

HOW TO TELL SOMEONE THE GOOD NEWS

**“The Third Angel’s Message in Verity”
Wins Souls**

Seven Bible Studies for Soul Winners

by Robert J. Wieland

**“He who believes in Me,” said Jesus,
“... out of his heart will flow rivers
of living water” (John 7:38, NKJV)**

You Want to See Success!

Ellen White sensed in the 1888 message something special that would convict honest-hearted people and make them "obedient to all the commandments of God."

In other words, if we could learn to present justification by faith *correctly*, such people would begin to keep the Sabbath.

Shy, diffident, tongue-tied church members come "alive" when the 1888 *Good News* finds a home in their hearts. Somehow, sometime, somewhere, the *agape* message will "out." The soul-winning "power" will not be in their personalities, but in the message itself.

And you don't need a doctoral degree to tell it!

Study One: The Holy Spirit Wants to Give Success

I. BELIEVE THAT THE LORD WILL BLESS YOUR EFFORTS.

1. What special task has He appointed us to do? Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:14-16.

Note: He has "commanded" that the Good News ideas in the message of Christ's righteousness "be given to the world" as "the third angel's message in verity" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 92; Review and Herald, April 1, 1890).

2. What makes this ministry a very happy one? Luke 4:17-19; Acts 8:26-37.

Note: "This Ethiopian represented a large class who need to be taught by such missionaries as Philip—men who hear the voice of God and go where He sends them. There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in" (Acts of the Apostles, p. 109).

II. HOW "THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE IN VERITY" WINS SOULS.

1. Why has the Lord called Seventh-day Adventists into existence? Rev. 14:6.

2. What is the meaning of the term "everlasting gospel"? Acts 13:32, 33.

3. What is the only way people can be "won" to eternal life? Rom. 1:16, 17.

Note: There is a difference between "warning" people and "winning" them. Warnings of the nearness of the end and impending judgment are necessary as part of the message; but unless the heart is won by genuine Good News, convincing the mind of cold doctrines will be love's labor lost. "The trouble with our work has been that we have been content to present a cold theory of the truth" (Review and Herald, May 28, 1889).

Our concern now is not merely to achieve baptismal statistics to enhance our Laodicean pride, but preparing people to endure unto the end, prepared to "stand in the day of God."

4. How is a person "led to repentance"? Romans 2:4.

Note: As surely as God is good, He is leading every human being to repentance. But while many say "No!" to His leading, some are ready to respond. Now let us cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and pray that we won't get in His way as we tell people of that "goodness."

5. What truth of the gospel brings conviction and leads to full consecration? John 12:32, 33; 1 Corinthians 1:17,18; 2:1, 2.

Note: "Christ crucified—talk it, pray it, sing it, and it will break and win hearts. ... Souls are thirsting for the water of life. Do not allow them to go from you empty. Reveal the love of Christ to them. Lead them to Jesus, and He will give them the bread of life

and the water of salvation.

"The theme that attracts the sinner is Christ and him crucified. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus stands revealed to the world in unparalleled love. Present Him thus to the hungry multitudes, and the light of His love will win men (and women) from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness. Beholding Jesus upon the cross of Calvary arouses conscience to the heinous character of sin as nothing else can do" (Review and Herald, Nov. 22, 1892).

6. This being so, in what practical, simple, even easy way, could one begin helping someone to understand the message?

Note: You might try a simple Bible reading rather than a contrived Bible study. Begin with John 3:1-21, or Psalm 22, or wherever his/her interest is. Your "outline" is there in the Bible text, all prepared; you won't even need any "notes." Your "preparation" will be a prayerful reading of the text alone first, verse by verse. You can mark your own Bible for emphasis or with notes for comments. But you have nothing to fear. If you forget all your "notes" and "comments," no big deal, what is important is letting the Bible speak. The Bible will "speak" as your voice conveys its import, for your voice will echo the voice of Christ if your own soul is "won" by the truth therein. "The shepherd of the sheep ... calleth his own sheep by name, ... and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:2-4).

7. How must the Bible be read in order to win hearts? Neh. 8:8; 1 Cor. 2:3, 4.

Note: "Let us put all the Christlike tenderness and love possible into the voice." "However great a man's knowledge, it is of no avail unless he is to communicate it to others. Let the pathos of your voice, its deep feeling, make its impression on hearts." "Govern your voice, put all the pathos and melody in it you can" (Evangelism, pp. 174, 175, 183).

8. Aside from prepared or printed Bible studies, what Bible readings are especially helpful for people hungry and thirsty for truth?

- For the sick: Psalm 103; Matt. 8:1-17.
- For the discouraged: Heb. 12:1-13; Job 1; 2; 42.
- For the bereaved: 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 5:24-29; 1 Cor. 15:12-16; Rev. 21, 22.
- For alcoholics: Prov. 31:1-7; 23:29-35; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 6:14-18, 7:1; Luke 21:25-36; Phil. 4:13; Matt. 11:28-30; 21:17-22.
- For those struggling with appetite: Prov. 15:17; 23:1-3, 21; 30:7-9; Gen. 1:29; 3:18; 1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 4:1-11.
- For a troubled marriage: Eph. 5:18-33; Matt. 19:3-9; Prov. 5:3-21
- For seeking God's guidance in a marriage: Gen. 24.
- For troubled parents: Col. 3:18-21; Prov. 22:6; 29:17; 23:13; 19:18; Deut. 6:4-9; Matt. 19:13-15; Psalm 25.
- For those who are lonely: Isa. 41:10; 50:10; Psalm 73:23-28; 142:1-7; 2 Tim. 4:16-18.

III. THE BEGINNING: LET *YOUR OWN* SOUL BE "WON" BY THE GOOD NEWS.

1. If the love of this truth is welcomed in your heart, nothing can stop it from flowing "out" in some way to others. Ponder the promise of Jesus in John 7:38.

Note: When "the message of Christ's righteousness" is understood and believed, there will be no need to urge church members to work for others.

2. As you have time, please study these passages in your Bible, and consider what they say about how good the Good News is:

- Gal. 5:16-18 (what are "the things" you "cannot do"? Good or bad?)
- Rom. 3:20-28; 5:7-21 (the simplicity of justification by faith).
- Matt. 11:25-31 (is it hard to be saved?)
- Rom. 8:31-39 (if one believes this, can he worry?)
- Rom. 10:6-11; Heb. 2:9-18 (how near, or how far away, is Christ?)

— Notes —

Study Two: Only If You're Hungry, Can You Feed Someone Else!

I. REVIEW: WHAT WE WANT TO LEARN.

- HOW to meet people with a happy approach and make friends.
- HOW to find interested people willing to learn.
- HOW to arouse an interest and cultivate it.
- HOW to learn the art of asking the right questions.
- HOW to present the love of God in a way that will motivate to a response.
- HOW to encourage your friend to study on his own.
- HOW to meet his practical spiritual needs.
- HOW to handle objections, or difficult questions.
- HOW to pray for souls effectively, and know our prayers are heard.
- HOW not to get discouraged.
- HOW to "grow" along with our students.
- HOW to motivate, rather than manipulate, to decide for Christ and His truth.
- HOW to present the testing truths, and when. HOW to prepare the student for a meaningful baptism. HOW to prepare him to face inconsistencies, weaknesses, lukewarmness in the church.
- HOW to root him and ground him in the truth so he will never fall away. HOW, in short, to "win people" who in turn become "soul winners."

II. HOW YOUR SOUL CAN BE "WON" FIRST.

1. Before you can effectively convey "the everlasting gospel" to someone else, you must first understand its "glad tidings." Acts 13:32, 33.

Note: "God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. ... Every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Review and Herald Extra, Dec. 23, 1890).

2. For a beginning, identify the "glad tidings" in these passages:

(a) Matthew 11:25-30; compare Acts 26:13, 14.

Note: The common idea is that it is very difficult to be a genuine Christian; especially it seems Adventists think that way. They don't realize how these statements of Jesus contradict their mind-set, which makes it difficult for them to win souls. He actually says it is "easy" to be saved and "hard" to be lost if we understand and believe the "glad tidings"!

(b) Romans 4:23 to 5:1-21; mark the two key thoughts—what genuine love accomplishes, and those "much more" grace abounding statements.

Note: The chapter division should begin with 4:23-25. For whose "offenses" did Jesus die? "All men"—see Isa. 53:6. Therefore, for whose "justification" was He raised? The same, for "all men." Chapter 5 makes it clear that His sacrifice has given "a verdict

of acquittal" to "all men" (compare 1 Tim. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 1:9; 1 John 2:2; John 1:29; 3:16-18). Christ restored the "whole race of men to favor with God" (Selected Messages, book 1, p. 343), and made it possible for "all" to enjoy life and eat their "daily food" (The Desire of Ages, p. 660). What transforms this justification into experiential justification by faith is the "love of God ... shed abroad in our hearts" (how that "love" motivates will be the topic of Study Three). We welcome that love.

(c) Romans 8:3, 4; 10:6-11; Hebrews 2:9-18.

Note: You can read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will find no story of a lost sheep that must seek his Shepherd. But there is a parable of a Good Shepherd seeking His lost sheep (Luke 15:1-10). Mark in your Bible the evidences of that seeking Savior, and those repeated statements of how close He has come to us. Note the contrast in the "afar off" "Christ" of the "Immaculate Conception" dogma and its related distortions (1 John 4:1-3). We can't win souls by presenting a Savior who is "afar off."

(d) Galatians 5:5, 6, 16-18.

Note: *Faith actually works. And grace is stronger than sin! We have often missed the "glad tidings" in this passage, understanding it backwards. The ten commandments become ten promises to the one who understands the gospel (Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1105). The truth of the two covenants is so encouraging that hearts begin to warm immediately on hearing it.*¹

The true message of the Bible is "glad tidings" for all, including alcoholics, drug addicts, or whosoever will "come." You want to communicate this "glad tidings" clearly. But first of all, *believe it yourself!*

3. Is salvation dependent on our holding on to God's hand, or on our *believing* that He is holding onto our hand? Isa. 41:10, 13; Phil. 1:6.

Note: Salvation does not depend on our initiating a "relationship" with Jesus, but on our believing and appreciating how He has initiated a relationship with us by becoming our Savior.

4. How can you see "glad tidings" on every page of the Bible? Luke 24:27; Gal. 3:8 (even Genesis is full of the gospel!); Rom. 10:15.

III. YOU BELIEVE THE "GLAD TIDINGS" YOURSELF.

1. At any given moment, in any circumstance, there is "Good News" for you and for the person you seek to help. 2 Cor. 1:19, 20; Rom. 8:31, 32.

Note: Even if one is on his death-bed, God has "glad tidings" for him if he can listen and believe, receiving the gift of repentance God gives. From where every human being stands, no matter how discouraging, you can tell him there is a path leading to heaven. But warn him that he "receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1).

¹ For helpful discussions of the two covenants, see *The Glad Tidings* by E. J. Waggoner, chapters. 3, 4; an introduction to the same in chapter 9 of *Grace on Trial*, or in chapter 5 of *"Lightened With His Glory,"* by this author.

2. As you have time this week, please read the following "*agape*" passages (the original word for love), and note what soul- winning power is in that word: 1 Cor. 13:1-8; Eph. 3:14-19; 1 John 4:8-18; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

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Study Three: The Good News of What Christ *Has* Accomplished

I. REVIEW OF LAST STUDY'S HIGH POINTS.

1. You can't "win souls" with bad tidings, only "glad tidings." John 12:31-33.

Note: "Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds, and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul. ... The power of Christ ... is drawing them. ... The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son" (Steps to Christ, pp. 26, 27).

2. What has Christ accomplished on His cross?

Note: Christ has redeemed "the whole race of men," has already died the second death "for every man," purchased the gift of justification and has given it to "all men" (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 5:15-18; Heb. 2:9). "The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11, NAS).

"God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to every man and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession" (E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 13, 14). Therefore the only way one can be lost is to resist and reject this gift. This "glad tidings" reconciles an honest but alienated heart. 2 Cor. 5:21; 6:1, 2; John 3:16-18.

"Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin" (*Our High Calling*, p. 11).

"Christ... took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 343).

3. As a method of winning hearts to Christ, is there a better motivation than fear of being lost or desire for reward in heaven? 2 Cor. 5:14,15.

Note: "It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, ... they hear His voice, and they follow Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 480).

4. What is the "broken link" that has kept many of us from winning souls?

Note: "We must look more to the presentation of God's love and mercy to move the hearts of the people. We must have a sense of both the justice and mercy of God. Those who can blend together the law of God and the mercy of God can reach any heart. For years I have seen that there is a broken link which has kept us from reaching hearts,

this link is supplied by presenting the love and mercy of God. There has been a sentiment creeping in that we should not present the claims of the Sabbath so strong. Why not? Is it not true that the man of sin is raising up the counterfeit and undermining the law of God, and should we not raise up the standard against him? (Ellen G. White, Council of Presidents meeting No. 5, March 3, 1891; General Conference Archives; used with permission).

"The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing" (The Desire of Ages, p. 826).

II. HOW PRESENTING THE LOVE OF GOD MOTIVATES TO HEART-OBEDIENCE.

1. How is God's love related to man's faith? John 3:16; Gal. 5:6; Col. 1:4.

Note: These texts indicate that the Bible definition of faith is a heart response to, or a heart-appreciation for, the love of God revealed in Christ. Such faith is better than fear as a motivation.

2. What is the only true source of gospel motivation? 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

3. Why is *agape* a unique, a *sine qua non* element of the "everlasting gospel"? 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 John 4:7, 8.

4. How is *agape* the effective truth to heal our deep human fears? 1 John 4:17, 18; compare Heb. 2:14, 15.

5. If Paul were here helping people today, what would be his special prayer for them? Eph. 3:14-18.

6. How is the final work of the gospel related to the truth of *agape*? Verse 19.

Note: "Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love" (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 415).

7. When John identifies the people who refuse to accept the mark of the beast, what is their outstanding characteristic? Rev. 14:12; compare with Rom. 13:10.

8. Where is *agape* revealed most clearly? 1 John 4:9, 10.

Note: "A work is to be accomplished in the earth similar to that which took place at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the early disciples, when they preached Jesus and Him crucified. Many will be converted in a day; for the message will go with power. ... The theme that attracts the heart of the sinner is Christ, and Him crucified. On the cross of Calvary Jesus stands revealed to the world in unparalleled love [*agape*]. Present Him thus to the hungry multitudes, and the light of His love will win men from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness" (Review and Herald, Nov. 22, 1892).

III. UNDERSTANDING WHY SUCH LOVE WINS HEARTS.

1. How does *agape* differ from all other loves? Rom. 5:7, 8, 10.

2. What element of *agape* must a person understand in order for his/her heart to be won? Luke 19:10, compare 15:1-10.

3. How does *agape* create value in its object? Isa. 3:12; 1 Cor. 6:20.

Note: Appreciating this "price" is what delivers a person from self-depreciation and develops in him/her a true and lasting self-respect. "You may say you believe in Jesus when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood" (Review and Herald, July 24, 1888).

4. How can one develop an effective appreciation for what it cost the Son of God to redeem us? Phil. 2:5-8. (Contrast the opposite spirit in Lucifer in Isa. 14:12-14.)

5. Why is the soul-winning power of *agape* a truth unique to Seventh-day Adventists? See *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56.

Note: Christians who believe in the natural immortality of the soul cannot in the depths of their souls believe that Christ truly "died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3), for they think that the human soul is immortal. Thus they cannot appreciate the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height," of the *agape* that was revealed at the cross, for Christ did "taste death for every man" that is, the equivalent of the "second death" (see Heb. 2:9; Rev. 2:11). In consequence, their understanding of faith is distorted; and thus they sense no motivation to obey "all the commandments of God." *Early Writings* profoundly discloses how the truth of *agape* is ministered only to those who follow Christ by faith into His closing work in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (pp. 55, 56).

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Study Four: Making the Prophecies Clear to Someone

I. BRIEF REVIEW OF OUR OBJECTIVES.

1. What life-activity will bring you the greatest joy at journey's end? Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3.

2. What did Paul regard as the greatest satisfaction of his life? Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19.

3. What encouragement does the Lord give to those of us who are timid, shy, who feel unable to communicate? Zech. 12:8; Isa. 32:4.

Note: "John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power and the earth was lightened with his glory.' Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people shall hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.

"God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth" (Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1055).

4. What central truth will be communicated by these "thousands of voices"?

Note: "It is Christ in His fulness as a sin-pardoning Saviour, that the sinner must see; for the unparalleled love of Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, will bring conviction and conversion to the hardened heart.... When the earth is lightened with the glory of God, we shall see a work similar to that which was wrought when the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the power of a risen Saviour. ... Thus it was in the time of the early rain; but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Saviour of men will be glorified; and the earth will be lightened with the bright beams of His righteousness" (Review and Herald, Nov. 22, 1892).

II. HOW TO PRESENT THE GREAT PROPHETIC TRUTHS.

1. Remembering that fear of being lost or hope of reward are not effective motivations to follow Christ, what truth must permeate all your prophecy presentations? Rev. 1:5; 5:6, 9; compare 7:14, 17; 11:11; 13:8; 14:4, 10; 17:14.

2. What replaces the fear or egocentric motivation when your student considers the obvious fulfillment of the prophecies? Rev. 5:12; 19:6-9, 16.

Note: All of us already have the egocentric motivation, for it is "standard equipment." If we nourish it and appeal to it, the one who hears us may simply decide which "religion" or church best satisfies that self-centered motivation. Using the aroused interest in the Bible that you have stimulated, he may then join the Pentecostals or some other church. But if you keep before him that motivation of

honoring Christ in the closing scenes of the Day of Atonement, his heart will be more receptive to the testing truths that he will hear nowhere else.

3. How does Jesus introduce the study of the prophecies? John 14:16-18, 26, 27; 16:13, 14.

4. What essential truth of Bible prophecy is often denied in our usual presentations? Compare John 16:13 with Rev. 1:1, 2.

Note: A typical Adventist commentary begins, "Revelation has been considered to be the most difficult book in the entire Bible." This mind-set comports with the popular notion that God has made it "hard" to be saved and "easy" to be lost, for if He makes His "Revelation ... most difficult," He must be trying to hide it from us. Rather, He wants to "open" it up to us!

III. LETTING THE PROPHECIES SPEAK TO THE HEART.

1. What is a good way to begin the study of prophecy? Read Matt. 24:3-51.

Note: There seems no end to the important truths that can be communicated simply by reading this chapter verse by verse: (a) the reality of the second coming, (b) the end of the world, (c) the prevalence of deception, (d) how to react to rumors of wars, (e) earthly disasters, (f) reality of opposition from unbelievers, (g) the loss of agape, (h) the good news of gospel proclamation, (i) arousing an interest in Daniel, (j) perpetuity of the Sabbath.

2. Before you get into Daniel or Revelation, what are other simple prophetic studies? 1 Thess 5:1-10; 2 Thess. 2:1-12, 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:10-13.

Note: It is not necessary at first to get involved in minute explanations of all the topics that can come up in reading these passages. But if they are studied before the student gets into the symbolic language of Daniel and Revelation, the interest will be aroused, and at the same time the heart will be prepared to receive truth.

3. What is the focal point of Bible prophecy? Rev. 19:6-9.

IV. PREPARING TO STUDY REVELATION.

1. What study provides the key for unlocking Revelation? Matt. 24:15.

Note: Daniel 2 can be said to be the simplest, the "Model T," of symbolic Bible prophecies. Daniel 7 goes into greater detail, the "Model A" of prophecy. Daniel 8 goes into still greater detail, the "V-8." But each is easy to comprehend, for the Holy Spirit is eager to teach us.

While we recommend using the Glad Tidings Bible Study Guides, we also recognize that often using the Bible alone is best. Our purpose is not to overwhelm the student with prophetic details like a medical student memorizing materia medica, but to inspire in him a love for the word of God. We cannot hope to "feed" him, but we shall be happy to arouse in him a sense of hunger. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to fish, and he eats for a lifetime."

2. Why is it important that our student have an intelligent understanding of these prophecies? 2 Peter 1:19-21.

3. After he has gained a knowledge of Daniel's prophecies, how shall we begin the study of Revelation? Rev. 1:1-3.

Note: Make clear that the Lord wants us to understand this precious book, and that a special "blessing" is ours if we study it. As we are prayerful, let us also be careful about getting involved in testing truths before we can deal with them adequately. Avoid controversies. Feel free to say, "I don't know but I'll try to find the answer" in response to hard questions, or "we will study that more fully." Frequently we should invite decisions or responses of faith, which strengthen the student's exercise of the will or power of choice. Let your prayers be thoughtful, reverent, never flippant, or careless.

Many sincere seekers for truth who love the Lord are turned away by the cold, irreverent way we often pray: ("Let's have a little prayer," like "let's have a little salt in our soup"). Coldheartedness in the teacher will result in coldheartedness in the student.

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Study Five: How Not to Dread Presenting Testing Truths

I. INTRODUCTION: DON'T BE AFRAID OF A CRISIS.

1. What preparation must precede presenting the "testing truths"?

Note: "You should not feel it your duty to introduce arguments upon the Sabbath question upon meeting the people. If persons mention the subject, tell them that this is not your burden now. But when they surrender heart and mind and will to God, they are then prepared candidly to weigh evidence in regard to these solemn, testing truths" (Evangelism, p. 228; 1895).

"Do not make prominent those features of the message which are a condemnation of the customs and practices of the people, until they have opportunity to know that we are believers in Christ, that we believe in His divinity and in his preexistence. Let the testimony of the world's Redeemer be dwelt upon. ... Let the outsiders understand that we preach the gospel as well as the law, and they will feast upon these truths, and many will take their stand for the truth" (ibid., p. 231; 1889).

2. Note how Stephen gained the attention of his audience: Acts 7:2, 3. And how Paul gained the goodwill of his audiences: Acts 13:16, 17.

Note: Although these were sermons and not informal Bible studies, the principles apply. Stephen and Paul first gained the confidence of their listeners, and then presented the testing truths for their time (Acts 7:51, 52; 13:38-41).

"To the Gentiles, Paul preached Christ as their only hope of salvation, but did not at first have anything definite to say upon the law. But after their thoughts were warmed with the presentation of Christ as the gift of God to our world, and what was comprehended in the work of the Redeemer in the costly sacrifice to manifest the love God to man, in the most eloquent simplicity he showed that love [agape] for all mankind—Jew and Gentile—that they might be saved by surrendering their hearts to Him. Thus when, melted and subdued, they gave themselves to the Lord, he presented the law of God as the test of their obedience. This was the manner of his working—adapting his methods to win souls" (ibid, pp. 230, 231).

3. When you have prepared the way, do not hesitate to present the full message of the "testing truths." 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Acts 20:26, 27, 31-33.

Note: "When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away. ...

"Frequently, when a congregation [or family] is at the very point where the heart is prepared for the Sabbath question, it is delayed through fear of the consequences. This has been done, and the results have not been good. ...

"Lift up the standard, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Make this the important theme. Then, by your strong arguments, make it of still greater force. Dwell more on the Revelation. Read, explain, and enforce its teaching.

"Our warfare is aggressive. Tremendous issues are before us, yea, and right upon us. Let our prayers ascend to God that the four angels may still hold the four winds,

that they may not blow to injure or destroy until the last warning has been given to the world. Then let us work in harmony with our prayers, let nothing lessen the force of the truth for this time" (ibid., p. 229).

"The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power. There has been too much beating around the bush in the proclamation of the third angel's message" (ibid., p. 230).

II. EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PRESENT THE SABBATH TRUTH.

1. Remember that "the truth ... is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). You have presented His *agape-love* in His life, His death, and His resurrection; now present His example. Luke 4:16, Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 23:50-56 (GNB is very clear).

2. Present the reason for the Sabbath: Rev. 1:10; Heb. 4:4-9 (explain the meaning of "rest"—"a keeping of the Sabbath").

Note: The weekly Sabbath is our lifeline to heaven, our banquet of spiritual food, our "main" aqueduct through which we enjoy a fresh supply of the water of life. Present also the need for fellowship with others who believe the truth (Heb. 10:25; Lev. 23:3, "an holy convocation").

3. Present the law of God as ten "new covenant" promises. Ex. 20:1-17; Rom. 3:31; 6:12-15; Heb. 8:6-11.

Note: We have not presented "the law" correctly unless we have made plain that it is a revelation of agape (Rom. 13:10), and that it is in reality ten powerful promises. "The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. ... That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, 'This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan.' There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus" (Ellen G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1105).

Remind your student of the Good News in Matthew 11:28-20. Jesus says it is "hard" to resist the leading of the Lord (Acts 26:14). "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

4. You can trace the Sabbath all through Scripture.

Note: At creation (Gen. 2:1-3); Noah knew of it (7:4; 8:10); Abraham kept it (18:19); Israel knew of preparation for it (Ex. 16:22-25); David sings about it (Psalm 92); Isaiah loved it (58:13, 14); Jeremiah honored it (17:27); Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament kept it (Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14).

5. A lesson on "how to keep the Sabbath" will rivet attention on the truth. (See *Glad Tidings Bible Study Guides*, lesson 29.)

Note: Understanding how to keep the Sabbath focuses light upon this holy day and clearly reveals how it is different from ordinary Sunday-keeping. At this point in a series of Bible studies, an invitation to a Friday evening supper and opening of the

Sabbath will be a blessing to your student, to let him see what a joy Sabbath-keeping is.

At this point, a sincere truth-seeker will want to attend Sabbath School and worship services; God grant that his first impression of an Adventist meeting will be a good one because the presence of the Holy Spirit will be there!

III. PRESENTING OTHER TESTING TRUTHS.

1. Be careful in presenting "the state of the dead." 1 Thess. 4:14-18.

Note: One of our popular lessons has been entitled, "Are the Dead Really Dead?" It is an unfortunate idea to present; the truth is that the dead are not "really dead," they are "asleep." None will be "really dead" until at the end of the millennium (Rev. 2:11; 20:14). Since the world began only one man has ever truly died— Jesus; all the rest have gone to "sleep." Read John 11:11-14, 43, 44. Emphasize that the dead are asleep "in Jesus," and thus they know nothing until the resurrection. The fear of death is wiped out by this blessed truth. If the truth is presented in a kind, gentle, even tender manner, objections will probably be minimal.

2. What is the best way *to* present Christian standards?

The answer is: Health reform, temperance, diet, amusements, wearing of jewelry, etc., will be easy to present in the light of the great Day of Atonement. This will be our next topic.

— Notes —

Study Six: Preparing for Christ's Second Coming

I. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE?

1. Note the full context of Revelation 14:

- (a) It opens with a people "without fault before the throne of God" (verses 1-5).
- (b) It presents the "everlasting gospel" (verse 6).
- (c) It separates a people from "Babylon" (verse 8).
- (d) It prepares a people to meet the final, most clever deception of Satan—the "mark of the beast" (verses 9-11).
- (e) Its fruitage is a people who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12); "agape is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).
- (f) The next event is the second coming of Christ (verse 14).
- (g) A people prepared for Christ's coming is the "harvest" ripe (verse 16).

2. What effect does the message have on those who prepare for Christ's coming?

1 John 3:1-3.

Note: Make it clear that this is not a "works trip," or self-righteousness. This is sometimes ridiculed as fanaticism, trying to be "little christs," or "navel-gazing." Preparing for the return of Jesus is solemn Bible truth; the motivation is not self-centered, a search for personal security based on fear, but a sincere desire to honor the Savior in the final time of this world's crisis.

3. What is included in this purification? 2 Cor. 6:16-18; 7:1.

II. WHAT TRUTH WILL MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S COMING?

1. How important is the unique Adventist sanctuary message? Heb. 9:11-14, 24-28.

Note: Christ Himself has always been without "sin," so the phrase "without sin" cannot mean a change on His part. Here is how it is rendered in several translations: "Shall ... show himself the second time, without reference to sin" (Berkeley); "not to deal with sin" (Moffatt); "not to bear sin" (New American Standard). Those "that look for Him" will be "without sin," having purified themselves "even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

"The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith" (Evangelism, p. 221). It "should be clearly understood by the people of God. ... Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. ... The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work on behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth, ... revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin" (The Great Controversy, pp. 488, 489).

"Christ's work on behalf of men," as we have seen, is to minister the experience of justification by faith.

2. In presenting the sanctuary truth, don't get the cart before the horse. Begin with the New Testament, not the Old:

(a) Use the texts in Section I, #2 and #3, and make clear that a preparation for Christ's coming is needed for all of us.

(b) Let Hebrews reveal Christ as a High Priest who will prepare us for His coming if we let him do so, and we do not hinder Him: 3:1, 7, 8; 4:11, 12, 15; 7:25, 26; 10:35-39. Define the word "High Priest"—the Physician, Psychiatrist, and Healer of our souls.

3. How does the High Priest prepare His people for His coming?

Through the Holy Spirit He:

(a) Convicts of sin that we did not know of. John 16:7-9.

(b) Gives the on-going gift of repentance. Rom. 2:4; Acts 5:31.

(c) Gives grace to overcome the sin which was previously unknown to us. Rom. 6:20, 21; Gal. 5:16, 17; Psalm 19:12, 13.

Note: This on-going work is "receiving the atonement" (Rom. 5:10, 11). When "the harvest is ripe," Jesus will come (Mark 4:26-29; Rev. 14:14-16).

The sacrifice which Christ offered at the cross was perfect and complete; but the sinner must choose to "receive the atonement." Here is where the Seventh-day Adventist truth of the sanctuary comes into focus. When the Lord has a people who, by a mature faith and surrender to His love, have overcome fully, they will be reconciled to God, and every buried root of alienation will be healed. This is the same as standing before the throne "without fault" (Rev. 14:5) or the harvest being "ripe" (verses 14, 15). It is described by Ellen White's phrase, "final atonement" (The Great Controversy, p. 485; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 352, 355, 357-358, 426).

III. WE NOW LIVE IN THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.

1. These truths will grip the heart.

Now we can present the symbols of the sanctuary ministry: Heb. 8:1-6; 9:1-12; Ex. 25:8, 40. (Draw your own sketch of the two-apartment sanctuary, with the articles of furniture.)

2. When did the heavenly High Priest begin the final phase of His ministry? Dan. 8:14, 17, 27; 9:23-27.

Note: This 2300-year prophecy is "the foundation of our faith." It is not difficult to understand or to explain to others. You can easily find a chart in many of our books. Study it, mark your Bible, and draw the chart yourself. A little practice will make it clear. Thus, you can demonstrate that the heavenly Day of Atonement began in 1844.

3. How do we make practical the fact that we are living in this solemn time? Note the type in Lev. 23:27-32; now note the antitype in Luke 21:34-36.

Note: Those who love the Lord have a special duty and privilege, living in this antitypical Day of Atonement. The ancient Israelites left their ordinary labors on the day of atonement, fasted, gathered around the sanctuary, and "afflicted" their souls (Lev. 16:19-31). "Afflicting the soul" means to "abase self (Isa. 31:4); "chasten thyself (Dan. 10:12); "humble one's soul" (Psalm 35:13). In ancient Israel, the day of

atonement was the one day on which the people fasted, except for times of special crisis (cf. Acts 27:9; Isa. 58:3-5; Ezek. 8:21).

This experience today includes health reform and simplicity of diet (Dan. 10:2, 3; no alcohol, drugs, harmful food, so that the mind might be clear to appreciate the on-going work of our great High Priest). These duties on the Day of Atonement are not "works" to merit salvation, but they give evidence of heart-cooperation with the great High Priest. This is the real reason Adventists believe and practice health reform.

This is also the reason why those who follow Christ find deliverance from the "keeping-up-with-the-Jones" rat-race of worldly success. Ancient Israel left their business on this day; we cannot neglect to make a living, but we can learn to put Christ and His service first. We can learn to feel a concern for the work of that great High Priest, as a bride is concerned for her husband-to-be. We can learn to love souls as Jesus loves us!

Dress reform, wearing simple clothing, accompanied "afflicting the soul" (see Psalm 69:10; 1 Kings 21:27; Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:5; Judges 20:6; 1 Sam. 7:6; Neh. 6:4). In times of spiritual emergency, God's people did not drink alcohol or wear jewelry (Isa. 3:16-24; Ex. 33:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4). This is the real reason why we do not drink, smoke, do drugs, or wear jewelry, because living in the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary is a solemn time.

Your student will have little difficulty giving up jewelry and changing the lifestyle, if these sanctuary truths are made clear.

— Notes —

Study Seven: Current Events and Bible Prophecy

I. BRIEF REVIEW OF OUR OBJECTIVES.

1. According to Proverbs 11:30, how do we prepare *now* to eat of the fruit of the tree of life?

Note: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (KJV). "Godly men are growing a tree that bears life-giving fruit, and all who win souls are wise" (Living Bible). In a very real sense, our happiness in the world to come will depend largely on what we do in this world. The import of this text is that here and now we plant the "seed" that will bear fruit there on "the tree of life." (The Hebrew supports the KJV and LB reading.)

2. In this light, how can we understand Jesus' strange parable of the unjust steward? Luke 16:1-9.

Note: Jesus is not commending dishonesty, as some have supposed: (a) All of us, being sinful mortals, are slated to lose our "stewardship." (b) Let us use what resources we have left to us to "make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," that is, to "win souls" who can receive us (welcome us) "into everlasting habitations." (c) Living henceforth to "win souls" is therefore good common sense! (See the song in the frontispiece.)

II. SEVERAL BIBLE PROPHECIES THAT MUST NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD.

1. Does anyone have a right to "interpret" Bible prophecy? 1 Peter 1:20, 21.

2. Who are the two central figures in the Daniel 8 prophecy? Dan. 8:9, 11, 25.

3. How does Daniel 8 make clear the issues in the great cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan? How do Seventh-day Adventists fit in? Verses 9-14.

Note: This passage is the foundation text for the rise of Seventh-day Adventists. The "little horn" is the great empire of Rome in its two phases: pagan and papal. Its war is fought against Christ and against His faithful people. The "good news" is introduced in an oblique way that thoughtful Jews of Daniel's day would understand. At the end of 2300 years of oppression, resolution of the great cosmic controversy would finally come about through the antitypical Day of Atonement, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. This 2300-year prophecy ended in 1844. Its real meaning is the honor and vindication of God in the final defeat of Satan and sin. When Daniel understood this, it made sense to him.

4. How does Revelation further make clear the prophecy of Daniel 8? Rev. 10:7; 11:15-19; 14:6, 7, 14, 15.

5. How can we know that ordinary wars are not yet the battle of Armageddon? Rev. 16:12-17.

Note: We must let the scriptures explain themselves: (a) The battle of Armageddon does not come until the sixth plague, (b) The plagues come only after probation has closed (Rev. 15:1; cf. Heb. 3:2). (c) At that time Christ has ceased His ministry as High Priest and has left the Most Holy Apartment (15:8; 22:11, 12; Isa. 55:6).

"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" (The Great Controversy, p. 425). Thank God that the time has not yet come! There is still opportunity for repentance and soul-winning. Although the plagues are literal, the language of Revelation 16 is symbolic. "The beast," "the dragon," "the false prophet" of verse 13, are all symbolic. Evidently the history of Daniel 5 is evoked in this symbol. As Cyrus' army dried the waters of the Euphrates so he could capture Babylon, so in the sixth plague the defenses and support of modern symbolic Babylon will collapse, and she will face her final judgment in history.

6. What great work must be accomplished now? Matt. 24:14; Rev. 18:1-4; Zech. 8:21-23; 12:8; 13:1.

7. Has Daniel 11:44, 45 met its fulfillment as yet?

Note: Not unless probation has already closed, for the next verse (12:1) says "at that time shall Michael stand up" (begin to reign as King of kings). Thank God, He is still our High Priest!

8. Can we believe that the pioneers of the Advent Movement were led of the Lord in their understanding of Daniel and Revelation?

Note: According to Revelation 10:6, there is to be no more prophetic "time" after the end of the 2300 year prophecy. Therefore the "days" of Daniel 12 cannot be understood as literal, but are an emphasis by repetition of the time prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 with the added specifics of "the daily" in order to reinforce its mention in 8:11-13 and 11:31. There was no serious error in the pioneers' understanding of the prophecies; if they had welcomed "the message of Christ's righteousness" in 1888, the gospel commission could have been completed and the earth have been lighted with the fourth angel's message, in their generation (Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 234, 235).

III. IN STUDYING THE PROPHECIES, WHAT IS THE TRUE MOTIVATION THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN BLESS?

1. Note the motivation that inspires God's people in the close of the Day of Atonement. Rev. 19:6, 7; 10:6, 7; 11:15, 19.

Note: Like a bride concerned for the honor of her husband, God's people will be concerned to "give honor to Him [the Lamb]" rather than seek for their own security. The vindication of His name is the great issue involved in the Day of Atonement.

2. Who are "false prophets" today? Read 2 Peter 1:20; 2:1, 2.

Note: We are warned against all "time-setting." We are also warned against "new theories," "a new exposition of those prophecies which [God] has, by His Holy Spirit,

moved upon His chosen servants to explain."¹

3. What true motivation will lead us to follow the Lord all the way? 2 Cor. 5:14-21.

Note: "It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, revealed throughout His pilgrimage on earth, from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross, and the sight of Him attracts, it softens and subdues the soul. Love awakens in the heart of the beholder. They hear His voice, and they follow Him" (The Desire of Ages, p. 480).

4. What remains, therefore, the burden of our message? 1 Cor. 2:1-4.

IV. WHAT ARE THE BIBLE REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM?

1. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Note: In the context of what Jesus said, it is clear that the "believing" is a heart-response of appreciation for the Good News of the "gospel" that is presented to them (verse 15). If the heart has been won by the love of Christ (agape) rather than an egocentric motivation, there is serious hope that the ones converted will never fall away (1 Cor. 13:8), even if they meet stumbling blocks.

2. "Teach ... them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

3. A verse-by-verse review of Romans 6:1-17 is very important.

Note: You can be sure that the Holy Spirit will add His blessing to such a study. Our goal is not merely to add another statistic to the church membership roll or to get a report in the Union paper. We want our "someone" to stand at last on the sea of glass, in triumphant victory. Go through the thirteen points in the baptismal certificate; you can present them in a Good News context. And always praise God for the joy He gives you in sharing His message of grace!

— Notes —

¹ *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 185-192; *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 73, 82; 109-116; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 457, 465.