

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

March 2004

“Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” (2 John 1:3) February brought many blessings our way, including the birth of our third child, Zachariah Beachy. We thank God for this new blessing to our home.

Due to our busy schedule, we will not be having a health article in this issue, but we hope to have one for you next month. We are getting closer to camp meeting time here in West Virginia. It will be held from June 15-19. We surely hope that each of you will be able to attend. Make your plans early to ensure that your trip will be a success. Please contact us for more information.



## The Two Laws

by J. N. Andrews

“There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.” (1 Corinthians 8:6) From him all beings derive their existence. He who creates and upholds has certainly the right to govern and control. Hence it is that he is represented in the Scriptures as the one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. (James 4:12) Existence being derived from the benevolence of the Creator, all intelligent creatures are amenable to His just government. Of all the creatures made by God to inhabit the earth, man alone is capable of learning the distinction of right and wrong, and he alone is placed under the control of moral law. Deriving his existence from a Being of infinite purity, he was himself once innocent, pure, and upright. He was the creature and the loyal subject of God, and God was the author of his existence, and his rightful Sovereign. In the beginning God did not give any instruction to man regarding a saviour or redeemer; for man needed no pardon.

As a creature owing all to God, the Author of his existence, it is self-evident that he was under the highest obligation to love Him with all his heart. The existence of other human beings originates a second great obligation; viz., to love our neighbors as ourselves. This precept is also one of self-evident obligation; for others are equally the creatures of God with ourselves, and have the same right that we also have. These two precepts are the sum of all moral law. And they grow out of the fact that we

owe all to God, and that others are the creatures of God as well as ourselves.

In rendering obedience to the first of these two precepts, man could have no other god before the Lord; nor could he worship idols; neither could he speak the name of God in an irreverent manner; nor could he neglect the hallowed rest-day of the Lord, which was set apart at creation in memory of the Creator’s rest.

Equally evident is it that our duty toward our fellow-men comprehends our duty to our parents, and the strictest regard to the life, chastity, property, character, and interests, of others.

The moral law thus divided into two parts, and drawn out and expressed in ten precepts, is of necessity unchangeable in its character. Its existence grows out of immutable relations which man sustains toward God and toward his fellow-man. It is God’s great standard of

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right, and after man's rebellion, the great test by which sin is shown.

Where shall we look for the record of such a moral code as we have noticed? In the earliest possible place in the Bible, certainly. And yet the book of Genesis contains no moral code whatever. How can this mystery be explained? A few facts will remove the difficulty. The book of Genesis was not written until about 2,500 years after the creation. As it was written long after the patriarchs were dead, it could not have been a rule of life for them. It is a brief record of events that occurred during that period, and contains several allusions to an existing moral code. But the book of Exodus, which brings the narrative down to the author's own time, introduces this code under circumstances of the greatest solemnity. In this book is found the law of God as given by himself in person, and written with His own finger on stone. Indeed, the evidence indicates that no part of the Bible was written until after the ten commandments had been spoken and written by God, and consequently that code is the earliest writing in existence.

Such was the origin of the moral law, and such the character of its precepts. Its proclamation by God himself, prior to his causing any part of the Bible to be written, sufficiently attests the estimate which he placed upon it. From its very nature, it exists as early as the principles of morality; indeed, it is nothing but those principles expressed or written out. These principles do not owe their existence to the fall of man, but to relations which existed prior to the fall.

But there is a system of laws that does owe its origin to sin; a system that could have had no existence had not man become a transgressor. The violation of moral law was that which gave existence to the law of rites and ceremonies, the shadow of good things to come. There could be no sacrifices for sin until man became a sinner. In Eden, there could be no types and shadows pointing forward to future redemption through the death of Christ; for man in his uprightness needed no such redemption. Nor did God place upon man before his fall the obligation of carnal ordinances, which look forward to the time of reformation; for man was innocent and free from guile. That it was the violation of moral law that caused the fall of man, may be seen at a glance. The motive set before Eve by Satan was that they should become as gods if they ate of that tree (Genesis 3), and as Adam was not deceived (1 Timothy 2:13), it is evident that he chose to follow his wife rather than to obey the Lord; an open violation of the first commandment in each case.

When man had thus become a sinner, and God had promised the means of his redemption, a second relation toward God was brought into existence. Man was a sinner, needing forgiveness; and God was a saviour, offering pardon. It is plain, therefore, that the typical law, pointing forward to redemption through Christ, owes its origin to man's rebellion, and to God's infinite benevolence. If man had not sinned, he would have needed no types of future redemption; and if God had not determined to give his Son to die, he would have instituted no typical system pointing forward to that great event. The existence of such a code, therefore, is in consequence of sin, its precepts are of a ceremonial nature, and its duration is necessarily limited by the great offering that could take away sin. From the fall of Adam till the time of Moses, the typical system was gradually developed and matured; and from Moses' time until the death of our Lord, it existed as the shadow of good things to come.

At Mount Sinai, as we have seen, God proclaimed the moral law, speaking it with his own voice, and writing it with his own finger. By his direction, the two tables on which the law was written were placed in the ark of the covenant, which was made on purpose to receive it. (Exodus 25:10-22; Deuteronomy 10:1-5) And this ark, containing the law of God, was placed in the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary—the most holy place. (Exodus 40; Hebrews 9) The top of the ark was called the mercy seat, because that man who had broken the law contained in the ark beneath the mercy seat could find pardon by the sprinkling of the blood of atonement upon this place. The whole system of ceremonial law was ordained to enable man to approach again to this broken law, and to typify the restitution of the pardoned to their inheritance, and the destruction of the impenitent.

The law within the ark was that which demanded an atonement; the ceremonial law, which ordained the Levitical priesthood and the sacrifices for sin, was that which taught men how the atonement could be made. The broken law was beneath the mercy seat; the blood of sin-offering was sprinkled upon its top, and the pardon was extended to the penitent sinner. There was actual sin, and hence a real law which man had broken; but there was not a real atonement, and hence the need of the great antitype of the Levitical sacrifices. The real atonement, when it is made, must relate to the law respecting which an atonement had been shadowed forth. In other words, the shadowy atonement related to that law which was shut up in the ark, indicating that a real atonement was demanded by the law. It is necessary that the law which demands atonement in order that its transgressor

may be spared, should itself be perfect, else the fault would in part, at least, rest on the Lawgiver, and not wholly with the sinner. Hence the atonement, when made, does not take away the broken law; for that is perfect, but is expressly designed to take away the guilt of the transgressor.

In the New Testament we find the great antitype of all the offerings and sacrifices—the real atonement, as contrasted with the Levitical one. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great sacrifice for sin, was the antitype of all the Levitical sacrifices. The priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is the great antitype of the Levitical priesthood. (Hebrews 8) The heavenly sanctuary itself is the great original after which the earthly one was patterned. (Hebrews 9:23; Exodus 25:6, 9) And the ark of God's testament in the temple in Heaven (Revelation 11:19), contains the great original of this law. And thus we see under the new dispensation a real atonement, instead of a shadowy one; a High Priest who needs not to offer for himself; a sacrifice which can avail before God; and that law, which was broken by man, magnified and made honorable at the same time that God pardons the penitent sinner.

We shall find the New Testament to abound with references to the essential difference between these two codes, and that the distinction in the New Testament is made as clear and obvious as it is made by the facts already noticed in the Old Testament.

Thus the one code is termed “the law of a carnal commandment” (Hebrews 7:16), and of the other, it is affirmed, “We know that the law is spiritual.” (Romans 7:14) The one code is termed “the handwriting of ordinances,” “which was contrary to us,” and which was nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14); the other code is “the royal law,” which James affirms that it is a sin to transgress. (James 2:8-12)

The first is a code of which “there was made of necessity a change” (Hebrews 7:12); the second is that law of which Christ says, “Till heaven and earth pass; one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:18) The one law was a “shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1), and was only imposed “until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:10); but the other was a moral code, of which it said by John, “Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4) The one is a yoke not able to be borne (Acts 15:10); the other is that “law of liberty” by which we shall be judged. (James 2:8-12) The one is that law which Christ abolished in his flesh. (Ephesians 2:15); the other is that law

which he did not come to destroy. (Matthew 5:17) The one is that law which he took out of the way at his death (Colossians 2:14); the other is that law which he came to magnify and make honorable. (Isaiah 42:21) The one was a law which was disannulled “for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Hebrews 7:18); the other is a law respecting which he inquires, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.” (Romans 8:31) The one is that law which was the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles. (Ephesians 2:14); the other is that law, the work of which even the Gentiles are said to have written in their hearts (Romans 2:12-15), and to which all mankind are amenable. (Romans 8:19)

The one is the law of commandments contained in ordinances (Ephesians 2:15); the other law is the commandments of God, which it is the whole duty of man to keep (Ecclesiastes 12:13), which are brought to view by the third angel (Revelation 14:12), which the remnant of the seed of the woman were keeping when the dragon made war upon them (Revelation 12:17), and which will insure, to those who observe them, access to the tree of life. (Revelation 22:14)

Surely, these two codes should not be confounded. The one was magnified, made honorable, established, and is holy, just, spiritual, good, royal; the other was carnal, shadowy, burdensome, and was abolished, broken down, taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, changed, and disannulled, on account of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

Those who rightly divide the word of truth will never confound these essentially different codes, nor will they apply to God's royal law the language employed respecting the handwriting of ordinances.

That the ten commandments are a perfect code of themselves, appears from several facts:

1. God spake them with his own voice, and it is said, “He added no more” (Deuteronomy 5:22), as evincing that he had given a complete code.

2. He wrote them alone on two tables with his own finger, another incidental proof that this was a complete moral code.

3. He caused these alone to be placed under the mercy seat, an evident proof that this was the code that made an atonement necessary.

4. He expressly calls what he thus wrote on the tables of stone, a law and commandments. (Exodus 24:12)

The precepts of this law are variously interspersed through the books of Moses, and mingled with the precepts of the ceremonial law. And the sum of the first



table is given in Deuteronomy 6:5; and that of the second, in Leviticus 19:18; but there is only one place in which the moral law is drawn out in particulars, and given by itself with no ceremonial law mixed with it, and that is in the ten commandments.

An examination of the royal law in James 2, and of the handwriting of ordinances in Colossians 2, will further illustrate this subject; the one is in force in every respect, while the other is abolished.

“If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:8-12)

1. The law here brought to view is an unabolished law; for it convinces men of sin who transgress it.

2. It is an Old Testament law—it is taken from the Scriptures.

3. The second division of the law is quoted because he was reproving sin committed toward our fellow-men; and hence he takes the second of the two great commandments, the sum of the second table (Matthew 23:36, 40; Romans 13:9), and cites his illustration from the second table of stone.

4. His language shows that the ten commandments are the precepts of the royal law; for he cites them in illustrating the statement that he who violates one precept, becomes guilty of all. This is a most solemn warning against the violation of any one of the ten commandments.

5. He testifies that whoever violates one of the precepts of this code, becomes guilty of breaking the whole code.

6. And, last of all, he testifies that this law of liberty shall be the rule in the Judgment. The unabolished law of James is therefore that code which God gave in person, and wrote with his own finger.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:14, 16, 17) If this handwriting of ordinances is the same as the royal law of James, then


Paul and James directly contradict each other. But they wrote by inspiration, and each wrote the truth of God. We have seen that James’ unabolished law refers directly to the ten commandments. Hence it is certain that the law which Paul shows to be abolished, does not refer to that which was written with the finger of God. It is to be noticed that the code which is done away, was a shadow extending only to the death of Christ. But we have already seen that the law shut up in the ark was not a shadow, but the very code that made it necessary that the Saviour should die. Not one of the things abolished in this chapter can be claimed as referring to the ten commandments, except the term sabbaths; for the term holy day is, literally, feast day (εορτη), and there were three feasts appointed by God in each year. (Exodus 23:14) The term sabbath is plural in the original. To refer this to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, is to make Paul contradict James. What are the facts in the case?

1. The ceremonial law did ordain at least four annual Sabbaths; viz. the 1st, 10th, 16th, and 23rd days of the seventh month. These were besides the Sabbath of the Lord, and were associated with the new moons and feast days. (Leviticus 23:23-39) These exactly assure Paul’s language. Hence it is not necessary to make Paul contradict James.

2. But the Sabbath of the Lord was “set apart to a holy use” (this being the literal meaning of sanctify) in Eden. (Genesis 2:3) It was “made for man” before he had fallen. (Mark 2:27) Hence it is not one of the things against him and contrary to him, taken out of the way at Christ’s death.

3. It was not a shadow pointing forward to the death of Christ; for it was ordained before the fall. On the contrary, it stands as a memorial pointing backward to creation, and not as a shadow pointing forward to redemption.

It is plain, therefore, that the abrogation of the handwriting of ordinances leaves in full force every precept of the royal law, and also that the law of shadows pointing forward to the death of Christ, must expire when that event should occur. But the moral law was that which caused the Saviour to lay down his life for us. And its sacredness may be judged of by the fact that God gave his only Son to take its curse upon himself, and to die for our transgressions.

Reader, are you in rebellion against the law of God? If so, I beseech you to lay down your arms, and seek pardon in the blood of Jesus, before the curse of the law falls upon you. 

(This article was taken from a tract entitled, *The Two Laws*, written by J. N. Andrews, and printed by the *Review and Herald*, Battle Creek, Michigan. Editor)

# Influence

by Ellen G. White

The life of Christ was an ever-widening, shoreless influence, an influence that bound Him to God and to the whole human family. Through Christ, God has invested man with an influence that makes it impossible for him to live to himself. Individually we are connected with our fellow men, a part of God's great whole, and we stand under mutual obligations. No man can be independent of his fellow men; for the well-being of each affects others. It is God's purpose that each shall feel himself necessary to others' welfare, and seek to promote their happiness.

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.

Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing.


Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and

their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world.

But never should it be forgotten that influence is no less a power for evil. To lose one's own soul is a terrible thing; but to cause the loss of other souls is still more terrible. That our influence should be a savor of death unto death is a fearful thought; yet this is possible. Many who profess to gather with Christ are scattering from Him. This is why the church is so weak. Many indulge freely in criticism and accusing. By giving expression to suspicion, jealousy, and discontent, they yield themselves as instruments to Satan. Before they realize what they are doing, the adversary has through them accomplished his purpose. The impression of evil has been made, the shadow has been cast, the arrows of Satan have found their mark. Distrust, unbelief, and downright infidelity have fastened upon those who otherwise might have accepted Christ. Meanwhile the workers for Satan look complacently upon those whom they have driven to skepticism, and who are now hardened against reproof and entreaty. They flatter themselves that in comparison with these souls they are virtuous and righteous. They do not realize that these sad wrecks of character are the work of their own unbridled tongues and rebellious hearts. It is through their influence that these tempted ones have fallen.

So frivolity, selfish indulgence, and careless indifference on the part of professed Christians are turning away many souls from the path of life. Many there are who will fear to meet at the bar of God the results of their influence.

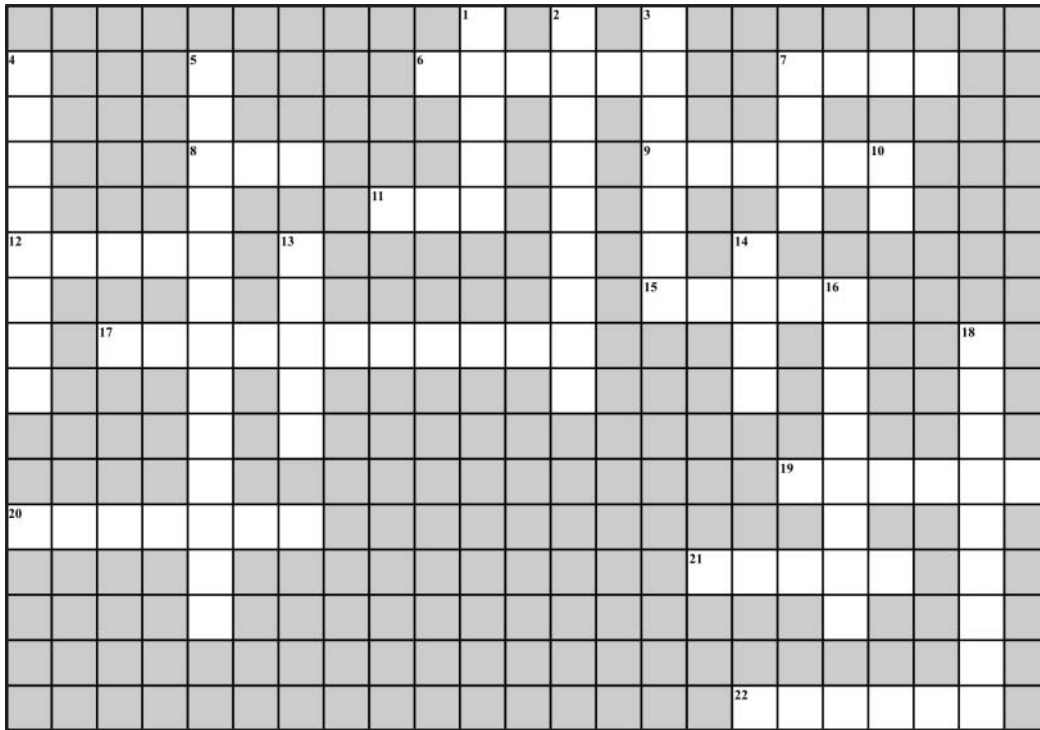
It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves. We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.

(This article was taken from pages 339-342 of the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, by Ellen G. White.  Editor)

# Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies that are based on the “These Last Days” Bible Lessons. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line.

## What Is a Soul?



Answers are on page 12

- Seventy \_\_\_\_ came out of the loins of Jacob. Exodus 1:5—**15 Across**
- There were 276 souls in a \_\_\_\_ with Paul. Acts 27:37—**7 Across**
- God combined dust with the \_\_\_\_ of life to create a living soul. Genesis 2:7—**19 Across**

### DUST + BREATH = SOUL

**Note:** The Biblical definition of a soul is simply a breathing being. Notice that the text does not say that man was given a soul, but rather he *became* a soul. A soul is not something a person has, it is the entire person. Souls have blood. (Jeremiah 2:34) Not only are people souls, but so are fish and animals. (Revelation 16:3) The Hebrew word for soul, *nephesh*, is variously translated “person” (Genesis 14:21), “self” (Leviticus 11:43), “life” (Psalm 31:13), “me” (Judges 16:30), “creature” (Genesis 1:21), “beast” (Leviticus 24:18), “man” (2 Kings 12:4), “thing” (Ezekiel 47:9), and “fish.” (Isaiah 19:10) When translated “body” the *nephesh* is usually dead. (Leviticus 21:11)

The Greek word for soul, *psuche*, has the same meaning. In Matthew 16:25 Jesus commends anyone who will lose his soul (*psuche*) for Christ’s sake. It is often translated simply as “life” (Matthew 2:20). It means “person” (Acts 7:14). “My soul” and “your soul” are idiomatic

expressions meaning “I” and “you” (Matthew 12:18; 2 Corinthians 12:15, margin).

- When God takes a person’s breath, they \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 104:29—**11 Across**

### SOUL - BREATH = DUST

**Note:** “If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.” Job 34:14, 15.

- The \_\_\_\_ that sinneth shall die. Ezekiel 18:20—**7 Down**
- When life ends, we return to \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis 3:19—**14 Down**
- When a man dies his breath goeth \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 146:4—**21 Across**

**Note:** A soul is like the light that results when a light bulb is connected to a power source. The breath of life, is the electric current. Electricity will produce light only while it is flowing through the bulb. When the filament in the bulb breaks, the electrical circuit is broken, and the light goes out. Just as the light cannot exist unless there is both electricity and a bulb, so there must be both the breath of life and a functional body in order for there to be a living soul.

- After a person dies, the people who knew him will see him \_\_\_\_ more. Job 7:8—**10 Down**
- Anyone who goes down to the grave shall \_\_\_\_ no more. Job 7:9 (2 Words)—**6 Across**

- He will return no more to his \_\_\_\_\_. Job 7:10—**1 Down**
- When a person dies he shall not \_\_\_\_\_. Job 16:22—**9 Across**

**Note:** everyone will come back to life at their proper resurrection, but not before that time.

- In these last days some shall give heed to seducing \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Timothy 4:1—**3 Down**
- Spirits of \_\_\_\_\_ will appear, working miracles. Revelation 16:14—**22 Across**
- In the garden, Satan disguised himself in the form of a \_\_\_\_\_. Genesis 3:1—**20 Across**
- Satan can transform himself into an angel of \_\_\_\_\_. 2 Corinthians 11:14—**12 Across**
- His ministers can appear as the ministers of \_\_\_\_\_. 2 Corinthians 11:15—**5 Down**
- If they speak not according to the law and to the \_\_\_\_\_, there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:20—**2 Down**

- Instead of trying to contact the dead, we should seek \_\_\_\_\_. Isaiah 8:19—**8 Across**
  - People who consult with \_\_\_\_\_ spirits of dead people will not be found among God's people. Deuteronomy 18:10, 11—**4 Down**
  - All that do those things are an \_\_\_\_\_ unto the LORD. Deuteronomy 18:12—**17 Across**
  - Paul called a sorcerer a \_\_\_\_\_ of the devil. Acts 13:10—**13 Down**
  - People cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord's table and the table of devils. 1 Corinthians 10:21—**18 Down**
  - God calls us to come out from among evil influences, and be \_\_\_\_\_. 2 Corinthians 6:17—**16 Down**
- Note:** Christians will have nothing to do with magic, fortune telling, horoscopes or séances; or games, books, movies or toys containing elements of witchcraft or spiritualism.

## An Update on Michael Sibanda

(A fellow believer on death row in Zimbabwe, falsely accused of murdering his wife.)

This is to update you on the case of Michael Sibanda who has been in a prison cell for the past seven years. We understand his case was reexamined with more judges. However, the unfavorable judge who handled his case before was also among them. As a result, though the new judges were convinced there was no evidence indicating that he could be truly guilty, the presence of the former judge somehow biased the judgment and the case was postponed to a further undisclosed date.

We know that Michael has been busy sharing the truth with others in prison. Another inmate on death row has joined him in his mission to share the gospel with the other prisoners. Michael's mother lives a good distance from the prison, so she rarely is able to visit him, especially since the money for transportation is not easy to come by in Zimbabwe. If you are interested in writing to Michael or to his mother, please contact us and request their addresses.

Editor

## Long Awaited Book Finished

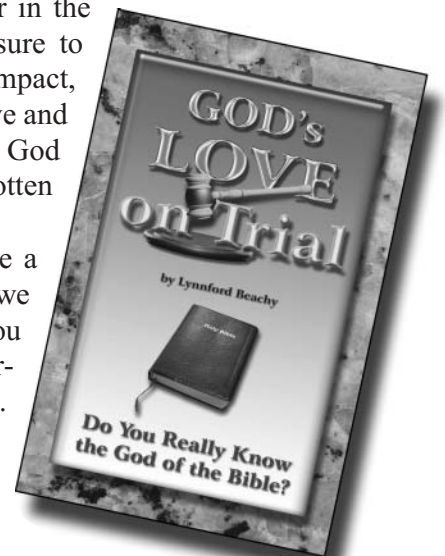
Last month we informed you about the completion of the long awaited book, *God's Love on Trial*, and we would like to remind you about it again.

In the November, 2002 issue of *Present Truth*, we printed three articles regarding the trinity, for which we received more requests than any other issue to date. Shortly thereafter I promised to get these articles together in a booklet form. It has finally been done, with additions and changes that make it a better book than the original articles.

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came to this earth to give us an understanding, that we may know the true God of the Bible. Do you know Him as He is revealed in His Word, and in Christ, or have you settled for some philosophical conception of God in His place? This book will answer that question. It details what the Bible says about God, and compares it with trinitarianism, tritheism, modalism, and unitarianism. We believe that this 44-page book will clarify these issues for you and your friends.

Many of those who have read this book have reported that it is one of the best books they have read on this subject to date. It is designed to clarify some of the difficult-to-understand issues about God in simple language that is easily understood by all. From the drunk on the street, to the minister in the pulpit, this book is sure to have a positive impact, drawing people to love and worship the only true God and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

If you do not have a copy of this book, we strongly encourage you to get a copy for yourself and your friends. The suggested donation is \$1.50 per book, plus actual shipping costs. Editor







## Questions and Answers

by Lynnford Beachy



### Question:

"I have been reading Zechariah 4 about the two olive trees with the pipes that supply oil to the golden lamp. This sounds like an illustration of the Father and the Son pouring out the oil of their spirits into the lamps to light the world, but when I get to the last verse this doesn't fit."

E-mail

### Answer:

You are right that the golden oil flowing out of the two olive trees represents God's Spirit, as explained in verse 6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." This oil flows into the bowls of the candlestick, which represents the people in God's church. In John's vision of Revelation 1, Jesus told him, "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Revelation 1:20)

The two olive trees in Zechariah's vision are said to be "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:14) This would eliminate either of them from being the Father, and since *two* are mentioned, they could not be the Son. I believe that the most consistent interpretation is that they are the two anointed cherubim, who stand before the throne, as represented by the two cherubim that Moses was commanded to place on top of the ark of the covenant in the earthly sanctuary. (See Exodus 25:17-20.) Satan was one of these covering cherubim before he fell into sin and was cast out of heaven. (See Ezekiel 28:14-19.)

In the April 1999 issue of *Present Truth*, we printed an article on the ministry of the angels, which covers this vision in more detail. If you are interested, you can find it online at: [http://www.presenttruth.info/newsletters/PresentTruth/1999/pt\\_d\\_apr99.htm](http://www.presenttruth.info/newsletters/PresentTruth/1999/pt_d_apr99.htm), or you may contact us for a printed copy.

I hope this helps to answer your question.

### Question:

"I've been reading over the *Present Truth* issues but I have not been able to find one that explains the relationship between Michael and Jesus. Does *Present Truth* believe Michael the Archangel and Jesus are the same Person?"

"If you believe this could you explain how you came to this understanding?"

"If you don't believe this could you explain how you came to this understanding?" *Rhode Island*

### Answer:

Yes, we understand that Michael is a name of Jesus Christ. Many people get confused by the term archangel. They think that it refers to a high ranking angel, when in reality it means the ruler of the angels. The Greek word *αρχαγγελος* (archangel) is a compound word made up of *αρχω* (to rule over or reign over) and *αγγελος* (angels). Notice how *αρχω* is used by Paul, when he wrote, "Esaia saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to **reign over** (*αρχω*) the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." (Romans 15:12) The archangel is not an angel, but the ruler of the angels, Jesus Christ Himself.

The ruler of the angels appeared to Joshua outside of Jericho. Joshua asked Him who He was, and He responded, "As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come." (Joshua 5:14) The verse continues, "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship." Every time in the Bible when a man fell down to worship one of God's angels or his people, he was commanded to stop. (See Revelation 19:10; Acts 10:25, 26; 14:11-15.) Yet, when Joshua fell down to worship the ruler of the angels, he was not forbidden, but rather encouraged. "And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." (Joshua 5:15) This proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the ruler of the angels is Jesus Christ, for He alone, could be called "the captain of the LORD's host" and also receive worship.

It is also significant that the Bible only speaks of **one** archangel. Some people suppose there are several, but the Bible only speaks of one, and He is always called Michael. The name Michael means, "who is like God," a name which could not refer to a created angel, but to the only One who is "the express image" of "the invisible God." (Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15)

Practically every time Michael, the archangel, is referred to, He is spoken of in language that could only refer to Jesus Christ. Let us notice a few examples.



## Revelation 12:7-9

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Michael is spoken of here as the ruler of the angels, fighting against Satan. Jesus Christ has always been foremost in the fight against Satan. He is the promised seed of the woman, who came to bruise Satan’s head. He is the one who “led captivity captive,” and has “the keys of hell and of death.” (Ephesians 4:8; Revelation 1:18) He is the “captain of the host of the LORD,” who appeared to Joshua. (Joshua 5:14, 15)

## Jude 1:9

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Here Michael is said to be directly involved in the resurrection of Moses, and we know that Christ is “the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) Also, the statement Michael makes to Satan is the very same statement Jesus Christ made to Satan when contending with him about the high priest Joshua. “And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD [Jesus Christ: See Exodus 3:2-4; 23:20, 21.], and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (Zechariah 3:1, 2)

## 1 Thessalonians 4:16

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” At the voice of the archangel, the dead in Christ shall rise. Jesus said, “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” (John 5:25; See also verses 28, 29)

## Daniel 12:1, 2

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was

since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Here it says that Michael is the great prince that stands for the children of God. The Bible says that there is only “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5) In addition to that, He is called the great prince. Jesus Christ is “the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

Some people think that Michael is just one among many princes of equal rank, because of Gabriel’s testimony in Daniel 10:13: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, *one of the chief princes*, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” Yet, a literal translation of this text says, “Michael, first of the chief heads.” (*Young’s Literal Translation*) Michael is said to be ruler and leader of God’s angels. (Revelation 12:7) Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the first in rank next to God Himself (1 Corinthians 11:3); “the head of all principality and power.” (Colossians 2:10)

Yes, based on the testimony of Scripture, Michael and Jesus Christ are the same person. Jesus Christ is the archangel, the ruler of the angels. He is not an angel by nature, but rather the divine Son of God who rules over the angels. Some people think that to affirm Michael and Jesus to be the same person somehow lowers Christ to the level of angelic beings, but that is not the case at all, rather it shows His rightful position as greater than, and ruler over, the angels of God.

Some think that it is a peculiar teaching originated by Jehovah’s Witnesses, who arose in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but it existed long before that time. Many Bible scholars down through the ages have come to the same conclusion.

“Michael the archangel, &c. By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an eternal one, the Lord Jesus Christ; as appears from his name Michael, which signifies, “who is as God”: and who is as God, or like unto him, but the Son of God, who is equal with God?” (*John Gill’s Expositor* on Jude 1:9, printed in 1809)

“The archangel, head or ruler of the angels, sometimes denotes Christ being the God-Man (1 Thess. 4:16 [cf. John 5:25-27]; Jude 1:9 [cf. Zech. 3:2]).” (*Zodhiates’ Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, definition for archangel, page 260)

I hope this helps to answer your question.



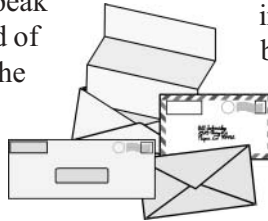


# Letters from our Readers



(Each month we receive letters that help us to know how God's work is progressing throughout the world. Because we think you are interested in this work as well, we are printing some of them for you. If you do not wish your letter to be printed, please let us know when you write. We cannot guarantee the truthfulness of every letter contained herein. *Editor*)

"God bless you more for the truth you speak about the Trinity. I received your tract, 'The God of the Bible' ... when I visited my friend who is in the hospital. One man was preaching there and, afterwards, he shared different tracts, and I reluctantly took it from him. When I reached my house I dropped it. Anyhow, later in the evening I was touched to read it. I just picked it up, and as I read the contents I found out it's the hidden truth. Please, I will be in New York this month. I will contact you as soon as possible for more light. Thank you."



*Nigeria*

"Would you please send me a copy of your book advertised in *Present Truth*, February 2004, *God's Love on Trial*. I enjoy *Present Truth*."

*New Zealand*

"I have quit asking myself why your ministry has the Truth about Almighty God and His Son, Christ Jesus and most other denominations do not. I am just thankful that Father's Holy Spirit has guided myself and many others to these truths through your ministries. So many Christians who say they believe 1 Corinthians 8:6 and John 3:16 back away from these truths when it comes down to the true meaning, that there is one God and His begotten Son, Christ Jesus. And Ephesians 4:30, 'the Holy Spirit of God.'"

"My wife and I thank you for your following and teaching of the true Word of God our Father and His Son, Christ Jesus. May the Lord continue to bless your studies and your work."

*Colorado*

"I would like to purchase two copies of *God's Love on Trial*. Do you take Visa? If you would let me know that you're sending the books and how much, I will send you a check."

*California*

(We are not able to take credit cards. All our materials are sent on a donation basis. We can send out literature immediately and, after receiving it, you can send a donation. *Editor*)

"I am happy to write to you... from an Island far out on Lake Victoria, 100 miles from Jinja town. Particularly, I am a home Bible worker since 1996. We are seven adults and 15 children plus several interested friends. I was fortunate one day, when I visited Mbale and came across the home of a certain man. In his home I came across a booklet entitled *The Truth About God* by Lynnford Beachy, which was very interesting. After I studied it thoroughly several times, I was

forced to share it with the whole church and we all became interested with the message of the truth about God, which disqualified our ideas about three gods (Trinity), because we had been believing that God the Son and the Holy Spirit are of the same age or one person. Therefore, as we have read and taught the truth in the book, we are discriminated against by the large denomination because we believe contrary to its church manual.

"My request is that if you have any believers in Uganda who can come and assist us, please contact them and inform me by e-mail. Lastly, may you assist me with the book on last day events and other Bible-based literature as promised on page 12 of the same book, *The Truth About God*. Otherwise, thank you for the work of publishing the book. I wish to hear from you soon. God bless you."

*Uganda*

"I recently received two tracts from my parents in the Lord, i.e. 'One Hundred Bible Facts on the Sabbath Question' and 'The Law of God.' I am blessed by both.

"I have known about the 'Great Whore' for quite some time and of the seventh-day Sabbath. I would discuss what I read and studied in the Scriptures with others; and I would be called a 'fanatic' and, like Paul before King Agrippa when Festus told him, 'Paul, much learning has made you mad.' I just thank our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit for allowing me the privilege of serving and knowing of these things."

*Ohio*

"Please add me to your wonderful newsletters. Keep up the excellent work. This IS truth!"

*Arizona*

"How thankful we are to the Lord for your ministry. Your teaching materials have been a great help to our family."

*Washington*

"I want to say a special word of thanks to all of you brethren of Smyrna and all the others who have collected and donated money for the work here in Germany. Not only have we been able to buy a new and modern Risograph and other technical equipment, but my wife and I have also found a bigger apartment where we can move, hopefully in a few months. There we will have extra room for the computer, the printer and a storage place for the paper and printed materials. We did our best with this little apartment... There is hardly a corner where there is not paper or printed stuff... Thank you very much for your donations.

"We are also in great need of translating the material into the Russian language and recently two Russian sisters offered their help. I have to call them to check out what they can do. Please pray for this also. There are a lot of Russian brethren."

*Germany*

# "The Passion of the Christ"

by Allen Stump

This February 25th, Ash Wednesday, the movie, "The Passion of the Christ," was released by writer and director Mel Gibson. Gibson, a pre Vatican II Catholic who believes in the Latin Mass and fish on Friday, has created what is proving to be one of the most controversial films of all time.

The play comprises the last twelve hours of Christ's life, from the Garden of Gethsemane to His death on the cross. Gibson's purpose was to share what Christ suffered for mankind. The emphasis is on the physical sufferings of Christ, and is so graphic and explicit that the movie received an "R" rating because of violence. In an interview with Diane Sawyer shown on a special Monday night edition of "Primetime," Gibson defended the extreme violence in his film saying:

"I wanted it to be shocking. And I also wanted it to be extreme. I wanted it to push the viewer over the edge. And it does that. I think it pushes one over the edge. So that they see the enormity, the enormity of that sacrifice; to see that someone could endure that and still come back with love and forgiveness, even through extreme pain and suffering and ridicule."

While the movie displays some flashbacks to earlier times in the life of Christ, the context of the gospel narrative is missing. The accuracy of the film has its proponents and its critics as well. Pope John Paul II is credited with saying, "It is as it was," after seeing the film. Others, fear that Gibson took sections out of context from the Bible, added non-biblical scenes, or presented materials from a distorted viewpoint. Gibson states that he stayed close to the Biblical text, preferring it to historical accounts.

We cannot judge Gibson's heart or motives. While he is a devoted Catholic, so was Martin Luther at one time. The movie does have extrabiblical scenes and its music presents an emotional environment that would not be found reading the Bible. Gibson does not deny that he has been influenced by the writings of Nun Anne Catherine Emmerich of France (*The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*) who claimed to have visions on the passion of Christ.

Evangelist Billy Graham was so moved that he wept after seeing the film. Newscaster Paul Harvey called it a "masterpiece" and said that he was greatly moved by the film. But will it really make a difference? Many evangelicals think it may be the greatest witnessing tool in this century or ever. Does the film evoke passion and

feelings? Yes it does. However, so do many soap operas and many other fictional works.

Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6:63a) The flesh profiteth nothing and representations of it profit little also. Jesus continued by saying, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63b) If the sinful heart cannot be brought to repentance by the recorded words of Christ as given in the inspired Word of God as recorded in the gospel accounts, then do not expect an uninspired passion play on Christ's life to inspire people to true Godly repentance. The words of God in the believer's mind, with the workings of the Holy Spirit, can portray a much clearer picture of Christ's passion to the believer than an uninspired motion picture. Once someone views a picture of Jesus, or a movie about Him, his or her mind carries a limited idea about Jesus that will be hard to have removed.

The real issue of Christ's death is not the physical sufferings that He endured. Yes, His physical sufferings were great, but you can read *Foxes' Book of Martyrs* and see equal or greater physical suffering. The issue is the emotional and spiritual experience that Jesus went through and this the film cannot portray like God's Word teaches. While the gospels accurately tell of Christ's physical sufferings, the emphasis is not on the physical agony that Jesus received but, rather, on the emotional and spiritual suffering that He endured. Jesus suffered "the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) If this is just physical suffering, then Jesus' death was neither unique nor special. But the Bible portrays the death of Jesus to be an experience that no human has ever tasted. The Psalmist says that Christ was laid in "the lowest pit" (Psalm 88:6), representing the worst death experience that anyone has ever endured.

One Christian author expressed it this way: "The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour 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." (*The Desire of Ages*, by Ellen White, page 753)

The film is charged by many to be anti-Semitic. To these charges, Gibson says that the film simply tells a part of the gospel story. Gibson acknowledges that we all killed Jesus. He died for the sins of the world. True, it was at the hands of the Jewish leaders and the Roman Empire, but this is also part of the facts, just as it was part of the fact that the German government killed over six million Jews during the holocaust. We have Auschwitz still with

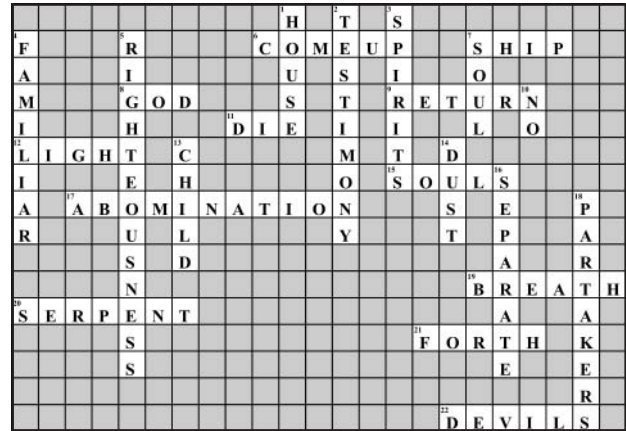


us as a memorial whose upkeep is paid for by the Germans! The movie, "Schindler's List" (1993), tells of Oskar Schindler who used Jews to start a factory in Poland during the war. He witnesses the horrors endured by the Jews and starts to save them. This movie did not cause hatred toward Germans, nor an uprising against them.

Some evangelical Christians believe that the opposition to the film proves it must be good and correct and that Satan is working against it. However, rejection by certain critics does not mean that it is acceptable, neither does acceptance by the Pope make it bad. Popular opinion never decides good or bad. I believe that the focus of the film is off the mark and that it portrays a mystical Christ, with an emphasis on physical sufferings, instead of the Biblical Christ whose sufferings were primarily emotional and spiritual. Further, I believe that the physical representation of the gospel scenes will only limit our minds to the working of the Holy Spirit. I do not recommend that Christians view, or encourage others to watch, this film. ✍

(Allen Stump is the pastor of our chapel, my associate worker, and a good friend. You can contact him by sending correspondence to *Present Truth* or, by e-mail, at allen@smyrna.org. *Editor*)

*Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 6*



**Present Truth** is published monthly by Smyrna Gospel Ministries. It is sent free upon request. **Duplication of these papers is not only permitted but strongly encouraged, as long as our contact information is retained.** *Present Truth* is available online at <http://www.presenttruth.info>.

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