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What Does *Only Begotten* Mean?

Virtually all Christians give assent to the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; however, most theologians do not accept that Jesus is the literal begotten Son of God. They believe, instead, that He is a coequal and co-eternal *person* of the Godhead and not the literal offspring of the Father. They say *son* is to be understood as a role or as a symbolic position Jesus assumed to help humanity understand the love and sacrifice of God for man through using an endearing human relationship. Is this really what the Bible teaches?

God declared Jesus to be His Son: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). In

the most well-known Bible verse ever, Jesus declared that He was the “only begotten Son” of God (John 3:16). Under oath, Jesus said that He was the Son of God. (See Matthew 26:62–64 and Mark 14:62.) The apostles proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. (See Matthew 16:16; John 1:49, 20:31; Acts 8:37, 9:20; Romans 1:4; etc.)

If the plan of salvation is supposed to be simple enough for a young child to understand, can we honestly accept the testimony of God, Christ, and the apostles, or must we put some mystical interpretation upon these words to make them mean something that they do not say? The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that Jesus is not really the Son

... IN THIS ISSUE ...

LIVING FOR JESUS | P. 7
IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

A LIVING SACRIFICE | P. 8
WATER: A TREASURE...

FROM THE CHURCHES | P. 10

MINISTRY & EVANGELISM | P. 13

HISTORY IN ADVANCE | P. 14
CHAINS OF PROPHECY

LITTLE HEAVENS | P. 18
LEAD ON SOFTLY

TO THE FLOCK | P. 20
THE PEACE THAT COMES...

IN THE GARDEN | P. 22
SOIL DEGRADATION

TO THE YOUNG | P. 23
LITTLE MISSIONARY

HEALTHY OPTIONS | P. 24
CASSAVA PASTA

of God; instead, he is a coequal with God, who plays the role of a son. God plays the role of a father, and the Holy Spirit plays the role of an actualizer.

According to the Trinitarian doctrine, when the Bible says that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” it really means that God shared His fellow or pal with mankind. According to this teaching, Jesus did not call God His Father because He was His Father but rather “to bring us into a close and personal relationship with God” (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* p. 20). According to the doctrine of the Trinity, “The Father seems to act as *source*, the Son as *mediator*, and the Spirit as *actualizer* or *applier*” (*Ibid.*, p. 24; emphasis supplied).

The false theory of the Trinity teaches that the relationship of God and Christ is not literal but one of role playing or acting. The Greek word translated *hypocrite* (ὑποκριτής *hupokritēs*) in New Testament texts, such as Matthew 7:5 and Matthew 23:13–15, means *actor*, *pretender*, or a *dissembler*! The concept of theatrics is also condemned in the strongest terms by the Spirit of Prophecy as being an invention of Satan, something that ministers should not use, nor should be found in our Sabbath Schools or in any of our evangelistic efforts. (See *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 134.2; *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 23.3; *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 253.1; and *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 9, page 109.3.)

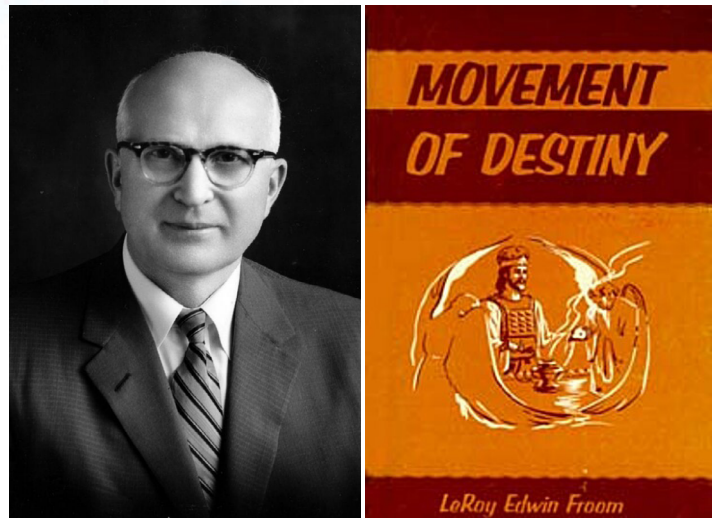
The false theory that the relationship of God and Christ is not literal is arrived at through the use of a spiritual application to the terms *Father* and *Son*.

The false theory of the Trinity teaches that the relationship of God and Christ is not literal but one of role playing or acting.

The late LeRoy Froom, historian and apologist for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, wrote his book *Movement of Destiny* with the purpose, among others, of promoting the Trinitarian doctrine. Froom used a spiritual interpretation to state that when the Bible says Jesus is the Son of God, He is not really the Son of God. Note Froom’s reasoning:

“The term ‘son’ is widely used in both the Old and the New Testaments wholly apart from the idea of generation or priority. Thus, Paul makes a typical reference to ‘sons of

disobedience’ (Ephesians 2:2; 5:6, R.S.V.). In fact, the term son was one of the most common Biblical ways of *identifying the characteristics of a personality*.



“In Biblical terminology *son*, or *sons*, was constantly used to indicate the distinguishing character—such as sons of Zion, sons of Belial, sons of God, sons of men, sons of light, sons of the prophets, sons of the stranger, sons of the alien, sons of thunder, sons of the covenant. Christ said to a certain perfidious group, ‘Ye are of your father the devil’ (John 8:44). The term son was therefore used to denote the *characteristic trait*, the *distinctive attribute*. It signified the predominant character or intrinsic nature of a person” (LeRoy Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, p. 301; emphasis in original).

Froom placed a “spiritual” application on the term son. While we acknowledged that the term son does in many places denote characteristic traits, this is not the complete picture. It cannot accurately be said that the term son is used *wholly apart from the idea of generation or priority*. There are indeed symbols and figures used in the Bible. The seventh chapter of

Daniel portrays four different beasts coming out of the sea (Daniel 7:3). These beasts are noted to be symbolic of “kings” or “kingdoms” (Daniel 7:17, 23). However, the biblical student must be careful not to put a spiritual meaning where it is not intended. For example, Jesus claimed to be the “light of the world” (John 8:12). If we couple this with Genesis 1:3, where we read that on the first day God spoke and said, “Let there be light,” we might be led to believe, along with the Jehovah’s Witnesses, that Christ was the first and highest of all created beings. Such an improper interpretation would be a very poor conclusion. The ques-

tion now arises, is there a safe rule of interpretation to use? The Reformers and Advent pioneers used a very safe rule of interpretation. As Ellen White noted:

“The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed” (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 598.3).

“The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.” ... If the language is plain and simple, accept the Bible for what it says. If there is reason to believe that the terms are symbolic, then the Bible will supply the key for understanding that symbol.

This rule does not deny the use of symbols, but it simply says that if the language is plain and simple, accept the Bible for what it says. If there is reason to believe that the terms are symbolic, then the Bible will supply the key for understanding that symbol, as it does with the beasts and kingdoms in Daniel.

With this simple plan, may we leave the thoughts of the theologians behind for a moment and examine what the Word of God says? The term “only begotten” is from the Greek word μονογενής (*monogenēs*). This is a compound word from two Greek words. The first word, μόνος (*monos*), means one or only one, and the second word, γένος (*genos*), means kindred or offspring. Together they mean only born or “only begotten,” as translated in the King James Version of the Bible. If this is so, why do many new translations fail to use the terms “only begotten” or “only born” in John 3:16? Instead, they use the terms “unique” or “one and only.” Let us examine this matter carefully for there is much more to this than most people realize.

Writing in the January 2007 issue of *Reflections*, the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez defines *monogenēs* as *unique*. In doing this, he is following the lead of many other theologians who also define *monogenēs* as unique or only one.

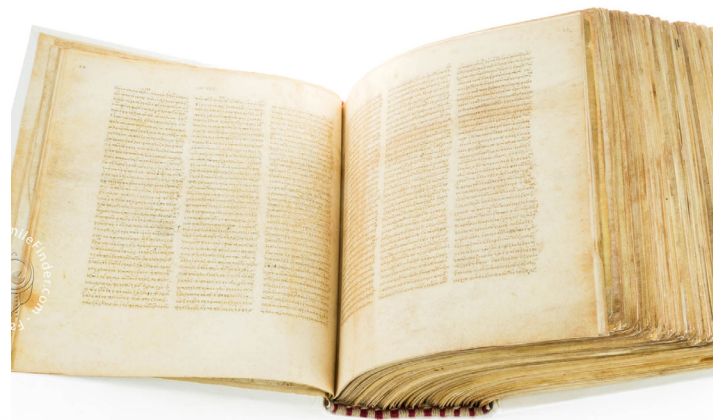
To justify defining *monogenēs* as unique, Rodríguez makes an appeal to the Greek text of John 1:18. Before we look at the Greek of John 1:18, we should note that there are two main families of Greek texts that are used most often to translate the New Testament.

The first set of texts is known as the *Textus Receptus* or the *Received Text*. The *Textus Receptus* was the Greek New Testament used by the Reformers. The different copies (literally thousands of manuscripts and portions thereof) compared quite closely one to another and the *Textus Receptus* was so well accepted that it became known as the *Received Text*.

The second set of texts is composed of two manuscripts: The *Vaticanus* and the *Sinaiticus*. Regarding the *Vaticanus* manuscript, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* states: “VATICANUS, CODEX is said to be the oldest extant vellum manuscript. It and the Codex Sinaiticus are the two oldest uncial manuscripts. They were probably written in the fourth century. The Vaticanus was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome

by Pope Nicolas V in 1448, its previous history being unknown” (Article entitled “Vaticanus Codex,” reference no. 26766 in *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, softcopy of Online Bible).

It is claimed that the *Vaticanus* manuscript was written in the fourth century, but it has no known history until 1448 when it appeared in the Vatican Library at Rome! The *Sinaiticus* manuscript has a similar history, being found by Dr. Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine in 1859. Its previous history also remains unknown.



The New Testament of the *King James Version* has been translated from the *Textus Receptus*. Almost all modern translations, however, such as the NIV, ESV, NASB, and RSV, have been translated from texts based on the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts. The *Westcott-Hort Greek text* is based on these manuscripts, as is the *Novum Testamentum Graece* or the *Nestle text*.

The *Textus Receptus* was the Bible of early Eastern Christianity as well as the Bible of the Syrian Church, the Waldensian Church of northern Italy, the Gallic Church in southern France, and the Celtic Church in Scotland and Ireland. Some of the reasons the Reformers accepted the *Textus Receptus* as the basis of their translations are: 1) Their numerous copies were in agreement, 2) The *Textus Receptus* agreed with the earliest versions of the Bible—the *Peshitta* (A.D. 150) and the *Old Latin Vulgate* (A.D. 157), 3) The *Textus Receptus* agreed with the vast majority of the more than 86,000 citations from Scripture by the early church fathers, and 4) The *Textus Receptus* was not mutilated with deletions, additions, and amendments as the minority texts were.

While the *Vaticanus* and the *Sinaiticus* are claimed to be the oldest manuscripts still in existence, there is evidence that copies of the *Received Text* were in existence before the *Vaticanus* or the *Sinaiticus* supposedly existed. Benjamin Wilkinson in his book *Truth Triumphant* writes: “It is altogether too little known that the real editor of the received text was Lucian” (p. 45). Lucian lived circa A.D. 250–312.

The *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts differ in thousands of places from the *Textus Receptus*. One notable place they differ is found in John 1:18. The texts are basically the same except for one word. John 1:18 in the *Textus Receptus* includes the phrase μονογενής υἱός (*monogenēs huios*); whereas, the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts read μονογενής θεός (*monogenēs theos*).

The Textus Receptus reads only begotten son while the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts literally read only begotten god. Trinitarians using the corrupted Catholic manuscripts do not believe that there can be a begotten God; therefore, they declare that the word monogenēs must, instead, mean unique or only one.

υἱός (*huios*) is the Greek word for *son*. θεός (*theos*) is the Greek word for *God*. Thus, the *Textus Receptus* reads *only begotten son* while the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts literally read *only begotten god*. Trinitarians using the corrupted Catholic manuscripts do not believe that there can be a *begotten God*; therefore, they declare that the word *monogenēs* must, instead, mean *unique* or *only one*. The latest edition of the *New International Version* translates John 1:18 as: “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in clos-

est relationship with the Father, has made him known.” Is such a translation, however, consistent with the rest of Scripture?

Let us look at how the word *monogenēs* is used in the Bible. Does it really mean only born or only begotten? *Monogenēs* is used in reference to Jesus five times in the Bible, always by John (John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18; 1 John 4:9). The only other references are three passages in the book of Luke and a passage in Hebrews, which we shall examine shortly. I believe that an honest reading of John’s and Luke’s writings, without a preconceived notion, would lead the reader to accept them at face value. The context does not give evidence to the concept of translating *monogenēs* as one and only. Since we are looking for a usage to enlighten us on the passages from John, let us examine the three usages from Luke. The first is concerning the widow of Nain’s son:

“Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only (*monogenēs*) [‘only-begotten,’ *Rotherham translation*] son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her” (Luke 7:12).

Rodriguez in *Reflections* writes: “He is ‘the only son [*monogenēs*] of his mother.’ At first one could conclude that he is the only begotten son of the widow, but contextually that does not seem to be the case. That piece of information is not provided to establish a genealogical connection between the two [if you deny what *monogenēs* means], but

to describe the desperate situation of this lady. She was already a widow and now she lost her only child; for her there is no other like him. The usage intensifies her pathos and invites those ready to sympathize with her” (*Reflections*, January 2007, p. 7).

Actually, contextually, it is all the more compelling to define *monogenēs* as her only begotten son. If he was a unique son, she might have other sons or daughters to fall back upon in her distress. The fact that her pathos and sorrow is so great is even a stronger reason to define *monogenēs* as its structure dictates. There is no indication that *monogenēs* means anything other than only born child in Luke 7:12.

The second reference in Luke to *monogenēs* is Luke 8:42 concerning Jarius’ daughter: “For he had one only (*monogenēs*) [‘only begotten,’ *Rotherham translation*] daughter,

about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.” No indication that *monogenēs* means anything other than only born child here.

The third usage is Luke 9:38 where a man’s son was possessed with an evil spirit: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child (*monogenēs*).” Here Rodriguez admits: “... one could not totally rule out the idea of generation” (*Reflections*, January 2007, p. 7.). Rodriguez goes on to write, though, “the interest of the biblical writer is not found there but in the fact that those individuals are facing a serious painful tragedy. In that case the translation ‘unique’ is more appropriate in that it stresses the enormous magnitude of the loss. There is no other like this child/daughter; they are irreplaceable” (*Ibid.*). This logic, however, is really more powerful if this is the only begotten child of the man than if he is simply unique. There is no indication that *monogenēs* means anything other than only born child here. In each of these cases, *monogenēs* makes reference to an only born child.

Finally, we shall examine Hebrews 11:17, which Trinitarians heavily depend upon and believe wins the case for them. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (*monogenēs*).” Trinitarians note that Isaac was not Abraham’s only begotten son; he was not even Abraham’s first son. Ishmael was Abraham’s first son, and Abraham also had sons by Keturah. Does this, however, invalidate the meaning of *monogenēs*? If we read the next verse, we see a more complete picture because Paul’s thought does not end with verse 17. Reading verses 17 and 18 together in one unit as they were intended to be read, the text says:

“¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Hebrews 11:17, 18).

Isaac was Abraham’s only born child to whom the promise of the seed was made! *Monogenēs* is qualified in these verses to be limited to the son of promise. It is interesting that the very theologians who decry the proof text method in the place of higher criticism so conveniently neglect context in this vital verse!

Clearly, the Greek word *monogenēs* means only born. Christ is the literal offspring of the Father and this certainly agrees with Proverbs 8 where, speaking under the symbol of *wisdom*, Christ declares:

“²²The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. ²³I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. ²⁴When there were no depths, I was brought forth [Hebrew: born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. ²⁵Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth [Hebrew: born]” (Proverbs 8:22–25).

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An English translation from the *Septuagint* for verse 25 says, “Before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me.” Some have said that this verse cannot be referring to Jesus Christ, but in *The Signs of the Times*, we read:

“Through Solomon Christ declared: ‘The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth’” (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900).

God through Christ brought all things into existence “visible and invisible” (Colossians 1:16). This includes the concepts of *time* and *space*; therefore, in the sense that Christ is the author of time, Christ has truly existed throughout all time with God. (See M. L. Andreasen, *The Sabbath*, pages 54, 55.)

Satan is behind the false view that Jesus is not the Son of

God because he does not want you to know, believe, and dwell in God's love. John writes: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Satan knows that we love God as a result of our understanding and appreciating God's love for us (1 John 4:19). He also knows what 1 John 4:9 says: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Satan will do anything he can to keep the truth of God's great love from us, and he has invented a false understanding of *monogenēs* to keep us from comprehending God's love. If *monogenēs* means unique or special, then the Bible writers did not understand it. Why do we dare redefine the Greek language to teach a doctrine of Satan? Let us accept the Scriptures as God designed us to do, and with that understanding, receive His great love for us in the gift of His only begotten Son! Ω

WRITTEN BY Allen Stump

Continued from page 19 (Lead On Softly)

The gentle character of the Divine Shepherd, as touchingly portrayed in Isaiah 40:11, speaks to my maternal heart in a most poignant way. How tender is our Saviour! How infinitely gracious! "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall *gather the lambs with his arm*, and carry them in his bosom, and shall *gently lead those that are with young*" (Isaiah 40:11).

May the father of each household that professes the truth of the third angel's message demonstrate in their own lives the power of the truth that sanctifies.

"The father is to be a tender shepherd, drawing his children to Christ with the words of love, laboring untiringly for the erring" (Ellen White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 576.1). Ω

WRITTEN BY Marrah Sims

News and Announcements

1889 HISTORIC SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS PHILIPPINES
CAMP MEETING

On the Verge of A Stupendous Crisis

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen,...thinking men and women of all classes...recognize...that the world is **on the verge of a stupendous crisis**. {PK 537.1}



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For more information contact: 0917-301-2857 (Sims), 0927-875-6988 (Yeyen), or 0915-467-0908 (Sam).

In Everything Give Thanks

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

How many times have you said thank you today? Have you thanked God that you have the ability to get up and walk, to sit or sleep, to eat or drink, to speak or share, to experience happiness or pain, to work or live to see another day? Not everyone enjoys all of these privileges, nor do they all have access to your opportunities.

One time, when I was very sick and couldn't walk or even move without pain, I looked out the window and observed people going about their day, freely walking, running, and doing what they were doing, all with ease. I couldn't help but think to myself, “How privileged they are to walk as they please and to move freely without pain!” When strong, I had never thought of appreciating the ability to move with such freedom. It wasn't until I experienced the helplessness to perform even the simplest tasks that I truly became grateful for health, strength, and all the smallest blessings in its train.

We owe to God all that we are and all that we are able to do. There is not a single capability or blessing we could possess if God did not grant it to us. From the littlest strength to the greatest ability, from the air we breath to the safety we enjoy—these are all blessings we owe to our heavenly Father, whose love and mercy extends unto everlasting. And so He has the right to receive our gratitude. He loves to hear us give thanks, testify to His goodness and love, and appreciate all that He has done for us.

But did you know that ingratitude is actually one of the sins that called for vengeance upon the people living in Noah's day? “God did not condemn the antediluvians for eating and drinking . . . Their sin consisted in taking these gifts [the fruits of the earth] without gratitude to the Giver, and debasing themselves by indulging appetite without restraint” (Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 101.2).

Prophecy tells us that “as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man” (Luke 17:26). “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be



lovers of their own selves . . . unthankful, unholy” (2 Timothy 3:1, 2). What we have today is an entitled generation! No wonder that both the Old and New Testaments enjoin us many times to possess a grateful heart.

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 118:1). “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4). “In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6). “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

But Job asked, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil” (Job 2:10)? Should we only be thankful for the good and resent the difficult? The injunction is to give thanks in everything, whether good or bad, for God wants us to have a thankful heart. “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2-3).

It may not seem like it while we are experiencing it, but even the difficult, the painful, the unpleasant are actually for our good. “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15). And so, in everything, give thanks. Ω

WRITTEN BY Samaritana Malinay

Water: A Treasure for Our Health

Do you regularly experience thirst, dry mouth and lips, reduced saliva production, dry skin, tiredness and drowsiness, headaches, difficulty concentrating, confusion or disorientation, dark urine, and muscle pain or cramps? If so, you might be experiencing signs of dehydration.

Water is essential to life. Today, science is confirming what our ancestors knew intuitively: pure water plays a vital role in our health.

In the Bible, Jesus Christ described Himself as “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Water is presented as one of God’s greatest gifts. The Lord’s messenger tells us:

“In health and in sickness, pure water is one of heaven’s choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulation of the blood” (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 237.1).

Pure water to drink and fresh air to breathe invigorate the vital organs, purify the blood, and help nature in her task of overcoming the bad conditions of the system. Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues.

“Pure water to drink and fresh air to breathe invigorate the vital organs, purify the blood, and help nature in her task of overcoming the bad conditions of the system” (Ellen White, *Healthful Living*, p. 187.1). “Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues” (*Ibid.* p. 187.2).

Drinking water regularly is recommended to prevent illness and relieve physical pain. Its external application in



the form of baths, showers, or compresses is also recommended to relieve various ailments.

Today, biomedical science confirms divine inspiration. Numerous studies show that regular hydration with water plays a key role in maintaining the body’s health.

Here are some of the main benefits:

1. Stimulates vital functions - Water is essential for the proper functioning of all physiological processes. It transports nutrients and waste products throughout the body, irrigates tissues, and lubricates joints. Insufficient hydration, however slight, reduces physical and cognitive performance by 10–20%.
2. Improves digestion - Water aids digestion by liquefying the food bolus and stimulating intestinal motricity. Adequate hydration prevents constipation. However, to avoid diluting gastric juices, it is not advisable to drink during meals.
3. Detoxifies the body - Water transports metabolic waste to the kidneys, liver, and lungs for elimination. Drinking water regularly eliminates toxins accumulated in the body.
4. Reduces the risk of kidney stones - Sufficient hydration dilutes urine and prevents the formation of stones in the kidneys and urinary tract.

5. Prevents constipation - Water stimulates intestinal transit and facilitates evacuation, reducing the risk of constipation.
6. Supports the cardiovascular system - Water thins the blood and helps the heart pump more efficiently. This benefits blood and lymph circulation.
7. Nourishes skin and hair - Water brings suppleness and radiance to skin as well as shine and volume to hair.
8. Stimulates metabolism - Adequate hydration supports metabolism and thermogenesis, facilitating fat loss.
9. Strengthens the immune system - Water transports white blood cells and activates T-cell production, reinforcing natural defenses.
10. Soothes the nervous system - Water regulates body temperature and hydrates the brain, promoting physical and mental relaxation.

Water can also be applied to the body in a variety of ways. Its external uses often provide additional benefits.

- ▶ Baths and showers stimulate blood and lymph circulation, relieve muscle tension, reduce inflammation, and calm the nervous system.
- ▶ Compresses soothe muscle and joint pain, relieve headaches, and provide physical and mental relaxation.
- ▶ Steam baths powerfully decongest the respiratory tract and effectively relieve colds, sinusitis, bronchitis, and lung problems.
- ▶ According to the principles of natural hydrotherapy advocated by Kneipp and E.G. White's health writings, properly applied pure water is one of the best remedies for many ailments. It stimulates the body's natural self-healing reactions and often makes it possible to do without medication.

The things of nature are God's blessings, provided to give health to body, mind, and soul. They are given to the well to keep them well and to the sick to make them well. Connected with water treatment, they are more effective in restoring health than all the drug medication in the world.

"The things of nature are God's blessings, provided to give health to body, mind, and soul. They are given to the well to keep them well and to the sick to make them well. Connected with water treatment, they are more effective in restoring health than all the drug medication in the world"

(Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 76.2).

Today, modern medicine increasingly recognizes the health benefits of water. Many professionals recommend it as a complementary therapy, particularly for stress, digestive disorders, skin diseases, or ENT problems. Used properly, it often relieves symptoms and without side effects.



There's no doubt that water plays a vital role in maintaining physical, mental, and emotional balance. Simple as it may be, it is one of the best pillars of preventive health. Rather than systematically resorting to medication, we recommend starting by properly hydrating our bodies with pure water.

This simple habit can often prevent many ailments and naturally strengthen the body's defenses.

In conclusion, water is truly *God's gift*, a treasure for our daily health. Whether drunk, used externally, or as a complementary therapy, it powerfully stimulates the body's self-healing capacities. In a society where the over-consumption of synthetic products prevails, it's time to rediscover the benefits of water as a gift from the heavens and to give it back the primordial place it deserves in our lifestyle.

Do not wait until you're thirsty before drinking, as this means your body is already in a state of dehydration. Stay properly hydrated throughout the day to maintain your health, which is God's blessing to you. Drinking water regularly, as a preventive measure, helps maintain the *temple* that is our body and supports both our physical and mental well-being.

So, by choosing to hydrate properly, taking care of the body and mind God has entrusted to us, we glorify Him who created us and placed us on earth. Ω

WRITTEN BY Corisande Facorat

Waldensian Center

To raise up a rightly trained army of gospel workers and missionaries, the Waldensian Center (WC) commenced another year of training on October 4, 2023. Several participants in the training already hold leadership roles in their local churches, yet they recognize the significance of further training to enhance their effectiveness in carrying out the work of God. Below are the testimonies of some of the current trainees who have shared their learning experiences and the blessings they have received from being a part of this training.

Unexpected Blessings

TESTIMONY BY Shiela Marie Avanceña

I praise and thank the Lord for the opportunity He has given me to participate in the WC Training School, which further enriches my spiritual growth. Despite having attended many trainings since my youth, I still feel a sense of spiritual deficiency.

In 2022, my husband and I made the decision to attend the training; however, I was having second thoughts because I thought it might be difficult for me as a parent. On the other hand, I saw that the training would greatly benefit my husband and my child, so I firmly decided to go and complete a year of training, thinking that I would just sit in.

As our departure from Pangil drew near, I felt a mix of emotions. There was sadness at the thought of leaving the brethren behind, coupled with excitement about meeting new people and having new experiences. Predominantly, however, I felt nervous.

Several months before our departure, I realized that this change would benefit not only my husband and my child but also myself. I saw that I needed to adjust my lifestyle, including the way I dress and, more importantly, my diet. Additionally, I realized that I needed to gain confidence and improve my English skills to better understand the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy.

When the training began in October, I struggled somewhat during my first week. There were many days when I couldn't attend meetings, but I am grateful to the Lord



because He helped me, seeing that I needed to learn the lessons being taught.

One of the things I have learned here is music discernment, when we studied the principles of music. I used to think that any religious song was fine to sing, but I've come to realize that's not correct. We need to first consider whether it glorifies God and to be cautious because Satan may use our voices.

Another thing I have learned is the importance of taking care of our health. I used to believe that being a vegetarian, drinking plenty of water, avoiding harmful habits, getting enough rest, and adhering to dress reform were the keys to good health. But here I have learned that many of the chemicals commonly found in everyday products can have detrimental effects on our bodies, gradually causing damage. This includes the soaps, shampoos, and perfumes we frequently use which often contain high levels of chemicals capable of harming our organs. The same applies to cosmetics, lotions, and other body-care products which I discovered can increase the risk of cancer. In the past, I regarded individuals who do not use these products as *extreme*, but I am now grateful to have gained an understanding, with the help of the Lord, of why such products should be replaced with natural alternatives.

I have also learned about the harmful effects of radiation on our bodies. Although it may be difficult to avoid these

things, I believe that our God has abundant blessings and is ready to help us in all things. I praise Him for giving us this knowledge to take care of our bodies, which are His temple.

One of the most important things I've learned here is the weight of responsibility of a minister and leader. I've come to realize that there's still much more for me to learn. This includes the importance of being firm in every decision and every truth we uphold so as to become an effective leader for future generations.

During our time here, I have had many experiences that have strengthened my faith in God. One notable experience was visiting people in distant homes to minister to the sick and to share His word. Additionally, I thank the Lord for the well-rounded training we've received which has improved our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

I am deeply grateful to the Lord because what I initially thought would just be a sit-in for me has turned into something much more meaningful. By listening to the subjects and lessons here, I've come to understand the importance of knowing and learning these things, and so I have become a true student. I also thank Him for helping me learn to avoid using cooking oil, table sugar, and other items that I once thought I couldn't give up. With His help and grace, I have been able to overcome them. I also thank Pastor David and Sis. Marrah for letting me use their other room, where I am able to attend classes while taking care of my child and putting her to sleep. I am truly thankful to the Lord for blessing them with understanding and kindness.

I wholeheartedly thank God for providing abundantly for our needs at WC—water, food, health, and strength, as well as His rich grace and mercy extended to all of us, especially to me. I pray that the rest of our time here brings more blessings, helping us trainees to reach greater heights of perfection and to draw closer to God. Ω

My Learning Experience at Waldensian Center

TESTIMONY BY Krazel Montac

My name is Krazel B. Montac, a wife from Mutia, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. Let me share a bit about my life and my experience here at WC.

I was raised in Bukidnon as a Seventh-day Adventist, but to be honest, my religious devotion was superficial. I never placed much importance on the Sabbath. I would attend

church Sabbath morning and that was about the extent of my Sabbath observance. My family wasn't strict about observing the Sabbath either.

When we moved to Mutia, I began attending a church outside the mainstream SDA, where I heard the minister teach about the One True God. At first, I didn't give much importance to it because I had never heard it preached in the mainstream church. But gradually, I came to understand the One True God doctrine.

Then I married a missionary who had also embraced the same teaching. Not too long after our marriage, our church in Mutia faced trials, including division and separation, and that was my first painful experience as a church member.



As a parent, I experienced the most intense emotional pain when my newborn died. It was unexpected, and I felt as though I had died along with him. I wanted to understand the reason, but I didn't allow myself to question the Lord. Instead, I held the thought in my heart that the Lord must have another plan for me and my husband. My desire to see my son in heaven has become one of the factors motivating me to serve the Lord. It's not easy to lose a loved one, but it's not a reason to lose the will to live because our Lord is always ready to help us bear our trials.

When my husband decided to train at WC, I didn't accompany him because I initially didn't approve of his decision as the training didn't seem significant to me. But I gradually began to understand its importance, so I decided to join him a month after.

During my stay here, I've had to make many adjustments, particularly with food, but I've understood the great importance of the health reform message and other related matters. However, sometimes, the thought of returning home crosses my mind because I feel tired, especially of studying.

Every morning, except on the Sabbath, we do outdoor activities, such as planting and other necessary tasks. In the afternoon, we have our class time. To be honest, I find the lessons challenging because I haven't studied for ten years since leaving school at the age of 19.

Here, I have also understood the differences between worldly education and the true education that the Lord desires for His people, and I feel a great lack within myself. Despite the challenges I've faced during my training here, it was the right decision, and I am thankful I made it. I have been greatly blessed, and I have had many first-time experiences.

I acknowledge that there is still much for me to learn, and I hope that my training here will not only benefit myself but also others whom we have opportunity to minister to, who need to know the truth. I hope my husband and I will continue to serve the Lord together in true service after our training. Thanks to the teachers for their dedication, enduring patience, and hard work, and thanks be to our living God! Ω

Visiting Panay

REPORT FROM Gideon Avanceña

As a part of the training program at WC and to provide regular pastoral visits to the churches and isolated members, WC has scheduled visits by some of the staff and missionaries in training to many of the churches and isolated members. Brother Gideon Avanceña shares the following experience of their recent trip to visit members on the island of Panay. (Editor)

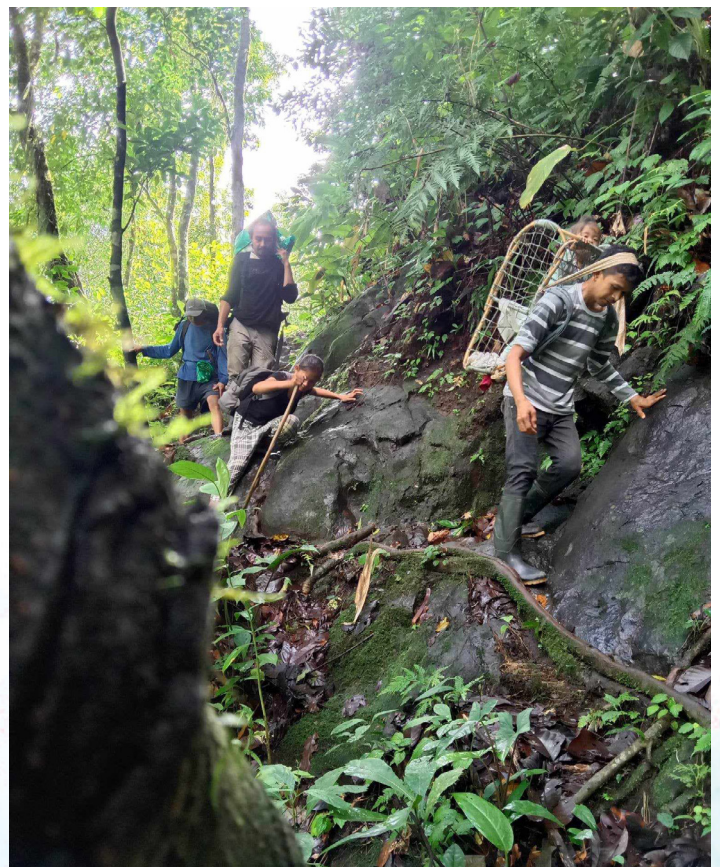
Last December, my wife, my child, Bro. Sharnel, and I had a joyful, yet challenging, experience visiting our brother Al and his family in Kalibo, Aklan. From Negros Oriental, we travelled for three days and then walked eight to ten hours for over thirty kilometers to reach their home nestled amidst the mountains. The trek to their place, situated where the Aklan River, the province's longest river, originates was arduous due to narrow paths, dense patches of tall grass, steep terrain, and muddy pathways. Walking through water sometimes up to the thighs, we crossed back and forth across rivers perhaps twenty times. When it rains, you just have to wait for the water level to subside.

Recognizing their needs, we had the opportunity to help construct a restroom, make a compost pit, and administer remedies to Sister Dianne and her baby. We held the Sabbath worship there and also encouraged them to per-

severe in their country living journey. They were grateful that they were visited despite the distance. Brother Al and his wife also share a desire to engage in the Lord's work.



We also had the opportunity to visit some of their neighbors. Their community is a small barangay (*village*) with a school and a small church. Almost the entire population identifies as mainstream Seventh-day Adventists. We perceive a potential opportunity for further evangelistic efforts there should the Lord open the way once more. We look forward to visiting again in the future and seek to minister to the community more. Ω



Ministry and Evangelism

Ministry and evangelism can take on many forms. If we will only give it thought and prayer, God can open up many doors for us to reach out to others.

Evangelism looks like a water well at a sanitarium established years back. Many people travel eight kilometers one way on foot to get water. They've done that for years, but now the local one true God establishment has the water of life for them and for their surrounding neighbors as well. Yes!

Local Ministry

Whether meeting with the local pastor in the small town where I live or using the tractor, trailer, truck, tools, and a few rusty skills to work with neighbors in their homes, in their yards, on their vehicles, etc., God has always given me something to do in ministry. It's difficult to be without something to do.

Ministry in Ethiopia

For years, I was working with "T," an educated and studious Ethiopian. He didn't have much to show for his labors but the faithfulness of his wife and small children. Then he held a camp meeting for some of his friends, where he taught the truths he loves about God and the true Seventh-day Adventist message. His friends were inspired, but shortly after, he was kicked out of Seventh-day Adventist pulpits. People started asking questions as to why he wasn't able to preach any longer. Young people began to inquire, elders of churches began to accept his teaching, and people started listening and sharing.

One day, he was at a location for a train or bus and saw a man who had been his pastor many years before when he was a child. He ran and stopped him, they ate together, and "T" opened his mouth with clear tones brought forth by the Father through His Son. The pastor, "G," was elated. He had learned those things many years before but had never been able to find anyone else who shared his beliefs or thoughts.

They started working together and preached the messages



of the Father and Son in a camp meeting. A video interview I had done with him was released the Sunday immediately following the camp meeting. Just four days later, "G" was called by the conference and told that there was no more place in the conference for him because he had been in a video with Daniel Mesa!

He had been well respected by the pastors and conference workers as a professor and outstanding representative in ministry. Now he and "T" are having a difficult time keeping up with all those who are interested in learning! The work there has exploded!

Ministry Comes with a Cost

A Bishop in Kenya

A Pentecostal bishop in Kenya who accepted the Sabbath and began sharing it with his seven congregations was left with only twelve members after he introduced the Sabbath question to his congregations. But since then, he has been getting inquiries from several of his (former?) members about what the Bible really does say.

Jailed for Preaching without a Permit

A believer in the truth about God who is an active minister in India has been put into jail for preaching without a permit. While doing ministry with three other pastors in Nepal, he was caught back in India with those three other pastors and has been denied a hearing three times. This must be very difficult not only for him but for his wife and their two boys. Evangelism will be expensive in the future. Ω

WRITTEN BY Daniel Mesa

Chains of Prophecy

In 1889, Seventh-day Adventists published a statement of the principles which were believed by the majority of Adventists. Many of the points deal with prophecy, including point #7, but the emphasis in #7 is on the “**chains of prophecy**.”

“VII – That the world’s history from specified dates in the past, the rise and fall of empires, and the chronological succession of events down to the setting up of God’s everlasting kingdom, are outlined in numerous great **chains of prophecy**; and that these prophecies are now all fulfilled except the closing scenes” (General Conference of SDA, *Fundamental Principles* 1889, p. 148.5).

What distinguishes a chain of prophecy from any other prophecy? A chain is a series of links all connected together; so, a chain of prophecy is a series of events, one following another. This is different from a single prophesied event. And as stated in belief #7, these chains of prophecy all lead to the judgment and the setting up of the kingdom of God.

Examples of chains of prophecy are as follows:

1. Daniel 2—the great image and stone—from Babylon to the kingdom of God
2. Daniel 7—the four beasts, horns, judgment scene—from Babylon to the judgment
3. Daniel 8—the two animals, horns, and sanctuary services—from Medo-Persia to the judgment
4. Daniel 10–12—the literal prophecy of kings/kingdoms—from Medo-Persia to the close of probation
5. Revelation 1–3—the seven churches—the condition of the church from the time of the apostles to the judgment
6. Revelation 4–8—the seven seals—the unfolding of the plan of redemption from the time of the apostles to the judgment
7. Revelation 8–11—the seven trumpets—judgments poured out from the time of the apostles to the judgment
8. Revelation 11–20—the seven-headed, ten-horned beast—to be shown below



Each of these prophecies begins with a portrayal of events in the distant past, and through their various symbols, event after event is chronologically connected up to the time of the judgment.

The Seven-Headed Beast, A Chain of Prophecy

In Revelation there is described in three different chapters a beast with seven heads and ten horns.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having **seven heads and ten horns**, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Revelation 12:3).

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having **seven heads and ten horns**, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Revelation 13:1).

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having **seven heads and ten horns**” (Revelation 17:3).

This beast is mentioned in six other chapters of Revelation (11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20) as “the beast,” without a mention of its heads or horns. The definite article “the” refers to a specific beast, and the context is clear that in each

case it has reference to the seven-headed beast. Thus, this beast is mentioned in a total of nine chapters of Revelation, which is almost half the book. If there were actually even just three distinct beasts being described, each with their seven heads and ten horns, it does not seem likely, or even possible, that there could be found meanings for three or more sets of seven heads and three or more sets of ten horns. That would involve fifty-one $[(7 \times 3) + (3 \times 10) = 51]$ different political or religious entities. After thorough study, we cannot find any biblical way to discover the interpretation of this many different symbols, so, if any meaning could be ascribed, it could not be proven to be thus. Elder Andrews, an early Seventh-day Adventist minister, puts it this way:

“The seven heads are seven forms of civil power which successively bear rule. These seven heads belong alike to the dragon of Chap. xii, the beast of Chap. xiii, and that of Chap. xvii. This shows conclusively that the dragon and these two beasts are **symbols of the same power under different heads. For there are not three sets of seven heads, but it is evident that the heads are successive forms of its power, one of them bearing rule at a time, and then giving place to another.** Chap. xvii, 9, 10.” (J. N. Andrews, *The Three Angels of Revelation 14:6–12*, p. 74.1).

It will not be our object to identify each of these seven heads or ten horns but rather to simply establish that it is, indeed, a **chain of prophecy** and that each reference to this beast is not a separate and distinct prophecy of itself.

Revelation 12 tells us this beast is Satan: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9).

But Satan uses various kingdoms as his agencies, and heads on beasts represent different kingdoms:

⁹“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. ¹⁰And there are seven kings [“the kings are seven,” *Green’s Literal Translation*]: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space (Revelation 17:9, 10).

So, while primarily the seven-headed ten-horned beast is Satan, in a secondary sense it represents seven kingdoms used as Satan’s agents.

Notice the following statement by Ellen White: “The line of prophecy in which these symbols are found begins with

Revelation 12, with the **(seven-headed and ten-horned)** dragon that sought to destroy Christ at His birth. The **(seven-headed and ten-horned)** dragon is said to be Satan (Revelation 12:9); he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the **(seven-headed and ten-horned) dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome**” (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 438.2; emphasis supplied).

The author agrees with our statement above that the seven-headed, ten-horned beast as mentioned in Revelation 12 primarily represents Satan, and in a secondary sense it says it represents pagan Rome. When it is described a little differently in Chapter 13 because it is at a different time, under a different head, in the following quotation, the seven-headed, ten-horned beast is said by the same author to represent the papacy.

“In chapter 13 (verses 1–10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire” (*Ibid.*, p. 439.1).

“... I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death.’ . . . At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity’” (*Ibid.*, p. 439.2).

In the words “saw one of his heads,” the head does not refer to one of the popes but refers to the papal power itself. The papal power, not just one of the popes, is one of the heads on this beast, and it received a deadly wound which was not healed for over a hundred years.

In Chapter 17, we see the seven-headed, ten-horned beast during the time of the judgment: “¹And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the **judgment** of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. . . . ³So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a **scarlet coloured beast**, full of names of blasphemy, having **seven heads and ten horns**. . . . ¹⁴These [the woman, the beast, and its ten horns] shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and

Chains of Prophecy (Comparison)

Date Range	Events or Kingdoms that war against Christ	Daniel 2 Image World Empires to the Kingdom of Christ	Daniel 7 Beasts & Little horn Connection of World Empires with the Saints	Daniel 8,9 Ram, Goat, Horns, Daily World Empires and Sanctuary Ministry of Christ	Daniel 10 - 12 Literal Kings Nations and End of Christ's Ministry in Sanctuary
20th-15th century bc	Egypt (Gen. 15)				
6 th - 5 th century bc	Babylon	Head of gold	Lion		
	Medo-Persia	Arms and chest of silver	Bear	Great ram	Three more kings in Persia
4 th century bc	Greece	Thighs of brass	Leopard – 4 heads	Very great goat – with one horn Horn is broken and 4 arise in its place.	Mighty king – will do according to his will – then kingdom divided toward four winds
2nd century bc to 5th century ad	Rome – Pagan Christ anointed	Legs of iron	Terrible beast with ten horns	Exceedingly great little horn comes out of one of the 4 – the “ daily ” period Little horn magnified himself to the prince of the host, Messiah cut off. End of 70 wks. Anointing of Christ	Robbers of thy people, raiser of taxes Daily taken away
6 th century ad	Rome – Papal Divided Europe	Feet and toes – part iron and part clay	Ten horns Little horn with mouth and eyes – rules for 1260 days Wears out saints	Little horn – transgression of desolation period, host trodden under foot	Abomination that maketh desolate placed, many fall, to time of the end A king will do according to his will, not regard god of his fathers, but a god of forces
7 th - 16 th century					
16 th - 17 th century					
18 th century	France and communism				
19 th century	Investigative judgment	Stone cut out of mountain without hands	Judgment – Son comes to Ancient of Days, dominion given Him	End of 2300 days. Judgment commences	
20 th century	Communitic confederacy with papacy and USA				
21 st century	3-fold union - Protestant USA, Catholicism, Spiritualism				
6000 th yr from Creation	2 nd Coming	Stone smites image	Dominion destroyed	Dan. 9 – Desolations determined until the consummation	Michael stands up – great time of trouble
7000 th yr from Creation	Wicked completely destroyed and the saints inherit the earth	Stone becomes a great mountain	Kingdom given to saints		

King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:1, 3, 14).

This beast is described in Chapter 12 as a dragon, in Chapter 13 as a leopard-like beast with a mouth like a lion and feet like a bear, and here in Chapter 17 as a scarlet-colored beast. These different descriptions are because the various chapters depict the beast at different times and under its different heads. During the time of its judgment in Chapter 17, it is under its eighth head. (It is still called a seven-headed beast even though it has eight heads because the eighth head is “of the seven.”)

Revelation 2,3 7 Churches	Revelation 4-8 7 Seals	Revelation 8-11 7 Trumpets	Revelation 11-18 7 headed beast
History of True Church	History of Nominal Church and Warning Signs	Judgments on empires in connection with sanctuary ministry	1 st to last of Satan's empires warring against Christ and their judgment
			1 st head – spiritually called Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11:8) Gen. 15:13 – shall be a stranger ... not theirs, they shall afflict them four hundred years
			2 nd head – mouth like a lion (Rev. 13:2)
			3 rd head – feet like a bear (Rev. 13:2)
			4 th head – body like a leopard (Rev. 13:2)
1st church – Ephesus – tested false prophets, ... 2nd church – Smyrna – persecuted 10 days, 3rd church – Pergamos dwells where Satan's seat is, Antipas faithful martyr.	1st Seal – White horse, church conquering 2nd seal - red horse – persecution of church by pagans	Trumpets 1-4 – 1/3 of trees, seas, rivers, sun, moon, and 1/3 of stars destroyed – (division of Roman empire into three, its destruction)	5 th head – Pagan Rome Rev. 12 – 7 headed beast Attempts to kill Christ when born
4 th church – Thyatira – sufferest woman Jezebel	3rd seal – black horse – papal apostasy 4 th seal – pale horse – papal persecution of God's people	5 th trumpet – star fallen, locusts torment 5 months	6 th head – Papal Rome Rev. 13 – 7 headed beast receives authority and seat from previous head of #12 Wars with saints for 42 months
5 th church – Sardis – have a name that they live but are dead, few have not defiled garments – Reformation	5th seal – souls of martyrs under altar – white robes given	6 th – trumpet – 4 angels loosed – desolation of Papal Roman empire by Turks – prepared for hour, day, month, year	7 th head – Atheistic, revolutionary France (1789-1798) Rev. 11 – 7 headed beast that ascendeth from the bottomless pit makes war on two witnesses
6 th church – Philadelphia – Advent movement Door – open	Sealing	7 th trumpet – time of dead to be judged, temple opened	
7 th church – Laodicea – SDA church			Rev 17 – 8 th head (from bottomless pit) unites with 10 horns and great whore to make war with Lamb
	7 th seal – silence – coming of Christ	Reward given saints	10 horns hate the whore and make her desolate and burn her. (See Rev. 19:20)
Promises to the overcomers		Destroy them which destroy the earth	8 th head of 7 headed beast goeth into perdition (See Rev. 20:10)

Summary

The seven-headed beast represents various nations used by Satan, spanning from the distant past all the way to the time of the judgment. The nine different chapters in Revelation that mention the beast, therefore, are not different isolated prophecies, but, like each of the other prophecies mentioned at the beginning of this article, they constitute a “chain of prophecy,” with link after connecting link. Ω

WRITTEN BY David Sims

Lead on Softly

Some of the characteristics of our Heavenly Father that many earthly fathers fail to correctly represent to their family members are the passive graces, such as love, gentleness, kindness, and courtesy. As the *lawmaker* of the household, he is to illustrate in his own life the active graces—force, energy, integrity, etc., and these are needed in order for him to perform his manly duties. Hence, there is a tendency for him to be stereotyped in that personality and fail to exemplify these equally important aspects of God's character. It is interesting to note that when God proclaimed His own *glory*, He declared, "The LORD God, *merciful and gracious*, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). His attributes of mercy and grace were the first to be mentioned before others.

When I read Genesis 33, I was touched by this wonderful attribute of Jacob demonstrated in his response to his brother, Esau, after their reconciliation. ¹²"And he [Esau] said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. ¹³And he [Jacob] said unto him [Esau], My lord knoweth that the *children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.* ¹⁴Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and *I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure*, until I come unto my lord unto Seir" (Genesis 33:12–14).

This thoughtfulness of the weakness of others, this consideration of their feeble condition, can only come from a heart that understands. Jacob was a faithful shepherd. For twenty years, Laban's flock flourished under his care, and in this experience, we can readily see the kind of character that was developed in the man. In his interview with Laban, he briefly mentioned his experience in the caretaking of the sheep.

³⁸"This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. . . . ⁴⁰Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Genesis 31:38, 40).

The meticulous care and constant attention required in



caring for the sheep demands not only diligent watchfulness but also a keen perception of their delicate needs. Aside from falling prey to wild beasts, they can also fall victim to parasites and pests, which can make their lives miserable or even cause their deaths. A good, responsible shepherd will vigilantly watch for the first sign of pest infestation and ensure that an antidote is given to any sheep that has fallen victim before it ravages the entire flock. Sheep are considered dumb and helpless creatures, with their only means of defense being to flee when attacked. This vulnerability calls for tender care and sympathy from the shepherd, akin to what a mother feels towards her own helpless and innocent baby. No wonder Jesus declared Himself to be our Good Shepherd!

Under the management of a good shepherd—one that is gentle, kind, courageous, and selfless—the sheep will be nourished, healthy, and well protected. On the other hand, the flock of a hireling, an unfaithful shepherd, will starve and suffer from cold, pain, and disease. The fruit will tell of the nature of the shepherd's work.

The question that of necessity we parents need to individually ask ourselves is, "What kind of shepherd are we?" When the Judge of the Earth will come and ask, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? What wilt thou say" (Jeremiah 13:20, 21) to Him?

The servant of the Lord reminds us that in our management of our household, we must not only exercise justice

but more so mercy. We read in the following passages:

“Fathers and mothers, in the home you are to represent God’s disposition. You are to require obedience, not with a storm of words, but in a kind, loving manner. You are to be so full of compassion that your children will be drawn to you” (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 16, Ms 79, 1901, par. 8).

“Be pleasant in the home. Restrain every word that would arouse unholy temper. ‘Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,’ is a divine injunction. Remember that your children are young in years and experience. In controlling and disciplining them, be firm, but kind” (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1904, par. 12).

“Parents and guardians are to treat those under their care even as God treats his earthly children, with kindness and love” (*Ibid.*, par. 20).

“Let kindness be the law of the home and of the school. Let children be taught to keep the law of the Lord, and let a firm, loving influence restrain them from evil” (*Ibid.*, par. 21).

“Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy. If you do so, your necessary restrictions will have far greater weight in their young minds. Rule your children with tenderness and compassion, remembering that ‘their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven’” (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 394.2).

Sometimes, because of their immaturity, it is hard to make children understand that the motive of our restrictions is love. But there is a language that they can understand—the look in our eyes, the tone of our voice, the expression of our face. These unspoken messages convey more than the words being spoken. It was the look on Jesus’ face that saved Peter from despair.

“In that gentle countenance he (Peter) read deep *pity and sorrow*, but *there was no anger there*...The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips, *that look of compassion and forgiveness, pierced his heart like an arrow*. Conscience was aroused . . .” (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 712.4).

Let parents remember that it is God’s goodness—His gentleness—that leads us to repentance. In our dealings with

our children, let us remember God’s way of dealing with us. He does not censure our weaknesses and criticize our faults. Instead, He works out, in His wisdom, the most effective and gentle way of helping us overcome. When we fall, He convicts us through the agencies of the divine Spirit and gives us even the strength to stand up again. When we are lost, He seeks us first, so we can find our way back to His waiting arms.

“It is the unpromising ones who need the greatest patience and kindness, the most tender sympathy. But many parents reveal a cold, unpitying spirit, which will never lead the erring to repentance. Let the hearts of parents be softened by the grace of Christ, and His love will find a way to the heart” (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 6, Ms 22, 1890, par. 26).

It is easy to love children who are well-behaved and (for lack of a better word) *normal*. But I have come to realize that the true test of our profession as Christians is whether we can love the unlovable and be forbearing with those who test our patience the most. The ultimate evidence of Christianity is the fulfillment of the law of love as laid out in Matthew 5:44–48. When Jesus charged His followers, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (verse 48), He was referring to the preceding statements that say “Love your enemies, bless them

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that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you” (verse 44). This does not only refer to our dealings with those who are mature in years, but to the young ones as well. And this perfection we can attain and demonstrate only as we love as Jesus loves.

Continued on page 6

The Peace That Comes Through the Right Shoulder

Most of humanity is longing for peace. This highly coveted thing people seek from relationships, money or financial stability, power, a change of circumstances, and avoiding conflict. Even wars have been fought to end all wars and usher in universal peace. But there is no real, abiding peace except that which brings all other blessings in its train—peace between the soul and God. “Let him take hold of my strength, [that] he may make peace with me; [and] he shall make peace with me” (Isaiah 27:5).

The parting gift the Prince of Peace gave His disciples before He left them in person was something they especially needed so they could accomplish the work He had entrusted to them: a legacy of peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (John 14:27).

But there is one aspect of the sacrificial service that beautifully teaches in type and shadow and brings to light the secret in obtaining this coveted treasure.

The disposition of the fat, the breast, the right shoulder, the bread, both leavened and unleavened, as well as the occasions the peace offerings were offered, reveal the pathway to peace. We will look at this in this short article.

It is the work of the sinner himself to search himself for every sin and surrender it to our great High Priest. Furthermore, it was specified that with his own hand, the offerer had to give the priest the breast of the offering. ... No one else can do the work required, that of giving oneself to Christ. It has to be done as one's own choice, with one's own will. Only as we thus give our hearts to Christ can He give us a new heart.

As was the case with most of the other offerings, the fat was removed and burned on the altar. The offerer himself was to make a diligent search for all the fat (a symbol of sin) and remove it. He was to give it to the priest, with his own hand, to be burned upon the altar. This signified that



it is the work of the sinner himself to search himself for every sin and surrender it to our great High Priest. Furthermore, it was specified that with his own hand, the offerer had to give the priest the breast of the offering. ³⁰***His own hands shall bring*** the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved [for] a wave offering before the LORD. ³¹And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons” (Leviticus 7:30, 31). No one else can do the work required, that of giving oneself to

Christ. It has to be done as one's own choice, with one's own will. Only as we thus give our hearts to Christ can He give us a new heart. “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Proverbs 23:26). When this work of yielding is done, then and only then can the Lord fulfill the work He desires to do. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

One distinctive feature of the peace offering was that both leavened and unleavened bread were offered in addition to the animal sacrifice. Both the priest and the offerer were to partake of the bread—both the leavened and the un-

leavened bread—and both partook of the animal as well. The significance of this is brought out in the following passage: “For we [being] many are one bread, [and] one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17). Eating the same thing or eating together signifies being one flesh.

The only way the Son of God can help fallen man is to partake of their sinful human flesh. “¹⁴Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *he also himself likewise took part of the same*; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For verily he took not on [him the nature of] angels; but *he took on [him] the seed of Abraham*. ¹⁷Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:14–17).

And the only way we can be saved is through partaking of His divine nature. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

The bread with no leaven signified sinlessness imparted by Christ, and leavened bread signified sinfulness of humanity taken by Christ. Christ partook of the same flesh as we have, and we are to partake of His divine nature.

One more very significant part of the service was the giving of the right shoulder to the priest. “And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest [for] an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings” (Leviticus 7:32). This signifies giving the reins of government to God to govern in our lives.

We can see this from the following facts. The right **shoulder** of the sacrifice was given to Saul when he was about to be anointed king over Israel, signifying the government was being given to him. Also, prophecy foretold that the government of Israel would be placed upon the “**shoulder**” of Christ. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Christ’s work in our lives is not simply as a Savior who saves us from sin, but most importantly, if we allow Him, He is to be our Lord, our Master, who is to rule our whole being. It is impossible for us to have peace in the various circumstances we experience unless we recognize God is in control and allow Him to maintain control. When we

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come to Christ for forgiveness, we need to also ask Him to take charge of our lives. We need to place Him on the throne of our hearts and make Him our King. Then, we can trust that when we are brought into trying places, He has foreseen it and planned for it, and He will bring us through it. Only when we do this can we truly have peace.

The peace offering was an expression of thanksgiving and accompanied promises or vows. So, when we make a covenant with God or give Him thanks, we ought to accompany those promises and expressions of gratitude with a putting away of sin from our lives, making an entire consecration, giving our hearts completely to him, and allowing Him to be in control. And only then can we receive the peace that passes all understanding. Ω



WRITTEN BY David Sims

Soil Degradation

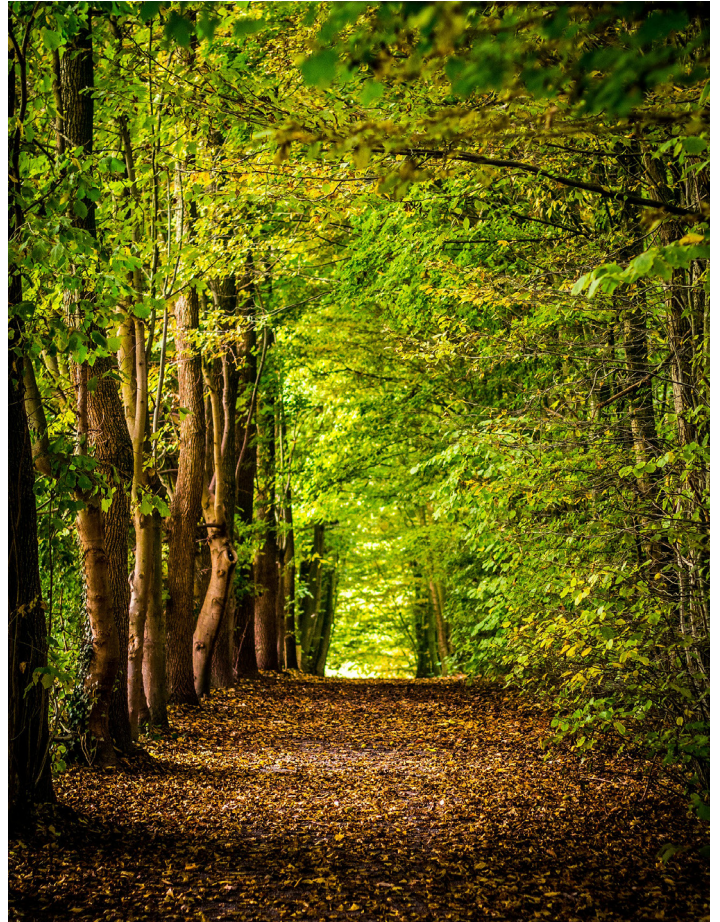
One of the dilemmas farmers face in agriculture is soil degradation caused by repeated cultivation and planting, ultimately resulting in soil infertility and impeded plant growth. To find solutions for this, let's examine God's methods revealed in nature.

Soil degradation occurs because of: 1) the use of chemicals, 2) the lack of rest for the earth, and 3) the reduction of microorganisms, etc. These three are interconnected. Understanding these is crucial in gardening.

The use of chemicals in farming is detrimental and counterproductive because they harm microbes and other living organisms. While these chemicals appear to lighten the work, they actually destroy the natural processes of nature. Many commonly used chemicals, including herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and fertilizers, all contribute to environmental degradation in various ways.

In the typical practices of the Jewish economy, the land was allowed to rest every seventh year. Besides being typical, this gave rest to farmers and cattle and allowed the poor to eat of the fruits and crops. But we also can find some agricultural benefits to this practice. Allowing plants to grow spontaneously and leaving crops partly unharvested may have aided in preserving the native species of plants. Additionally, this practice provides extra microbes and food for microbes as the crops would fall and decay and the wild plants would grow and then be tilled under later. Thus, the multiplication of the microorganism population would have received an extra boost, and they, in various ways, provide food for the crops.

As farmers, we are aware of the numerous intricate methods of fertilization that exist. Observing, however, how God tends to the plants under His care, we notice He employs very simple methods to restore soil fertility and foster crop growth. In autumn, leaves accumulate on the ground, gradually piling up each year and decomposing to enrich the soil progressively. These are the three guiding principles for soil fertilization in nature: freshness, surface deposition, and autumn application.



This natural method of fertilizing has stood the test of time. For millennia, vibrant forests thrived using this approach, and traditionally, this was how farming was done. In autumn, ancient farmers would scatter organic matter, such as cow dung, across their fields. Over the winter, these substances would decompose and enrich the soil for planting in spring. They did not rely on intricate methods of fertilization like modern farmers do, yet they still excelled in farming. All these have a lot to do with microorganisms. The gradual decomposition by small animals and microorganisms of organic matter until it breaks down completely into soil is critical to make nutrients available for plants. Ω

WRITTEN BY Donie Montac

Little Missionary

Hello young friends! What blessings have you received from the Lord in these past months? Try to count them. I think you will have hundreds or thousands on your list if you will count not only the material things but also the air we breathe, the sunshine, the water, and so on.

Since God blesses you abundantly, another question I would like to ask is, “What have you done for Him recently?” Have you ever shared about Jesus with anyone? You might think that you are not able to do that because you are young, but God can use you to witness for Him even though you are young. You may not yet be able to preach right now like what pastors and evangelists do. But one thing I am sure of is that there is something that you can do for Him to bring souls closer to Christ.

Are you familiar with the story of Naaman the leper? You can read it from your Bible in 2 Kings Chapter 5: 1–16. I would like to share it here, but we don’t have enough space for that, so please go ahead and read it from your Bible, okay? (Read your Bible before continuing.)

Have you finished reading it? Did Naaman recover from his leprosy? That’s right, yes! Who was the prophet in Israel during that time? It was Elisha. He commanded Naaman to go wash in the Jordan River. How many times? Seven times.

But did you notice who told Naaman who could heal him from his leprosy? Let’s look again in 2 Kings 5:2–3: “And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel **a little maid**; and she waited on Naaman’s wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would **God** my lord were with the prophet that is in Sa-

maria! for **he would recover him of his leprosy.**”

Wow! This little maid is witnessing for God. Naaman is a Syrian captain and he didn’t know the God of Israel, but this little maid shared with him the good news that he could be healed by God. In that way, she was able to let the unbeliever know about God by simply informing him that God had a prophet who could help him recover from his leprosy.



When Naaman was healed, what did he do and say? Let’s read again in 2 Kings 5:15: “And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, **Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel:** now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.” Naaman realized that the true God is the God of the Israelites, and one of the reasons for this is because a little maid shared with her master what she knew.

As a child or youth, you can also share truths about God and the Bible. You can talk about Jesus with your friends. You can ask Jesus to guide you on what and how to share with your friends and neighbors. Take time to read your Bible

and ask God for wisdom and direction on how to witness for Christ. You can also invite them to read the Bible together and learn about God. You can gather other kids like you in your home or church and ask your mom, dad, or the local pastor to tell you more about Jesus and His Father. That is doing missionary work in your own little way, and God will smile upon you. ☺ Happy Sharing! Ω

WRITTEN BY Yeyen Batasin

Cassava Pasta with Tomato Coconut Sauce

RECIPE BY Shiela Marie Avanceña

(Gluten-free, dairy-free, homemade)

FOR THE PASTA

Ingredients:

18 oz cassava flour (grated and dried cassava)
3 cups coconut milk
1–2 cups water
½ tbsp salt

Instructions:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl to form a mixture with a pancake-like consistency.
2. Preheat the pan.
3. Line the pan with a banana leaf.
4. Spoon 3-4 tablespoons of the mixture onto the banana leaf, spreading it evenly to create a flat bread of moderate thickness.
5. Cook each side for approximately 2-3 minutes over medium heat.
6. Once cooked, slice the flat bread into strips resembling linguine pasta.

FOR THE SAUCE

Ingredients:

5 medium-sized tomatoes
4-5 cups coconut milk
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Blend the tomatoes until smooth and juicy.
2. Transfer the pureed tomatoes into a saucepan and stir over medium heat for 1–2 minutes.
3. Pour in the coconut milk while stirring constantly.
4. Add 1–2 tablespoons of grated dried cassava and stir well.
5. After 2 minutes of stirring, season with salt to taste.
6. Optional: Enhance the flavor by adding garlic and onion powder, along with dried herbs like oregano, basil, parsley, and thyme.
7. Once the sauce is cooked, mix with the pasta and serve.



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EDITOR Samaritana Malinay

ASSISTANT EDITORS David Sims, Allen Stump

PROOFREADERS Krysyll Lacap, Onycha Holt

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WEBSITE <https://1889hsda.org>

EMAIL admin@1889hsda.org