

For as the heaven is high above the
earth, so great is his mercy toward
them that fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so
far hath he removed our transgressions
from us. Psalm 103:11-12



FORGIVENESS

1888 MESSAGE STUDY
COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER
December 2016



1888
MESSAGE STUDY
COMMITTEE



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The gospel of Jesus Christ is the central truth of the Bible and the most effective means of winning souls for Christ. This newsletter is designed to provide resources that will aid in sharing the Good News through personal and public evangelism.

EDITOR

Gerald Finneman

EDITORIAL BOARD

Fred Bischoff, Mark Duncan,
Ron Duffield, Joe Gresham,
Bob Hunsaker, Patti Guthrie

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the 1888 Message,

We want to take a moment to introduce you to our two newest office staff members. We experienced something akin to shell-shock last year following the tragic death of our dear friend Will Pergerson, who served as our 1888 ministry Evangelist and General Manager.

Immediately in the aftermath of that event, a good friend of the Pergersons and of the 1888 Message, Lanette Sanford, stepped in to keep things moving forward. She was a tremendous blessing at a time when we really needed someone to step in to the breach.

During Lanette's tenure at our office, we wanted to begin a major digitization project of all of our 1888 print and audio materials. The Lord provided for us in this need also by sending us Jennifer Barnett. Jennifer had been working in ministry with our friends and 1888MSC board members John and Monica Campbell. Jennifer had been introduced to the 1888 Message by the Campbells and had been studying it with them for several years during their time in ministry together. She has been very busy over the last year in our digitization project and assists in various areas. Jennifer loves to study God's Word and share the truth as it is in Jesus, and in her free time she enjoys classical music, cooking, hiking, and crafts.

About 6 months ago our office manager, Lanette Sanford, informed us that she needed to step aside to spend more time as a full-time mother. Again, God provided a ready blessing in sending us Juanita Staten. Juanita had a perfect background for our office manager position, as she had worked as an office manager for an Adventist physician, but, in addition, she had also spent many years as a Bible worker. Juanita had worked on a volunteer basis in our office in the past and had been a Bible worker with our Evangelist Will Pergerson. So, before we knew we had a need, the Lord was preparing Juanita to be a blessing to the ministry, and in the proclamation of this most precious message.

Juanita has been doing a tremendous job organizing many special projects and addressing day to day challenges in our office. She will begin reaching out in ministry to share the 1888 message in weekend seminars and Bible worker training sessions next year. God has truly blessed us with her addition to our ministry. Her favorite Bible verse is Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

We want to thank you all for your ongoing support of the proclamation of the 1888 message. It is the message that God commanded to be given to the world (TM91-93). We know you will be blessed as you call in, or communicate with Juanita and Jennifer in our 1888 Message Study Committee office. And we want to thank Juanita and Jennifer, as well as all of you, for the blessing you are being to us as we work to fulfill God's call to us as individuals and as a ministry.

Robert Hunsaker,
President, 1888MSC



BEAUTIFUL FORGIVENESS

A Lesson in Forgiveness.

Notes on the International Sunday-School Lessons.

Present Truth United Kingdom, April 21, 1897 **E.J. Waggoner**

In this lesson the two things which are to be especially emphasized are first, the Lord's willingness to forgive us; and second, how we can avail ourselves of that willingness. When Jesus said to Peter, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven," He was not setting up a standard for man which was in any way different from that which the Lord Himself follows in dealing with us. In fact, His instruction to Peter grew out of His own spirit of compassion, for He was "full of grace," and in this respect, He was simply revealing the character of God, who is "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping

mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."

FORGIVENESS EASY

It is not hard for God to forgive those who wrong Him. There is no struggle in the Divine mind between the desire to punish and an inclination to forgive. "God is love," and "the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord." "The work of destruction is a 'strange work' to Him who is infinite in love." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

THE GROUND OF PARDON

The fulness and the freeness of

this spirit of forgiveness are clearly revealed in this case of “a certain king which would take account of his servants.” The great debt was acknowledged as due, but when the servant simply asked for some consideration, “Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.” When putting it in His own words, He said, “I forgave thee that debt, because thou desiredst me.” There was no ground for this action except in the spirit of compassion felt by the lord of that servant. There was no dispute about the fact of the debt and it was a very large one, “ten thousand talents.” But “the lord of that servant was moved with compassion.” This is to reveal to us the character of the Lord whose “throne is in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.” It is the same view that is given to us in the dealings of the Lord with the children of Israel. “For their heart was not right with Him, and neither were they steadfast in His covenant. But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.” Ps. 78:37-38.

These things are written for our encouragement, “that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The Lord is the same today as of old. “I am the Lord, I change not.” “But there is forgiveness with Thee, that

Thou mayest be feared. . . . Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.” Ps. 130:4-7. Let no one forget that the Lord is willing, and more than willing to forgive. If we were only as willing to confess our sins as He is to forgive them, the whole debt would be cancelled without delay.

WHAT SIN IS

Sin is in its very nature treason against the government of God. “Sin is the transgression of the law,” and it is such a transgression against the fundamental law of God’s kingdom that it involves the very dethronement of God Himself, and the putting of self in the place of God. No other ruler, except “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,” could offer a free pardon to all who had rebelled against Him (and that means all the inhabitants of this world), without endangering the stability of His government; but in the plan of salvation for sinners through the gift of His only begotten Son, “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Thus God is “just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Thus the forgiveness which is so freely offered is not the reckless act of an irresponsible monarch who endangers the very existence of its own kingdom by the extreme exercise of the pardoning power. Such a

revelation of love as is given in the cross of Jesus has won the hearts of the universe, unrepentant man only excepted, in an eternal allegiance to “the King of glory.” “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto Me.” “Bless the Lord, O my soul, ... Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.”

HOW TO RECEIVE THE PARDON

But we must also note the further teaching of this lesson with reference to the way in which this forgiveness can be received by us. The forgiven debtor went out and straightway became an unforgiving creditor. Then his lord said unto him, “Thou wicked servant, shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?” R.V. As the result of this unforgiving spirit the servant lost the benefit of the compassion which had been extended toward him, for “his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due him.” And then comes the application of the lesson: “So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” The same terrible fact is thus stated in another place: “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.” James 2:13.

But this does not grow out of any arbitrary refusal on the part of God to show mercy, as a punishment on

a specially wicked class, but it is because in showing the unforgiving spirit we cut ourselves off from forgiveness. “Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God, only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren. To cherish an unmerciful spirit toward others, is to close the heart against the mercy of God toward ourselves. As if this above all others was the sin that His followers needed to be warned against, the one for which they were in the greatest danger of shutting from their hearts the light and love and peace of heaven, Jesus after completing the Lord’s prayer added, ‘If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.’ He who is unforgiving, cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God.”

FORGIVENESS MEANS CLEANSING

But even this is full of encouragement, when we stop to consider it, for it shows that “God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. “This comes to us through the gift

of Jesus” whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom. 3:25. But the love of God is His own life, the power of His own presence, and this cannot be accepted simply for ourselves. From its very nature it must flow out to others, for it is an overflowing love, and it is only by serving as a channel for it that we can receive it at all.

God does not want reservoirs to hold His love, but channels through which it may freely flow

to others. But “no one can give place in his own heart and life for the stream of God’s blessing to flow to others, without receiving in himself a rich reward. The hillsides and plains that furnish a channel for the mountain streams to reach the sea, suffer no loss thereby. That which they give is repaid a hundredfold. For stream that goes singing on its way, leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness.” Such is the law of the kingdom: “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give and it shall be given unto you.” Luke vi. 37, 38.

~~UNLOVING~~
~~UNFORGIVING~~
~~UNGODLY~~



What is the Meaning of “Forgive”?

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, March 14, 1899

by A. T. Jones

THE righteousness of God is revealed to faith. Rom. 1:17.

Faith is complete dependence upon the word of God, expecting that word to do what the word itself says.

Is there, then, righteousness spoken by the word of God, so that people can depend completely upon that word, that the word shall accomplish what the word says?

There is. Indeed, that is the very object of the gift of Christ. For Him “God hath set forth. . .to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom. 3:25.

Seeing then that God hath set forth Christ expressly to declare, to speak, the righteousness of God, it is certain that the word of God has been spoken, upon which there can be complete

dependence, expecting that word to do what that word says. In other words, there is righteousness that can be received by faith.

Wherein is this word spoken?—It is spoken in the word “forgiveness.” “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;” “there is forgiveness with thee.”

Now what is the meaning of “forgive”? The word “forgive” is composed of “for” and “give,” which otherwise is give for. To forgive, therefore, is simply to give for. For the Lord to forgive sin, is to give for sin. But what does the Lord give for sin?—He declares “his righteousness for the remission of sins.”

Therefore when the Lord forgives—gives for—sin, He gives righteousness for sin. And as the only righteousness that the Lord has is His own, it follows that the only righteousness that

God gives, or can give, for sin is the righteousness of God.

This is the righteousness of God as a gift. As all men have only sinned, and, if they are ever clear, must have forgiveness entirely free; and as the forgiveness of sin—the righteousness of God given for sin—is entirely free,—this is the righteousness of God as a free gift “upon all men unto justification of life.” Rom. 5:18.

Every soul, therefore, whoever asks God for forgiveness of sin, in that very thing asks it solely upon the word of God, which speaks forgiveness. And faith is entire dependence upon the word for what the word speaks. Thus righteousness is altogether of faith.

“Every one that asketh receiveth.” You have asked the Lord many a time to forgive your sins; that is, you have asked Him to give for your sin. But when you ask the Lord to give for your sin, in that you ask Him to give the only thing that He does or can give for sin, which is righteousness. That is what it is to ask forgiveness of the Lord.

And He does forgive—He does

give for—your sins when you ask Him. He says He does, and He does. “He is faithful”—that is, He will never fail—”and just to forgive us our sins.” And the only thing He gives for sins is His righteousness. {March 14, 1899 ATJ, ARSH 168.12}

Then why not thank Him for the righteousness that He freely gives for your sins, when you ask Him to?

Do you not see that righteousness by faith is just as plain and simple as the asking God for forgiveness of sin? Indeed, it is just that.

To believe that righteousness is given you for your sin, when you ask forgiveness; and thankfully to receive that righteousness as the gift of God,—this is what it is to exercise faith.

Yet how true it is that “we suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief, and of our ignorance of how to exercise faith.”

“Hast thou faith?” Have the faith of God. “Here are they that keep. . . the faith of Jesus.”

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KIDS CORNER



The Unforgiving Servant

WOW, What a King

By Sharon Pergerson

In Matthew 18:23-35, a king looked through the accounts of what his servants owed. One was brought before him who owed 10,000 talents, but didn't have the money to repay it. The king stated the penalty for such a debt. The man, his wife, his children, and everything he owned would be sold as payment toward the debt. The servant then fell down and worshipped the king. He asked him to be patient with him and give him more time and he would repay his debt. Thankfully, the king, moved with compassion, gave him what

he needed - mercy that freed him and forgave him his debt.

Did you notice something? The servant asked for "more time." He did not even ask the king to forgive his debt. It seems he thought he could pay back all that he owed. Bible Scholars say different things, but in the average calculation, 10,000 talents would equal roughly 14 billion dollars. This servant owed a whopping 14 billion dollars. Even if he should pay back a \$1,000 a day, every day of his life, it would take him over 3,800 years to repay his bill. No, the

servant could never, ever repay that debt. It was impossible. That's why the king had mercy on him and gave him what he needed, rather than what he asked for. He was granted his freedom and a receipt for a bill paid in full. WOW, What a king.

What we don't think about is that even though the Bible story didn't mention it, this servant's debt still had to be paid. He owed the state, the king could not just delete the bill off the books. Other stories in the Bible fill us in to this truth. The secondary meaning of stories like the hidden treasure in the field, and the merchant looking for goodly pearls, is that, to have us, to free us, to buy us, and to pay our debt of sin, Someone had to give up everything. The one who forgave the bill had to pay it. The king then, had to pay the servant's debt.

Our story is a picture of the plan of Salvation. God is the King, and we are the servant who owed. Our great debt is sin and the penalty for sin, even one, is eternal death in hell's fire. We too, cannot ever repay our debt. No matter how many good things we do, they are all fouled with sin. Just like the servant, we too have many times asked God for more time to repay our debt, but no amount of time could do the trick. Thankfully, before the foundation

of the world, God set a plan in place. When we appeared before Him loaded with our debt of sin, He already had a solution, Jesus Christ. In Jesus, God put all the riches of the universe, including Himself, as payment for the sins of every person who has ever lived. Because of God's actions toward us in Jesus, we have been granted our freedom and a receipt for a bill paid in full at the cross. WOW, what a King.

The rest of the story is about how this servant responded to the great gift of the King to him. Sadly, he wasn't thankful or grateful for it. We see that by how he treated someone who needed his mercy and his forgiveness. How we treat others, especially those we think are nobodies, unlovable, or who we think owe us something, shows how we really feel about what God has done for us. That's why Matthew 25:40 says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." That servant's response was his personal response. By God's grace, you and I will not respond as He did. I choose to respond like Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, and Paul, how about you?



The Person God Forgot

by Jerry Finneman

The format for this topic is in the form of a Bible Study that you can give to others. The topic is about the person God forgot. No, God does not have a faulty memory. But there are some things He chooses to forget, and there are some things He remembers. Would you like to be forgotten? Or remembered? Our study is about God's forgiveness.

1. Luke 23:42—One who did not want to be forgotten.

- Is this a good prayer?
- Did Jesus forgive him?
- Did Jesus remember him?
- Did He give him a promise?
- Was that forgiven thief as safe as though inside the city of God?

2. What does God want

to do? (Isa. 43:25).

- For whose sake is it that He wants to forgive our sins?
 - Oh! For our sake we sometimes think. But here He says it's for His sake.
 - There is something Jesus loves about blotting out our sins and He says it is "for My sake I am doing it." Isn't that interesting? And He will not remember them. He will not hold them against us.
3. What is involved in the forgiveness of sin?
- The basis for forgiveness is Christ's life and His death. Isa. 53:4-6; without the shedding of blood there is no remission.
4. The thief heard these words: Luke 23:33-34.

- Was Jesus here asking forgiveness for known sin or unknown sin? (Cf. 1 Cor. 2:8).
 - The thief became inspired with hope.
 - Faith was kindled in his heart.
 - And then he asked to be forgiven.
5. Is the sin of Laodicea known or unknown? (Rev. 3:15-18).
 6. Are there any conditions regarding personal forgiveness: Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9.
 - The condition of forgiveness is to believe God's word and to accept it. What more could anybody ask. Forgiveness is impossible only for him who deliberately refuses it.
 7. If we do not forgive others; if we are backbiting, tale bearing or accusing someone, are we not advertising the fact that we have not received God's gift of forgiveness? Have you refused or despised the gift? Have you refused to forgive someone? (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15).
 8. And how many times should we forgive? (Matt. 18:21-22).
 - How much is 70 times 7? Is this the number of times God will forgive?
 - Is this opening the door to license or permission to sin? (Luke 7:37-48).
 9. Read Zech. 3:1-5. We observe here that Jesus covers us with His robe of righteousness.
 - Does He furnish a cloak for sinning or for cleansing from sin?
10. David's concept of forgiveness – what does it include? (Psalms 51:1-10).
 11. How does God consider us when we are in Christ? (Rom. 8:1).
 - Romans 8 begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation (Rom. 8:38-39).
 12. What will never happen, if one comes to Christ? (John 6:37).
 - When we surrender to Christ and believe His promise there is no possibility of being cast out.
 - If we will cling to this promise we are secure. When you believe this promise “you are as safe as though inside the city of God” (a letter to Lizzie Innes, 10MR 175).
 13. Where does God want to put our sins? (Isa. 38:17).
 14. Where else does God want to put your sins? (Micah 7:17-19).
 15. How far does God want to remove our sins from us? (Psalms 103:10-14).
 - In what respect is His mercy so great? Our sins are transferred from ourselves to the sanctuary – from earth to heaven.
 16. Where are your sins now?
 - They are either on earth or in heaven. They are either in your heart or through the blood of Jesus they have been transferred to the heavenly sanctuary.
 - Oh! I nearly forgot. Who is the person God forgot? YOU! – the person you used to be.



Sabbath School Insight Highlights

“The Book of Job” 4th Quarter 2016

Even so he exercised faith in God...
From Sabbath School Insight #1

‘Seeking to save us from ourselves’,
now there is a thought. I
need to be saved from myself.
God’s providence is able to do
this. Jesus has saved me from
myself. Praise God! From
Sabbath School Insight #2

Faith, belief in the Word of God,
regardless of circumstances, is
what turns trials into blessings.
From Sabbath School Insight #3

Let affliction, then, of whatever
sort it may be, everything that
is crossing to our disposition, or
seems to be contrary to us, even
though it be the direct result
of our own misconduct, be
received as from the hand of the
Lord, and we shall be sure to
experience good from it... From
Sabbath School Insight #4

Did He choose for sin to enter into
this world? Did He choose for its
consequences to bring so much
pain and sorrow into this life?

NO. But He did choose to be born.
Why? So that He can understand
why we choose not to be born.
From Sabbath School Insight #5

The cross is a revelation to our dull
senses of the pain that, from its
very inception, sin has brought
to the heart of God”. From
Sabbath School Insight #6

When God “executes judgment”,
He simply steps back and permits
the natural consequences of our
actions to take their course. From
Sabbath School Insight #7

“To all who are reaching out
to feel the guiding hand of
God, the moment of greatest
discouragement is the time when
divine help is nearest. From
Sabbath School Insight #8

...it is neither our righteousness nor
our faith that we can depend on
but, in Christ, we can be covered
with His robe of righteousness and
rely on the faith of Jesus. From
Sabbath School Insight #9

TESTIMONIALS

The “KENYA BOOK” fundraiser was a huge success! A total of \$2,867 was collected and 16 boxes of books were shipped. On November 28, Brother Kenneth sent the following:

Good evening.

...Also wish to let you know that I already sent 5 sets to the Union president to be given to 5 Conference presidents under this Union. It's my prayer that these books will fall in the hands of those who are genuinely searching for the message of RBF.

Brother Kenneth in Kenya was not the only one to receive a shower of blessings the Lord is sending from this ministry. Schaf Uganda is a Pentecostal Christian nonprofit organization that runs several projects in Uganda. Their ministry deals with children (orphans and vulnerable children) as their major initiative. A request for a donation of books was submitted and we sent them. Here is their response.

“Praise Jesus, We are here to pass our thanks for the package that you sent us here in Uganda. As Schaf Uganda organization management team, we feel very much blessed for your services. May the good Lord reward your ministry with abundance. We look forward to stay connected and work together for the good of the body of Christ Jesus. God bless you.” Yours faithfully, Adam

We received an email request from Brother Gould from China. He was requesting help with placing an online order. Since he's from China, it was difficult purchasing online. Books were shipped to him free of charge. He's translating the message in Chinese!

“Dear Brother

Thank you for your gifts. Today, I receive the books of the most precious message. No sooner do I get them than I also feel very delight. However, I say sorry to you that you spent much money nearly \$190.00. I should have paid these books, but you freely send them to me. Of course, I hope that we can have much cooperation on this message. Wish God help me to translate 1888 message! I love this messages presented by your publishers. May God bless 1888 Publishers! Brother Gould”

Brother David is from India! He sent a question online. The Committee answered his question and sent him some books. Brother David says,

“The book “knocking at the door” throws more information upon the subject of Laodicean message. It is really a clear light upon the message to Laodiceans. The author's view of Revelation 3 is revealed by God to him I believe. As a small group of Adventist people in our churches here go through these three books. I must thank God for He is drawing His people nearer to Him through such precious messages.”

1888 Overseas Literature Fund

Dear Friends of the 1888 Message,

Ellen White reminds us that the message that A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented was “the message that God commanded to be given to the world” (TM91.2) - a clear reference to the gospel commission in Matthew 24:14. We, at the 1888 MSC, want to do all we can to support the propagation of the 1888 message, not only in the USA, but to God’s people all around the world.

We have been receiving a steadily increasing number of requests for literature from around the world, particularly Africa. The vast majority of the people requesting 1888 truth filled literature have no funds for the purchase and especially for the cost to ship 1888 materials to them. We want to meet the needs as often as possible.

To meet these growing requests from overseas, for 1888 literature, we are starting an “1888 Overseas Literature Fund”. We are asking you to partner with us in sharing the 1888 message to lighten the EARTH with the glory of God. This message is for the world, and we need your support to meet the requests we receive from all around the world. Please prayerfully consider if you can give additional support, above and beyond your usual contribution, to support the 1888 Overseas Literature Fund.

You can donate easily on our website specifically to the 1888 Overseas Book Fund, via the mail and label your check appropriately or call our office at 1-866-954-4523.

Thank you again for your generous giving to spread God’s most precious message.

Your Brother in Christ,

Robert Hunsaker,
President, 1888MSC

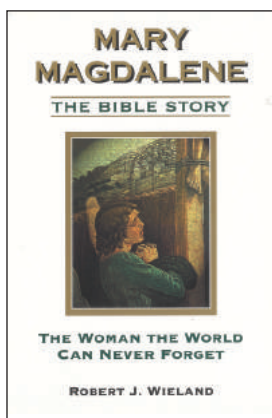
Let's Honor The Lord With Our Giving

*“Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.
And whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”*

2 Corinthians 9:6



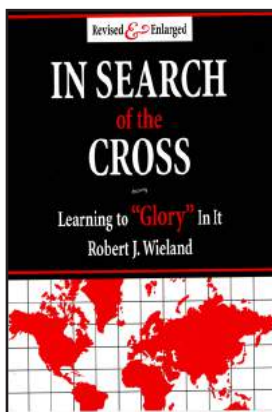
P.S. Your donations are tax-deductible and should not include any tithe, which should go to the SDA church.



Mary Magdalene: The Bible Story Robert J. Wieland

Mary Magdalene captures the imagination of almost everybody who hears about her mysterious and exotic act of anointing Jesus' feet with "precious ointment," and then washing them with her tears. Robert J. Wieland explores the story of this strange lady who holds a legendary place in the Bible story. 64 pages.

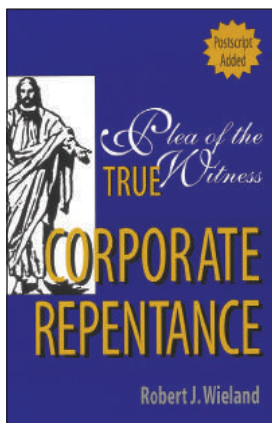
\$9.95 (Book Special Applies)



In Search of the Cross Robert J. Wieland

There must be a reason why the proclamation of the cross draws "all men" to Jesus and it captures forever all honest hearts. Salvation depends on what Christ has done for us, not on what we do. But what we "do" is to sense a heart appreciation for what He has done, with no thought of getting a reward or escaping hell. One died for me; I must live for Him! 135 pages.

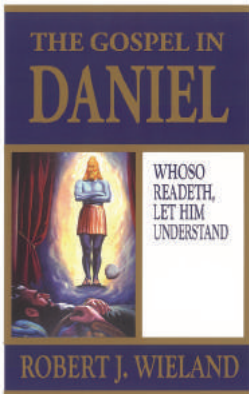
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True Corporate Repentance Robert J. Wieland

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself calls the Seventh-day Adventist leadership and the church to corporate and denominational repentance. This book demonstrates both the possibility and certainty of a favorable response. It explains how the honor and vindication of Christ are involved in our response and focuses attention on the imperative of His vindication rather than our own salvation. This intriguing subject, seldom understood, is made crystal clear. 163 pages.

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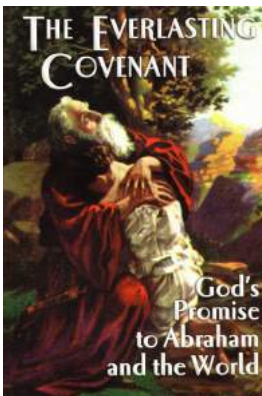


The Gospel in Daniel

Robert J. Wieland

The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is explained here, with all the "beasts" and symbols, and "days" that are years, et cetera. But that's not the real purpose for this book. Others can do that. What we want to see is why Daniel's message grips human hearts today and motivates people to total dedication to Daniel's Savior—our Lord Jesus Christ who took our second death and died in our place. 223 pages.

\$9.95 (Book Special Applies)

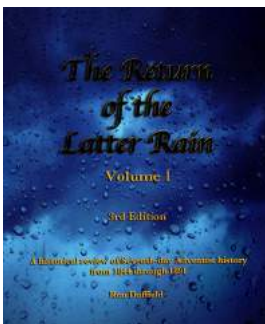


The Everlasting Covenant

E. J. Waggoner

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PETER AND FORGIVENESS: part 6

By Fred Bischoff

We have been exploring the principle behind forgiveness through the past eight stories of Peter and Jesus. The last two took us into the events in Matthew 26 occurring after the eleven left the upper room with Jesus, the night of His arrest. Now we come to the third story we will examine in this chapter, the crisis of Peter's life, as that night slipped away.

It is a life and death matter-- this issue of the justification of life, or the condemnation of death. Jesus had arrived at His condemnation of death (Matthew 20:18; Mark 10:33; 14:64). Paul later wrote of this life and death battle, between a "law of ... death" and a "law of ... life" (Romans 8:2). The one law, "the law

of sin," Paul confessed was "in my members" (Romans 7:23; compare 17, 18, 20). Did Peter recognize it in himself? Or was he still thinking he was "rich, and increased with goods, and [in] need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17)? As the events unfolded, he would be unable to avoid facing his need. And what will Jesus give for that need? In the midst of being condemned to death, would Jesus, by His actions, pull Peter into the same? Or would that be totally incompatible with what was motivating Jesus to go to the cross?

Paul, in his lawyerly way, simply and powerfully observed a solution God had crafted to the condemnation of death that "the law of sin and death" pronounces on

the sinner. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh....” (Romans 8:3). As Jesus walked steadfastly toward the cross, where He would give, as Peter would later write, “his own self [to] bare our sins in his own body on the tree”

(1 Peter 2:24)--condemning our sins in His flesh--, what would He give for the sinner? This story a few steps before that tree will show us.

Story #9: Matthew 26 (3): Peter’s Denial--Experiencing the Look of Forgiveness

The Story: Compare our Matthew passage with Luke 22.

Matthew 26:69-75	Luke 22:55-62
Now Peter sat without in the palace:	And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.
and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.	But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.
But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.	And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.
And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.	And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them.
And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.	And Peter said, Man, I am not.
And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.	And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.
Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.	And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.
And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.	And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.
And he went out, and wept bitterly.	And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Ponder: What was in the look of the Lord?

Commentary (Emphases supplied)

While the **degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter's lips**, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and **looked full upon His poor disciple**. At the same time Peter's eyes were drawn to his Master. In that **gentle countenance** he read **deep pity** and **sorrow**, but there was **no anger** there.

The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, that look of **compassion** and **forgiveness**, pierced his heart like an arrow. **Conscience was aroused. Memory** was active. Peter **called to mind** his promise of a few short hours before that he would go with his Lord to prison and to death. He **remembered** his grief when the Saviour told him in the upper chamber that he would deny his Lord thrice that same night. Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now **realized with bitter grief** how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately He had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself.

A tide of **memories** rushed over him. The Saviour's **tender mercy**, His **kindness** and **long-suffering**, His **gentleness** and **patience** toward His erring disciples,—all was remembered. He recalled the caution, "Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Luke 22:31, 32. He **reflected** with horror upon

his own ingratitude, his falsehood, his perjury. Once more he looked at his Master, and saw a sacrilegious hand raised to smite Him in the face. Unable longer to endure the scene, he rushed, **heartbroken**, from the hall.

He pressed on in solitude and darkness, he knew not and cared not whither. At last he found himself in Gethsemane. The scene of a few hours before came **vividly to his mind**. The suffering face of his Lord, stained with bloody sweat and convulsed with anguish, rose before him. He **remembered** with bitter remorse that Jesus had wept and agonized in prayer alone, while those who should have united with Him in that trying hour were sleeping. He **remembered** His solemn charge, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41. He **witnessed again** the scene in the judgment hall. It was **torture to his bleeding heart** to know that he had added the **heaviest burden** to the Saviour's humiliation and grief. On the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in agony to His Father, Peter **fell upon his face**, and wished that he might die.

It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him **watch and pray** that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin. All the disciples, by sleeping in that critical hour, sustained a great loss. Christ knew the fiery ordeal through which they were to pass. He knew how Satan would work to **paralyze their senses** that they might be unready for the trial. Therefore it was that He gave them warning. Had those hours in the

garden been spent in watching and prayer, Peter would not have been left to **depend upon his own feeble strength**. He would not have denied his Lord. Had the disciples watched with Christ in His agony, they would have been **prepared to behold** His suffering upon the cross. They would have **understood in some degree** the nature of His overpowering anguish. They would have been **able to recall His words** that foretold His sufferings, His death, and His resurrection. Amid the gloom of the most trying hour, some rays of **hope** would have **lighted up the darkness** and **sustained their faith**. (*The Desire of Ages*, pages 712.4 to 713.4)

Ponder: How vital to life is such a look that Jesus gave Peter?

Commentary (Emphases supplied)

When in the judgment hall the words of denial had been spoken; when Peter's love and loyalty, **awakened** under the Saviour's **glance of pity and love and sorrow**, had sent him forth to the garden where Christ had wept and prayed; when his tears of remorse dropped upon the sod that had been moistened with the blood drops of His agony--then the **Saviour's words**, "I have prayed for thee: . . . when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," were a **stay to his soul**. Christ, though **foreseeing his sin**, had **not abandoned** him to despair.

If the look that Jesus cast upon him had spoken condemnation instead of pity; if in foretelling the sin He had **failed of speaking hope**, how dense would have been the darkness that encompassed Peter!

how reckless the despair of that tortured soul! In that hour of anguish and self-abhorrence, **what could have held him back from the path trodden by Judas?**

He who could not spare His disciple the anguish, left him not alone to its bitterness. His is **a love that fails not nor forsakes**.

Human beings, themselves given to evil, are prone to deal untenderly with the tempted and the erring. They cannot read the heart, they know not its struggle and pain. Of the **rebuke** that is **love**, of the **blow** that wounds to **heal**, of the **warning** that speaks **hope**, they have **need to learn**. (*Education*, pages 89.1 to 90.2)

Note: Jesus' look contained forgiveness. As in Story #7 we saw there was forgiveness before the sin of denial, so here we see forgiveness before memory, grief, and heart brokenness came. Story #5 showed forgiveness is not retained unless it is passed on, unless God's *giving* is valued enough to transform us so we *give* for the sins of others against us. So this story adds further evidence that the very ground of our ability to respond in the contrition and confession that marks a heart made tender, is the initiative He takes in extending to us, before we even ask, those *gifts* that accompany *forgiveness*--pity, sorrow, compassion--all expressions of His "love which fails not nor forsakes."

Commentary (Emphases supplied)

In his early discipleship Peter thought himself strong. Like the Pharisee, in his own estimation he was “**not as other men are.**” When Christ on the eve of His betrayal forewarned His disciples, “All ye shall be offended because of Me this night,” Peter confidently declared, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” Mark 14:27, 29. Peter did not know his own danger. **Self-confidence misled** him. He thought himself able to withstand temptation; but in a few short hours the test came, and with cursing and swearing he **denied his Lord.**

When the crowing of the cock reminded him of the words of Christ, surprised and shocked at what he had just done he turned and looked at his Master. At that moment Christ looked at Peter, and beneath that **grieved look**, in which **compassion** and **love** for him were blended, Peter **understood himself.** He went out and wept bitterly. That look of Christ’s **broke his heart.** Peter had come to **the turning point**, and bitterly did he **repent** his sin. He was like the publican in his contrition and repentance, and like the publican he **found mercy.** The **look of Christ assured** him of **pardon.**

Now **his self-confidence** was **gone.** Never again were the old boastful assertions repeated. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 152.2 to 154.1)

Reflections

The clear conclusion is that God must *give* before we can *give*, that the heart change manifested in the spectrum from contrition and repentance, through confession, to

forgiving others, comes only as a result of God’s heart expression to us of a “love [that] covereth all sins.” (Proverbs 10:12). The implications of this dimension of forgiveness are even more fundamental than a needed change, because they reach down to our very existence.

Before we as sinners can live, and in order to continue living, God must *forgive*. To have any hope of avoiding the condemnation that is to death, we must be recipients of the “justification of life.” And we have received. In fact “all men” have (Romans 5:18).

Perhaps we need to face the reality that people are dying for lack of knowing this, for encountering from us the looks that speak condemnation instead of *forgiveness*. Do we see the implications of falsely believing God imparts no dimension of *forgiveness* until we change? This leads us so easily to feel justified in withholding our *forgiveness* until those who have wronged us have gone through their necessary change, to whatever degree our wounded selves would demand. So how can we *give* what we ourselves refuse to believe we have received? Would we not want rather to be used by God to nurture life by the *giving* of self, by *forgiving*, even as He has?

How well did Peter learn the lessons we’ve been tracing? We will consider detailed answers to that question in our concluding section, after our next story. But for now, consider a few key observations. In his epistles he repeatedly highlighted God’s *giving*:

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God *giveth*: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:11)

Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and *giveth* grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5)

According as His divine power hath *given* unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are *given* unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:3, 4)

Paul stated that the goal when Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” was “that the righteousness of the law **might be fulfilled** in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4). Peter used the same grammatical tense and mood to describe the goal of life that came from Jesus’ *giving* us the gift of Himself-- “that we, being dead to sins, **should live** unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Righteousness does not come from the condemnation of death, but only from the justification of life. Do we grasp the importance of what Jesus *gave* to all men by His death, by His being condemned?

Transition

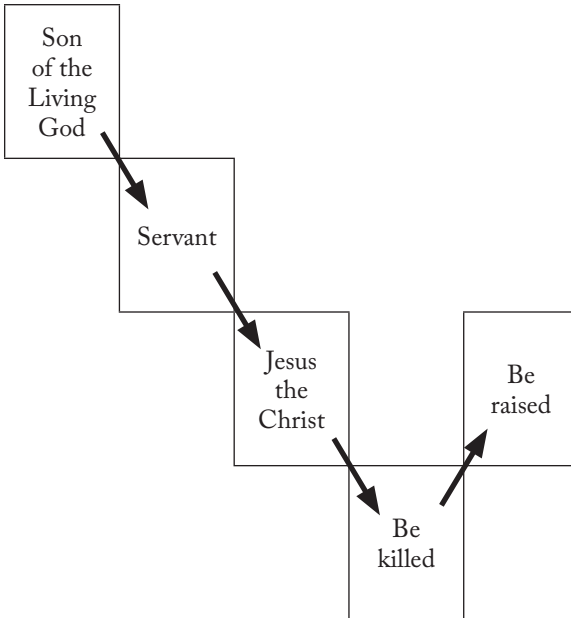
Peter’s Gethsemane experience was a major step in maturity. But one more story in the Gospels will highlight the power of Christ’s *forgiving* love in transforming the self-confident Peter into a sensitive nurturer of babes (see 1 Peter 2:2). We move from this last story to one found only in John’s gospel. This interaction occurred after the denial, and after Jesus’ death and resurrection, sometime during those final days of *giving* to His disciples what they would need to face the future. During that time He was “seen of them forty days, ... speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3). Peter still needed another lesson in how God’s kingdom functions. And so do we.

But before we go there, let’s take the use of the term “fellow-servant” (used 4 times back in Story #5) and fill in one other position of the diagram we introduced first in Story #1 (from Philippians 2), and developed more in Story #2, a diagram outlining the dynamic of forgiveness pointing to the cross and resurrection, which happen before our next story. The plural “fellow-servants” in Matthew 18:31, who were “very sorry” at the refusal of the one servant to *give* as he was given, indicates, as noted, that there are others in this kingdom as witnesses to the core principle. The last uses of this noun occur in Revelation 19:10 and 22:9, where the angel first mentioned in Revelation 1:1 as Jesus’ agent to bring the visions of Revelation to John, twice told John not to worship him, but God. As we saw, the one thing the ungrateful

servant in this story did right was to fall down and worship the king, clearly a symbol of God (Matthew 18:26). Jesus repeatedly in the gospel is recorded as receiving worship (see for example, Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17). However, in His humility, Jesus did not first take upon Himself the form of a man (seen in the diagram from Story #1). A careful study of “angel of the Lord,” “archangel,” and “Michael” will reveal that before *giving* Himself to become a human, the “Son of the living God” had taken “the form of a servant” (Philippians

2:7), an allusion to becoming an angel to the angels, as Michael the archangel, one who did, even in His humility, receive worship that no created being should receive. (See Exodus 3:2-6; Numbers 22:22-38; Joshua 5:13-15; Jude 9; 1 Thesalonians 4:16; John 5:28, 29.) It is Michael and His “fellow servant” angels who in their humble service are victorious against “the dragon ... and his angels” (Revelation 12:7, 8), those rebellious, heavenly beings, bent on self-exaltation and taking (Revelation 12:9; John 8:44; Isaiah 14:12-17).

Diagram adding Matthew 18:31:



The final elements of this diagram we will address in the Conclusion, from Peter’s first epistle where he wrote that Jesus was “raised” and given “glory.”

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