

The Theme of Greatest Importance

1. The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message:

The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for **this is essential to salvation**. We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost.—Letter 97, 1902. **Ev 196**.

- a. What will take for all to understand the truths contained in these messages and how are they to be demonstrated in the daily life?
- b. Why did she say that our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost when studying this message?

2. We are given a glimpse of the seriousness of the work of the third angel in the following quote:

I then saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, "Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is **the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares**, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention." **EW 118**.

3. The third angel's message describes two groups of people who will be alive on earth as a result of the work of the third angel in separating the wheat from the tares:

- a. **The wheat**—are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus
- b. **The tares**—are those who receive the mark of the beast and are tormented with fire and brimstone in the cup of his indignation without mixture of mercy for disobedience

4. Human response to the third angel's message is what determines the destiny of the soul:

"I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." **EW 258-259**.

5. Much more is comprehended in the third angel's message than what is commonly understood by us as a people, and it behooves us as thinking Seventh-day Adventists to know what this message is really all about, and more importantly, know how it can be demonstrated in the daily life, because our salvation depends on it.

The Third Angel's Message in Three Stages

6. Recall that the third angel's message was revealed to our pioneers back in the early days, in stages; the third angel's message was gradually opened by God to their understanding;
 - a. **Sabbath reform**—discovered in 1846-47 (**1T 78-79**)

When we began to present the light on the Sabbath question, we had no clearly defined idea of the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-12. The burden of our testimony as we came before the people was that the great Second Advent movement was of God, that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given. We saw that the third message closed with the words: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." And we as clearly saw as we now see that these prophetic words suggested a Sabbath reform; but as to what the worship of the beast mentioned in the message was, or what the image and the mark of the beast were, we had no defined position. **1T 78-79.**

- b. **Health reform**—the right arm of the third angel; revealed by the Lord to Ellen White in 1863 (**6T 288**)

It was at the house of Brother A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863, That the great subject of health Reform was opened before me in vision.— **CD 481**

- c. **Righteousness by faith**--the Loud Cry of the third angel was brought to the Seventh-day Adventist church at the Minneapolis Conference of 1888

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity."— **Ev 190**

The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer.—**1SM 363**

7. The question is, why were these three components lumped or packaged as the third angel's message?

ANSWER: Remember that the essence of the third angel's message is "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"

- a. **Sabbath reform**—has to do with the **moral law** and it cannot be said that of the Advent people that. . ."here are they that keep the commandments of God while they were violating the fourth commandment Sabbath;
- b. **The health reform message**-- has to do with the **natural law** and cannot be said that one is keeping the commandments of God while he is transgressing the natural law;
- c. **Righteousness by faith**—in essence is the faith of Jesus; it was added because law keeping apart from genuine faith in Christ is legalism; obedience to the commandments of God must be the fruit of faith; the law and the gospel must go together;

The Commandments of God

8. **REMEMBER:** the **moral law** and the **natural law** make up the "commandments of God" and the message of righteousness by faith is what corresponds to the "faith of Jesus"

A. Violations of the natural law is tantamount to violating the moral law

Transgression of physical law is transgression of the moral law; for God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of the moral law. His law is written with His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty, which has been entrusted to man. And every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of that law. **COL 347.**

“A continual transgression of nature’s law is a continual violation of the law of God.” **CTBH 8**

The health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel’s message as the hand is with the body. The law of ten commandments has been lightly regarded by man; yet the Lord will not come to punish the transgressors of that law without first sending them a message of warning. **Men and women cannot violate natural law by indulging depraved appetite and lustful passions, without violating the law of God.** . . .To make natural law plain, and to urge obedience to it, is a work that accompanies the third angel’s message. --**CTBH 9.**

B. Intemperance and laxity in eating habits make it easier to violate the moral law

“It is as truly a sin to violate the laws of our being as it is to break the ten commandments. To do either is to break God’s laws. **Those who transgress the law of God in their physical organism, will be inclined to violate the law of God spoken from Sinai.**” **CTBH 53**

C. Unfaithfulness in the health message also causes one to reject the first angel’s message:

“Sinful indulgences defiles the body and unfits men for spiritual worship.” **CTBH 9**

D. it is impossible to attain to character perfection while disregarding the health message (1 Pet 2:11; Prov. 23:2)

“It is impossible for those who give rein to appetite to attain to character perfection **CTBH 47**

Whoever eats too much, or of food which is not healthful, is weakening his power to resist the clamors of other appetites and passions. . .**CTBH 75**

The Faith of Jesus

9. What about the faith of Jesus? What is it exactly? What does it mean to have the faith of Jesus?

THE FAITH OF JESUS

“ . . .If we would have the spirit and power of the third angel’s message, we must present the law and the gospel together, for they go hand in hand. As a power from beneath is stirring up the children of disobedience to make void the law of God, and to trample upon the faith of Christ as our righteousness, a power from above is moving upon the hearts of those who are loyal to exalt the law, and to **lift up Jesus as a complete Saviour.** . . .RH Sept 3, 1889.

“The faith of Jesus.” It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel’s message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that he might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take his righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us **amply** and **fully** and **entirely** is the faith of Jesus. **3SM 172.**

10. The Bible teaches that the standard of righteousness which men are required to have is no less than the perfect character of Christ manifested in His humanity:

- a. **Matt 5:48**— . . . be ye **perfect** as the Father which is in heaven is perfect
- b. **Rom 8:29**— . . . predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**
- c. **Eph 4:13-15**— . . .
 - i. **Verse 13**--Till we come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**, unto the measure of the **stature of the fullness of Christ.** . . .

- ii. **Verse 15**--that we may **grow up into him in all things**
- d. **Eph 5:27**—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, **not having spot or wrinkle** or any such thing; but that it should be holy and **without blemish**
- e. **Col 4:12**—that ye may stand **perfect** and **complete** in the will of God
- f. **James 1:4**—that ye may be perfect and entire, **wanting nothing**
- g. **1 Pet 5:10**—But God. . .after that ye have suffered a while, make you **perfect**, establish, strengthen, settle you

The Lord requires perfection from His redeemed family. He expects from us the perfection which Christ revealed in His humanity. **CG 477.**

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—**perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness.** If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. **SC 62.**

11. Why is it that so many Christians believe that they can, and will continue sinning until Jesus comes, in spite of what the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy clearly teach?

God will accept only those who are determined to aim high. He places every human agent under obligation to do his best. **Moral perfection is required of all. Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin.** All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole, and every one who receives Christ as a personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes. **COL 330**

- a. The reason why many professed Christians lower the standard of righteousness is “to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong-doing;”
- b. It is unbelief;
- c. It cannot be said that we have the faith of Jesus if we cling to the idea that we will remain **imperfect in character** until Jesus comes!

12. **Heb 9:27**--Those deluded Adventists who believe they can continue sinning until Jesus comes are destined to experience the greatest disappointment of their lives when Jesus comes:

When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us. **2T 355**

A Most Startling Discovery

13. **IMPORTANT:** There is a solid tie-in or connection between the three components of the third angel’s message and the three articles found inside the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary:

14. This is a fact that should not be overlooked because it teaches that those who are living up the light of the third angel's message and are demonstrating it in the daily life, are showing that they have followed Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary; they are accounted as worshipping therein and have become entitled to the benefits of the final atonement
- a. **The pot of manna**—lines up the health reform work (the natural law)
 - b. **The tables of the commandments**—lines up with the Sabbath reform (the moral law)
 - c. **The rod of Aaron**—lines up with the faith of Jesus as opposed to unbelief and presumption
 - i. The sin of **Korah, Dathan and Abiram** was the sin of **presumption, the counterfeit of faith (DA 126)**; they believed that God would honor them as priests, even though their action was directly against the expressed will of God with regards to the selection of priests;
 - ii. The rod of Aaron was preserved in the ark to serve as a token, a memorial (warning) against anyone who would venture to commit the sin of presumption, believing it to be an act of faith (**Num 17: 10; Num 16:39, 40**)
 - iii. The rod of Aaron points typifies the powerful high priestly ministration of Christ after the order of Melchisedek; this high priestly ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is what makes Him the “complete Savior” that He is!
 - iv. **Heb7:25** This High Priestly work of intercession is the very thing that gives Him the ability to save men “**amply, fully and entirely**” from sin--save them to the **uttermost**;
 - v. **Heb 5:4-6**--Anyone who presumes to take up this work commits the sin of presumption and blasphemy;
 - vi. To take that priesthood away or to supplant it with human priesthood is to destroy the completeness of Christ as our Savior!
15. This tie-in between the third angel's message and the three articles in the ark of the covenant is one of the strongest proof that can be presented to show that God was actually leading the advent movement step by step; He is also leading us today if we embrace the three angels messages and demonstrate them daily in our lives;

Conclusion

16. The question is, do we now understand better what the third angel's message is, and are now in a better position to demonstrate it in the daily life?
17. So many are taking the third angel's message lightly, not realizing that their destiny depends on how they respond to it; too many Adventists do not know what the third angel's message is, in a practical way and do not know how to demonstrate it in the daily life. . .
18. It cannot be said that we keep the commandments of God even though we keep the Sabbath, while we are in violation of the health message;
19. **The sin of unbelief**
- a. The idea that believers will continue sinning until Jesus comes is unbelief—it is a denial of Jesus as a complete Savior
 - b. Stated differently, the idea that all God can do for sinners is to forgive them of their sin because human nature is desperately wicked, but cannot give them victory is unbelief; it is denying that Jesus can save believers **amply, fully and entirely** from sin

- c. if we teach that the gospel offers us, is to become **perfect in Christ**, but not **like Christ** this side of eternity, shows that we do not have the faith of Jesus

He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that he can keep him from sinning, has not the faith that will give him an entrance into the kingdom of God. **3SM 360**.

20. The sin of presumption

- a. To believe that God will save us anyway, even though our lives are not in harmony with God's Law, is not unbelief but presumption, and presumption is the counterfeit of faith (**DA 126**)

“. . .faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. **For presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith.** Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures. **DA 126**

21. When the third angel comes to you and me, which will he place on our foreheads, the seal of God or the mark of the beast? Will he count us among the wheat or among the tares? The choice is ours. . .