8. Explain who the image of the beast is
9. Explain what the mark of the beast is
10. Explain the hellfire that will fall on those who worship the beast
11. Explain the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (that the saints have)

Ask yourself if you would be able to give at least a basic explanation of the Three Angel's Messages. If not, how can we be a witness?

Our mission statement if there ever was one - from Evangelism, pp. 119-120

> **Proclamation of Truth Our Work**—In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import,—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.
> The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them....
> Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the Word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, "even at the door."

The Latter Rain will not be given to someone who will not proclaim this message now as the Latter Rain's purpose is to give power to the Third Angel.

> (Early Writings, p. 85) At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, trouble will be coming on the earth, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. At that time the "latter rain," or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.

THURSDAY – Be a Servant Leader

This lesson can be closely connected to Sunday's lesson (Flee Pharisaism). The Pharisees were not servants to the people. They looked down upon them and thought themselves much better and more worthy.

The Pharisees failed in serving God's people at that time by misinterpreting the Scriptures and turning to tradition and man's wisdom. They also failed in serving the people of other nations by keeping the message to themselves. In other words they stop caring about souls. The Seventh-day Adventist Church today, we are following in the same footsteps. We are hiding our message from the world via books like The Great Hope, and our distinctive message of the Three Angels is just about completely extinct from every pulpit across the entire globe.

We are leaning heavily on our own wisdom too. Books like the Church Manual and the 28 Fundamentals book have taken the place of the Bible. You don't believe this you say!!!

On pages 46 and 47 of the current Church Manual are listed the 13 baptismal vows that are taken when a candidate is baptized into the church. The after these is what is called an "Alternate Vow" at the bottom of page 47. There are only 3 vows as if Jesus tarries the Church will no doubt move to only 3 vows, instead of the 13 already watered down vows we now currently take.

Here are the 3 "Alternate Vows" from the manual, p. 47:

> 1. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, and do you desire to live your life in a saving relationship with Him?
> 2. Do you accept the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with these teachings?
> 3. Do you desire to be baptized as a public expression of your belief in Jesus Christ, to be accepted into the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to support the Church and its mission as a faithful steward by your personal influence, tithes and offerings, and a life of service?

Please notice vow #2 as it is of major concern. It asks the candidate to trust the Fundamental Belief book over the Bible. In other words the Bible is not the acid test – the Fundamental Beliefs book is the test. And then you are asked to live your life in harmony with these teachings found in this book and not the Bible.

So right here we have not only the Church living by man's wisdom but also supplanting the Bible by a man-made book.

If we took this pledge, do you realize what you would be pledging to?

> *"The atonement, or reconciliation, was completed on the cross as foreshadowed by the sacrifices, and the penitent believer can trust in this finished work of our Lord."*

This is NOT what we believe as Seventh-day Adventists!!! The above quote is taken from *Seventh-day Adventists Believe…A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, p. 315.

This one sentence decimates the events of Oct. 22, 1844 and The Great Disappointment, and the investigative judgment work that Jesus, our High Priest, is performing right now on our behalf.

> (The Great Controversy, p. 489) **The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven**…. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected.

As we described in more detail in Wednesday's lesson (Be a Fruitful Witness) that it is impossible for the plan of salvation to be completed, or finished, at the cross. The sanctuary/investigative judgment doctrine is the main pillar of the Adventist faith. Without this one doctrine the Seventh-day Adventist Church has no reason to exist – it's that serious!

> (The Great Controversy, p. 409) The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14

The issue is even more serious!
Deny the sanctuary message, the investigative judgment, 1844 and you won't stop there. Now the issue of the Spirit of Prophecy comes to mind. If we were to decide these doctrines are false, then automatically we would have to question whether Ellen White has the spirit of prophecy or not because she says so plainly that these things are true.

We shouldn't be surprised as these issues were prophesied.

> (Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 204) The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, **and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith**, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? **The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error**. A new organization would be established. **Books of a new order would be written**. **A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced**. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, **but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power**, which, without God, is worthless. **Their foundation would be built on the sand**, and **storm and tempest would sweep away the structure**.

After reading that, Sister Ellen White was surely a prophet. What will you build upon?