



“PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR”

by Stephen Bohr

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AND THE FINAL CONFLICT

Introduction: The Sixth Plague After Probation's Close

The book of Revelation describes seven devastating plagues that will afflict the lost after the close of probation. The first five are malignant sores, the sea, rivers, and fountains of waters turned into blood, the sun scorching the earth with deadly heat, and darkness covering the planet. Then follows the sixth plague:

Revelation 16:12, ESV

“The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, [the river of Babylon] and its water [‘multitudes, nations, tongues and peoples who support the Babylonian harlot, Revelation 17:1, 2, 15] was dried up, [withdraw their support] to prepare the way for the kings from the east [Christ and His angels, Revelation 19:11-14 at the second coming].

Revelation 16:13, 14: The Gathering Before Probation's Close

While Revelation 16:12 describes the sixth plague after probation's close, the following two verses (13, 14) take us back in time to events that took place during probationary time. Before probation closes, three evil angels will go out to the whole world to gather the ungodly into Satan's army for the final battle. Meanwhile, three holy angels will gather God's people into His army (Revelation 14:6-12). Satan's purpose in gathering the ungodly is to drown God's army with his 'waters'—multitudes, nations, tongues and people:

Revelation 16:13, 14, ESV

"And I saw three unclean spirits [three angels] like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, [Satan by the civil rulers of the world] out of the mouth of the beast, [the papacy] and out of the mouth of the false prophet. [apostate Protestantism] ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle [7T 182: 'against God in the person of His witnesses'] of that great day of God Almighty." [Armageddon]

The Spirit of Prophecy confirms that the gathering of the wicked in Revelation 16:13, 14 takes place **before** the close of probation:

"The present is a solemn, fearful time for the church. The angels are already girded, awaiting the mandate of God to pour their vials [at this point they have not yet poured them out] of wrath upon the world. Destroying angels [three evil spirits] are taking up the work of vengeance for the Spirit of God is gradually [not completely yet] withdrawing from the world. Satan is [presently during probationary time] also mustering his forces of evil, going forth [presently] "unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world," to gather them under his banner, to be trained for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, p. 983.

Verse 15: Probationary Time Warning: Don't Gather on Wrong Side

While the three evil angels are gathering the wicked during probationary time, Jesus warns His people to guard their garments so that they do not gather for the final battle on the wrong side! The ESV, NASB, NET, and RSV correctly place parentheses around this verse, indicating that it breaks the flow of thought.

Revelation 16:15

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

After the parenthetical warning in **verse 15**, verse 16 **picks up** where verses 13 and 14 left off by identifying the name of **the place** where the three evil angels gathered the wicked for the final battle, that is, **Armageddon**.

Revelation 16:16

*“And **they** [the three evil spirits] **gathered** [this word connects with verse 14] **them** [the kings of the earth and the whole world] together to the **place** called in Hebrew, **Armageddon**.” [the Mount of the Congregation; Revelation 14:19-20; Daniel 11:45; Isaiah 12:12-14]*

The Gathering of the Righteous

Leader: Michael the Great Prince
Three holy angels
Gather the righteous to Christ’s army
Follow the lamb wherever He goes
Worship the Creator
Receive the protective seal of God
Gathered **into** spiritual Mt. Zion

The Gathering of the Wicked

Leader: Satan the ancient serpent
Three evil angels
Gather the wicked to Satan’s army
Follow the beast wherever it leads
Worship the beast
Receive the protective mark of the beast
Gather **around** spiritual Mt. Zion

In the present study, we will focus primarily on the meaning of Christ’s warning in verse 15. Notably, in the **Red-Letter Bible**, this is the **only time** that Jesus speaks between **Revelation 3:21** and **Revelation 22:7**. Therefore, this message must be extremely important!

Message for Seventh-day Adventists

Verse 15 is **not the first time** that the warning of verse 15 is found in the book of Revelation. There is a similar warning in Christ’s message to the church of Laodicea. Thus, we know that it is the **lukewarm** Laodiceans who **are in danger** of being spiritually naked and ashamed when the door of probation closes.

Revelation 3:18

*“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and **white garments**, that you may be clothed, that the **shame** of your **nakedness** may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”*

Applies Especially to Seventh-day Adventists

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, the message to the church of Laodicea has a general application to the entire Christian world, but applies in a special sense **to Seventh-day Adventists**. Thus, the warning of Revelation 16:15 is a direct warning to the remnant church:

“The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked [notice the key word] in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step [once again walking] with their Leader, that will be spewed out [the shaking] of His mouth unless they repent.” 2SM, p. 66

Revelation 3:18 and the Shaking

The message to the Laodiceans is so vitaly important that it will cause the shaking among God’s professed people. Some will remain and gather to Christ, and others will be ‘spewed out’ of His mouth because they are lukewarm and insipid and make Jesus nauseous. ‘Spewing out’ is another way of describing those who will be ‘shaken out’. Ellen White described the painful ordeal.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this will cause a shaking among God’s people.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, p. 181

A Closer Look at the Parenthetical Verse 15

We are reminded that Revelation 16:15 is a parenthetical statement that breaks the flow of thought between verse 14 and verse 16. Verse 15 is warning those who profess to be Christians, that the time is coming when Babylon will receive the plagues, so they need to make sure that they are on the right side before that. Thus, verse 15 encourages the last generation of the faithful to prepare for the close of probation and to gather on the right side while the door of opportunity is still open. This warning applies especially during the outpouring of the latter rain and the loud cry. How do we know this?

For two reasons. First, the warning is given in the context of the last three powers—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—that will intend to wipe the faithful off the face of the earth. Second, Jesus would not warn his people to be on the right side when the plagues are poured out if they were not going to be alive during that period.

The warning would be **fruitless** after the close of probation because, by then, everyone would have already chosen sides. The **English Standard Version** correctly places parentheses around verse 15, thus indicating that it is an **interjection**. **Verse 14** ends with the word ‘**gather**’ during probationary time, verse 15 then warns to be on the right side during the gathering, and **verse 16** identifies the name of the place where the lost are ‘**gathered**’.

When we connect the end of verse 14 with verse 16 and **skip verse 15**, this is how it looks:

Revelation 16:14, 16

*¹⁴ “For **they [the three evil angels]** are spirits of demons, performing signs, which **go out** to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to **gather them** to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . [kippping verse 15] ¹⁶ And **they [the three evil angels]** **gathered them** [the kings of the earth and the whole world] together to the **place** called in Hebrew, **Armageddon**. [Mount of the Congregation]”*

Here is a **summary** of the flow of events in verses 12-16:

- ✓ **Verse 12:** The outpouring of the sixth plague **after** the close of probation.
- ✓ **Verses 13, 14:** The gathering of the lost **before** the close of probation.
- ✓ **Verse 15:** Christ’s warning **before** the close of probation to gather on the right side.
- ✓ **Verse 16:** Identifies by name the **place** where the lost were gathered in verse 14.

The Elements of Verse 15

Let’s take a closer look at the components of verse 15:

Revelation 16:15

*"Behold, I am coming as a [1] **thief**. Blessed is he who [2] **watches**, and [3] **keeps** his [4] **garments**, lest he [5] **walk** naked [*nakedness has to do with how we walk*] and they see [6] **his shame**."*

"I come as a thief"

Contrary to common belief, the coming of the thief **does not** refer to the **second coming** of Christ but rather to the moment when the **door** of **probation** closes.

Matthew 24:37-39 describes two points in time after Noah gave his warning message to the antediluvian world. The first was when the **door** of the ark **closed**, and the wicked **did not yet know** for seven days that they were lost. The second was when it began to rain on the eighth day, and the wicked **knew** that they were lost:

Matthew 24:37-39

*"But **as** the days of Noah were, **so also** will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, **until** the day that Noah **entered** the ark, ³⁹ and **did not know** until the **flood came** and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."*

There was something the antediluvians **did not know** between the closing of the door and when it began to rain. What did they **not know** during those seven days? They were oblivious to the fact that they were lost when the door closed because they were **not watching**!

Likewise, when the **thief in the night** arrives at a home and everyone in the house is sleeping, they are unaware that the thief has come. Only when they wake up in the morning do they realize that they have been visited by the thief, but by then, it is too late. As the wicked did not realize that they were lost until it began to rain, so only when Jesus comes in the clouds, will the wicked realize that, so to speak, the thief had come while they were sleeping. I recommend that everyone read my small book titled "**Taken or Left?**".

Jesus warned His followers in **Mark 13:33-37**:

*"Take heed, **watch and pray**; for you do not know **when the time** is. ³⁴ It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper **to watch**. ³⁵ **Watch** therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house **is coming**—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—³⁶ lest, coming **suddenly**, he find you **sleeping**. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!**"*

As we read these verses we might assume that Jesus was referring to His second coming when He said that no one knows when the Master is coming. However, Ellen White made this remarkable statement about the meaning of the **sudden coming of the Master**:

*"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**." [Mark 13:35-37] **We are [Seventh-day Adventists]** waiting and watching for the **return** of the Master, who is to bring the morning, lest **coming suddenly** He find **us** sleeping. **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." [Revelation 22:11]***

*"When Jesus **ceases to plead for man**, the cases of all are forever decided **[everyone is gathered on one side or the other]**. This is the **time of reckoning** with **His servants** **[not with the ungodly]**. To those who have **neglected** the preparation of **purity and holiness**, which **fits** them **[fitness for heaven]** 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 **[like the coming of the thief]**, and those who have **neglected to purify** their souls by **obeying the truth** **[emphasis on fitness]***

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. 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 [*a lifestyle issue*] 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.” (2T, pp. 190-192)

“Watch”

Watching is the opposite of slumbering and sleeping. It means ‘to be alert, awake, aware, vigilant’. The following passage from Matthew is parallel to the verses in Mark 13, but adds the thought of the coming of the thief:

Matthew 24:42-44

“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Matthew 25:13 is the concluding verse of the parable of the ten virgins.

Matthew 25:13

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

This verse refers to the moment when Jesus marries His bride and Jesus will receive the kingdom in heaven when the door of probation closes:

“Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the

atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords." *EW*, p. 280

The closing of the door in the parable of the ten virgins does not refer to the second coming of Christ. We know this because after the door closed, the foolish virgins were not immediately destroyed but actually had time to go and search for oil but when they returned for the wedding chamber, it was too late, the wedding party was already in the chamber and the door had closed (cf. Matthew 22:1-14). The oil represents the Holy Spirit and once the Spirit has been withdrawn from the earth, all cases are fixed for eternity.

The prophet Amos described the desperation of the lost as they seek for God's word after probation's close:

Amos 8:11-12 (cf. *GC*, p. 629)

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. ¹² They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it."

When Jesus was agonizing in Gethsemane, the disciples, instead of watching, were slumbering and sleeping:

Matthew 26:38, 40

"Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

When probation closes, the lost will be asleep, unaware that the door of probation has closed and that they are lost. Theirs will be a rude awakening when Jesus comes on the clouds.

The message of Jesus to the **church of Sardis** is relevant to our study:

Revelation 3:3

***“Remember** therefore how you have received and heard; **hold fast** and **repent**. Therefore, if you will not **watch**, I will come upon you **as a thief** and you will **not know what hour** I will come upon you.”*

“Keep” (teréo)

The word ‘keep’ here means ‘to **preserve**, to **protect**, to **safeguard**’. According to the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* the word means, “**keeping** or **preserving** the **unblemished** nature of a person or a condition.”

The call here is to ‘keep’ clean the white garments **before received**. The word does not refer to the moment a person **received** the garment but rather encourages the person to ‘**preserve, protect and safeguard**’ the garment that they had already received in the past. Here are three examples of the meaning of the word *teréo*, to ‘keep’:

- ✓ Paul **kept the faith** until **the end** of his life (2 Timothy 4:7)
- ✓ Paul encouraged the Ephesians to **keep unity** (Ephesians 4:3)
- ✓ The rebel angels **did not keep** their place in heaven (Jude 6)

White Garments and Walking Naked

In the verse we are studying, there is a sharp contrast between being **clothed** and **walking** naked. What does the word ‘walk’ mean, **symbolically** speaking? Walking is an **action word** and whenever it appears in a **figurative sense** in Scripture, it refers to our **behavior**, **conduct** or **lifestyle**.

Our key text describes **two possible ways** that a person can walk. We can walk **naked** or walk **clothed**. In both cases, walking has to do, not with our **standing** before God but with the **actions** that flow from our standing. What, then, is the meaning of walking clothed? The following verses tell us that walking clothed has to do with the **good works** that God performs in us:

Ephesians 2:8-10

*“For by **grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God, **[our standing or title to heaven]** ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works** **[our fitness for heaven]**, which God prepared beforehand that we should **walk** in them.”*

The beloved disciple encouraged the faithful to walk as Jesus walked:

1 John 2:6

*“He who says he **abides** in **Him** **[in Jesus]** ought himself also to **walk** just as He **walked**.”*

According to Genesis 5, Enoch **walked** with God and God took him to heaven. Ellen White, wrote that he is a type of the **final generation** that will be translated to heaven without seeing death. Enoch not only had right standing with Christ but also the fitness for heaven:

Genesis 5:24

*“And Enoch **walked** with God; and he was not, for God took him.”*

The parallel verse in the book of Hebrews explains that **walking** with God means to **please** Him:

Hebrews 11:5

*“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for **before** he was taken he had this **testimony** **[witness]**, that he **pleased** God.”*

What does it mean **to please** God? We find the answer in the experience of Jesus:

John 8:29

*“And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has **not left Me alone**, for I always **do** those things that **please Him**.”*

In contrast to those who walk clothed are those who, before their conversion, **walked** naked, that is, according to the course of this world and **lived** according to the **desires of the flesh**:

Ephesians 2:1-3

*“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which **you once walked** according to the course of **this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once **conducted** ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”*

Colossians 3:6-7

*“Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of **disobedience**, ⁷ in which you yourselves **once walked** when you **lived** in them.”*

Keeping our garments clean

A few members of the church of **Sardis** did not defile the garments that they received when they were justified. In other words, they **kept them** clean **after** they received them:

Revelation 3:4-6

*“Therefore if you will not **watch**, I will come upon you as a **thief**, and you will **not know what hour** I will come upon you [**this can happen at death or when probation closes**]. ⁴ You have a **few names even** in Sardis who **have not [past] defiled their garments**; and they **shall [future] walk with Me in white**, for **they are worthy [they were found worthy in the judgment]**. ⁵ He who **overcomes shall be** clothed [**when Jesus comes**] in **white garments**, and I will not **blot out his name** from the Book of Life; but I will **confess his name** before My Father and before His angels.”*

There are **three dimensions** to the garments:

- ✓ The members of Sardis received their spiritual white garments while they lived on earth and kept them, that is, did **not defile them**.

- ✓ When their names come up in the investigative judgment, it will be revealed that they kept the garments that they received at justification clean. In other words, the garment is not conferred in the judgment but rather confirmed. The examination of the garment takes place before the second coming in the heavenly judgment (cf. Matthew 22:1-14). When the names of those who kept their garments clean come up in the judgment, they will be found worthy and their name will not be blotted out of the book of life.
- ✓ Then, when Jesus comes, they shall walk with Jesus in literal white garments in the kingdom.

The Robe of Sanctification

In Revelation, the white raiment is defined as the righteous acts of the saints, so the garment must be related not only to justification but also to sanctification:

Revelation 19:8

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Ellen White commented on this verse:

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints" Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Savior." COL, p. 310

In another place, Ellen White explained the distinction, but not the separation, between imputed and imparted righteousness:

“Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic [has to do with the way we behave], but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.” RH, June 4, 1895.

No one will go to heaven without having both the title or right (justification) to heaven and the fitness (sanctification). By way of example, I ask: What is more important? Is it to have a driver’s license which gives you the right to drive or to know how to drive? The answer is both! If you know how to drive but have no license, you will be ticketed. On the other hand, if you don’t know how to drive but have a license you will most likely crash! The title and fitness go together!

Revelation 22:11 draws a sharp contrast between the evildoer and the righteous doer when probation closes. The evildoer continues to do evil, and the righteous continues doing right! The emphasis in this case is on action, not on status:

Revelation 22:11, ESV

“Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

In the following powerful Ellen White statement, the fig-leaf garment is defined as the nakedness and deformity of sin. That is, to cover ourselves with our own righteousness or to excuse sin like Adam and Eve did is equivalent to nakedness. This is the reason why, when Adam and Eve sinned, they still felt naked and ashamed, although they had covered themselves with fig leaf garments (cf. Genesis 3:8):

“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. [now comes the ‘how’] When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we

live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. COL, p. 311

The Substance of the 1888 Message

The **1888** message, which was actually simple, has been complicated by many. Ellen White provided the best definition I have found:

"It [the 1888 message] presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." TM, pp. 91, 92

As noted before, Ellen White clearly defined the relationship between justification and sanctification:

"Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without . . . The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven." RH, June 4, 1895

The Final Generation

The book of Revelation describes the final generation (those who will be alive when Jesus comes) in three passages (Revelation 7:1-8, 14:1-5, and 15:2-4).

- ✓ **Revelation 7:1-8** describes the sealing of the 144,000 for their protection in the time of trouble.
- ✓ **Revelation 14:1-5** describes their sterling character.
- ✓ **Revelation 15:2-4** describes their victory over the beast, his image, and his mark. This clearly indicates that the 144,000 are not the redeemed of all ages but rather the last generation.

Let's take a closer look at the end-time generation. **Revelation 6** describes the reaction of the lost at the second coming of Christ:

Revelation 6:14-16

*“Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was” moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “**Fall on us** and **hide us from the face** of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!”*

The **very next verse** in the chapter ends with a solemn and sobering question uttered by both the saved and the lost (GC, pp. 641, 642):

Revelation 6:17

*“For the great day of His wrath has come and **who shall be able to stand?**”*

The answer to the question is found at the very beginning of **chapter 7**. The **144,000 living saints** will be able to stand! While Revelation 7 does not describe the characters of those who belong to this group, **Revelation 14:1-5** does:

- ✓ They **follow the Lamb** wherever He goes, including to the judgment hall, the agony of Gethsemane, and the Cross:

*“The forces of darkness will unite with human agents who have given themselves into the control of Satan, and the **same scenes** that were exhibited at the **trial, rejection, and crucifixion** of Christ will be **revived**. Through yielding to satanic influences, men will be transformed into **fiends**; and those who were created in the image of God, who were formed to honor and glorify their Creator, will become the habitation of dragons, and Satan will see in an apostate race his **masterpiece of evil**—men who **reflect his own image**.” RH, April 14, 1896*

- ✓ They will **sing the song** of Moses and the Lamb, the song of their **experience**, which no other generation can sing as they can, because they have not gone through the same experience.
- ✓ They were **not defiled** with women, that is, with the apostate **harlot** and her **daughters**.

- ✓ There was **no deceit** in their mouths, which means that they have **clean hearts** because the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart (Matthew 12:34, 35).
- ✓ They are **without fault** before the throne of God (cf. 1 Peter 1:19; Jude 24; Ephesians 5:27).

Additional Evidence of the Last Generation

Revelation 6:17 is **not the only place** in Scripture where the **question** of Revelation 6:17 is asked. There are several **other passages** where a similar question is asked and a description of the **sterling character** of the faithful is given as an answer.

Joel 2:1-11 gives a vivid description of the **second coming** of Christ with the armies of heaven (cf. Revelation 19:11-14), and the description **ends** with the same question as Revelation 6:17:

Joel 2:11

*“The LORD gives voice before **His army**, for **His camp** is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is **great and very terrible, who can endure it?**”*

The answer to the question is given in terms of the Day of Atonement:

- ✓ The trumpet blows in Zion, announcing that **Yom Kippur** is at hand.
- ✓ There is a call to **assemble** around the sanctuary and to **fast**.
- ✓ A call is made for the congregation to return to the Lord with all their heart, and with **weeping** and **mourning**, the people are invited to **rend their hearts** and not their garments.
- ✓ A call is made to **sanctify** the congregation.
- ✓ **Ministers** are to weep between the porch and the altar, pleading with the Lord to spare His people.

Not the Only Place: Psalm 15

Psalm 15:1 begins with a similar question, and verses 2-5 provide the answer by emphasizing the conduct or lifestyle of those who will dwell with the Lord:

Psalm 15

"LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle [the sanctuary]? Who may dwell in Your holy hill [Zion]? ² He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; ³ he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; ⁴ In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change [does not break his promises]; ⁵ he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved [they will be able to stand?]"

Not the Only Place: Isaiah 33:14-16:

Most Christian churches teach that the wicked will burn in the fires of hell forever. However, the prophet Isaiah begs to differ. It is the righteous who will abide in the everlasting fire and not be burned! The prophet asks two synonymous questions in verse 14 and provides the answer in verses 15 and 16 in terms of the conduct of the final generation:

Isaiah 33:14-16

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: ¹⁶ He will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure."

Not the Only Place: Nahum 1:6, 7

The Prophet Nahum asked two questions in verse 6 and answered them in verse 7:

Nahum 1:6,7

*"**Who can stand** before His indignation? And **who can endure** the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and **the rocks** are thrown down by Him. ⁷ The Lord is good, a stronghold in the **day of trouble**; and He knows **those who trust** in Him."*

Not the Only Place: Malachi 3:2, 3

The prophet Malachi asked **two similar questions** and provided the answer in terms of the **cleansing** of the faithful:

Malachi 3:2, 3

*"But **who can endure** the day of His coming? And **who can stand** when He appears? For He is like a **refiner's fire** and like **launderers' soap**. ³ He will sit as a **refiner and a purifier** of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and **purge them** as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."*

Ellen White quoted these verses from Malachi and linked them with the spotless character of the final generation:

*"Says the prophet: "**Who may abide** the day of His coming? and **who shall stand** when He appeareth? for He is like a **refiner's fire**, and like **fullers' soap**; and He shall sit as a **refiner** and **purifier of silver**; and He **shall purify** the sons of Levi, and **purge them** as **gold and silver**, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Malachi 3:2, 3. **Those who are living** upon the earth when the **intercession of Christ shall cease** in the sanctuary above are **to stand** in the sight of a holy God **without a mediator**. Their **robes** must be **spotless**, their characters must be **purified from sin** by the blood of sprinkling. Through the **grace of God** and their **own diligent effort** they must be **conquerors in the battle** with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a **special work of purification**, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of*

Revelation 14. When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ **will be ready** for His appearing." GC, p. 425

Psalm 24 was sung by the **heavenly universe** as Jesus neared the gates of the New Jerusalem at His ascension. Two questions are asked and answered:

Psalm 24:3-6

*"**Who** may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or **who** may stand in His holy place?"⁴ He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**; who has not lifted up his soul to an **idol**, nor **sworn** deceitfully.⁵ He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and **righteousness from the God** of his salvation.⁶ This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face."*

Righteousness by Faith in Verity

In recent times, justification, that is, the **imputation** of Christ's righteousness **apart from human works**, has been emphasized almost **to the exclusion** of sanctification. In a remarkable statement about the message of Jones and Waggoner in 1888, Ellen White linked righteousness by faith with the **third angel's message**. Was she referring to justification only? Here is her statement:

*"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the **third angel's message**, and I have answered, "It **is** the third angel's message, **in verity**." RH, April 1, 1890*

If the third angel's message is righteousness by faith **in verity**, we need to take a closer look at the third angel's message to see **how** this is so. What does the third angel's message say?

Revelation 14:9-12

*"Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone **worships the beast** and **his image**, and receives **his mark** on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who **worship the beast** and **his image**, and whoever receives **the***

mark of his name. Here is the **[1] patience** of the saints, here are those who **[2] keep the commandments** of God and the **[3] faith** of Jesus."

What possible **relationship** could this passage have with righteousness by faith? It certainly is not describing **forensic justification only!**

It has become common for some Adventist scholars to define righteousness by faith in the **same way** that **Martin Luther** and the Reformers defined it, as the imputation or accreditation of Christ's righteousness to the repentant sinner. If this is true, then Martin Luther preached the third angel's message! However, we know that **Luther did not proclaim** it because the first angel's message was not preached until after **1798**, and the second and third angels' messages follow the first in time:

*"**No such message [the first angel's message]** has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, **did not preach it**; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers **did not proclaim it**. **Martin Luther** placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But **since 1798** the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near." GC, p. 356*

This means that righteousness by faith as it is defined in the context of the third angel's message must have a **deeper dimension** and **go beyond** the concept that was taught by Luther and the Reformers. It is righteousness by faith in a **special end-time** historical context. We know this for sure because the test over the **beast**, its **image**, and its **mark** was hundreds of years in the future from Luther's time!

Ellen White does not state that the third angel's message **contains** the message of righteousness by faith, but rather, it **is** righteousness by faith. Righteousness by faith is **not one element** of the third angel's message but rather **permeates it all!**

There are **three key expressions** in Revelation 14:12:

- ✓ They have the '**patience** of the saints' (better translated 'perseverance' or 'endurance')

✓ They “keep the commandments of God”

✓ And ‘the **faith** of Jesus’

Where is the **first time** we encounter the beast, his image, and his mark in the third angel’s message? The answer is **Revelation 13:11-18**, so we must return there.

According to Revelation 13:11-18, there is a time coming when God’s faithful people will go through the ‘*great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*’ (Matthew 24:21). Those who refuse to worship the beast and his image and to receive the mark will not be able to **buy or sell**, and they will eventually come under the **sentence of death**.

What **kind of persons** must the faithful be to go successfully through this severe trial? The answer is that their **faith in Christ’s righteousness** will be revealed in their **faithful obedience**! This is the aspect of the third angel’s message that **Martin Luther** did not emphasize because his struggle was with those who believed they could not be **saved by their own works**. Later, **the Wesleys** would provide the **balance** by emphasizing the need for the justified to live a holy life!

Patience of the Saints

The **three characteristics** of the last generation must be understood in the special context of **Revelation 14:9-11**.

First, the final generation must have the **perseverant and enduring faith** (*hupomoné*) of the saints—a faith exhibited in **faithfulness**. The expression ‘*patience of the saints*’ also appears in Revelation 13:10 in the same special **end-time** context:

Revelation 13:10

*“He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the **patience** and the **faith** of the saints.”*

Several things must be said about this verse:

- ✓ The meaning of the word 'patience' is better rendered 'perseverance' or 'endurance' (cf. Matthew 24:13). People who persevere hang in there no matter what! Trials, trouble, and tribulation will not phase them or shake their faith in Jesus!
- ✓ The 'faith of Jesus' in Revelation 14:12 is described in this verse as 'the faith of the saints'. That is to say, the faith that the saints will have is of the same quality that Jesus had!
- ✓ The context of Revelation 13:10 is important. It describes the deadly wound that the papacy received in 1798, followed immediately after, in verses 11-18, with a description of the rise of the United States as a benevolent nation, followed by its metamorphosis into an oppressive power that will precipitate the final trial of the last generation over the beast, the image, and the mark.

This is the identical context of the third angel's message in Revelation 14:12. Why will God's people need a perseverant faith? Because of the trials they must face as described in Revelation 13:11-18.

Keep the Commandments of God

The **second** idea in Revelation 14:12 is that the final generation will keep the commandments of God in a time when the Christian world is trampling on them. God's end-time people will keep the commandments rather than the commandments of men, even at the risk of losing their lives. This certainly requires a persevering and enduring faith!

However, what is the motivating force that drives the final generation to keep the commandments even at the risk of death? Will God's end-time people be self-sufficient legalists, believing God will save them from death because of their good behavior? A resounding no!

This is where the faith of Jesus comes in. What is the faith of Jesus? Is it faith in the righteousness of Jesus or is it the faith of Jesus, that is, the faith that Jesus had? The fact is that the expression 'faith of Jesus' can be properly translated as an objective genitive, 'faith of' or as a subjective genitive, 'faith in Jesus'. Are both perhaps true?

The Faith of Jesus

Ellen White explained the meaning of the 'faith of Jesus':

*"The **third angel's message** is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the **faith of Jesus** Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of **equal importance**, the **law and the gospel** going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness. "The faith of Jesus." It is talked of, but **not understood**. **What constitutes the faith of Jesus** that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our **sin-bearer** that He might become our sin-pardoning Savior. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and **took our sins** that we might take His righteousness. And **faith in the ability of Christ to save us** amply and fully and entirely **is the faith of Jesus**. 3SM, p. 172*

I believe that the 'faith of Jesus' is the same quality of **faith** that Jesus had in His Father when He went through his time of trouble in **Gethsemane** and the **cross**. And what was **that faith like**? We must visit those places to find the answer:

*"Upon Christ as our substitute and surety **was laid the iniquity of us all**. He was **counted a transgressor**, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The **guilt of every descendant of Adam** was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, **He cannot see the Father's reconciling face**. The **withdrawal of the divine countenance** from the Savior in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was **this agony** that His physical pain was hardly felt. Satan with his **fierce temptations** wrung the heart of Jesus. The Savior **could not see** through the portals of the tomb. **Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror**, or tell Him of the **Father's acceptance** of the sacrifice. He feared that **sin was so offensive** to God that **Their separation was to be eternal**. Christ **felt the anguish** that the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's*

wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God." DA, p. 753

So **what sustained the faith of Jesus** when He **felt forsaken** by the Father in His **time of trouble**? Satan was attempting to **shake His faith** in His Father's love and acceptance. He could not see His Father's reconciling face! He feared that the load of sin He bore would separate Him from His Father forever. Satan was doing his utmost to persuade Jesus that the **load of sin** He bore was so great that His Father had forsaken Him and He would never see His face again (Matthew 27:46). Psalm 22:1, 2 vividly describes Him crying out in agony to His Father:

*"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so **far from helping Me**, and from the words of My **groaning**? ² O My God, **I cry** in the **daytime**, but **You do not hear**; and in the **night season**, and am not silent."*

During His severe trial, the Lord could and did not lean on His **feelings** or **emotions**; if He had, He would have failed. He had developed a perseverant faith in His Father, stronger than death. From previous experience, He **knew** His Father, He **loved** His Father, and He **trusted** His Father in spite of what His feelings told Him. The book of Hebrews describes His cries to the Father:

Hebrews 5:7-8

*"... who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and **was heard because of His godly fear**, ⁸ though He was a Son, yet **He learned obedience** by the things which He suffered."*

Ellen White described the secret of His victory:

*"Amid the awful darkness, apparently **forsaken of God**, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the **evidence of His Father's acceptance** heretofore given Him. He **was acquainted** with the **character** of His Father; He **understood** His justice, His mercy, and His great love. **By faith** He rested in Him whom it had ever been His **joy to obey**. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. **By faith, [this is the faith of Jesus]** Christ was victor." DA, p. 756*

The Faith of Jesus and the Last Generation

During the time of **Jacob's trouble**, Satan will tempt the last generation to **feel as Jesus** felt during His time of trouble. He will tempt them to **feel** that their sins are too great for God to forgive, that He has forsaken them, and therefore, loyalty and obedience to Him are fruitless! Like the persistent widow of Luke 18, they will cry out to the Lord day and night. However, the elect will be victorious because they will have implicit **faith in Jesus**. They will have the assurance that their sins have been forgiven and that they are covered with His righteousness, no matter how they feel or what others say. Their quality of faith will be like the faith that Jesus had during His time of trouble. Like **Job**, they will cry out, *'I know that my Redeemer lives. . . when He has tested me I shall come forth as gold. . . 'though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him'*. Like **Jacob**, they will exclaim, *'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'*

Ellen White explained Satan's prime temptation during this time:

*"As Satan accuses the people of God on **account of their sins**, the Lord permits him to try them **to the uttermost**. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be **severely tested**. As they review the past, their **hopes sink**; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. Satan **endeavors to terrify them** with the thought that their **cases are hopeless**, that the stain of their defilement will **never be washed away**. He hopes so to **destroy their faith** that they will **yield to his temptations** and **turn from their allegiance** to God." *GC*, pp. 618, 619*

During that time, God's people will **feel much** like Jesus felt in Gethsemane and the cross. They will feel like God has forsaken them. The wicked will **taunt them** by asking, *'where is your God now?'*

If Jesus had trusted His **feelings** and emotions during His trial, He would have failed. His Father did not seem to be there. He feared that the sins He was bearing (which were not his) would separate Him from the Father forever! He could not see beyond the portals of the tomb. He cried out on the cross *'why have you forsaken me?'* Yet His faith did not fail because He did not trust **His feelings** but rather the **promises** of His Father. He had faith in His Father. He

knew His Father, **loved** Him and **trusted** Him, and therefore He knew that though he felt forsaken, He was not.

Martyrs Past and Future

In order to understand the third angel's message (Revelation 14:9-11), we must return to **chapter 13**, where the trial over the beast, his image, and his mark are first mentioned. This chapter describes a sea **beast** that ruled for **42 months** (Revelation 13:1-10) and during this period **wore out** and **killed** the saints of the Most High. In spite of being **savagely hunted** and apparently forsaken of God, they trusted in Christ's righteousness and therefore remained **faithful**!

These martyrs of the **past** are portrayed in Revelation as crying out for justice from **under the altar** of sacrifice. To all human appearances, God had forsaken them and delivered them into the hands of their enemies. In spite of this, their faith did not waver. They **knew** Jesus, they **loved** Jesus, they **trusted** Jesus, and, although their feelings told them otherwise, they had the **assurance** of salvation through the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Therefore, when they died, we are told that they were covered with the white robes of **Christ's righteousness**. Here is the passage with my own explanatory notes in brackets:

Revelation 6:9-11

*"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [**of incense**] the souls [**like Abel, their blood is crying out for justice; Genesis 4:10**] of **those who had been slain** for the word of God and for the testimony which they held [**during the persecutions of the past**].¹⁰ And they **cried** with a **loud voice**, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You **judge** and **avenge** our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"¹¹ Then a **white robe was given** to **each** of them; and it was said to them that they should **rest a little while** longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who **would be killed** as they were [**these are those who will be killed before the close of probation**], was completed."*

The **faith** of these martyrs in Jesus was evidenced by their willingness to die rather than be **unfaithful** to their Lord. After their martyrdom, they were symbolically given spiritual **white robes** of Christ's righteousness *in absentia*

as a reward for their **faithfulness**. In fact, during their lives, they had already kept their garments clean.

You might ask how we can say that these martyrs of the past had the righteous robe of Christ's righteousness if they undoubtedly ate pork, drank beer, believed that the immortal soul left the body at death, and kept Sunday as the day of rest. The answer is very simple. If they were willing to give up their lives in faithfulness to Christ, they would have given up these things if they had the light.

We must remember that the martyrs of the past were living in the dark ages when the light of the two witnesses was burning dim (Revelation 11:3). God did not expect as much from them as he does from us or the last generation! Jesus said that one who is faithful **in little** will be **faithful in much**! (Luke 16:10). If they had understood the light on these matters, no doubt they would have obeyed it.

The end-time martyrs of the future will be in a different situation. They will be living during the outpouring of the latter rain power when the whole world will have the fullness of the light of God's glory (Revelation 18:1). Unmitigated power and fullness of light! God will then expect more because those who proclaim the loud cry will have fullness of light and power. Their **assurance** of salvation in the righteousness of Christ will be exhibited in their obedience to the fullness of light.

In the book of Hebrews, the apostle Paul rebuked those who claimed to be mature Christians but were still infants. They were rudimentary or ABC believers. The apostle wrote about them:

Hebrews 5:12-14

*"For though by this time you **ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the **first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to **need milk** and not **solid food**.¹³ For everyone who partakes **only of milk** is **unskilled** in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But **solid food** belongs to those who are of **full age**, that is, those who by **reason of use** have their **senses exercised** to discern both **good and evil**."*

Paul then gave the Hebrews a **loving but stern** warning about what would happen if they did not grow up:

Hebrews 6:1-8

*"Therefore, leaving the discussion of the **elementary principles** of Christ, let us **go on to perfection**, not laying **again the foundation** of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits. ⁴ For it is impossible for those who were **once enlightened**, and have **tasted the heavenly gift**, and have become **partakers of the Holy Spirit**, ⁵ and have tasted the **good word of God** and the powers of the **age to come**, ⁶ if they **fall away**, to renew them again **to repentance**, since they **crucify again** for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. ⁷ For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸ but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

The Examination of the Garments

Matthew 22:11, 12 explains that the robe of Christ's righteousness is assigned to the faithful while they are alive, **before** their lives are examined in the investigative judgment. The purpose of the heavenly judgment is not to inform God but rather to **confirm** that the martyrs had and **kept the garment** of Christ's righteousness clean while they lived. When the martyrs resurrect, they will then be given **literal white robes** and they shall walk with Jesus in the kingdom (Revelation 3:4, 5).

The examination of the garments of those who have claimed the name of Jesus is firmly rooted in the Bible. Jesus spoke about the separation of the wheat from the tares the wise from foolish virgins and the good from the bad fish. All claimed the name of Jesus but upon close inspection some were faithful and others not!

Matthew 22:1-14

*"The kingdom of heaven is like a **certain king** [the Father] who arranged a **marriage** [at the close of probation] for his **son** [Jesus], ³ and **sent out** [the prophets during the Old Testament period] his servants to call those who were*

invited [the Jewish nation] to the wedding; and they were **not willing** to come.

⁴ Again, he sent out other servants, **[after the death of Christ]** saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and **fatted cattle are killed**, **[the sacrifice of Christ]** and all things are ready. **Come to the wedding.**"'

⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest **seized his servants**, treated them spitefully, and

killed them [Matthew 23:34, 35] ⁷ But when **the king [the Father]** heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out **his armies**, **[the Roman legions]** destroyed those murderers, and **burned up their city [the destruction of Jerusalem]**. ⁸

Then he said to his servants, 'The **wedding is ready**, but those who were invited were **not worthy**. ⁹ Therefore go into the **highways**, **[the gospel to the world]**

and as many as you find, **invite to the wedding.**' ¹⁰ So those servants **went out** into the **highways** and **gathered together [into the boat]** all whom they found, both **bad** and **good**. **[genuine and counterfeit believers]** And the **wedding hall**

was **filled with guests**. ¹¹ "But when the king came in **to see the guests**, he saw a man there who did not have on a **wedding garment**. ¹² So he said to him,

'**Friend**, how did you come in here **without a wedding garment?**' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him

away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ "For many are called, but few are chosen."

"When Christ shall come, he will not **change the character** of any individual. Precious, **probationary time** is given to be improved in **washing** our **robes of character**, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb." *Counsels on Education*, p. 237

"The provision has been made for us to wash. The fountain has been prepared at infinite expense, and the burden of **washing rests upon us**, who are imperfect before God. The Lord does not propose to remove these spots of defilement **without our doing anything** on our part. **We must wash our robes** in the blood of the Lamb. We may lay hold of the **merits of the blood** of Christ **by faith**, **[justification]** and through His **grace and power [sanctification]** we may have strength to **overcome** our **errors**, our **sins**, our **imperfections** of character, and come off victorious, **having washed our robes** in the blood of the Lamb. *3T*, p. 183

Revelation 6:9-11 describes **two groups** of martyrs. One group was slain in the past by the papacy during the 1260 years. The names of those who died covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness and manifested it by obedience to the light they had will be retained in the book of life. Ellen White wrote about this group that died in the past:

*"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—**the Inquisition**. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, **taking the fearful record** of their iniquitous decrees and **writing the history of deeds** too horrible to appear to human eyes. "Babylon the great" was "drunken with the blood of the saints." The mangled forms of millions of martyrs **cried to God for vengeance** [notice the allusion to the fifth seal] upon that apostate power." *GC*, pp. 59, 60*

The second group will be martyred in the **future** when the same beast's deadly wound is healed, and the image is built and the mark enforced. The martyrs of the past suffered persecution and death by the **beast** before the **image** was erected and its **mark** imposed. Ellen White described this **second period** of persecution:

*"When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else that **giving life** [which means that it must have been dead] to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to **spring again** [which means that the active despotism must have existed before] into **active** despotism." *5T*, p. 712*

Ellen White also applied the souls under the altar passage to the second period of persecution:

*"When the defiance of God's law is **almost universal**, when his people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, God will interpose. **Then** will the **voice be heard** from the **graves of martyrs**, represented by the **souls that John saw** slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which they held—then the prayer will ascend from every **true child** of God: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." The fervent prayers of his people will be*

*answered; for God loves to have his people seek him with all the heart, and **depend upon him** as their **deliverer**. He will be sought unto to do these things for his people, and he will arise as their **protector and avenger**. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" The Review and Herald, December 21, 1897*

How do the two periods of persecution **relate to each other**? The beast that rose from the sea (Revelation 13:1-10) ruled for 42 months, after which it received a deadly wound, which rendered it **inactive** for a period of time. Around the time that the sea beast received its mortal wound, a **second beast** rose from the earth. According to Revelation 13:11-18, this beast will do everything in its power to restore the power that the sea beast lost. The earth beast will exercise **all the authority** of the first beast on **its behalf**. It will command the earth to **worship** the first beast. It will make **an image** of the first beast and **impose its mark**. It will become the first sea beast's **enforcer** by persecuting the saints of the Most High as it did in the past.

Just as the martyrs of the past, the saints will **remain faithful** to their Lord in the midst of persecution and death. Shortly before the close of probation, as the loud cry is being proclaimed with latter rain power, some will be mowed down, and then the number of the martyrs **will be complete**.

Regarding the **revival of the persecutions** of the past, we are told:

*"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a **repetition** of the persecutions of the past **are blended**." Counsels for the Church, p. 39*

Do you remember that the martyrs cried out to God to **judge and avenge** the shedding of their blood? Well, God will answer their pleas when the plagues fall upon the **great harlot** (Revelation 17:1, 2; 19:1, 2)

Revelation 20 describes the end-time martyrs who will be slain just before the close of probation:

Revelation 20:4

*"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been **beheaded** for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the **beast** or his **image**, and had*

not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

The last day martyrs will have a faith in Christ that translates into faithfulness. While they lived, they kept the white robe of Christ’s righteousness clean, and they revealed this righteousness in their willingness to die for their Lord. Therefore, when their name comes up in the judgment, it will be retained in the book of life, and when Jesus comes, he will clothe them in literal white robes of light.

However, some who will receive the latter rain and proclaim the loud cry will not die. They will be alive after probation closes, and their life will be in jeopardy. In their trial, they will not let loose of the Lord’s hand. They will have the garment and keep it clean. They will have the patience of the saints and will have faith in the righteousness of Jesus that is manifested in the faith of Jesus, the quality of faith He had in His trial.

The Importance of Obedience

However, not all who claim to have the garment will remain faithful. Some, according to Revelation 16:15, will have slumbered and failed to keep their garments clean, and the shame of their nakedness will be seen. They claimed to have the righteousness of Christ, but the testimony of their lives denied their claim:

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message [they must have been Seventh-day Adventists], but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth [they are devoid of the garment], abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the bitterest enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbath keepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.” GC, p. 608

Daniel and His Three Friends

Daniel's three friends are types of the last generation. The literal story of Daniel 3 will be played out on a global scale during the final time of trouble. Daniel 3 and Revelation 13 have the same basic elements. A beast raises up an image, commands everyone to worship it, and whoever does not will be subject to a death decree and shall go through a 'furnace of fire' heated to an intensity such as never was (Daniel 12:1).

"Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for his children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace fire; their earthliness must be consumed that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected." GC, p. 621

Ellen White understood the type/antitype relationship between Daniel 3 and the third angel's message:

"An idol sabbath has been set up, as the golden image was set up in the plains of Dura. And as Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, issued a decree that all who would not bow down and worship this image should be killed, so a proclamation will be made that all who will not reverence the Sunday institution will be punished with imprisonment and death." Manuscript Releases, volume 14, p. 91

How did Daniel's three friends reveal that they had experienced righteousness by faith? The answer is that their faithfulness revealed their faith to the greatest nation of antiquity. The three young men revealed their trust, allegiance, and assurance by being loyal, even at the risk of death. They knew Christ, they loved Christ, and therefore, they trusted Christ. They could feel the intense heat of the furnace, peer pressure was strong, and God did not seem to intervene immediately to deliver them. However, they had the perseverance and faith of the saints—faith in Jesus revealed by the faith of Jesus!

Ellen White explained how they demonstrated their faith in Jesus:

*“The three Hebrews were called upon to **confess Christ** in the face of the burning fiery furnace. It cost them something to do this, for their lives were at stake. These youth, imbued with the Holy Spirit, declared to the **whole kingdom** of Babylon **their faith**—that He whom they worshiped was the only true and living God. The **demonstration of their faith** on the plain of Dura was a most eloquent presentation of their principles.” YL July 12, 1904*

Because of their faith **in** Jesus, the young men were delivered **by** Jesus. The word ‘deliver’ is a key word in Daniel 3. It appears mainly in three ‘**crisis chapters**’ at critical junctures, Daniel 3, Daniel 6, and Daniel 12:1, so these chapters must be closely related.

Let’s examine the word ‘deliver’ in Daniel 3. Just as a side note, the story illustrates what will happen when the **Establishment Clause** of the **First Amendment** to the Constitution of the United States will be violated in the future when the apostate Protestant churches will appeal to the state for the establishment of a Sunday law:

Daniel 3:16-18, 28, 29

*“Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and **worship** the image which I have made, good! But if you do not **worship**, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will **deliver** you from my hands?”*

¹⁶ “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that is the case, **our God whom we serve** is able to **deliver** us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will **deliver** us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ **But if not**, let it be known to you, O king, that **we do not serve** your gods, nor will we **worship** the gold image which you have set up.”

²⁸ “Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His **Angel** [Daniel 3:25 identifies the Angel as Jesus] and **delivered** His servants who **trusted in Him**, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they **should not serve nor worship** any god

except **their own God!** ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree **[illegitimate]** that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can **deliver** like this."

The book of **Hebrews** tells us that the three young men **quenched the fire** through their **faith** (Hebrews 11:33, 34). Clearly, their faith was more than an **intellectual assent**. It was **more than** a **judicial act** of imputation. True faith in the righteousness of Christ was exhibited by their **faithfulness**. Faith and works are a **package deal**; they always go **together**. We are not saved by **faith alone** or **works alone** or **faith plus works** but by a faith **that** works! In this sense, righteousness by faith is the third angel's message in verity. Ellen White compared the steadfastness of the Hebrews to the last generation:

*"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **so in the closing period** of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who **stand steadfastly** for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will **stand unmoved**. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf **Jehovah will reveal Himself** as a "God of gods," able to save to the uttermost those who have **put their trust** in Him." *PK*, p. 513*

Daniel in the Lion's Den

Another passage that illustrates righteousness by faith in the end-time crisis is the story in **Daniel 6**. The story illustrates the crisis that will come upon the last generation when apostate Protestantism will influence the **civil power** of the United States to violate the **Free Exercise Clause** of the First Amendment.

Daniel's life was in jeopardy because he was faithful to **the law** of His God and because of his **worship practices** (Daniel 6:5). Once again, the word 'deliver' is the key to the chapter:

Daniel 6:16, 20, 23, 27

*"So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, 'Your God, whom you **serve continually**, He will **deliver** you . . . ' ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you **serve continually**, been able to **deliver** you from the lions?" . . . ²⁷ He **delivers** and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has **delivered** Daniel from the power of the lions. . . ²³ So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, **because he believed** in his God."*

The king knew why God had delivered Daniel from the lions when he stated twice that Daniel **served God continually**, and that he **trusted** his God. When Daniel's ordeal was over, Daniel himself explained why God delivered him from the lion's den:

Daniel 6:22

*"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was **found innocent** before Him; and also, O king, I have **done no wrong** before you."*

According to **Hebrews 11:33** Daniel shut the mouths of lions **by faith**. Daniel's faith was not a mere **judicial act** where God imputed Christ's righteousness to him. It was certainly that, but not that alone! His faith was trust in Christ's imputed righteousness which flowed into his **practical life**. Daniel **knew** Christ, **loved** Christ, **trusted** Christ and therefore was **obedient** to Christ! Faith meant trusting in a person without question or doubt even in the face of death.

The definition of **faith** in the book of **Hebrews** does not differ from other places in Scripture, the emphasis is simply different. Hebrews reveals that true faith is **obedient**. Stated another way, faith is exhibited in faithfulness.

Why did God allow Daniel to go through his ordeal? Why not spare him the pain and agony? The answer is that Daniel's faith, like that of the last generation, brought honor and glory to God. It proved that Daniel did not serve the Lord for the loaves and fishes but out of simple and pure love! Love is exhibited in loyalty!

*"God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted **evil angels** and **wicked men** thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant **more marked**, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness **more complete**. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psalm 76:10), the psalmist has testified. Through the **courage** of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, **Satan was to be defeated**, and the name of God was to be **exalted and honored**."*

Paul's Concept of Justification and Sanctification

Those who dwell on the theme of righteousness by faith frequently focus on **justification** and center mainly on the writings of the **apostle Paul**. However, there are other New Testament writers who focus on the same topic from a different, yet complementary perspective. One of those is **James**, the brother of Jesus.

Martin Luther was not too fond of the book of James, calling it the 'epistle of straw'. He never wrote a commentary on the epistle of James. In the mind of Luther, James was **too works oriented**. For him, James **seemed to conflict** with Paul on the subject of righteousness by faith. However, let's not be too hard on Luther. The reformer was struggling against a different enemy of the gospel than James. Luther was struggling against a system that focused on **faithless works** and James on church members that stood for a **workless faith**.

So, the key question is this, does Paul's definition of righteousness by faith conflict with that of James? Did Paul believe that man is made righteous by a **forensic act** of God while James believed that man is made righteous by the actions of a **holy life**? As we look for an answer we must remember that James is as much a part of the biblical canon and just as relevant as the writings of Paul.

Let's take a look first at Paul's concept of justification. The apostle was **categorical** that one is **justified** by faith **apart** works **of law**. The fact is, however, that 'works of law' **by definition** are not good at all because they are not the fruit of faith, but rather an attempt to **earn** salvation and to **boast** (Romans 2:23; 4:2; Ephesians 2:9).

Romans 4:2-3

*"For if Abraham was **justified by works**, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham **believed [had faith in]** God, and it was **accounted** to him for righteousness."*

Galatians 2:16

*"knowing that a man is **not justified** by the **works of the law** but **by faith in Jesus** Christ, even we have believed **[had faith]** in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified by faith** in Christ and not by the **works of the law**; for by the **works of the law** no flesh shall be **justified**."*

Ephesians 2:8, 9

*"For by **grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that **not of yourselves**; it is the **gift** of God, ⁹ **not of works**, lest anyone should **boast**."*

One is reminded of the parable of the **Pharisee** and the **publican** who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee **boasted** of his 'good' works, despised the publican, and justified himself. In the end, the publican went home justified, the only time that the gospels record the word 'justified' on the lips of Jesus!

However, Paul held genuine good works in **high esteem**, not as a **means** of salvation but as its fruit:

Ephesians 2:10

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should **walk** in them."*

Titus 2:11-14

*"For the **grace of God** that brings **salvation** has appeared to all men, ¹² **teaching us** that, **denying ungodliness** and **worldly lusts**, we should **live soberly, righteously**, and **godly** in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who **gave Himself** for us, **that He might** redeem us from every lawless deed and **purify for Himself** His own special people, **zealous for good works**."*

Romans 6:22, 23

*"But now having been **set free from sin**, and having become **slaves of God**, you have your **fruit to holiness**, and **the end**, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

The Epistle of James on Justification and Sanctification

Now let's- take a look at how James understood righteousness by faith:

James 2:14-26

*"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone **says** he has faith but does **not have works**? Can **[such a]** faith **save** him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is **naked** and destitute of **daily food**, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do **not give them** the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also **faith by itself**, if it does **not have works**, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." **Show me your faith without** your works, and I will show you **my faith by my works**. ¹⁹ You **believe [same word translated 'faith']** that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons **believe [same word for 'faith']** and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he **offered** Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that **faith was working together with** his works, and by works faith was **made perfect? [complete]** ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was **accounted to him** for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is **justified by works**, and **not by faith only**. ²⁵ Likewise, was not **Rahab** the harlot also **justified by works** when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the **body without** the spirit is dead, so **faith without** works is dead also."*

These days, most Adventist scholars appear to be **soteriological dualists** while they claim to be **anthropological monists**. While they teach that man is saved by **faith alone** without works, in the same breath, they say that the spirit alone cannot exist without the body! However, James begs to differ. He **compared** the unity of body and spirit with the unity of faith and works. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead, and a dead faith can never save the sinner.

True Believers Seated with Jesus

The book of **Ephesians** illustrates the progressive experience of true believers. According to **Watchman Nee**, the **Chinese** Bible commentator, there are **three key words** that provide the **summary** and **structure** of the book. We first **sit** with Jesus and rest in what **He has done**, his perfect life and death for sin:

Ephesians 2:4-6

*“But God, who is rich in **mercy**, because of His **great love** with which He **loved us**,⁵ even when we were **dead** in trespasses, **made us alive together** with Christ (by **grace** you have been saved),⁶ and **raised us up together**, and made us **sit together** in the **heavenly places** in Christ Jesus,⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of **His grace** in His **kindness** toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

Ephesians 2:8, 9

*“For by **grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should **boast**.”*

True Believers Walk with Jesus

Christ’s grace gives us the **title and assurance** of salvation. However, our rest in Jesus is revealed in our daily walk:

Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1, 17-19; 5:2, 8-10, 15,16

*“For by **grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift** of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should **boast**.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, **created** in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which **God prepared** beforehand that we should **walk** in them. . .^{4:1} I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy** of the calling with which you were called. . .¹⁷ This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should **no longer walk** as the rest of the **Gentiles walk**, in the futility of their mind,¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;¹⁹ who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to **work** all uncleanness with greediness. . .^{5:2} And **walk** in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. . .⁸ For you were once darkness, but*

now you are light in the Lord. **Walk** as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. . . ¹⁵ See then that you **walk circumspectly**, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

True Believers Stand for Jesus

When we rest in what Jesus has done and walk with Him, this gives us the strength to **stand** for Him when we are attacked by the powers of darkness. Only as we **sit** with Jesus can we **walk** with Him and, in the end, **stand** and be faithful in our struggle against the power of the devil:

Ephesians 6:10-17

“Finally, my brethren, **be strong** in the Lord and in the power of **His might**. ¹¹ Put on the **whole armor** of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the **whole armor** of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. ¹⁴ **Stand** therefore, having girded your **waist** with truth, having put on the **breastplate** of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your **feet** with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the **shield** of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the **helmet** of salvation, and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ **praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

The Apostle Paul described salvation as a **four-step** process:

Romans 6:20-23

“For when you were **slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are **now ashamed**? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now having been **set free** from sin, and

having become **slaves of God**, you have your **fruit to holiness**, and **the end**, everlasting life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

How is it Possible?

Immediately after listing the **honor roll** of faith, the apostle Paul described the **secret** of their **victorious faith**:

Hebrews 12:1-2

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin** which so easily ensnares us, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us, ² **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for **the joy** that was set before Him **endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Ellen White explained the secret of victory over sin:

“A deadly **spiritual malady** is upon the church. Its members are wounded by Satan but they will not **look to the cross of Christ**, as the Israelites **looked** to the brazen serpent, that they may live. The **world has so many claims** upon them that they **have not time** to **look** to the **cross** of Calvary **long enough** to see its **glory** or to feel its **power**. When they **now and then** catch a **glimpse** of the self-denial and self-dedication which the truth demands, it is unwelcome, and they turn their **attention in another direction**, that they may the **sooner forget it**.” *5T*, pp. 202, 20

“All **true obedience** comes from the heart. It was **heart work** with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that **when obeying Him** we shall be but carrying out **our own impulses**. The **will, refined and sanctified**, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God, as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of **continual obedience**. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, **sin will become hateful to us**.” *DA*, p. 668

By **beholding Christ**, we are being **changed** into His likeness:

2 Corinthians 3:18

*“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into the **same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

“By beholding Christ, by talking of Him, by beholding the loveliness of His character we become changed. Changed from glory to glory. And what is glory? Character—and he becomes changed from character to character. Thus we see that there is a work of purification that goes on by beholding Jesus.” Sons and Daughters of God, p. 337.

As our attention is fixed upon Him through **persistent prayer**, intensive **Bible study**, and by ministering to Him by acts of love to a **hurting humanity**, we **walk** in the steps of Jesus:

*“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ's life on earth, to **walk** where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to **walk** in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His **footprints** beside the sick-bed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall **walk** in His steps.” DA, p. 640.*

Is it Possible?

Jude 14-15

*“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are **ungodly** among them of all their **ungodly** deeds which they have committed in an **ungodly** way, and of all the harsh things which **ungodly** sinners have spoken against Him.”*

Genesis 5:24

*“And Enoch **walked** with God; and he was not, for God took him.”*

Hebrews 11:5-6

*"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for **before** he was taken he had this testimony, that he **pleased** God."*

John 8:29

*"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that **please Him**."*

- ✓ Turn away your senses from beholding **worldly things**.
- ✓ Turn your eyes upon Jesus, his **perfection**, His **sacrifice**

*"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it **point by point**, and let the **imagination grasp** each scene, especially the **closing ones**. As we thus **dwell** upon His great sacrifice for us, our **confidence** in Him will be more constant, our **love** will be quickened, and we shall be **more deeply imbued** with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross."
DA, 83*

The Challenge Ahead

*"The work, which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity, she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that **worldly conformity** has **silenced or withheld** must be given under the **fiercest opposition** from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom **their sympathies have long been tending**. These apostates will then manifest the bitterest enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us. The members of the church will **individually be tested and proved**. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be **forced to bear witness** for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience, which would have helped them in this emergency, they have **neglected to obtain** and*

their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges.” 5T p. 463

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