

LESSON 2

THE THREE GREAT ATTACKS COMING ON GOD'S PEOPLE

By Tim Saxton, Associate Speaker

In Matthew 4:2, our story continues:

"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."

Part of Christ's preparation for ministry was self-denial; He must overcome where Adam fell. He was led by the Spirit to fast and pray for forty days, and afterward, it says He was hungry, literally dying of hunger.

It was then that a beautiful being appeared to Him, saying:

"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." —Matthew 4:3

Now, to Jesus who was hungry, starving if you will, it appeared an angel had been sent from Heaven to relieve Him of His distress, except for that one word . . . if.

Here Christ had to make a choice: follow as His Father had led Him through his lifelong study of Scripture, or trust His senses and feelings and follow what this "angel" said.

Which did He choose?

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." —Matthew 4:4

Christ recognized the enemy by the en-

"What?"

"There, it must have been my imagination," June thought. "She's okay; she's in there sleeping," but something about that voice didn't sound right, so she opened the bedroom door only to find the room empty.

Then the first voice spoke again, saying, "She is in the garage and in the car, with the motor running, hurry!" Rushing to the garage, June found it to be true. She arrived in time and saved her mother from the suicide attempt.

June soon found help for her mother and years later, this same mother made a decision for Christ and was baptized. However, June could never forget the day she heard two different voices: one was the voice you could trust, and one was the voice you couldn't.*

In Scripture, we find the story of a time when Christ Himself could not trust the voice He heard. The Bible says in Luke 4:1:

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

When Christ was baptized, the Bible tells us the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. It was the Spirit that directed Christ's life, and after His baptism, it was the Spirit that led Him to go into the wilderness to prepare for His Ministry.

It was the Christmas holiday season, and June's mother was visiting. On this day, June was planning for the two of them to go see Christmas lights, but first, she would take a short nap. While resting, June was suddenly awakened by a voice that said, "Your mother is trying to kill herself."

The voice was so strong that June jumped up, thinking surely this couldn't be the case; her mother had not acted depressed. Making her way to her mother's room and standing outside the door, she called to her mother inside. A sleepy-sounding voice responded, saying,



emy's insinuation of doubt. What the enemy suggested didn't align with how He knew His Father had led Him.

How did Christ know the Father's plan? He knew the Scriptures, not simply as a base of knowledge, but in a relational sense with His Father. This allowed Him to recognize His Father's voice. We, too, can have that same experience.

How often, when the devil comes to tempt us, he does not appear as the devil, such as the case with Eve. The Bible tells us:

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." —2 Corinthians 11:14

In the Garden of Eden, the disguise was in the form of a serpent.

Sometimes, the devil or his angels will appear as our dearly departed loved ones to attempt to deceive us into falsehoods and to trusting our senses over what the Word of God plainly states.

Why is this important? Because prior to the end of time, we are told that such attacks will intensify.

In this study, we are considering the three great attacks coming upon God's people before probation's close. These attacks come in their greatest manifestation during the time of the shaking of the church and the Latter Rain.

ATTACK #1 THE ATTACK OF SPIRITUALISM: SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS ATTEMPTING TO DECEIVE GOD'S PEOPLE INTO ACCEPTING FALSEHOODS.

In the *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1875, we find this from the pen of inspiration:

"It is not difficult for the evil angels to represent both saints and sinners who have died, and make these representations visible to human eyes. These manifestations will be more frequent, and developments of a more startling character will appear as we near the close of time."

Is it safe to trust our feelings, impressions, and senses over the Word of God? Is it even safe to trust ourselves? No. Our only safety is to trust in the Divinely Inspired Word of God, which is perfect and will lead us to eternal life.

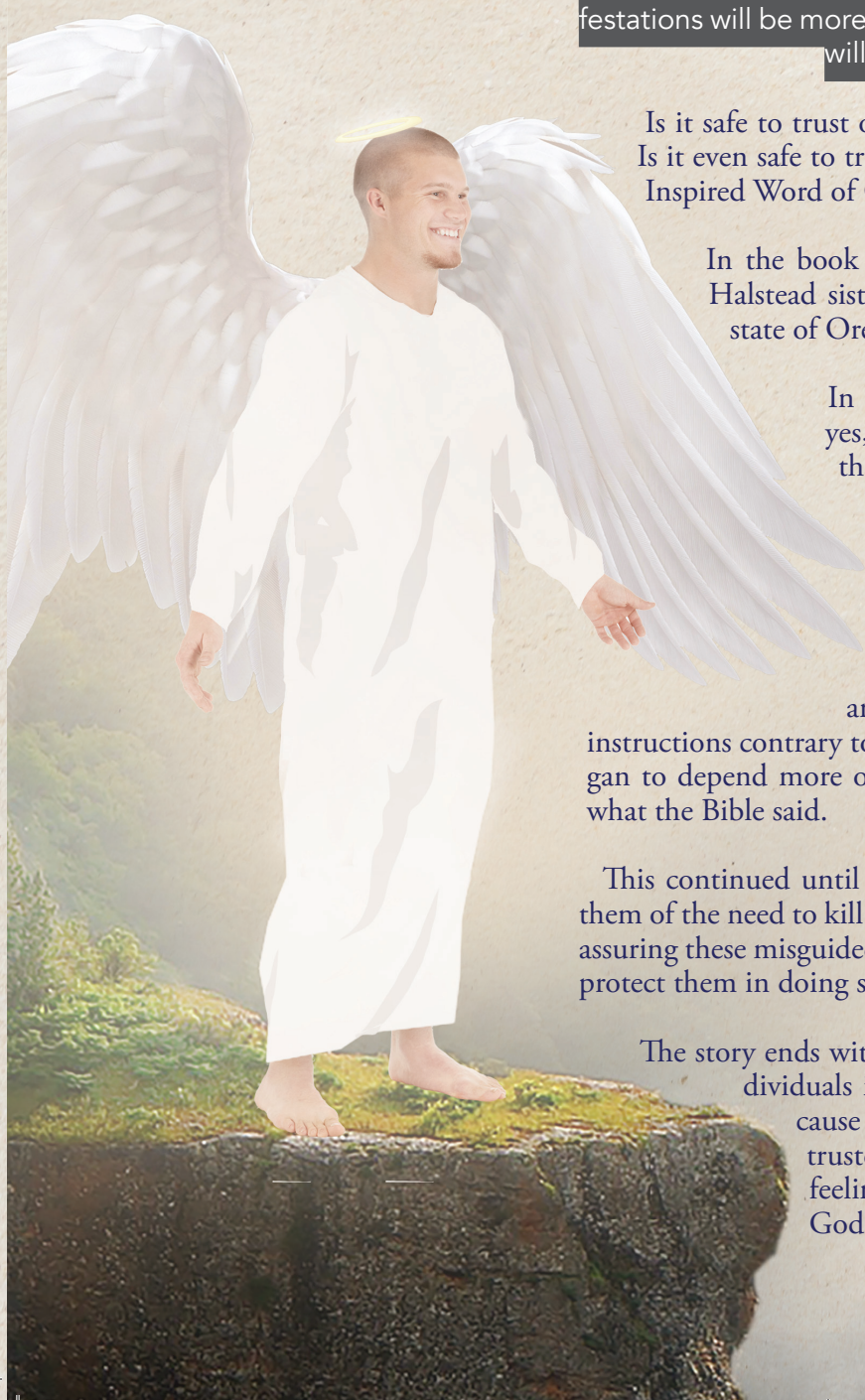
In the book *Beware of Angels*, Roger Morneau** tells the story of the Halstead sisters, who were involved with others in a Bible study in the state of Oregon.

In time, members of their study group were visited by angels, yes, real angels with supernatural powers. They affirmed that these Bible students were God's chosen people and now had been brought special light.

In fact, "Jesus" himself appeared to them. They were overjoyed and full of happiness. These angels continued visiting and instructing them, but with instructions contrary to the Bible. Thus, the group began to depend more on what the angels said than on what the Bible said.

This continued until the fallen angels had convinced them of the need to kill some "wicked" people nearby, assuring these misguided individuals that God would protect them in doing so.

The story ends with the murder of several individuals in the state of Oregon, because the deceived, like Eve, had trusted their own senses and feelings over the plain Word of God.



We find in the book *Last Day Events* on Page 160:

"Satan will use every opportunity to seduce men from their allegiance to God. He and the angels who fell with him will appear on the earth as men, seeking to deceive."

During Earth's final crisis, he will appear in various manners (angels, dearly departed loved ones, etc.) in an attempt, as the Bible says, to deceive even the very elect.

However, the greatest attempt in this form of deception is the personation of Christ himself.

This occurs during the final mark of the beast crisis as God's people are pleading for deliverance. Consider what we find in *Ms 16*, 1884:

"Satan sees that he is about to lose his case. He cannot sweep in the whole world. He makes one more, last, desperate effort to overcome the faithful by deception."

"He hears the unceasing cry for Christ to come, for Christ to deliver them. This last strategy is to personate Christ and make them think their prayers are answered."

"He clothes himself with the garments of royalty which have been accurately described in the vision of John. He has power to do this. He will appear to his deluded followers, the Christian world who received not the love of the truth



but had pleasure in unrighteousness (transgression of the law), as Christ coming the second time."

He proclaims himself Christ, and he is believed to be Christ, a beautiful, majestic being clothed with majesty and, with soft voice and pleasant words, with glory unsurpassed by anything their mortal eyes had yet beheld. These, his deceived, deluded followers, set up a shout of victory,

"Christ has come the second time! Christ has come! He has lifted up His hands just as He did when He was upon the earth, and blessed us."

For God's people this is the almost overpowering deception. Yet, their foundation is not based on their senses and feelings, but on the living Word of God. They see in this terrible manifestation, a supernatural being blessing the very ones Scripture identifies as having taken the mark of the beast. Let's continue our quote:

"The blessing is pronounced by this false Christ upon the worshippers of the beast and his image, (the people) who have received the mark of the beast and the mark of the image of the beast."

Yet, the hearts of God's people are not with the world nor this supernatural being. The saints are looking upward to heaven, their hearts steadfastly set upon Christ alone. No other will they worship. They both know Christ and they know what his Word says and they refuse to bow to a counterfeit.

"But this answers to the last closing work, the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place."



Often, we underestimate this attack of the enemy, as if a simple head knowledge will keep us safe. But during Satan's final attacks, human senses will be overpowered by the supernatural power of these fallen angels. All who do not have a living connection with God and who do not know the voice of His Word will fall to the satanic delusions.

Where is the security for God's people? Is it simply in knowing the doctrine of what happens when you die? No, that is not enough. Though doctrine is important, we must know Scripture based on a relationship with our Father, like Christ knew Scripture based on a relationship with His Father.

From the book, *Selected Messages*, Volume Three, Page 411, we find:

"Unless we follow our Leader closely, Satan will obtain the victory over us."

Where is real protection found? In a living, trusting relationship with Jesus Christ. Such a relationship includes:

1. Confessing and forsaking of all sin in our lives. Psalm 66:12, 1 John 1:9
2. Being obedient to all of God's commandments. (Revelation 12:17, John 14:15)
3. Intentionally trusting what Christ says. (Matthew 7:7, Luke 17:6)

Ephesians 6:12-13 reminds us of the type of battle we are fighting:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

ATTACK #2 EXTREMISM AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE.

The Protestant Reformation started in earnest with a man named Martin Luther. A pious monk, Luther was seeking to do all in his power to earn his way to Heaven. However, the day came when, as he was ascending a staircase on his knees, a voice said to him, "The just shall live by faith."

The words of that voice changed Luther, and armed with a new truth, he boldly became a reformer to the customs, traditions, and abuses of the church.

As the reform movement grew, Satan became alarmed. People were becoming unshackled from the chains of tradition and superstition that had bound them. Many were accepting the reformed faith, trusting in the Word of God, and holding their faith in Jesus. As the power of the Gospel went forth mightily, we find it recorded in the book, *Great Controversy*, Page 186-191:

Satan, "attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement—to deceive and destroy . . . by palming off . . . a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false Christs in the first century of the Christian church, so there arose false prophets in the sixteenth century."

Notice here that the writer brings out how the devil operates in this manner every time there is reformation among God's people. It is his *modus operandi*. Let's continue with our quote:

"A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven . . . they rejected . . . the very foundation of the Reformation—that the word of God is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; and . . . substituted the changeable, uncertain standard of their own feelings and impressions."

Here we find that these men started placing their thoughts and feelings above the stated Word of God. Continuing:

"Others who were naturally inclined to fanaticism united with them. The proceedings of these enthusiasts created no little excitement. . . . and now some really honest persons were misled by the pretensions of the new prophets."

This is a most interesting phrase. Those "naturally inclined to fanaticism" joined them. In society, we have a broad view of normalcy for human behavior. We also recognize actions and behaviors that are so far removed from the majority of society that we term them mental illnesses.





Right in between are those whose way of thinking is on the edge. They are not so far out that society locks them up, yet interactions with them reveal that something isn't quite right in their thinking, and they consistently gravitate to extreme views and conclusions. We often find such people preoccupied with pride, fear, or self-interest. Continuing:

"The leaders of the movement . . . Said . . . 'We are sent by God to instruct the people. . . . we know what will happen; in a word, we are apostles and prophets.' . . . The Reformers were astonished and perplexed. This was such an element as they had never before encountered, and they knew not what course to pursue. . . . the fanatics . . . would not endure the slightest contradiction or even the kindest reproof or counsel."

One clear sign of fanaticism and extremism is the inability to reason. It's as if their minds are closed. What was the result of the erratic behaviors of these fanatics?

"The most terrible scenes of sedition and strife followed, and the fields of Germany were drenched with blood."

Notice how the Lord had sent great light through the power of His Spirit at the time of the Reformation. Then the devil, true to his evil character, tried to disrupt the work of God by bringing about a spirit of extremism among the people. This is often mistaken by some

for sincere zeal, but the results are a reproach upon God's work.

The extremism and fanaticism in this story resulted in violence, and all of God's people (reformers) were tainted due to the actions of the few. Thus, Satan attempted to bring reproach upon God's work through a few extreme, violent, and misguided individuals.

Did anything like this happen in Bible times?

We find it recorded in the Book of Acts, chapter 21:

"And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?" (Verse 37)

"Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?" (Verse 38)

What happened? Who was the apostle Paul mistaken for? A violent extremist.

We find then, during the time of the early rain when the Gospel was going forth with power, that society was also dealing with fanaticism and violent extremists, and God's people were being mistaken for them.

Notice what is recorded in the book *Acts of the Apostles*, Page 348:

"In every age Satan has sought to impair the efforts of God's servants by introducing into the church a spirit of fanaticism. Thus, it was in Paul's day, and thus it was in later centuries during the time of the Reformation. Wycliffe, Luther, and many others who blessed the world by their influence and their faith, encountered the wiles by which the enemy seeks to lead into fanaticism overzealous, unbalanced, and unsanctified minds."

The Bible tells us:

"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were

possible, even the elect."
—Mark 13:22

It is interesting to note that in the early rain of the Advent movement, just before the midnight cry was given in the summer of 1844, there was a great increase in fanaticism within the Adventist community.

Again, quoting from the book *The Great Controversy*, Page 395:

"About this time, fanaticism began to appear. . . . The prince of evil was losing his subjects; and in order to bring reproach upon the cause of God, he sought to deceive some who professed the faith and to drive them to extremes. "Then his agents stood ready to seize upon every error . . . and hold it up before the people in the most exaggerated light, to render Adventists and their faith odious. Thus the greater the number whom he could crowd in [extremists] . . . the greater advantage would he gain by calling attention to them as representatives of the whole body of believers."

Thus, we see the devil using the same strategy in the early advent movement as used in the time of the early church and the Reformation, and we are told that this same strategy will be used against God's people in the end time.

What is that strategy? Just prior to or during the time of great revival, the devil will bring in fanatics and extremists among God's people. They will look like God's people and talk like God's people, but have just enough pride to place self over the Bible. The honest in heart will mistake these individuals' extremist views as zeal for God, and many will be convinced.

Then at the right time, the extremists will push their fanatical beliefs to the limits, stopping at nothing, not even the Word of God, to make others as fanatical as they are. Like in Bible times and the time of the Reformation, radical extremism will result in violence.

The world will look at these unbalanced individuals and associate their violent, extremist beliefs with all of God's people.

Thus the devil will attempt to neutralize the work of the Latter Rain.

Consider a letter that Ellen White wrote to early Adventist reformers Jones and Waggoner in 1886:

"If you move in the future as you have done in this matter, you may be assured of one thing, you will condemn the work of the latter rain when it shall come."

Notice the context: it is the time of the Latter Rain. Continuing:

"For you will see at that time far greater evidences of fanaticism. . . . The enemy always works through those of unbalanced minds and imperfect characters." —Letter 76-1886

What time is she referring to when she says the church will see far greater evidences of fanaticism? The time of the Latter Rain.

Do you see how, prior to the end, fanaticism will return, only in a more extreme form? Do you see how it returns just before the Latter Rain and the giving of the Loud Cry?

What is the answer?

1. Develop and foster that living, trusting relationship with Christ, in the three steps described in the prior section.
2. Avoid distractions. There is nothing the enemy would like more, than for you to make issues out of non-issues. Ask Christ to keep you focused on the truth for this time (Three Angels' Messages, etc.) and the saving of the lost.
3. Seek the mind of Christ. If you find yourself "naturally inclined" to unbalance, confess your weakness to the Lord and ask Him to recreate your mind into one like Christ's. (2 Tim. 1:7, Phil. 2:5)

Mrs. White makes this statement in a letter written in 1894:

"In the time of confusion and trouble such as never was since there was a nation, the uplifted Saviour will be pre-

sented to the people in all lands and in all places, that all who look may live."
—Letter 23b, 1894

The time of confusion and trouble, also known as the little time of trouble (though it will not be little), is the time when the uplifted Savior will be presented to the entire world. It is the time of the Latter Rain!

Those who look past the confusion and trouble of that time are those who have their eyes steady on Jesus, who know Him in a spiritually intimate way, who follow exactly what He says in His Word and who share His precious love with others. These are those who make it through in the end.

ATTACK #3 HOLDING ON IN THE DARKNESS:

In the Book of 2 Kings, we find the story of Elijah, when he was about to be taken to Heaven. In chapter 2 and verses 1-2, we read,

"And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven . . . that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel."

Now in modern terms, Elijah was Elisha's boss, and Elijah stated, "I am going on an extended walk" (and let's imagine



it was a hot, sultry day). Now if your boss said to you, "I am going for a ten-mile walk, but you can stay and rest," which would be your easier choice, to stay and rest or go walking in the heat? We all know the answer, yet look what Elisha says in verse 2:

"And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel."

Then, surprisingly, it happens again:

"And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho." (Verse 4)

Yet, a third time, the same thing happens:

"And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on." (Verse 6)

Why was Elisha so insistent that he not leave the side of Elijah? We find the answer in verse 9.

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

What was the blessing that Elisha wanted? The Holy Spirit, and not just the Holy Spirit, but a double portion of that given to Elijah. We are told the gift of the Holy Spirit is the greatest of all gifts that God can give.

How does Elijah answer such a request:

"And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." (Verse 10)

Now if you were Elisha, what would that statement mean for you? Does it mean you can wander off on your own and still hope to receive what you requested? No. Does it mean you can pause and rest while Elijah keeps walking? No. If Elisha wants a double portion of the Spirit, he must stay right by Elijah's side, keeping his eyes fixed on him.

Is there a lesson here for us?

During the time in which the church is shaken, what do God's people want? They want the Holy Spirit in the form of the Latter Rain.

What was required of Elisha to receive the Holy Spirit? He had to stay by the side of Elijah, keeping his eyes fixed on him to the very end. This is an example of what God's church is to do in their desiring of the Holy Spirit. In this story, Elijah is a type of Christ, and the church is to keep her eyes fixed on Christ if she wants the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at a few more examples:

In 1 Kings chapter 20 and verse 35, we find an interesting story:

"And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour

in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him."

Now a study of this chapter reveals that this man (a son of the prophets) had been commissioned by the Lord to give the king an object lesson. To do this, he needed help, for he had to appear before the king as one who was wounded. So, he goes to his neighbor, who understands the man is a prophet, and tells the neighbor that the prophet brings a command of God for the neighbor to help him. This "help" meant smiting him to make him appear wounded. Yet the neighbor purposefully and intentionally refused to follow the command of God and lend assistance. Afterward, the young prophet says to him,

"Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee." (Verse 36)

Now place yourself in the position of the guilty neighbor. You have been faulty and purposefully sinful, and are told in your guilty condition that as soon as you depart, a lion will kill you. What should you do? Where is the message of hope in this rebuke?



For a clue to the meaning, let's paraphrase the sentence: "As soon as you leave me (or walk away), a lion will kill you."

What should you do? Don't leave! Don't walk away! For when you walk away (from the Lord), there is nothing out there but a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

God is here, sending a message of hope that though we may be sinful and guilty in our lives, yet one thing is needful, which is to stay by the side of the Lord (whom the prophet represented). For it is when we walk away from the Lord that we find ourselves in outer darkness.

Do you see the message of hope contained in this story?

Unfortunately, the disobedient neighbor did not see it . . . for the Bible says:

"And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him." (Verse 36)

A third example takes us to the Upper Room when Christ is eating the last supper with His disciples.

In Mark 14:18, we find:

"And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me."

Who was going to betray Jesus that night? Judas. Was Judas at the table with Christ? Had Jesus just washed Judas' feet? Had Jesus, in fact, washed the feet of all the disciples? Yes, He had. Do you think Judas' heart had been at least momentarily touched by the love and humility of Christ?

Consider what we find in the book *The Desire of Ages*, Page 645:

"When the Saviour's hands were bathing those soiled feet, and wiping them with the towel, the heart of Judas thrilled through and through with the impulse then and there to confess his sin. But he would not humble himself. He hardened his heart against repentance."

Have you ever had the Holy Spirit prick your heart to do something, but it was something that you didn't want to do? Perhaps it was your pride that held you back, or maybe it was something embarrassing?

Judas was in the same situation. We are told that his heart thrilled him through and through to repent, yet he resisted and hardened his stance. But notice what was even worse than his pride and unrepentance . . .

"Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."
—Matthew 26:25

Continuing from *The Desire of Ages*:

"In surprise and confusion at the exposure of his purpose, Judas rose hastily to leave the room. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly . . . He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Night it was to the traitor as he turned away from Christ into the outer darkness. Until this step was taken, Judas had not passed beyond the possibility of repentance. But when he left the presence of his Lord and his fellow disciples, the final decision had been made. He had passed the boundary line." —The Desire of Ages, Page 654

What was the worst mistake that Judas made? Like the disobedient neighbor in our earlier story, he walked away.

Had Judas been willing to hold on to Christ and not leave His side, he would not have betrayed Him. It was in leaving the side of Christ that placed him in utter darkness and closed the door of his probation.

Contrast the example of Judas with that of Jacob. Jacob, too, had sinned a great sin, but in repentance, he held on to the angel anyway, and his words were:

"I will not let you go, except thou bless me." —Genesis 32:26

Jacob was willing to hold on, no matter

what mistakes he had made in his past. He put his all on the line in utter faith that Christ would not cast him away, and he was not disappointed.

In the Book of Hebrews, chapter 3 and verse 12, we are told:

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."



Do we see a similar thread in all these Bible examples? That thread is to keep your eyes on Christ and do not give up and walk away, regardless of what happens.

While visiting a Midwestern city, I attended a Friday evening vespers service. After a beautiful message, the minister made a call, and the presence of the Spirit could be felt. The call was first made for various types of commitments, and finally, for anyone who would like to make a stand.

Prior to this, I had struggled, at times, when I felt I should have stood for the Lord, but hadn't. Now, the conviction was strong to respond to this appeal, but again, pride forbade me. After all, primarily young people were responding; how would it look for me to join them? I was preoccupied with what others would think.

Still, the Spirit moved me to go forward, and yet I said no. Then the conviction intensified when the minister reminded us that this could be the last opportunity to make a stand. The sense of the Spirit was ever so strong, and still, pride forbade me. I thought I would be embarrassed.

As the minister closed with prayer,



he invited any others to come forward during the prayer. The conviction, ever so strong, was stifled again.

When the service was over, I left in silence. Over the next several days, I did much soul-searching. Never had I experienced such a rebuke of the Spirit of God. Always before, I had basked in the joy of the Spirit. Even in times of trial and difficulty, the Spirit had always been there to encourage me.

Now this didn't seem the case. In fact, it seemed the Spirit of the Lord had completely withdrawn, and life had become a burden. Instead of joy, the happiest experiences of life had no meaning, and the truth of this text came home:

***“In the morning thou shalt say,
Would God it were even! and at
even thou shalt say, Would God it
were morning!”
—Deuteronomy 28:67***

Thus, I was without peace.

During this time, I prayed earnestly, but it seemed those prayers went nowhere, and then a voice came along, whispering, “It’s too late, you’ve gone too far, you can’t be saved!”

Along with this came a sense of God’s justice that was startling: not justice in the punitive sense, but the justice of rejected love. Never had I felt such despair

and hopelessness, and terrible was the temptation to give up. The darkness and pressure were intense beyond words.

However, it was in the darkness that a glimmer of light shone through; it was the light of those in Scripture who held on and refused to let go of the Lord, regardless of what they had done or how they felt. These were the ones who prevailed!

It seemed that in every case, those who gave up and walked away were left hopeless.

So, I continued to pray, even though I didn’t feel like it. Even though it seemed futile and I felt nothing, yet I held on in prayer anyway, choosing to serve God regardless of what happened to me.

It was then the darkness finally parted, and the sense of the Spirit of the Lord returned. Afterward, I learned that this experience is similar to what many of God’s people will pass through in the last days.

It is true that we all have made mistakes; however, as the darkness of the time of trouble descends, there will be a sense of the withdrawal of the Spirit of God from our world. Satan will throw his darkness around God’s people, reminding them of their sins and urging them to give up!

It is then that God’s people must hold on, though they don’t feel anything, though it seems hopeless, and though it feels like their past sins have cut them off from God. That will be the time to hold on anyway, for that is true faith. It is only this type of faith (holding on to the righteousness of Christ, even when you don’t feel anything nor sense His presence) that brings sweet victory in the end.

It is truly the experience of Jacob, who also learned what it means to hold on anyway.

One day, I received a text message from a distraught individual. It said:

“Could you please pray, pray, pray, for my dad. He said God told him he’s lost. He started crying last night telling me about it. I asked, are you sure that’s what he was telling you and he said yes that he



knows. But he had stopped praying quite a while back and is not reading the Bible. I'm not sure what happened.

"And could you please pray for me as well? I kinda gave up the past couple of weeks myself. I got so overwhelmed and stopped praying. I have not went one night without praying for many years, and now it's been a couple of weeks. I've tried to a few times but it's like I don't even know what to say now. No words will come. I even had a dream the other night I was in hell and the only person left. Usually dreams of this nature upset me so very bad, but this time it did not.

"How can a person that's so indifferent be saved? I don't want to be lost, but I'm to the point that being saved is too hard for me, and in the situation I'm in I feel it's impossible for me. I have no one around me that wants to be saved, no one that wants to even know Jesus. I feel there's way too many things wrong in my life that I've avoided much too long to fix and I just feel I can't do it. I think that's why I've given up.

"Satan has gotten the best of me and the sad thing is I don't much care anymore. I want to care, and I want to know Jesus and be saved and help others, but I just can't get there. Maybe God just don't want me there. I doubt that's true but I can't figure out why he's not helping more. I think he's taken what spirit I did have away from me. And how can a person ask for it back that is indifferent?

"How can a person pray from the heart if the feeling's not there? How can a person be sincere with God when they are not sincere? All those things have to come from God, and if I don't mean it when I pray, what good does it even do to pray?"

Can you hear the agony in this cry as Satan's darkness is surrounding them?

In that darkness, the same answer rings true: hold on to God anyway, re-

gardless of your mistakes, feelings, or past behaviors. That is what Jacob did and what we are to do as well.

Job expressed similar sentiments when he said:

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."—Job 13:15

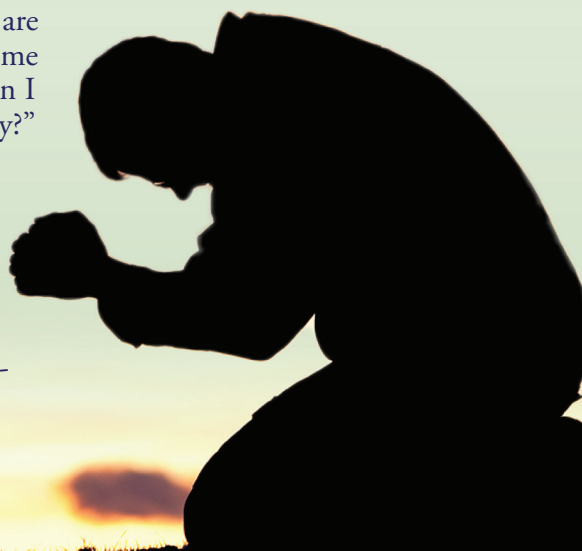
Holding on to Christ: how precious it is. Yet, how few have experienced the life-changing faith as did both Jacob and Job. It is that type of faith (holding on) that looks away from our unworthiness and casts everything onto Christ, which brings victory in the end.

On the cross, Jesus did not "feel" the hope of coming forth from the tomb; He did not feel saved. In fact, I dare say, He felt lost, like the lost sinner would feel from the withdrawal of God's presence. We hear this in His cry, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

You and I cannot understand the horrific sense of Christ's agony. It is truly the cry of the lost, for the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit leaves an infinite void that nothing can fill. Therefore, the Book of Psalms, chapter 51, says:

"Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me." (Verse 11)

In the final shaking of God's church, we find that His chosen people must learn what it means to stand and hold on, regardless of their feelings.



Listen to what we find recorded in the book *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume One, Page 179-181:

"I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken. Some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, were pleading with God. Their countenances were pale, and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness were expressed in their countenances, while large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God's approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them."

Notice this occurs during the time when the church is shaken, prior to the outpouring of the Latter Rain. The language used to describe the experience sounds much like the time of Jacob's trouble during the falling of the plagues, but it isn't. This gives us some idea of how intense the test is for God's people, prior to the Latter Rain.

And continuing:

"Evil angels crowded around them, pressing their darkness upon them, to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and they distrust God and next murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. . . .

"Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. . . .

"My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The

company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet. . . .

"Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven. . . .

"The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. . . . The careless and indifferent, who did not join those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, but their numbers were immediately made up by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. . . .

"I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. . . . I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered: 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'"

In this description of the shaking, we find that it is those who continually look to Christ, trusting His righteousness regardless of their feelings, who go through to the end. These have learned what it means to cling by faith and to hold on anyway.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was operating a mission college in Friedensau, Germany, shortly after World War I. From this place, missionaries were being sent throughout Europe.

One day, however, a dreadful discovery was made: there would be no coal for the coming school year! There was both a shortage of coal in the country and a shortage of funds on hand at the school, and without coal, the school could not keep the students warm in the cold winters. There seemed to be no alternative but to call a board meeting and vote to close God's school.

TELLER

It was with heavy hearts that those in charge decided to hold the meeting. Everyone knew what the outcome would be, and gloom settled over the beautiful campus as faculty and students thought of the great blow the work of God was about to receive. Friedensau had been the pride of its constituency, and only the books of Heaven contained a true report of the institution's noble and far-reaching influence.

Conspicuous by his absence at this deliberation was the business manager . . . who after much wrestling with God and with a prayer in his heart, had left the campus early that morning for Magdeburg. Upon arriving, he visited one of the banks in that city. With his faith in the overruling providence of God, Pastor Vitins had brought his last American money, five hundred dollars. He knew full well that he could get coal for every cent of this much-sought-after currency, but there was one great snag in his scheme: at the rate of exchange, it would take exactly ten times as many dollars as he had to purchase a year's supply of coal for Friedensau. Before this could be possible, the German mark would have to drop to one-tenth of its value, and there was no earthly indication that this was going to take place within the foreseeable future, much less before the close of the exchange on this day.

Promptly at nine o'clock, Pastor Vitins flashed the greenbacks under the eager eyes of one of the bank's tellers. The exchange rate of the previous day was offered to him. "I'll try again later," was his polite response.

After the longest sixty minutes in his life, our brother approached the teller again, who said, "The mark has fallen 50 percent. Will you sell now?" The pastor replied, "Sorry, not interested. I'll wait till the dollar stands ten times above yesterday's rate." The teller told his preacher friend that his hope was foolhardy, but to his great disappointment, the pastor refused to part with the money.

After forty-five minutes more, the dollar stood at six times the previous day's exchange. The mark had hit skid row all right, and the great question was: how long would it skid, and why was it skidding just today, and so much?

Only God's servant knew why, and he continued to refuse to sell. The dollar was rising steadily all morning. The teller tried several times to buy Pastor Vitins' five hundred dollars, but every effort was met with the same reply: "I'm waiting till the rate is ten times as favorable as it was yesterday."

The fingers of the venerable clock showed ten minutes to twelve, and the dollar was nine and a half times above yesterday's rate. The frantic teller all but got down on his shaky knees. "Please, will you make the exchange now?" he asked.

The pastor's five hundred U.S. dollars were now worth four thousand, seven hundred and fifty marks, only two hundred and fifty less than needed.

Pastor Vitins still refused, and then the teller said, "Sir, are you aware that the exchange will close in the next ten minutes?"

"Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God."

Great Controversy, Page 621.



This may be your last opportunity. Please make the exchange."

Pastor Vitins' decision was, "I will wait." He was holding on even at the very last minute.

Then at 11:55 a.m., a flash! The exchange rate was ten times as favorable as yesterday! Now our brother handed over his dollars, and the teller as eagerly gave his signature.

Using the bank's phone, the coal was immediately ordered at the rate of exchange of that very minute, and Frieden-sau was saved!

The noon recess came, and all business stopped for lunch.

Out of curiosity, the happy business manager decided to observe the fluctuations during the afternoon. To be sure, the mark was climbing again, quickly and steadily, to where it had stood the day before. Speculators were disappointed and regretted not having sold when the dollar

had reached the day's peak at 11:55 a.m. Later, a careful survey of all Germany showed that the only transaction made anywhere at the ten-to-one rate had been made by the business manager to save God's school. Pastor Vitins had learned what it means to hold on anyway!***

As we come down to the end of time, God's people must learn the same lesson to hold on to Christ regardless of past mistakes or feelings.

"Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God—how few know what it is! How few have ever had their souls drawn out after God with intensity of desire until every power is on the stretch. When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God." *Great Controversy*, page 621

We are told that one of Satan's devices, in the end, is to tempt the people of God to take their eyes off Christ and look at their own unworthiness. Therefore, God's people must be aware of such attacks and purposely trust in an all-seeing God, focusing on His Worthiness and not their own; this is the only way to hold on in the days ahead.

"Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." —Isaiah 27:5

Is it your desire to hold on to Christ anyway, regardless of what comes in the future? Christ is waiting to give you such a victory. Why not ask Him for it today.

* "'Miracle at Mageburg' by Paul K. Freiworth, reprinted by permission of Joe Wheeler, editor/compiler of *My Favorite Miracle Stories* and Pacific Press Publishing Association."

** *Beware of Angels* by Roger Morneau. Pacific Press Publishing Association.

*** "Credentials Please" It Must Have Been An Angel, Marjorie Lewis Lloyd. Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1980. You may order copies of these books at adventistbookcenter.com

**White Horse Media
is a faith ministry.
Donations are appreciated.**

**White Horse Media
P.O. Box 130
Priest River, ID 83856
1-800-782-4253**

www.whitehorsemedia.com

For more end-time insights,
sign up for our free e-newsletter
on our website.

**Also Available:
The Latter Rain Series
Study Guides**



Additional recommended reading:

- *The Sanctuary in Heaven and in Your Heart*
- *The Sanctuary, the Atonement and the Fit Man*

**Download from our website
or call for printed versions.**