

ADVENTIST REVIEW

**AUGUST 2021: WHY ARCHAEOLOGY? + THE SAME OLD WHINE (OF BABYLON) + PROPHECY MATTERS + CAN AN ATHEIST GO TO HEAVEN? + SABBATH SAFARI
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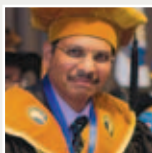
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E-mail: revieweditor@gc.adventist.org.

Web site: www.adventistreview.org.

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The *Adventist Review* (ISSN 0161-1119) is the general paper of the Seventh-day Adventist® church. It is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Periodicals postage paid at Silver Spring, MD, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Adventist Review*, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: Twelve issues of the monthly *Adventist Review*, US\$19.95, plus additional postage outside North America. Single copy US\$2.00 plus shipping and handling.

To order, visit adventistreview.org/subscriptions or send your name, address, and payment to: *Adventist Review* subscription desk, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653-5353

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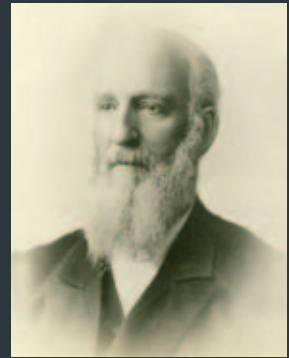
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TRENDING

THE MOST SHARED STORIES ON
ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG LAST MONTH:

- 1 Adventist Church in Haiti Asks for Prayers Amid Challenges, Uncertainty
- 2 I Baptized My Parents After Three Decades of Praying for Them
- 3 New Video Series Discusses Biblical Sexuality
- 4 Adventists Respond to Miami Building Collapse
- 5 South American Division Votes to Allow Women Elders

200 YEARS AGO



James Springer White was born on August 4, 1821. He suffered a childhood illness that left him with poor eyesight causing his schooling to be delayed. His first formal schooling started at age 19 and lasted about 12 weeks.

He married Ellen Gould Harmon in 1846. Following a vision given to Ellen, James started *Present Truth*, a “little paper” for the Advent people. It continues to this day as the *Adventist Review* (the magazine you are reading!). James and Ellen White, along with Joseph Bates, co-founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

James was exceptionally gifted. He was known as a singer, teacher, preacher, publisher, educator, administrator, businessman, and major influencer within the Adventist movement.

As he aged, he developed health problems, some of which could be attributed to his extraordinarily strong work ethic, the high expectations for himself and others, and stress. His untimely death in 1881 left a void within the church. James’ presence was felt in every part of the denomination. Few individuals throughout history have impacted the Seventh-day Adventist denomination as much as James White.

HIS Impact On Me



Soraya

Former student
Holbrook Indian School (HIS)



Liked by **HolbrookIndianSchool**

10/6/18 is when my sisters and I got baptized. It's the best decision I've ever made. I went to an amazing school, met a lot of amazing people, went to church, had bible studies, sang songs, went to camp, rode horses, went bike riding, participated in sports and in Native festivities.

This was all because God lead my mama to Holbrook Indian School (HIS). My decision to attend HIS helped me so much. I'm not embarrassed to say how much I rock with God because He's done so much for me that I can't explain. God has plans. I don't know what they are but I trust Him. --Soraya via Instagram

Soraya is a singular example of the experience that many of our students at HIS have. Help other Native American children and youth experience God's amazing love by making a gift to Holbrook Indian School today at [HolbrookIndianSchool.org](https://www.holbrookindianschool.org)

BILL KNOTT



Our children and our grandchildren deserve a fuller story than we learned.

The Stories We Tell

Imagine, if you will, that all the stories of Adventism are represented by three brilliant clusters of blue, red, and yellow helium balloons—the kind that set our childish hearts to throbbing when we glimpsed them at the county fair or at a corner vendor in the city.

The blue cluster, arrayed against a backdrop of billowing cumulus clouds, are all the Founders' stories. They feature the first and second generation of Adventist leaders, men (almost always) of Anglo, Nordic, or Germanic stock who sailed seas, launched colleges, and planted congregations in previously unentered lands. We know these narratives so well that they have now achieved a kind of mythic status: remember when William Miller prayed in the maple grove beside his home, or Joseph Bates once fell into the Erie Canal? And certainly you know how Ellen White helped pick the site for what is now Loma Linda University, and Andrews University, and Oakwood University. We tell these stories for good reason: they are our stories of beginning.

The red balloons are stories we have only begun to see in the last 30 years—the stunning tales of women, people of color, and those who worked a century ago in urban missions or the high reaches of Bolivia's Altiplano. Their names and briefer versions of their deeds sometimes appear

in archived versions of the *Adventist Review*, or even in books long out of print. Who knew that the champion literature evangelist in North America a century ago was a formerly enslaved Black woman who couldn't read the volumes she sold to White Southerners? When did you last hear of those who served the church's outposts in Mongolia, Iraq, and Ecuador before the global disaster of the Second World War? Their stories have been mercilessly reduced to "mentions" in our narratives of "greats," for their color or their gender or their absence from leadership roles made their stories unworthy of keeping in our official narrative.

The yellow balloons are those of everyday Adventists whose names were never mentioned in this journal, and whose descendants didn't go on to found colleges, plant sanitariums, or march in mission pageants. Though their faithful tithe and prayer and personal witnessing built everything we have, they usually didn't "work for the church," get elected as delegates to General Conference Sessions, or have their names engraved upon a donor plaque in an institutional hallway. And yet we can know much about their lives—if we want to. We can reconstruct the typical experience of Adventist herders in the hills of Tanzania or of laborers in Singapore—what their average income was; how they trans-

ported products to the markets; what opportunities they had to educate their children and hold their families together—all while waiting for the blessed hope of Jesus' second coming. These are the unacknowledged millions of believers—men and women whose stories never took flight.

Tell me now: which cluster of balloons is the truth about Adventism in the last 190 years? Why is it that the skies above us—where winds circulate the stories we want to fly—are mostly filled with only blue, punctuated by an occasional red? Why have we failed to tell the stories that don't easily fit our founding paradigm—a narrative that privileges Whiteness and English and church leadership positions?

The beautiful bouquet of faith—the glorious admixture of yellows, reds, and blues, and all the colors they create—will yet take flight, God willing. Our children and our grandchildren deserve a fuller story than we learned. The truth about our past is multi-hued, multi-racial, and multi-lingual.

And when we learn one day whom heaven has considered great, we will all be in for a grand surprise—a celebration where a great diversity of balloons will fly above the corners of that city "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

Bring that day. 🍀

I always looked forward to reading the magazine and learning more about the different aspects of our faith and the body of the world church.

—**NYASHA P. CHIYANGWA**, NEW YORK

WOMEN AND MINISTRY

July's issue on the role of women in the Bible and in the church was outstanding! I was inspired by the remarkable women who have made a difference in our lives. The long list of women and ministry in our church is inspiring for their dedication and love for God. I was a student of Leona G. Running's at the seminary. Many people don't know that in her early days she was the secretary of R. M. Rabello, my father-in law. She was an outstanding teacher. She made me love Hebrew! We can also consider laywomen, like my mother, who after embracing this message went to the city of Lages, Santa Catarina, Brazil, and started the first church in our home. Today there are five churches in the city. Praise the Lord for Ellen White, and all the women of this church.

Leo Ranzolin, Sr.
Estero, Florida



and his July article, "Eternity's Coming," was no different. He mentioned Elizabeth Wurtzel's memoir where she concludes, "It all seems pointless in light of the fact that we're all going to die eventually."

When I read this, I thought how sad that someone would look at life this way! For me as a Christian, I look at life and death as just the opposite. After we take our last breath, it's just the blink of an eye, and we will be resurrected! When we compare a long life to the blink of an eye, it makes death seem short!

Thanks, Cliff, for writing things that get us to think.

Benjamin Anderson
Sublimity, Oregon

BILL KNOTT SHOULD WRITE A BOOK

It was good to read Bill Knott's editorial in the June issue, but also his article "Can We Trust Our Leaders?" He quoted Gary Wills: "We have thousands of books on leadership, none on followership." The next five paragraphs then give the most insightful guide to following the right leaders. I wish Bill would now write that first book on followership.

R. Lynn Sauls
Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Thank you for including the "Time Line: Women and Ministry in the Adventist Church" in the July *Adventist Review*. May I suggest two corrections? First, Sarah Lindsey's preaching ministry in New York and Pennsylvania actually lasted for 30 years (1868-1898); she died in 1914 at the age of 84. Second, the omitted date 1881 is important to women's ministry because the General Conference

in session passed a resolution that women, with the necessary qualifications, might, with perfect propriety, be ordained to the gospel ministry by the laying on of hands. That motion was tabled.

Brian E. Strayer
Berrien Springs, Michigan

ETERNITY'S COMING

I always enjoy reading Clifford Goldstein's column in the *Review*. They always cause me to think,

The COVID-19 pandemic is but a dry run for us to engage others of varied faith and beliefs. Many of us may never get another opportunity to connect freely with others.

—YVONNE LAWSON, VIA WEB

ADVENTIST MATCHMAKERS

I am a firm believer in Adventist education as a main evangelism tool to create generations of Adventist families. But I was disappointed when reading the news article on Adventist education in the June issue that no mention was made of the major role Adventist colleges and even academies play in matchmaking us with fellow believers.

On June 15 my husband and I celebrated our fifty-second wedding anniversary. We met at Atlantic Union College. Our two daughters met their spouses at Southwestern Adventist University. Our grandchildren are now experiencing relationships at Adventist academies and colleges.

This component of Adventist education—helping to create and connect the ongoing Adventist community—cannot be underestimated!

Nancy Daniels Nelson
Riverside, California

THE REVIEW TOUCHES MY LIFE

I am thrilled to express how the *Adventist Review* has touched my life. I was brought up in the Adventist faith in Zimbabwe. I have read the *Review* from the fourth grade onward. In Zimbabwe we didn't always have

the privilege of getting the current issue, but whenever we received them, my heart was filled with joy and gladness. I always looked forward to reading the magazine and learning more about the different aspects of our faith and the body of the world church. Thank you, and may God be praised for the sacred work you do.

Nyasha P. Chiyangwa
Hollis, New York

SEEING BOTH SIDES

I personally appreciate the articles in the *Review* that help educate us on the need for getting COVID-19 vaccinations. Unfortunately, the response was highly politicized at the start, and such disinformation continues strong today. My friends and family represent the entire scope of positions. The letters of protests do not answer for me the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Name Withheld

COMMENTS FROM ADVENTISTREVIEW.ORG

DELIVER US FROM PROCRASTINATION

Oh, how I can relate to this issue! I too have found myself on the wrong end of a bargain when I delayed action. When that happens, I am more resolved to be decisive at the next opportunity by His grace!

Valerie Wise

SHOULD YOUR LOCAL CHURCH GET INVOLVED WITH OTHER CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS?

The need for Adventists to collaborate becomes more urgent as millions are misled and trapped by the deceptions of Satan. We need to understand, relate, befriend, and teach, through love, the truths that so many yearn for. The COVID-19 pandemic is but a dry run for us to engage others of varied faith and beliefs. Many of us may never get another opportunity to connect freely with others. Let us break out of our walls and take the gospel to everyone.

Yvonne Lawson

YOUR TURN

We welcome your letters, noting, as always, that inclusion of a letter in this section does not imply that the ideas expressed are endorsed by either the editors of the *Adventist Review* or the General Conference. Short, specific, timely letters have the best chance at being published (please include your complete address and phone number—even with e-mail messages). Letters will be edited for space and clarity only. Send correspondence to Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600; Internet: letters@adventistreview.org.



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“Instead of sitting back and complaining about the youth, we decided to do something [to] spread love and hope throughout the city.”

—Taurus Montgomery, Harbor of Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, p. 12

NEWS



New vice-chancellor Vincent Injety signs the acceptance charge.

PHOTO: ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA AND EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION MEDIA CENTRE

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA INSTALLS NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

VINCENT INJETY IS THE THIRD IN THAT POSITION.

JANET OYENDE, ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA, AND MARCOS PASEGGI, ADVENTIST REVIEW

The Adventist University of Africa (AUA) held the installation ceremony of its new vice-chancellor on the school's main campus in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 20. Vincent Injety, an experienced Seventh-day Adventist academic, has become the third person to hold that position in the university's history.

The installation event, which was held in conjunction with the tenth graduation ceremony of the school, was attended by 200 people, following COVID-19-related regulations in Kenya. Additionally, more than

300 guests attended by Zoom videoconference, including church officials from the Adventist Church headquarters and the North American Division (NAD), both in Maryland, United States.

Mwenda Ntarangwi, commission secretary and CEO of the Commission for University Education in Kenya, delivered the keynote address. NAD president Alexander Bryant preached during the consecration service.

Ntarangwi commended AUA “for its commendable and steady growth.”

He said, “Congratulations for continuing to graduate postgraduate students who will soon reach the 800 mark.” Part of that steady growth has to do with good leadership from the sponsor organization, the school administration, faculty, students, and support staff, Ntarangwi said.

Ella Simmons, a general vice president of the Adventist Church and AUA Council chair, oversaw the installation service. Simmons reminded those attending the ceremony that AUA was conceived and established for a distinctive purpose. “In times

Main guest and speaker Mwenda Ntarangi, Commission Secretary/CEO of the Commission for University Education in Kenya, gives his keynote address. PHOTO: ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA AND EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION MEDIA CENTRE



such as these, it is ever more important that it remains true to its original purpose while addressing needs that are unique only to these last days," she said. "Today we move forward in the confidence of God's guidance and benevolence for present and future challenges."

Simmons charged the new vice-chancellor to "avail himself as an instrument of righteousness" and "carry out his responsibilities with diligence," relying entirely upon God.

Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Adventist Church education director, congratulated the new vice-chancellor and prayed that God would grant him "a wise and discerning heart, as He did for Solomon in an earlier time," according to the story recorded in the Bible. "We at the General Conference Department of Education wish for Dr. Injety every success," she said.

Blasious Ruguri, East-Central Africa Division (ECD) president and AUA chancellor, presented Injety with several symbols of office such as the university charter, seal, logo, and mace, to publicly affirm him in his new position.

From the Adventist Church headquarters, General Conference president Ted N. C. Wilson and associate treasurer George Egwakhe attended through a Zoom link. They were joined by regional education directors, church administrators,

and dozens of special guests on the videoconference call.

ABOUT THE NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

Vincent R. Injety, a professor and researcher in management, brings to AUA 30 years of experience in higher education, including 10 years of lecturing and 20 years of academic leadership. He spent 10 years at Spicer Adventist University in India as a lecturer in the Faculty of Business. In 1999 he accepted a call to Solusi Adventist University in Zimbabwe to serve as the Master of Business Administration program director. Later he was elected the school dean and eventually became the pro-vice-chancellor.

In 2008 he was elected dean of the Faculty of Business at Helderberg College of Higher Education in South Africa. Later he became the vice president of academic administration. In 2013 Injety was elected the school president, a position he held till 2020. In 2015, he was ordained as an Adventist gospel minister by the South African Union Conference.

Injety holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting from Spicer Memorial College; a Master of Business Administration from Andrews University; a doctorate in management from the University of Pune; and a postgraduate Diploma

in Higher Education from the University of South Africa. His teaching, research, and publications are in strategic management, leadership, finance, and general management.

He is married to Lynda, who currently serves at AUA as quality assurance director. Both are children of Adventist pastors and have been serving in Africa for the past 22 years. They have two children, Sahana, who lives in Canada, and Steven, a student at Andrews University in the United States.

NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS

Injety commended the service of his predecessors, Brempong Owusu-Antwi and Delbert Baker, who, he said, laid a solid foundation. "Owusu-Antwi was like Abraham, who, not knowing where he was going, took up the challenge and worked towards the accreditation of the university," Injety said. "Baker was like Moses, who took up gigantic projects focusing on advancement and infrastructural development."

The new vice-chancellor then paralleled himself to Joshua, who took the mantle from Moses. He committed himself to work to develop leaders, solve societal problems, and facilitate a moral transformation. Injety also mentioned establishing accredited research journals as an impetus to research and sharing research findings, as well as expanding AUA's academic programs and offerings to new territories, making postgraduate education accessible and affordable.

Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus has been located in Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, since the institution's founding in 1897. PHOTO: ADVENTIST RECORD



In his dedicatory prayer Wilson asked God to “lead Dr. Injety as He had led His people in the past.” He charged Injety to be of good courage, fulfilling the Great Commission recorded in the Bible (Matt. 28:19, 20). Wilson also prayed for Injety “to instill in the hearts of students the magnificent commission that God has given to us, so that like Isaiah they can say, ‘Lord, use me.’”

ABOUT THE ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

AUA is one of the General Conference institutions (educational institutions managed by the Adventist Church headquarters) offering postgraduate education in preparing global leadership and educators to support the mission and strategic goals of the Adventist Church. Established in 2006, the university primarily serves the three African divisions: East-Central Africa, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean, and West-Central Africa.

It currently offers nine master's degrees in the areas of theology and religion, business administration, health, and computer sciences. It also offers three doctoral degrees, including a PhD in Leadership.

AUA received initial accreditation by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) in 2005 and has retained that accreditation ever since. AUA's enrollment is currently at 576 students, with 794 graduates from 33 African countries since its inception. ▀

AVONDALE IS NOW AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST UNIVERSITY

ADVENTIST INSTITUTION HAS A 124-YEAR STORY.

BRENTON STACEY, ADVENTIST RECORD

With a 124-year history that places it as one of the oldest in Australia, Avondale is the first higher education provider to become a university under new national standards.

It is the only addition to the “Australian University” category following a transition on July 1 to standards introduced by the federal government in February.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) congratulated Avondale for achieving the requirements under the revised Higher Education Standards Framework. “Our decision recognizes Avondale's commitment to student outcomes, its significant research progress, and Avondale's contributions to the communities it serves,” chief commissioner Peter Coaldrake said.

The announcement is evidence of God's leading, vice-chancellor and president Kevin Petrie said. “I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity to bring further diversity to the sector, which will benefit students.” And, he added, “I'm determined to use our new position to transform more lives through Christ-centered higher education. God will continue to bless as we continue to be faithful to His calling.”

Recognizing that the Avondale story “spans the century,” Petrie acknowledged, with appreciation, the contribution “of those who came before and of those who continue to mentor and collaborate with us.”

Avondale's journey to becoming a university spanned more than 30 years. “It has all been worth it,” chancellor Glenn Townend, president of the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, said. “Avondale as a university will continue to provide graduates and research that blesses the church and the world around us. We thank God.”

Iurii Ponosov, the undergraduate representative on Avondale's governing council, describes the announcement as “a proud moment.”

“We all look forward to graduating from Australia’s first Adventist university,” he said.

The experience for students like Ponosov will become an even better one because university status “strengthens our ability to provide high-quality, research-informed learning experiences,” provost Kerri-Lee Krause said. Avondale is a leader in delivering strong student outcomes, with national surveys showing levels of satisfaction and employment rates that rank Avondale among the best higher education providers in Australia.

World-standard interdisciplinary research in historic Adventist fields of significance—health and well-being, Christian education, biblical studies, and Christian spirituality—“supports the mission of the church and shows we’re here to serve our world for good,” Petrie said. This informs civic engagement and leadership in areas such as pioneering lifestyle medicine interventions and challenging Anzac mythology to better understand the nation’s history.

Avondale’s registration as an Australian university marks the culmination of years of sustained high-quality development. It began in the mid-1970s with accreditation for degree programs and includes two previous applications (1994 and 2006) for university status. By 2012 Avondale had achieved a ratio of research publications per staff member equivalent to the mean across selected Australian universities. It also expanded its program of higher degrees by research. A relationship with mentoring partner Charles Sturt University followed, as did the granting of self-accrediting authority.

Only two years earlier, in 2019, the national regulator approved a change of category application lodged by Avondale from “Higher Education Provider” to “Australian University College.” It was the first time a higher education institution had qualified for a change of category under TEQSA.

Established in 1897, Avondale is a member of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist system of universities and colleges and has graduated more than 12,000 students who serve largely in people-helping professions. ▀

LOCAL CHURCH GOES BOLD TO FIGHT COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

EVENTS IN BENTON HARBOR SEEK TO EMPOWER, SPREAD HOPE.

JHARONY FERNANDEZ-GIBBS, LAKE UNION HERALD, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Following an uptick in gun violence in Benton Harbor, Michigan, United States (which included the fatal shooting of a 19-year-old last summer), Taurus Montgomery, pastor of the Harbor of Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, knew he and the church could not remain on the sidelines.

June 10-13, local church members and leaders held “The Final Play,” an event that brought families together to set the tone for a positive, productive, and peaceful summer in the city of Benton Harbor.

“Instead of sitting back and complaining about the youth, we decided to do something,” Montgomery said. He has been pastor of the church for almost nine years and lives with his family in the economically depressed community. “Something that will showcase opportunities that are available to the youth, set the tone toward preventing an uptick of summer violence, unite community and leaders around the shared goal of youth empowerment, and spread love and hope throughout the city.”

MORE THAN BASKETBALL

The four-day “basketball and faith” event had several components: a basketball tournament, exhibit booths, giveaways, community service, talent show, food vendors, and community grants. Representatives from more than 20 organizations shared information on topics from health and wellness to financial literacy to education with attendees.

Each evening an episodic stage play centered on a young man going into the summertime: he had talents and abilities but faced a challenging environment.



“The Final Play” event in Benton Harbor, Michigan, United States, in early June. PHOTO: LAKE UNION HERALD

Teams in the charity basketball tournament competed for a US\$1,000 prize and for a chance to donate US\$2,500 to the charity they represented. The organization with the most social media shares received the first pick of the basketball team to represent them. The Benton Harbor mentoring organization 400 Men had the first pick of charitable organization and chose Benton Harbor All Stars, which placed second in the tournament. The 400 Men group was awarded US\$1,500. Peace of Life of Benton Harbor chose the Oakwood University team, and that team placed first. Peace for Life was awarded US\$2,500. The African American History Museum of Benton Harbor received a US\$1,000 community grant.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The community impact portion consisted of participants going to

stores and gas stations to bless community residents with free groceries, gas, haircuts, and, of course, free prayers.

The Harbor of Hope church was able to hold this event, which attracted more than 400 attendees, by utilizing the skills of more than 100 volunteers and a planning committee that met for nine months.

One of the volunteers, Shannon Trecartin, remarked that it was obvious God had picked very specific people with complementary skills to make the event a success. “And as an aside,” she said, “planning ‘The Final Play’ revived my relationship with God. It reminded me of the excitement that comes when you dedicate your time and talents to God and blessing His children.”

COMMUNITY’S RESPONSE

One of the players, a young man

named Napoleon, made a decision to follow Christ. He had been attending Harbor of Hope before the pandemic and said he was glad they were once again engaging with the community.

Diane Young, a local influencer, said she was impressed with the high degree of professionalism and wrote on a social media account: “Thank you, Taurus Montgomery and supporters for the grants awarded to some amazing groups working to make our community a better place to live and work. The exhibit booths, the networking, the basketball tournaments, the praise team, and the stage play were such a blessing to Benton Harbor. But what touched me even more was the young man wanting something different, wanting a better life, wanting to be saved. Thank You, Jesus!”



During the forum, participants and speakers discussed how to set goals and achieve them. PHOTO: DENIS ABUBAKIROV, VLADISLAV MIKULA AND ANASTASIA SHVETS, EURO-ASIAN DIVISION NEWS

IN UKRAINE, HUNDREDS ATTEND ANNUAL YOUTH FORUM

PARTICIPANTS HOLD CANDID DISCUSSIONS, ENJOY FELLOWSHIP.

YANA KULIBABA, FOR EURO-ASIA DIVISION, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

The fourth annual youth leadership forum in Ukraine, titled LeaderShip, was held May 28-29 in Vinnitsa. The event drew more than 200 participants from all over the country for moments of worship, reflection, and discussion on spiritual leadership.

The 2021 theme, LeaderShip 360°, sought to create greater awareness about the topic of leadership in the participants' minds. "The idea was to motivate young people to serve in their communities and to inspire them to become dedicated leaders wherever leadership is especially needed — at school, at work, and home," organizers said.

Among the speakers this year was pastor and teacher Kostiantyn Kampen, education director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine. Kampen holds a doctoral degree in leadership, and his favorite activity in leadership is stra-

tegic planning. "The influence of a leader directly depends on his or her inner sense of contentment, values, and relationship with God," Kampen reminded the young people.

Another speaker, Sergei Antonyuk, pastor and director of the Western Media Center of the Nadiya TV channel, discussed practical leadership issues, leading the youth to reflect on the examples of biblical leaders. Evgen Alokhin, a youth pastor and head of the youth ministry department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine, also took part in the forum. "You need to assess the potential of your strengths," Alokhin told participants.

Alexander Tkachenko, the youth pastor of the Zhytomyr region, spoke about the growth of the leader in crisis situations, namely, how life's troubles can strengthen the leader. Another youth pastor

of the Vinnitsa region, Vladislav Mikula, discussed sexual purity and responsibility.

During the forum, participants and speakers discussed how to set goals and achieve them, shared experiences, learned how to plan their time well, and talked about leadership in different areas of life.

Participants highlighted the positive atmosphere of the event and how blessed they felt during the lectures, discussions, and activities.

"These were God-blessed days," participant Yulia Stakhova said. "Listening to the speakers, I received answers to my prayers. I felt extremely inspired and just got a lot of new knowledge, for which I am eternally grateful to the speakers and to God," she added.

Denis Abubakirov, one of the forum organizers and the youth leader of the Adventist Church in Podolia, said that as organizers, they understood that strong leaders exert a powerful influence on society. "Over the past four years we have set ourselves the goal of strengthening youth leadership, because everyone will benefit from it," Abubakirov said. "Our deep desire is that the youth, in whose potential we believe, can be the driving force behind the changes in their environment," he added. "We received a lot of good feedback from the forum participants that the presentations and workshops were very practical and inspirational. And we thank the Lord for that." ▀

RADIO EVANGELIST MILTON PEVERINI PASSES TO HIS REST

RETIRED LA VOZ DE LA ESPERANZA
SPEAKER MINISTERED FOR 58 YEARS.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

Milton Peverini García, former speaker/director for La Voz de la Esperanza, passed to his rest in Loma Linda, California, United States, in the early morning of June 27, after a long illness. He was 88.

In January 1971 Peverini García joined the ministry of La Voz de la Esperanza as associate speaker/director, becoming the speaker/director in 1974, after Braulio Pérez Marcio retired. Throughout his ministry Peverini García made a significant contribution to the spiritual life of thousands, not only as speaker/director on the La Voz de la Esperanza ministry, which he led for 27 years, but also as a speaker in international evangelism series and as the author of numerous books and articles.

“He possessed that rare blend of genius and humility, which, happily for me, made him the perfect mentor, and, for the myriads that followed him on radio and television, it translated into intensely interesting yet easy-to-follow expositions of our beloved Adventist faith,” Frank González said. The latter joined La Voz de la Esperanza in 1996 and became the speaker/director when Peverini García retired in January 1998.

The current La Voz de la Esperanza speaker/director, Omar Grieve, and associate speaker/director Nesity Pittau Grieve, added, “Thousands of precious souls were moved by the messages imparted by Dr. Milton Peverini. He was a gifted speaker and evangelist who will have many stars in his crown.”

“His iconic voice was heard around



Milton Peverini García.

PHOTO: IT IS WRITTEN

the world and inspired millions to draw closer to Jesus,” Minner Labrador, NAD multilingual ministries director, said in a press release.

EARLY YEARS

Milton Peverini García and his identical twin brother, Tulio, were born to a young pastor named Hector Peverini and his wife, Sotera, on November 13, 1932, in Paysandú, Uruguay.

After receiving his theology degree at Colegio Adventista del Plata, in Entre Ríos, Argentina, Peverini García decided to study law to better serve the church. During those years he married Eunice Meier, the daughter of missionaries who had served several years in Brazil.

While studying law, Peverini García taught at the local academy and was then called to be director of youth and education for the Buenos Aires Conference. He received his law degree from the University of Buenos Aires in 1966 and was ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor in 1967.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY

The couple and their children then moved to California, where he first served as pastor in two local area churches. In 1971 he was invited to join the Spanish language radio ministry La Voz

de la Esperanza as associate director. In 1974, when Braulio Pérez Marcio retired, Peverini García became the speaker/director of La Voz, a responsibility he held until 1997.

Peverini García traveled extensively throughout the United States and most of the Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America, as well as Canada, Australia, and several countries in Europe. He led multiple evangelistic crusades and continually encouraged church members to share their love of Christ with others. He translated many hymns into Spanish, working closely with the quartet Los Heraldos del Rey, and authored multiple pamphlets and Bible courses, and several books.

From 1994 to 2004 he served as associate speaker for Escrito Está (It Is Written for the Spanish-speaking world) and speaker emeritus for La Voz from 1998 to 2007. From 2009 to 2016 Peverini García coordinated the production of quarterly audio programs for blind and visually impaired Spanish-speaking audiences, a ministry of Christian Record Services.

Along with his wife, Eunice, he is survived by three adult children, Ricardo, Graciela, and Susana; six grandchildren; and one great-grandson. ▀



Ken Denslow, new president of the Lake Union Conference.

PHOTO: LAKE UNION HERALD

LAKE UNION ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

KEN DENSLow SAYS HE IS HAPPY TO RETURN TO THE REGION.

DEBBIE MICHEL, LAKE UNION HERALD, AND ADVENTIST REVIEW

On June 9 the Lake Union Conference executive committee convened a special virtual session to elect a new president. The committee prayerfully considered several names and ultimately voted to elect Ken Denslow as president.

Denslow is assistant to the president of the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States. He will replace Maurice Valentine, who was elected in April to serve as an NAD vice president.

Lake Union general vice president Carmelo Mercado, who served as the recording secretary for the executive committee, said leaders compiled a list of leadership qualities expected in the new president. Then the committee used that list in the careful

selection of a candidate.

“We are thankful that Denslow has accepted our invitation, and we pray that God will bless and use him as he leads our union to fulfill the mission that God has given the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Mercado said.

Denslow has had a long association with the Lake Union. He received his bachelor’s and MDiv degrees from Andrews University and started his ministry as boys’ dean at Cedar Lake Academy (now Great Lakes Adventist Academy).

After being a pastor for a few years in the Michigan Conference, Denslow left to serve in the Chesapeake Conference. He returned to the Lake Union area to assume the role of associate director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI). He then moved on to the Illinois Conference

and, between 1993 to 2011, served in a variety of roles, including ministerial director, executive secretary, and ultimately president, a position he held for nine years. He became assistant to the president of NAD in March 2011.

“Sometimes we find a happy symmetry in the leading of Providence,” said Bill Knott, editor of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* and a longtime friend of Denslow. “It’s especially satisfying to see Ken return to senior leadership in the same region where he has lived and served more than half his life as an academy dean, a pastor, an evangelist, a ministerial director, and a conference president. He’s widely admired by many across the Lake Union, and deservedly so. His remarkable skills as a strategic planner, an accessible administrator, and a caring pastor make him a valued and highly trusted leader.”

Denslow shared that he and his wife, Pat, are excited to be returning to their “home union.” “I look forward to working with the conferences of the Lake Union as we serve our Father God in building a community of faith prepared to meet Jesus,” he said.

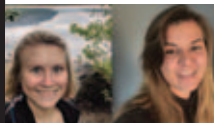
Pat Denslow is an educator, and the couple have two grown children: Michael and his family, who live in Chicago, and Kristin, who lives with her husband and daughter in Keene, Texas. 🍀



PHARMACY FACULTY AND STUDENTS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD. Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy in Loma Linda, California, has been recognized nationally for the school's community outreach during the pandemic, receiving the 2021 "Rookie Award" at the tenth annual Medication Adherence Team Challenge. The Team Challenge encourages health profession students and faculty to develop interprofessional initiatives and raise public awareness about the importance of medication adherence.



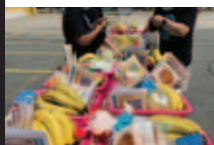
ADRA IMPLEMENTS DROUGHT-TOLERANT CROP IN MADAGASCAR. Since 2015 the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has implemented a food project in the Bekily, Ampanihy, and Betioky Sud districts of southern Madagascar, which have been affected by severe drought and widespread crop failure. "The focus of ADRA's agricultural activities was to minimize the negative effects of persistent drought on food production in the region," Emanuel da Costa, ADRA's program manager, said. The crop, sorghum, was reintroduced. It is an ancient cereal grain that is drought-resistant and can be ground into flour or used as livestock feed.



WOMEN LEAD TEEN GIRLS' VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY. As a response to COVID-19 and the changes that took place, the Georgia-Cumberland Conference launched a Teen Girls' Virtual Bible Study that met twice a month on Friday evenings from February to May. It started with leaders Kristiana Carney, a travel emergency room nurse in Portland, Oregon, and Jenny Wheeler, a biology teacher for Monterey Bay Academy in Watsonville, California. Carney and Wheeler did a survey of participants to determine what Bible study topics to cover. The Bible study group was geared toward girls in grades 8-12 (usually 13- to 17-year-olds). The organizers said teens enjoyed Bible study and small-group activities.



ADRA USES A BUS TO HELP THE VULNERABLE. In Slovakia, older adults, people without homes, marginalized communities, and people with disabilities remain heavily impacted because of the lack of access to COVID-19 resources. A bus was donated to ADRA, and a licensed and certified medical team will travel on the bus and provide information and options about the vaccinations. Some marginalized Roma and homeless communities have been impacted economically, and unexpected health expenses have worsened the situation.



ADVENTIST-SPONSORED BABY SHOWERS HAVE DEEP IMPACT. In early summer four community baby showers took place across the state of Massachusetts in the United States, in the cities of Attleboro, Clinton, Springfield, and Worcester. Each location provided free baby supplies and maternal wellness resources. With the help of community partners, a total of 30 families received essential baby supplies, as well as new parent information. Additionally more than 330 families were reached via radio as listeners heard presentations on infant care and pre- and postdelivery self-care for mothers.



ELLEN G. WHITE HOME IN AUSTRALIA IS OPEN AGAIN. Tours of Sunnyside, a Seventh-day Adventist heritage house in Australia, resumed in June after they were temporarily halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Located in Cooranbong, New South Wales, the place is prominent in Adventist history as the house of church co-founder Ellen White. She lived there in the 1890s. The reopening of Sunnyside coincides with several initiatives by the South Pacific Division aimed at preserving Adventist heritage.



LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

ADVENTIST ARCHAEOLOGY

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

*History and promises
of a successful
Adventist enterprise*

LAWRENCE T. GERATY

Any book relating to biblical archaeology usually does well in book sales. The periodical *Biblical Archaeology Review* enjoys very wide circulation. Any public lecture relating to archaeology and the Bible usually draws a crowd. What is it that makes “biblical archaeology” so attractive to so many, including Seventh-day Adventists?

REASONS FOR IMPORTANCE

In a recent review of a book authored by William G. Dever—*Has Archaeology Buried the Bible?*—the author notes that “bringing the Bible and ancient Israel into a new and brighter light in the last twenty years, archaeological evidence has dramatically illuminated ancient Israel, particularly its religion.”¹ Only this year, for instance, the announcement has come that brand-new Dead Sea scroll frag-

ments (Zechariah 8:16, 17; Nahum 1:5, 6) have been found in a cave, along with coins from the Bar Kochba Jewish revolt against the Romans (A.D. 132–136). Hardly a year goes by nowadays but we learn of some new archaeological discovery that throws light on the Bible.

Since Adventists are “people of the Book,” we of all people are immediately interested in any archaeological discovery that helps us understand the Bible better. And archaeology has done that. It gives us the geographical and historical context of the Bible, the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman environment in which biblical characters lived, worked, and functioned. Such people as Abraham and Sarah, David and Paul, come alive as archaeological discoveries relate to our heroes of the biblical past.

YESTERDAY

In its beginnings Adventists depended on the archaeological fieldwork and discoveries of others for their insights that would illumine the Bible. But three Adventist scholars holding PhDs from the University of Chicago changed that.

The first was Lynn H. Wood (1887-1976), who received his PhD in Egyptology from the University of Chicago in 1937—the first Adventist to do so. Wood had already been the first Adventist to participate in archaeological fieldwork, serving as a draftsman for Nelson Glueck, the famous American Jewish archaeologist who excavated two important sites in Jordan. From 1937 to 1951 Wood became the first to teach archaeology, developing it into a separate department, at the SDA Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. As the church's first trained archaeology scholar, Wood wrote mostly for popular denominational periodicals to strengthen readers' faith. However, he will always be remembered as the scholar who established the earliest fixed date in history: the founding of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom in 1991 B.C.

A colleague of Wood's at the seminary, which in 1961 would move to become part of Andrews University at Berrien Springs in Michigan was Edwin R. Thiele (1895-1986). Earlier a missionary to China, he went on to earn his PhD at the University of Chicago in 1943, the second Adventist to do so, with a dissertation on the chronology of the Hebrew kings. Working with a presupposition of biblical reliability in chronology, he, it is generally acknowledged, successfully synchronized the biblical data with itself as well as with extrabiblical sources. He never worked as a field archaeologist in the Middle East, however.

The third Adventist to get a PhD from the University of Chicago (1951) was one of Wood's college students in England, Siegfried H. Horn (1908-1993). While he was interested in archaeology from his youth, it wasn't until he had served as a missionary in the Dutch East Indies, where he was incarcerated by the Dutch as a German prisoner of war during World War II, that he was able to complete his studies and join his old professor as a colleague in the Old Testament Department of the SDA Theological Seminary, first in Washington, D.C., and then at Andrews University.

Shortly after World War II several Adventist scholars, many of them involved in the production of the denomination's first multivolumed *SDA Bible*

Commentary and Dictionary, specialized in archaeology during the 1950s. Several of these scholars, such as Alger Johns, Siegfried Schwantes, Wilson Bishai, and Leona Running, came under the influence of William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971), "the father of American biblical archaeology," who taught at Johns Hopkins University. Raymond Cottrell and Don Neufeld, the two primary commentary editors, were wellinformed in archaeological matters, as was Julia Neuffer, the seminary's first MA graduate in archaeology (1947).

In subsequent years active Adventist scholars with PhDs in archaeology from the University of Michigan included Douglas Waterhouse, Kenneth Vine, and missionary physician William Shea, who became the denomination's leading chronologist after Wood, Thiele, and Horn.

Of those named above, the most influential archaeologist was Siegfried Horn, a brilliant scholar who paid fastidious attention to detail and facts. During the Horn era, categorized by Lloyd Willis (in his Andrews doctoral dissertation) as a prolific period of "apologetic thrust," Horn authored more than half of the nearly 500 published articles on archaeology in denominational journals. Beyond being a longtime professor of archaeology at the SDA Theological Seminary—ultimately its dean—Horn initiated the first Adventist excavation in Bible lands, at Heshbon in Jordan, directing it from 1968 to 1973, then turning it over to the author, his successor at the SDA Theological Seminary, who, as part of a foursome including Larry Herr, Øystein LaBianca, and Douglas Clark, initiated the Madaba Plains Project in Jordan. This project has become the longest-running American dig in Jordan and the best published.

TODAY

For a third of a century (1951-1985), under Horn and the author, the SDA Theological Seminary, now at Andrews University, was the primary institution for Adventist archaeology. After Geraty's departure for Atlantic Union College, Adventist training in the discipline became dispersed to a number of locations.

Andrews University continues to be an important center and the most active in Adventist archaeology. It houses the Institute of Archaeology, founded by the author in 1980. It includes the Horn Archaeological Museum (with 9,000-plus artifacts), formally opened in 1970 and named for Horn in 1978. The

Andrews doctoral program in biblical archaeology begun by Horn and the author in 1976 continues to be supported by Horn's superb 4,500-volume library, as well as the institute's active field research program in Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, and Sicily. Since 1988, and with fine new quarters in 2003, the institute is now led by Randall Younker and his associate, Øystein LaBianca, assisted by David Merling, Constance Gane, and others. Paul Ray, Paul Gregor, and Robert Bates currently work with Younker and LaBianca in archaeological projects in Jordan (Jalul, Hisban), Israel (Gezer), Cyprus (Kurion), and Sicily (Salapruta, Mount Raitano, and San Miceli).

La Sierra University is the home of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology, directed by Douglas Clark and Kent Bramlett, with the assistance of the Richards Divinity School dean, Friedbert Ninow; School of Education dean, Chang-ho Ji; and the author. CNEA houses some 10,000 items, one of the largest collections of ancient Near Eastern artifacts from the Jerusalem area in the U.S. Its excellent library and labs, along with continuing field research excavation at Balu'a, as well as Khirbat Ataruz, both in Jordan, continue to make it a key center for Adventist archaeology. This current work continues the archaeological activity of previous Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus professors James Stirling, Kenneth Vine, and Bailey Gillespie.

Southern Adventist University, with its Institute of Archaeology and Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum, opened in 2000 under the supervision of Michael G. Hasel. He has built up a fine research library, lecture series, and an active archaeology program with some 40 graduates, many of whom have worked with him at important Israeli excavations such as Khirbet Qeiyafa, Tel Lachish, and Tel Hazor.

Other institutions have at times been supportive of biblical archaeology: Burman University, with Larry G. Herr; Walla Walla University, with Douglas Clark, James Fisher, and now Monique Vincent. All the archaeologists mentioned above have been active in their professional circles, especially in the leading one, the American Society of Overseas Research [ASOR], in which most of them have held both office and the respect of colleagues.

Outside North America, Udo Worschech at Friedensau University, Yvonne Gerber at the University of Basel, Paul Bork and Rodrigo Pereira de Silva at UNASP-EC, an Adventist University near São Paulo, Brazil, and Efrain Velazquez at the Inter-American



J. WHITAKER

Adventist Theological Seminary in Puerto Rico, have all been active in biblical archaeology.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

Adventist archaeologists have been responsible for major archaeological finds. One of the earliest was Siegfried Horn's discovery of an Assyrian king list as part of a cuneiform inscription—a critical find for biblical chronology. Lloyd Willis, of Southwestern Adventist University, discovered the first extrabiblical mention—on a seal impression—of the Ammonite king Baalis, otherwise known only from Jeremiah 40:14. Michael Hasel and Martin Klingbeil discovered at Lachish two seal impressions of Eliakim mentioned in Isaiah 37:1-3. Chang-ho Ji discovered an Israelite cult site from the time of the Moabite king Mesha mentioned in 2 Kings 3, along with what may be Jordan's first Hebrew inscription, on an altar. During the Madaba Plains Project in Jordan, Douglas Clark uncovered perhaps the best preserved "four-room-house" typical of the period of the Judges. And Kent Bramlett discovered an extremely well-preserved Canaanite temple with altar and sacred stones illustrating customs from Bible times. At Gezer in Israel, Randall Younker helped to reestablish the date of the monumental six-chambered gate to the period of Solomon (1 Kings 9:15).

More important than these and other remarkable finds and accomplishments mentioned above is the Adventist contribution to understanding the culture and social order in biblical times. Some examples

include Adventist pioneering research on the livelihood practices and social organization (tribal kingdom hypothesis) of Israel's neighbors, the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites; their efforts over the years to become aware of biases that have shaped their understanding as Westerners of biblical times and places, and even of their own agendas as archaeologists; their efforts to partner with their host communities when it comes to helping to preserve and present their sites to the public—something for which Øystein LaBianca has become particularly well known at Heshbon. Initiatives such as these help explain the high regard in which Adventist archaeology is held within the profession.

TOMORROW

Adventist archaeologists have made a name for themselves and for Adventism through diligent scholarship, research, and integrity; but also because the denomination has provided teaching positions and financial support. The Adventist way of doing archaeology, as established by Horn, Geraty, and their successors, has been characterized under a six-point code of practice by Randall Younker as follows:

1. Be forthright with findings. Avoid minimizing problems or stretching interpretations of data to explain things away.
2. Do not make claims beyond what the data can support.
3. Be quick and complete in publishing results.
4. Engage and work within mainstream scholarship.
5. Include a diversity of people and specialists.
6. Take the history of the Bible seriously, but do not place upon archaeology the burden of “proving” the Bible.²

If Adventist archaeologists continue to follow these principles in their work, and if the denomination continues to hire and support well-trained Adventist scholars with recognized credentials, the “tomorrow” of Adventist archaeological scholarship should remain bright, continuing to garner the kind of high esteem expressed on more than one occasion by William G. Dever, arguably the field's leading living “biblical archaeologist”: “The publication of the Hesban excavations has propelled Seventh-day Adventist archaeology—seemingly against all odds—into the very forefront of Near Eastern archaeology.”³

And in 2008, in a celebration of the Adventist Madaba Plains Project's fortieth anniversary, lauding what he called the key to its success:

“Seriousness of purpose; widespread institutional support; long-term commitment of personnel and resources; dedication to the training of future generations; and the promotion of archaeology throughout the larger community. This seriousness, in my judgment, is not only rare in American archaeology in the Middle East; it is unique.” For Dever, Adventists have done “the most innovative archaeology that anyone in the Middle East was doing, by any criteria. Their excavation and recording techniques were exemplary, their computer-based technologies on the cutting edge.” His climactic punchline: “None of the achievements outlined above would amount to much had the results not been promptly and fully published. They have been; and here again the Madaba Plains Project has an unparalleled record.”

Dever also speaks to Adventist archaeology's future: “Adventists have not only contributed generously to fieldwork out of their devotion to the Bible, but as a group they have been remarkably astute and single-minded in training and placing young people in their own network of educational institutions. Unless other American institutions and organizations—theological seminaries, church-related colleges, and other groups—learn a lesson from Seventh-day Adventists about seriousness of intent and necessity of support, the effect of their success will be lost on the rest of us.”⁴

Yes, Adventist archaeologists have much to celebrate, but we cannot rest on our laurels. A bright future beckons if the church continues to support its archaeologists, already known and respected for their field efforts that have done so much to illuminate and elucidate the biblical record. ♣

¹ William G. Dever, *Has Archaeology Buried the Bible?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), reviewed for the Society of Biblical Literature by Manfred Oeming.

² Randall Younker, “Integrating Faith, the Bible, and Archaeology: A Review of the ‘Andrews University Way’ of Doing Archaeology,” in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 43-52.

³ *Bulletin of the American Society of Overseas Research*, pp. 190, 191.

⁴ See William G. Dever, “The Death of a Discipline,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21, no. 5 (1995): 50-55, 70.

Lawrence T. Geraty is president emeritus, La Sierra University, and former president of the American Society of Overseas Research [ASOR], the professional organization to which archaeologists working in the Middle East belong.

WHY ARCHAEOLOGY?

*Holes in the ground, and
a dromedary's saddle.*



EFRAÍN VELAZQUEZ

I had heard about the “importance” of archaeology for the study of the Bible, but had never given it much thought.

During what should have been my last year at the Theological Seminary, an Andrews University professor sent us a survey that inquired about the interest of seminarians in archaeology and the relevance of investing funds in archaeological research. I had never been on an archaeological dig or had a particular interest in that area. My assessment of the importance of archaeology was low, in relation to mission objectives.

On the other hand, I had been fascinated by the stories of my beloved professor David Merling. He could make you want to be part of a dig. He enjoyed sharing experiences about places that I had only heard of in Bible stories. But my interest was more in youth ministry and working with at-risk teens; no time to be pottering about in the dirt. Still, that last semester before graduation, I pondered the challenging questions that the survey raised, and began to reflect on archaeology at another level. Why archaeology? Was it worth the effort?

Then a scholarship was announced: it would enable the winner to participate in a dig that following summer. I applied. And I got it! It granted me the opportunity to work at an archaeological site with Andrews University in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The fact that I had not had serious training in archaeology was not a problem. I went as a volunteer, like many others on that group at Tal Jalul, Madaba. I am not sure what the odds were of getting that scholarship and becoming the roommate of the author of that survey, but there I was. Now I could question the inquisitive professor: the tables were turned, and he would have to show me why it was essential to search for what others had left behind.

SEARCHING WHAT'S LEFT BEHIND

Before dawn the silence was broken by calls to prayer rising from dozens of muezzins crying out from minarets across the city. It was surreal for this youthful Puertorriqueño to be so suddenly and dramatically immersed in the sounds of a culture so different from my own.

I was an early bird, full of energy at 4:30 a.m., as the team headed out to hard work at a site that promised new experiences. I learned that archaeologists focus on whatever people have left behind. Their research recovers and documents anything used by humans (“artifacts”). Still, I could not hear any “voice” in the stones we moved or all the dirt we sifted. In a process that now seems to play in slow motion in my mind, but was moving at fast-forward speeds before my eyes, archaeology began to make sense. The small finds we recovered included pottery pieces, broken figurines, tools, beads, and hundreds of animal bones. None of these was unearthed with accompanying labels or signs. Trained archaeologists—Randall Younker, Paul Ray,

Their voices haunted me, and I wanted to learn more from those who had lived in the biblical lands.

others—dated the ceramics according to their historical periods in a daily process called “reading” pottery. At Jalul we did not find great kings or priests; only the belongings of ordinary people: farmers, shepherders, etc. I was surprised at how much information could be recovered from the trash that humans had left behind.

The day came, though, when I was startled by the voices from the past shouting at me. It was the day diggers uncovered a cave full of bodies. Call it Tal Jalul’s “Cave of Horror”: more than a dozen disarticulated bodies, representing a mass burial; perhaps the result of warfare or a pandemic. Some years later a piece of pottery with writing on it (called an ostrakon) was recovered close to the spot. Roy Gane deciphered it and associated it with the Ammonites. We wonder: were all those bodies part of the population massacred during Neo-Babylonian invasions? Did they die as a result of disease? There are questions to which we still have no final answers. But their voices haunted me, and I wanted to learn more from those who had lived in the biblical lands.

Adventists have been excavating in Jordan for more than 50 years, and are partly responsible for rewriting the history of a tribal kingdom, Ammon, in northern Jordan. We have uncovered seals with kings’ names at periods where previous scholarship had suggested a gap in habitation in that area. Our work has exposed layers of habitation at periods once thought dark or depopulated. The contributions have been so many that some have suggested with humor that SDA stands for “Seventh-day Ammonites.” Adventists have given a voice to the tribe the Bible identifies as descendants of Lot’s sleeping with one of his daughters (Gen. 19, particularly verses 30-38).

It made me feel part of something big. I was in my early 20s, and some of my natural skepticism was melting away. Archaeology was more than just looking at scraps left behind. We were allowing the people of the past to speak to us by the artifacts we were recovering. The material culture, and long conversations with the local Jordanian workers, made the work hours fly. Everything that we could find was significant—the color of the dirt, the number of pebbles, seeds, traces of walls, pieces of broken vessels, animal remains, and even coprolites (“fossilized feces”). All that had been “left behind.”

WILDERNESS DRAGONS

The scale of what archaeology does did not strike me, though, until the weekend that we visited the cove of the “dragons of the wilderness.” I had learned about the Ammonites in northern Jordan but was not impressed by the remains that have survived. No wonder Nelson Glueck and others insisted that the Ammonites had disappeared after the Neo-Babylonian invasions. On the other hand, the capital of another kingdom, “lost” to Western eyes, was impressive. It was the Nabatean metropolis, Petra.

The Edomites had established their kingdom in the region of Seir before Israel conquered the land of Canaan. Today that region is in the southern part of Jordan. But the children of Esau/Edom had been expelled from the mountains where they had first established themselves millennia before. In the book of Malachi we read that the Lord condemned Edom and “laid waste his mountains and his heritage” (Mal. 1:3).

That destruction has been associated with the incursions of Nabonidus in the sixth century B.C. on his way to Teima (in the Arabian Peninsula). The damage described by Malachi, writing during the early fifth century B.C., could be evidenced in the archaeological record. Levels at the sites of Busayra and Tell el-Kheleifeh have been documented, and I was able to explore the difficult-to-reach site where Nabonidus celebrated his victory over Edom (Sela’).

Nevertheless, with an allusion to the “dragons of the wilderness” (Mal. 1:3, KJV), Malachi warned that future destruction would occur. Lest you think that this reference is about flame-throwing reptiles, note that the Hebrew word is literally a reference to “jackals.” It seems that the prophet used that term for the nomadic Qedarite tribes whom the Neo-Babylonians left in control of that territory. These tribes oversaw the lucrative incense trade from the East and dominated the caravan routes that continued toward the Mediterranean Sea and Africa. Any effort from the Edomites to recover their land, claiming, “We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places” (verse 4), was crushed by another clan from the Arabian Peninsula.

The Nabateans took over the former Edomite territory and literally carved their kingdom out of the reddish mountains formed of sandstone with

Pottery reading is a key daily activity at any excavation. Seated (from right to left) are codirectors Michael Hasel, Yossi Garfinkel, and Martin Klingbeil of the Fourth Expedition to Lachish during excavations in 2014.



myriad colorful tones. The amazing city of Petra gives a monumental impression of the scale and splendor of some archaeological discoveries. I was awestruck by the large tombs, such as the iconic Al-Khazneh (“The Treasury”) at the end of the mountain gorge that protected the impressive city. The rock-cut theater and dozens of tombs and temples fueled my imagination as I rode a camel for fun along the colonnaded street *Cardo Maximus*.

THE ROAD AHEAD

That short camel ride was the beginning of a much longer journey: I am still not able to get off the dromedary’s back. Impressed by how much we could learn from the past on an archaeological dig, I chose to sign up for a doctoral program in archaeology. My passion for biblical stories was fueled by the actual context where they transpired. The landscape, the people, the food, and the material culture brought specific dimensions to my study of Scripture.

It took me longer than most to adjust to the discipline of archaeology. My background was in mission for troubled teenagers. But the discipline was not inaccessible or beyond the reach of any person with determination—even someone with no history of outstanding academic accomplishments or scholarly traditions. You may lack the background information on history, have never done technical work at a dig, and be unfamiliar with biblical languages. Like me, you may have only planted gardens with your shovel, have only

superficial knowledge of the historical context of your digging, and never have counted biblical languages as your favorite topic.

But once I realized how thrilling it was to listen to the voices of the people of the past, I could memorize those dates, names, and languages in short order.

I had been less than enthusiastic about the entertainment strategies proposed for helping youth to “stay” in church. I was searching for a challenge, one that made youth think as much as they are able to “feel.” With archaeology I saw stories come alive, and I was ready to transmit them with energy and passion, as well with accuracy and precision. The reality may be far removed from the romantic adventures so popular on the big screen. But there is plenty of excitement on every archaeological dig or exploration.

Everyone will not need all the skills required for an academic doctorate in order to participate in an archaeological dig. What is required is a willingness to learn and a determination to finish what you begin. My dad was no academic, but his work ethic and resolve equipped me to make the most of archaeological work. I have been able to hear the ancient voices and give a face and personality to people and peoples of biblical history. I may not have answers to all the questions raised by that long-ago survey, but I do have the best to one of my own: Why archaeology? Why not? ♣

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CHILDIMPACT
INTERNATIONAL

We have expanded our Rice, Health & Education appeal to meet the extreme Covid crisis needs in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh where death rates are high.



RICE, HEALTH & EDUCATION EMERGENCY APPEAL



RICE

Over 20,000 bags of rice distributed in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Students, teachers, bible workers, and their families benefited from direct donations.



HEALTH

Over \$50,000 has been sent for emergency equipment to Sheer Adventist Hospital in Nepal and two hospitals in Bangalore India.



EDUCATION

Urgent assistance is needed to provide essential supplies for Adventist mission schools that have opened and others that plan to reopen.

India, Nepal, and Bangladesh remain in crisis with a concerning number of Covid cases on the rise in surrounding countries. With thousands in daily cases and rising deaths, it continues to overload an already fragile healthcare system. Our Rice, Health & Education appeal will provide aid to the countries that desperately need resources. We have already supplied ventilators, oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters, and N95 masks.

Sadly there is no sign of relief and they need our help

Child Impact International needs to raise another \$100,000 for Covid emergency supplies including medical equipment for hospitals and food for victims, their families, and schools through our Rice, Health & Education appeal.



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Ooltewah, TN 37363
or Phone: (423) 910-0667





PHOTO BY GERALD KLINGBEIL

Archaeology is hard work. Volunteers work carefully to remove the dirt covering architectural remains in a square during the excavation of Lachish by the Fourth Expedition to Lachish in 2014.

REDISCOVERING LACHISH AND SENNACHERIB'S ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGN



*How archaeology
illuminates the
biblical text*

Only 175 years ago, in 1846, knowledge of the ancient Near East had been completely lost through the vicissitudes of time—illuminated only by the Bible and a few classical sources. In 1851, only five years later, a young Englishman, Austen Henry Layard, could boast that the progress of work in Mesopotamia had yielded more than 50 cuneiform names of kings, nations, cities, peoples, and gods mentioned in the Old Testament. What followed was an explosion of information, and it was only the beginning of a discipline that would eventually span the globe. Today that evidence has multiplied and expanded, particularly for one of the central events recorded in three books of the Bible (2 Kings 18; 19; 2 Chron. 32; and Isa. 36; 37)—the campaign of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, against Judah and its key cities, Lachish, and Jerusalem.

THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS

The northern kingdom of Israel had been conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., as prophesied by Isaiah, and now, some 20 years later, only Judah stood between the aggressive Assyrian empire and their goal of conquering Egypt. The Assyrian king Sennacherib approached the kingdom of Judah with his enormous army. Initially Hezekiah paid tribute to Sennacherib, hoping to avoid a direct



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the ancient site of Lachish, Israel CREDIT: FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH



Fig. 2: Lachish relief at Nineveh

PHOTO BY MIKE PEEL (WWW.MIKEPEEL.NET)

confrontation (2 Kings 18:13-16), but in time Sennacherib returned and positioned himself against Lachish (Fig. 1), the second most important city of Judah and one that guarded the main road leading up from the south to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32:9). The threat had become reality.

DISCOVERIES IN NINEVEH

In August 1849 the British explorer and archaeologist Austen Henry Layard returned to the capital city of Nineveh. He had been working at several

sites for some time, including Babylon. But this summer he would make the fabulous discovery of Sennacherib’s massive palace “without rival.” The excavated palace consisted of 71 rooms with colossal reliefs depicting his various campaigns and accomplishments. The focal point of the ceremonial wing of the palace, which was entered from a courtyard through a series of rooms flanked by enormous, winged bull colossi with the face of the king, was a room that became known as the Lachish room. Here Layard removed 12 large, sculptured relief slabs and shipped them to the British Museum in London.¹ The alabaster slabs depict in detail the siege, attack, and destruction of Lachish, with a siege ramp against the city and eight battering rams with foot soldiers, archers, and slingers moving against it (Fig. 2). The final panels show spoils and prisoners paraded and being killed before the king, who watches from his pavilion opposite the city. The siege of Lachish was the largest and most detailed

Assyrian military depiction found in any Assyrian palace. Its prominent position might have been chosen so that a “visitor might justifiably conclude that the surrender of Lachish was the high point of the western campaign.”²

EXCAVATIONS AT LACHISH

The British expedition to Lachish had uncovered the Assyrian siege ramp in the 1930s, but it was David Ussishkin’s Tel Aviv University (1974-1994) excavations that would identify the ramp. Built of stones and construction material weighing between 13,000 and 19,000 tons, it was estimated that if a worker could have carried 45 kilograms an hour over a distance of 300 meters, 10,000 workers could have completed the siege ramp in about 18 days. Inside the city, a counter ramp was rapidly built by the defenders to strengthen the city walls. The Nineveh reliefs depict the intense assault against the city as battering rams were pushed up the siege ramp. Defenders on the walls are shown throwing down firebrands, bricks, and stones to deter the attack, but all to no avail.

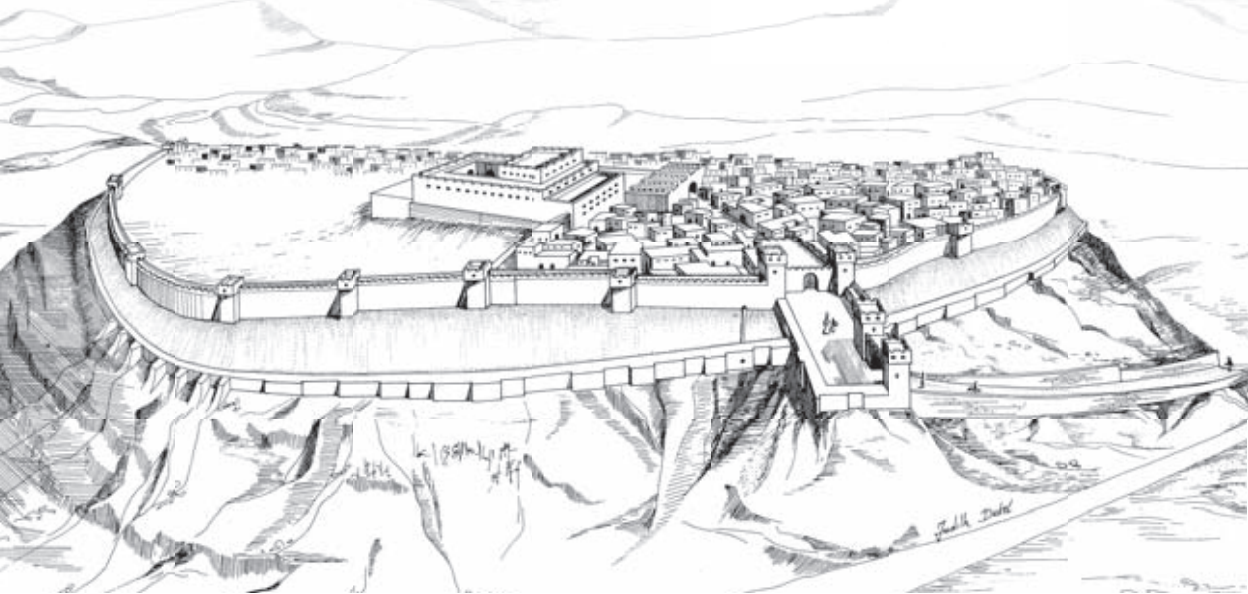
From 2013 to 2017 Southern Adventist University codirected with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem the Fourth Expedition to Lachish (Fig. 3). Each year more than 100 staff and volunteers from 14 different countries came to excavate the ancient city. In all of the excavated areas the massive destruction by the Assyrians was evident. In a row of elite houses built near the palace courtyard

extensive burnt mudbrick collapse from building walls were excavated until the floors were reached. Arrowheads, iron scales of Assyrian armor, and sling stones as depicted in the Nineveh reliefs were uncovered in the destruction debris. The mass of pottery crushed on the floors testifies to the complete destruction. Among the pottery were Judean *lmk* (Hebrew “for/to the king”) storage jars, which were extensively used in the kingdom for tax collection and distribution. The royal seals bore the city names Hebron and Socoh.³ The fire became so hot that calcified lime became affixed to the exterior of the vessels and could not be removed. After the defeat of Lachish, Jerusalem was next.

Sennacherib sent his Rabshekah, the vizier, to Jerusalem to offer terms of engagement. “Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, “The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria”’” (Isa. 36:13-15).

Should Hezekiah accept the terms of surrender offered and be led into captivity like the northern kingdom of Israel? Instead he took his greatest crisis to God. “And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the

Fig. 3: Drawing of the city of Lachish CREDIT: JUDITH DEKEL





▲ **Fig. 4:** Dipper juglet in which the seal impressions were found

◀ **Fig. 5:** Drawing and photo of the Eliakim seal impression

CREDIT: FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH



prophet, the son of Amoz" (Isa. 37:1, 2). Four people are mentioned in these two verses: the king, Hezekiah; his chief steward, the head of the household, Eliakim; Shebna the scribe; and Isaiah the prophet.

In 2014 as Southern was excavating the elite houses, two seal impressions were found in a dipper juglet in the Assyrian destruction debris (Fig. 4). Seals were used like ancient signatures to authenticate and validate documents. The seal impressions come from the same seal and read, "(Belonging) to Eliakim, son of Yehuzarach" (Fig. 5). We compared our seal impressions with another seal at the Hecht Museum, Haifa University, which reads, "(Belonging) to Yehuzarach, son of Hilkiyah, servant of Hezekiah." Putting the two pieces of evidence together, we suggest that our seal impressions belonged to Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah. The Bible simply skipped a generation, identifying Eliakim with his more prominent grandfather Hilkiyah. There are many other biblical examples where individuals are referred to as the "son" of a more distant ancestor. If this is the case here, then Eliakim, son of Yehuzarach is, in fact,

Eliakim, (grand)son or ancestor of Hilkiyah, the head of the palace as described in Isaiah.⁴

EXCAVATIONS IN JERUSALEM

On December 2, 2015, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem announced a significant discovery, a seal impression with the inscription "(Belonging) to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz, king of Judah." This impression was found in 2009 during the Ophel excavations directed by Eilat Mazar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, near the Royal Building. Three years later, on February 22, 2018, the Hebrew University announced another significant discovery, a seal impression with the inscription "(Belonging) to Isaiah [the] prophe[t]." Both of these impressions were first identified during the preparation of the final report volume of the excavations (Fig. 6).⁵ The two impressions of Hezekiah and Isaiah were found less than 10 feet apart in the same room. If the identifications are correct, this is the first time a biblical prophet's seal has been uncovered, and because of its location right next to Hezekiah, both individuals are shown to be contemporaries. This

Fig. 6: The Isaiah and Hezekiah seals found in Jerusalem

© EILAT MAZAR/PC: OURIA TADMOR



means that Isaiah did live in the eighth century B.C., while the events occurred. Shebna's seal was also discovered at Lachish. This means that all four people mentioned in Isaiah 37:1, 2 have been confirmed in recent archaeological work in Israel.

AN ANSWER TO A KING'S PRAYER

God's answer to Hezekiah's prayer is immediately communicated by Isaiah:

"Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,' says the Lord. 'For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake'" (Isa. 37:33-35).

Several clay prisms found in Assyria record Sennacherib's campaigns: "As for Hezekiah of the land of Judah, I surrounded and conquered forty-six of his fortified cities and small(er) settlements without number . . . as for him, I confined him inside the city of Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage" (Fig. 7).⁶ But there is no elaborate description of Jerusalem's destruction as one might expect in these boisterous accounts. The Bible affirms that Sennacherib's armies laid siege to Jerusalem, but that very night the angel of the Lord struck down the Assyrian army. Not one survived, and Sennacherib returned home to his capital at Nineveh (Isa. 37:36, 37). The silence regarding Jerusalem is deafening. The focal point of Sennacherib's palace emphasized elaborately the king's victory at Lachish, perhaps because it remained the most important city conquered,





▲ **Fig. 8:** Lachish reliefs showing Assyrian soldiers carrying spoils including incense burners ZUNKIR CC 4.0

◀ **Fig. 7:** Prism of Sennacherib

while the Bible emphasizes the deliverance of Jerusalem and mentions Lachish only in passing.

So why did Lachish and perhaps 46 other Judean cities fall? Two pieces of independent evidence provide at least some clues. The Nineveh reliefs depict Sennacherib seated and receiving the spoils of the battle at Lachish. Two Assyrian soldiers carry large incense stands over their shoulders, suggesting that there might have been a temple or a significant place of worship at Lachish, when there should have been only one temple in Jerusalem (Fig. 8). In our excavations in 2014 we discovered that every house in the elite zone contained a small female figurine, known as a Judean Pillared Figurine. Many have associated these with the worship of the Canaanite fertility goddess Asherah. Could it be that the religious reforms of Hezekiah did not spread as widely into

the kingdom as once thought? This might explain the judgments brought through the Assyrians against Judah, while the prayer of Hezekiah saved Jerusalem. ♠

¹ David Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib*, Publications of the Institute of Archaeology 6 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1982); David Ussishkin, *Biblical Lachish: A Tale of Construction, Destruction, Excavation and Restoration* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2014), pp. 301-353.

² John M. Russell, *Sennacherib's Palace Without Rival at Nineveh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 252.

³ Yosef Garfinkel et al., "The Canaanite and Judean Cities of Lachish, Israel: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Expedition, 2013-2017," *American Journal of Archaeology* 125 (2021): 419-459.

⁴ Martin G. Klingbeil, Michael G. Hasel, Yosef Garfinkel, and Nestor Petruk, "Four Judean Bullae From the 2014 Season at Tel Lachish," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 381 (2019): 41-56.

⁵ Eilat Mazar, *The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009-2013: Final Reports, Volume II* (Jerusalem: Shoham, 2018), pp. 253-256.

⁶ A. Kirk Grayson and Jamie Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 B.C.)*, Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 3/1 (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), pp. 65, 66.

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THE SAME OLD WHINE (OF BABYLON)

A recent spate of anti-Adventist eschatology has been infecting cyberspace. It's the same old whine (of Babylon), only coming from among us: Rome is no longer an important player; Sunday persecution will never arise; our end-time scenario is from Ellen White, not the Bible; and we must stop scaring people.

Let's take a look.

For starters, Rome—no longer a player?

In Daniel 2, right after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 2:39), the iron in the legs of the statue, and the iron and the clay in its feet and toes (verses 33, 34, 39-43), represent the last earthly empire, which remains until a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” (verse 45) destroys the earth and God establishes His eternal kingdom (verse 44).

In Daniel 7, after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 7:6), the fourth beast with its little horn (verses 7, 8, 19-21) represents the final earthly empire, which remains until God establishes His eternal kingdom: “The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (verse 18).

In Daniel 8, after the fall of ancient Greece (Dan. 8:8, 21, 22), the little horn represents the last earthly empire (verses 9-11, 22-25), which exists until, as in Daniel 2, it's supernaturally destroyed “without hand” (verse 25, KJV) at “the time of the end” (verse 17).

What power, which also plays a major role in the New Testament, arises after ancient Greece and remains to our day (as

it must if destroyed at the end)? This same power also persecuted God's people (Dan. 7:21), was blasphemous (verse 20), exalted itself against “the Prince of the host” (Dan. 8:11), and would “think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25, KJV). So unless the critics can identify another major power that arises after ancient Greece, that persecuted God's people, that thought “to change times and laws,” and that endures to our day—the Adventist position on Rome remains the only viable option.

And that option becomes even more viable, thanks to Revelation 13, which references the same imagery that Daniel 7 used to represent the final earthly power, the one that arose after ancient Greece and remains until supernaturally destroyed at the end of the world. In other words, Rome—which now, in Revelation, is depicted as a major end-time player, a beast (Rev. 13:1-11), the same beast behind the infamous and apocalyptic “mark of the beast” (Rev. 16:2).

Of course, the Adventist “traditional” interpretation of the “mark of the beast” and end-time persecution is also derided.

Let's see . . .

Revelation depicts final events as centering on worship: worship either of the beast and its image (Rev. 14:9) or worship of God, the Creator, the One who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:7, KJV)—language directly from the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:10). This is the one commandment that shows why we should worship God—because He is the Creator—and it's the same commandment that Rome sought to change, replacing God's decree (the seventh day) with humanity's (the first). “We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”*

Meanwhile, the Lord's followers—who are depicted, twice, as keeping “the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17; 14:12)—worship God because, as the Creator (and also our Redeemer), He alone is worthy of



worship (Rev. 5:9). And no more foundational symbol of Him as our Creator exists than the seventh-day Sabbath, which (again) the beast power sought to change. For an earthly power to try to change, in a sense to usurp, the most basic sign of the most basic doctrine, creation, is to attempt to usurp the Lord's authority at the most basic level possible: God as Creator. The only level more basic is God Himself, and because no entity, heavenly or earthly, can get to Him, it instead gets as close as possible: to the foundation sign of Him as Creator—the seventh-day Sabbath.

But persecution over the Sabbath?

In Matthew 12, after Jesus healed on the Sabbath the man with a withered hand (Matt. 12:9-13), how did the religious leaders respond? "But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus" (verse 14, NIV). Death because of the seventh-day Sabbath? In John 5:1-16, after another miraculous healing on the seventh day, the leaders "persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath" (John 5:16).

Death because of human tradition (nothing in the Bible forbade healing on Sabbath, just as nothing in the Bible has put Sunday in place of Sabbath) versus the seventh-day Sabbath? Though the specific issue here with Jesus isn't the same as in final events, it's close enough: human law versus God's, and in both the contested law centers on the biblical Sabbath.

It's hard, then, to see how the issue of worshipping either the Creator, or worshipping the beast and its image, won't be over the one commandment that points to God as Creator and that reveals why we should worship Him—the exact commandment that the beast power usurped.

And, as far as using Ellen White to prove our position on the mark of the beast . . . Where did I quote her above?

Finally, what about our scaring people with those ferocious beasts and warnings about persecution and death decrees?

We can't, without warning about the events that precede it, faithfully proclaim the Second Coming of Jesus.

Noah probably heard something similar. Maybe someone said to Malachi: *Can't you focus more on Yahweh's love instead of giving such nasty warnings like: "Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it" (Mal. 2:3, KJV)?* And what about the wars, rumors of wars, famine, pestilence, lawlessness, persecution, "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:8)?

Excuse us—if you must—for preaching the mark of the beast. It's an integral part of the three angels' messages and the "everlasting gospel" to be proclaimed by God's end-time people. After all, the one who gets it will only "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation" (Rev. 14:10). We can't, without warning about the events that precede it, faithfully proclaim the second coming of Jesus.

It's one thing for our end-time message to be attacked from without. But from within? We'd be naive to expect otherwise. Unfortunately.

* Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (Rockford, Ill: Tan Books and Publishers, 1977), p. 50.

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THE LIFE OF WOMEN DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD



Figurine
from Ez-Zib

*Between biblical text
and archaeological
background*

When the stories of the Bible are read, we often form images in our minds of the people, places, and costumes. I was always particularly interested in the lives of women. I enjoy reading about it in different historical periods, but my main area of concentration has been the Old Testament. When I started sharing what I had learned, I would ask my listeners what they thought women's lives were like during the Israelite monarchy. How do you imagine their lives in that period?

WOMEN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Let's start with the home. Separating household chores from other activities is common today. However, it was not so during most of the Old Testament period. The household of an ancient Israelite family was economically self-sufficient, providing for all the needs of the family. It was the center of life where social activities, the education of children, political decisions, and religious practices

happened. Understanding the work of a woman inside the household in Iron Age Israel requires setting aside the modern view of work inside the house as being of no economic value. In a society in which the household was the main independent economic unit, any work connected with the household, such as processing the grain for eating, or processing fibers for weaving, had great economic value. Moreover, ethnographic studies of pre-modern societies have shown that even though responsibilities and activities are divided according to gender, the division is not hierarchical, but much more complex.¹ Many of the tasks were also shared. The Bible mentions male, but also female shepherds, such as Rachel and the daughters of Jethro. Women also worked in planting and harvesting alongside men (Ruth 2).

Women are often portrayed baking in the Old Testament. The witch of Endor baked bread for Saul (1 Sam. 28:24); Tamar was called specifically to bake cakes for her brother Amnon (2 Sam. 13:8); and the widow of Zarephath was about to bake her last bread when Elijah found her (1 Kings 17:12, 13). Baking is only one step in the complex process of producing bread, one of the main staples of the ancient Israelite diet. As already mentioned, processing of the grain into edible products was done mainly by women. Grinding preceded the baking. The presence of implements and installations for grinding and baking within each household demonstrates that the work was done within the household, and the presence of several sets of grinding stones suggests that women worked in groups. Further archaeological evidence for women baking bread in groups comes from the communal dough-kneading trough found at Tel Dor, Israel,² and from the location and number of ovens in settlements, some located in between dwellings, which also points to shared use.³ There are also objects and paintings as evidence that women were the ones to grind the grain and knead dough, such as a figurine from ez-Zib⁴ and tomb paintings and models from Egypt, which portray women involved in bread-making.

Another activity often associated with women was weaving, such as the women weaving for Asherah in the temple (2 Kings 23:7). Even though this reference is related to worship, the fact that women were weaving outside the household could indicate that within the household that activity was also one of their tasks. The plural form is notable, implying

that several women shared that task and perhaps worked together. Ancient weaving instruments, such as spindle whorls, loom-weights, and needles, are commonly found in excavations of Iron Age Israel. Again, the presence of several sets of implements indicates that women worked in groups.⁵ Because of the large amount of work that goes into producing textiles and clothes, this activity was of considerable economic value to the household. The value of garments can be seen in the Bible in the Joseph narrative, where a special and probably more expensive tunic was given to Joseph by his father (Gen. 37:3).

BEYOND THE HOUSEHOLD

Women's tasks inside the household often extended outside through the informal networks formed between neighbors, as women got together to grind, bake, spin, or weave. These informal associations were essential to maintaining community life, and impacted social and political life in the community.⁶ Working in groups allowed them to exchange information about the needs and concerns of the community and voice their opinions about them. Ethnographic data suggest that women could even influence the outcome of legal or political decisions.⁷

But women did much more than that outside the household. Seals and bullae⁸ bearing women's names account for approximately 3 percent of the currently known seals and impressions.⁹ Since seals were used in legal or economic documents, this indicates that women participated in the community in both legal and economic matters. Written evidence such as ostraca¹⁰ containing women's names, indicates that women could take part in economic transactions.¹¹ This evidence also suggests that these women were educated, and could read and write.

WOMEN AND RELIGION

The Bible also shows women's shared participation in religion. According to 1 Samuel 1:24, 25, Hannah, Samuel's mother, brought her son to the temple and performed the dedication rites and the Nazirite vow with the priest. Earlier in the text, Hannah came to the tabernacle alone to petition before God, indicating that women were allowed in the public areas of the tabernacle (1 Sam. 1:9-12). Women are again portrayed within the temple precinct during the monarchy, indicating that women were probably allowed in the temple area throughout



the First Temple period (2 Kings 23:7). Women worked at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Ex. 38:8), perhaps in some cult-related capacity or preparing the sacrificial meals that were to be eaten in the sanctuary.¹² The Hebrew verb used in this instance is a term related specifically to the work of Levites in the temple. And women could also partake in sacrificial meals (1 Sam. 1:4, 5; 2 Sam. 6:19).

Female prophets such as Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah are also known in the Bible (Ex. 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14-20). Second Kings 22:23 implies the presence and participation of women in cultic activities and festivals, since the husband of the Shunammite expected her to go see the man of God on a new moon or a Sabbath.

However, one of the most interesting texts relating to the religious participation of women in religious practice is the Nazirite vow in Numbers 6. The Bible states that both men and women could take that vow. The Nazirite vow brought a common Israelite person as close to holiness as the high priest. Only the High Priest and Nazirites were completely banned from touching corpses, even of those closest to them. As Roy Gane puts it, “Although the Lord has set up a closed priestly circle to do special sacred tasks in intimate proximity to himself, he allows any member of his

“Kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6) to reach a high level of holiness as a Nazirite.”¹³

As seen above, both archaeology and the Bible indicate that women participated in all aspects of life in ancient Israel, economically, socially, and spiritually. Proverbs 31:10-31 touches on all of these characteristics as it describes the “Woman of Valor.” Things were probably somewhat different from what many imagine it to have been. 🍷

¹ Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 125.

² W. C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 38.

³ Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, p. 131.

⁴ J. B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), fig. 22.

⁵ Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, p. 133.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁸ Bullae are the impressions of a seal in clay, used to seal a document.

⁹ Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, p. 173.

¹⁰ Ostraca are broken shards of ceramics used for writing letters, receipts, etc.

¹¹ Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, p. 173.

¹² Phyllis Bird, “The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion*, ed. J. Patrick D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 406.

¹³ Roy Gane, *The NIV Application Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), p. 533.

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Operation Child Rescue and Child Impact International operates a school in the largest city slum

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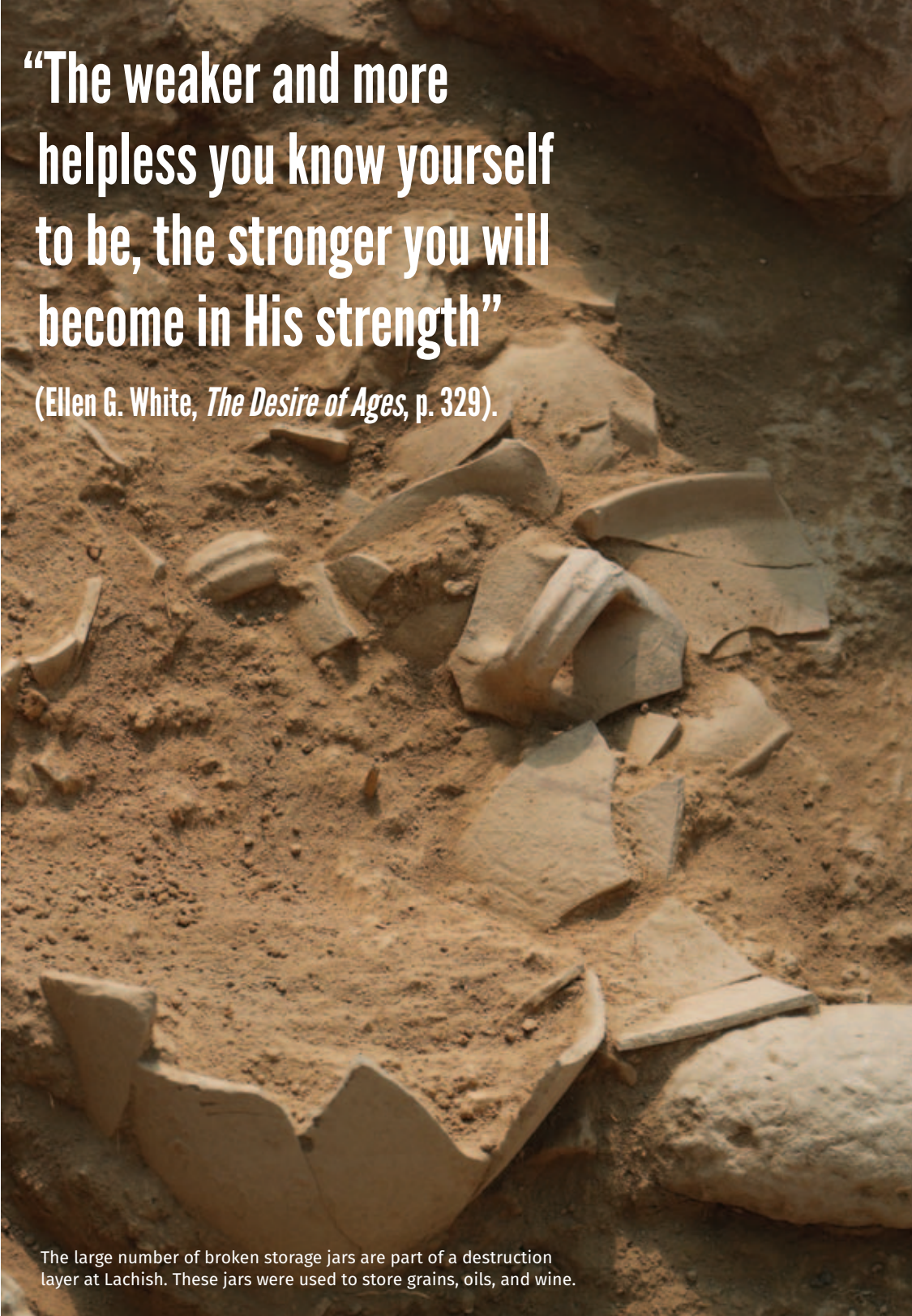
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**“The weaker and more
helpless you know yourself
to be, the stronger you will
become in His strength”**

(Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 329).

The large number of broken storage jars are part of a destruction layer at Lachish. These jars were used to store grains, oils, and wine.



The author excavating human skeletons at the Halzi Gate, site of fierce fighting when the city of Nineveh fell to the Medes and Babylonians in 612 B.C.

PROPHECY MATTERS

*Nahum and
Nineveh's Fall*

CONSTANCE E. CLARK GANE

I knelt under the burning sun and carefully removed dust and dirt from the dead man's face. It was a gruesome task, and I had been working for hours. I was hot and thirsty, but I continued brushing, carefully exposing the man's forehead and nose. He was young, maybe in his 20s. As I uncovered his mouth, I was appalled to see that it was frozen open. The burning gate had crushed him as it fell, and his mouth, open in a scream, had been filled with dirt. A dagger

was on the ground next to him where it had fallen. His life hadn't needed to end this way.

NAHUM SAID IT FIRST

God, through the prophet Nahum, prophesied what I was excavating. He saw the burning of the Halzi Gate at Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, years before it happened. He saw the warriors fighting in the narrowed passageway leading into the city and said, "The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; fire shall devour the bars of your gates" (Nahum 3:13). It was both thrilling and sobering to be excavating in Nineveh where I and others on our University of California, Berkeley, team uncovered more than a dozen warriors who had died a violent death. One had landed facedown with his arms outflung; another had tried to cover his face from the falling debris; yet another had fallen in a running position. The contorted bodies extended into the unexcavated portions of the gate, stunning visual realizations of the words of the prophet: "There is a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses—they stumble over the corpses" (verse 3). Among the bodies that we excavated were found treasures that had escaped the hands of the looters: a string of carnelian and lapis lazuli beads; an ivory scarab; bronze and iron arrowheads; iron armor; a pike, spearhead, and dagger; a duck-shaped stamp seal of white chalcedony; and a dome-shaped stamp seal of blue chalcedony in a silver mount.

The inevitability of Nineveh's destruction was clear to the prophets of Israel. In fact, God's extension of mercy to Nineveh in the mid-eighth century B.C. elicited rage and confusion from the prophet Jonah, who had carried the initial warning of judgment. He could not understand how the enemies of his people had been forgiven, because he had hoped for their destruction. A century later Assyria had returned to its cruel ways with a vengeance. God's patience had run out; He had seen enough suffering.

Sometime after 660 B.C. and before 630 B.C.—probably during the reign of Ashurbanipal, when the Assyrian empire was at its height—God gave Nahum a message about the future of Nineveh. Nahum refers to Nineveh as the "bloody city," "full of lies and plunder" (Nahum 3:1, ESV),¹ and a prostitute, "graceful and of deadly charms, who

betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms" (verse 4, ESV). God, through the prophet, declared that Nineveh would be "cut off" (Nahum 1:14, 15, ESV), completely destroyed. Through Jonah, forgiveness and reconciliation had been offered and received, but Assyria had again rejected God, and this time there would be no mercy.

GOD'S PATIENCE HAS ITS TIMETABLE

The seething fury of those who had experienced Assyria's brutality swelled to a climax that resulted in the fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy. To the south, Babylonia had been dominated for centuries by the Assyrians. Finally, in 627/626 B.C., a Chaldean of royal lineage named Nabopolassar (Nabû-apla-ušur in the Babylonian language), defeated the Assyrians in a battle near Babylon. By 616 B.C. Nabopolassar was in firm control of Babylonia and turned his attention north against the Assyrian homeland. Meanwhile, the Medes, to the northeast in the Zagros Mountains, who had also suffered humiliation from Assyria, were organizing under the leadership of King Cyaxares (625-585 B.C.). The two emerging powers, Babylonians and Medes, initiated independent military attacks against the Assyrian royal ceremonial city of Aššur. Cyaxares also attempted to sack Nineveh, but failed. Not strong enough to succeed by themselves against the powerful Assyrians, Nabopolassar and Cyaxares formed an alliance in 614 B.C., sealed with a kiss—the marriage of Nebuchadnezzar, crown prince of Babylonia, to Amytis, princess of Media. The Scythians, a powerful warrior nation from the north, joined the Babylonians and Medes, and together they besieged the Assyrian capital city of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

Nineveh was a formidable city. The great Tigris River flowed along the western flanks of the city, providing natural protection. Along the eastern flank, where the city was most vulnerable, King Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) had constructed a deep moat that was filled with water—a moat that remains to this day. The powerful walls of Nineveh had been built by Sennacherib when he moved the Assyrian capital from Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad) in the north to Nineveh. The walls were massive and comprised of two distinct walls. The outer wall was built of a rough stone core, faced with a facade of well-dressed limestone masonry,

God, through the prophet Nahum, prophesied what I was excavating.

and capped with continuous crenellated parapets. At the top, which was often 20 feet (six meters) high, was a walkway. Every 82 feet (25 meters) a tower was set into the wall. The wall itself was 7.5 miles long and enclosed an area of more than 1,852 acres (750 hectares). On the inside of this massive stone wall was a second, much higher mud-brick wall that was about 49 feet (15 meters) thick and at least 82 feet (25 meters) high. A paved causeway ran between the two walls. Fifteen gates allowed entrance into the city. Distinct communities occupied the city within these walls: palaces and temples on the high mound of Kuyunjik; below them industrial and merchant quarters, the wealthy, and the homes of the commoners.

Much of the interior of the city was comprised of expansive open spaces through which the Khosr River flowed and where the king had his gardens, groves, and zoological area. Part of this area was specifically reserved for lions, which figured prominently in royal lion hunts and the worship of Ishtar, whose attribute animal was the lion. Lion hunts are graphically depicted on the limestone wall reliefs of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, now housed in the British Museum. How appropriate, then, are Nahum's words, depicting the Assyrians: "Where is the den of the lions and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, lioness and lion's cub went with nothing to disturb them? The lion tore enough for his cubs, killed enough for his lionesses, and filled his lairs with prey and his dens with torn flesh" (Nahum 2:11, 12, NASB).²

The city of Nineveh was besieged at its most vulnerable points: the north and the east. Archaeological excavations have uncovered fascinating details from three of the 15 gates—the Halzi, Adad, and Shamash gates—where the battles were most evident. Fighting was fiercest at the Halzi Gate in the southeast and the Adad Gate in the north.

Following the failed Median attack on Nineveh at its Halzi Gate in 614 B.C., the Assyrians had preemptively narrowed the entrance to this gate from 23 feet (seven meters) to seven feet (two meters), resulting in a logjam of bodies during the final destruction of the city.

Babylonian Chronicle ABC 3 details the conquest of Nineveh by Nabopolassar and Cyaxares, describing the fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy: "From the month Simanu until the month Abu—for three months—they subjected the city to a heavy siege. . . . They inflicted a major defeat. . . . They carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple and turned the city into a ruin heap."³

NAHUM AGAIN

Just this spring, on March 16, 2021, fragments of the Nahum scroll were discovered in the "Cave of Horror," Nahal Hever Cave 8 (8Hev), in the cliffs near the Dead Sea in the Judean Desert of Israel—the first discovery of new Dead Sea scroll fragments in 60 years. Although a scroll of Nahum already had been found many years ago, these new findings remind us of Nahum's continued relevance, both to the ancient community that preserved it and the Christian community today.

Nineveh's destruction may be history. But Nahum's warning against gratuitous cruelty, power grabbing, and idolatry invite a critique of many selfish modern power structures. The good news is that God who hates oppression will not allow it forever. He will soon bring redress: "He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time" (Nahum 1:9).⁴

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³ See A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1975). Research for the article as a whole drew on the following sources: Stanley Mayer Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1978); Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 B.C.* (London: Routledge, 1995), vol. 2; W. W. Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2003); David Stronach and Kim Codella, "Nineveh," in E. M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (New York: Oxford University, 1997), vol. 4, pp. 144–148; David Stronach and Stephen Lumsden, "UC Berkeley's Excavations at Nineveh," *Biblical Archaeologist* 55, no. 4 (1992): 227–233.

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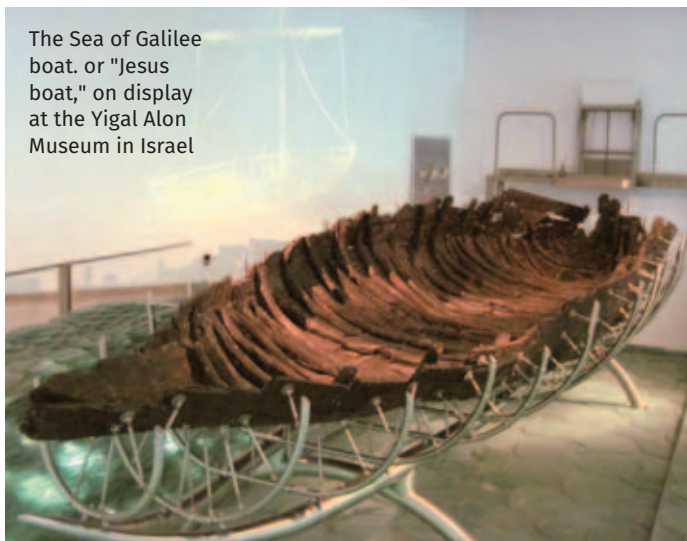
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The Sea of Galilee boat, or "Jesus boat," on display at the Yigal Alon Museum in Israel



FROM THE TIME OF CHRIST AND PAUL

Biblical Archaeology is also for the New Testament

It is traditional when talking about biblical archaeology to focus on wonderful discoveries that enlighten us about the Old Testament—as most of the essays in this issue highlight. However, there are numerous exciting discoveries that illuminate and even confirm details about the New Testament.

LIGHT ON CHRIST'S STORY

A major artifact illuminating Christ's story is the so-called Jesus boat found in the mud near the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. While not really a boat that Jesus sailed in, coin and ceramic evidence indicate that this kind of boat was in use during the time of Christ and is typical of those used by His disciples. This wooden boat, 7.5 by 27 feet, was in use from about 50 B.C. to A.D. 50. Pottery and nails (along with

carbon dating) secure the date of the boat to the time of Christ. This boat gives a good sense of what sailing on the Galilee was like in the days of Jesus and His disciples.¹ Another recent discovery is that of the Siloam Pool in Jerusalem, where Jesus healed the blind man (John 9:1-12). For years tour guides showed visitors to Jerusalem a Byzantine pool (at the south end of Hezekiah's tunnel) as the pool where Jesus performed His miracle. But recent excavation has discovered the actual pool that was visited by Jesus during the Roman period. The pool was a large, elaborate affair—225 feet wide, with steps leading down into it from three sides.²

Finds relating to people directly involved with the crucifixion of Christ have also been found. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea who washed his hands of any responsibility for the death of Christ, minted distinctive coins while he was governor,³ and his name appears on a dedication stone found at Caesarea Maritima as honoring the Roman emperor Tiberius by constructing a temple in his name.⁴

The ossuary (bone burial box) of Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest who presided over the Sanhedrin trial of Jesus, has been found in Jerusalem—his name is etched on the outside of the box.⁵

Dramatic evidence for an actual Roman crucifixion of a Jewish victim has also been found archaeologically. A nail through the heel bone was found in an ossuary containing the bones of Jehohanan, the son of Hagakol, a Jewish man crucified by the Romans. A piece of olive wood still attached to the nail shows Jehohanan was nailed to a cross of olive wood.⁶

Among the collapsed stones of the temple mound in Jerusalem was found an inscription in Hebrew stating that the stone marked the “place of the trumpeting” (probably located at the corner of the roof of the Sanhedrin building on the south end of the temple mound—the balustrade), where a priest would blow a trumpet to announce the beginning and the closing of the Sabbath, reminding us of how important it was for observant Jews to keep the Sabbath faithfully. The stone was knocked from its place when the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70.⁷

Another dramatic Greek inscription (actually two of them) was found on a stone in Jerusalem that was part of the dividing wall that marked the point beyond which Gentiles could not enter the temple without fear of death. Indeed, this is precisely what the stone says: “No foreigner is allowed within the balustrade [soreg] surrounding the sanctuary and the enclosed court. Whoever enters will be personally responsible for his subsequent death.”⁸ This is precisely the wall Paul states that Jesus has broken down: “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*” (Eph. 2:14, KJV).

FROM THE LIFE OF PAUL

Among the interesting finds that can be directly related to Paul’s mission to the Gentiles is an inscription found in Rome that records the name of Proconsul Sergius Paulus, who served for a time on the island of Cyprus. This official is also mentioned in Acts 13:6-12 as a convert of Paul’s in Cyprus.⁹ Thanks to Paul’s success with this Roman official, many doors were opened in southern Asia Minor (Turkey) that allowed Paul to expand his work.

Another individual who is associated with Paul and is likely attested archaeologically is Erastus of Corinth, mentioned in Romans 16:23 (also Acts 19:22; 2 Tim. 4:20) as an official holding the office of treasurer. An inscription mentioning an Erastus was found near a paved area northeast of the theater of Corinth. It has been dated to the mid-first century and reads “Erastus in return for his *aedileship* paved it at his own expense.”¹⁰ The name, office, place, and time are a good fit with the account of this individual in Romans, according to many scholars.

Beyond archaeology’s traditional finds, we cannot ignore the role the discipline has played in the text of the New Testament, a subject deserving more attention. Worth mentioning even in this

brief overview would be the discovery of Greek Papyrus P52, a papyrus fragment that contains the text of John 18:31-33. Dated to c. A.D. 125, it is considered the oldest surviving manuscript of the New Testament.¹¹ When we reflect on the fact that this text was circulating just a few years after the New Testament canon closed with John the revelator, we realize we are not far in date from the time of the original autographs, the manuscripts written by John and Paul themselves!

CONCLUSION

We have scarcely scratched the surface of material on archaeology’s exciting discoveries that illuminate and even confirm details of the New Testament. But one discovery that has not been made is equally exciting. While there are a couple major claims as to where Jesus was buried—the Garden Tomb area, north of the Old City of Jerusalem, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem—and while space does not allow a discussion as to which of these tombs is the more likely one, the good news is that these tombs are both empty!¹² No body of Christ has been found or will ever be. That is because we worship a risen Savior. 📌

⁷See Shelley Wachamann et al., *An Ancient Boat Discovered in the Sea of Galilee* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1988).

⁸“Ten Top Discoveries,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 35, no. 4 (July/August/September/October 2009): 4.

⁹Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁰Jerry Vardaman, “A New Inscription Which Mentions Pilate as ‘Prefect,’” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 1 (1962): 70, 71.

¹¹Zvi Greenhut, “Burial Cave of the Caiaphas Family,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 18, no. 5 (September/October 1992).

¹²V. Tzaferis, “Jewish Tombs at and near Giv’at ha-Mivtar,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 20 (1970): 18-32.

¹³Benjamin Mazar, “Herodian Jerusalem in the Light of the Excavations South and South-West of the Temple Mount,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 28, no. 4 (1978): 234.

¹⁴Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land: From the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 155.

¹⁵Jack P. Lewis, *Historical Backgrounds of Bible History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 153.

¹⁶David W. J. Gill, “Erastus The Aedile,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 40 (1989): 298.

¹⁷Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: an Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 99.

¹⁸Martin Biddle, Jon Seligman, Winter Tamar, and Gideon Avni, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (New York: Rizzoli in cooperation with Israel Antiquities Authority, distributed by St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

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READING DANIEL IN THE DIRT

How stones cry out

PATRICK MAZANI

The book of Daniel continues to excite believers because of its focus on the end-times. The first part of this two-part book relates Babylonian court stories; the second part deals with religious and political developments from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar to the end of world history. The recurrent theme of Daniel is the chronological succession of world empires from Babylonian times onward until they are displaced by God's kingdom. Through ages of dirt, archaeology has provided artifacts



The Nabonidus Chronicle documents the reign of Belshazzar's father as well as the period during which Belshazzar was regent in Babylon.

that increase our understanding of the world of the book and consistently affirm its historicity. Among the areas of its faith-building contributions are the book's language and dating, its geographic references and personal names, its reflection of life and times in Jerusalem, and its depiction of Jewish identification and status in captivity.

LANGUAGE AND DATING

The book of Daniel was first written in two languages. Chapters 1:1-2:4a and 8-12 were written in Hebrew, while 2:4b-7 were in Aramaic. Scrolls discovered at Qumran present the Hebrew and the Aramaic parts of the text of Daniel just as they appear in other ancient texts. The book of Daniel also includes scattered Akkadian, Greek, and Old Persian words. Daniel's prodigious linguistic skills and administrative experience in national and international affairs are evident. The idea of two languages in one document is not unusual. Ancient, recovered texts featuring multiple languages include the life-size statue of Hadad-yith'i, ruler of Guzana in mid-ninth century B.C., found in northern Syria, and written in both Akkadian and Aramaic.¹ Also, the trilingual inscription in Aramaic, Greek, and Lycian found in the sanctuary of Leto at Xanthos in 1973.² The widely familiar Rosetta Stone inscription was written by Egyptian priests in 196 B.C. in classical Egyptian hieroglyphics, Demotic, and classical Greek.³

Some have argued that the book of Daniel is historical fiction, a prophecy written after the fact, around 165 B.C., to console the Jewish people who were being persecuted by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.⁴ Their claim that the Aramaic used in Daniel belongs to the second century B.C. has been contradicted by studies showing that the book's Aramaic and syntax belong to the sixth century B.C. and are of Babylonian origin.⁵ Misplaced dating of Daniel results from inadequate use of archaeology. More and more archaeological evidence shows that the book is a unified whole, composed much earlier than their popularized suggestions.⁶ The author of Daniel had unique information and must have lived during the time period he wrote about.

OF PLACES AND PEOPLE

Disputes over history in the book of Daniel include doubts about everything from geography to humans, e.g., the Ulai waterway, the Great Sea,

Belshazzar the king, Darius the emperor. Only the last of these, Darius, the Mede, remains without convincing archaeological testimony to the accuracy of the book of Daniel.

The Ulai, where Daniel had the vision of a ram and a male goat (Dan. 8:2, 16), was said to be nonexistent. We now possess a bull inscription found at the palace in Nineveh that records the battle of Sennacherib, king of Syria (704-681 B.C.), against some Chaldeans "by the Ulai, a river whose bank was good."⁷

The Great Sea, so named by others beside Daniel (Num. 34:6, 7; Joshua 9:1), has been dismissed as mythic in Daniel 7:2, 3. But a foundation stone laid by Shamashi-Adad I (c. 1808-1776 B.C.), king of Asshur and Old Babylonia, identifies Lebanon as a land of the shore of the Great Sea.⁸ A broken slab found at Calah is inscribed with Adad-Nirari III's (810-783 B.C.) expedition to Palestine. It identifies his area of conquest to stretch from the Great Sea of the rising sun (Persian Gulf) to the Great Sea of the setting sun (Mediterranean Sea).⁹ Daniel was well acquainted with the geography of the places he writes about. Their mention in other ancient texts highlights the veracity of the biblical text.

King Belshazzar was considered by many scholars as a fictitious figure.¹⁰ This mindset was undone by, among others, the discovery of a Babylonian tablet dated about 559 B.C., identifying the person of *Bel-shar-utsur* (Belshazzar). Insistence that this person is erroneously identified as Nebuchadnezzar's son (Dan. 5:11, 18, 22), or king of Babylon (verses 1, 9, 30; see also Dan. 7:1; 8:1), is contradicted by many inscriptions discovered by archaeologists that show Nabonidus, king of Babylon (556-539 B.C.), as the biological father of Belshazzar.

Discovered inscriptions now explain both Belshazzar's status as king (Dan. 5:1ff.) and as son of Nebuchadnezzar (verses 11, 12). The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus say that Nabonidus, king of Babylon, was in Tema, Arabia, for 10 years while his son Belshazzar was in charge at Babylon.¹¹ Recovered Assyrian records tell of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704-681 B.C.), who appointed Bel-ibin, a Babylonian raised in Nineveh, to be king over Babylon in 702 B.C. These records also show Ashur-nadin-shumi, his son, was appointed to the same post in 699 B.C.¹² With regard to his identification as Nebuchadnezzar's son, overwhelming evidence from across the ancient Near East show



Belshazzar seeing the writing on the wall as depicted by Rembrandt.

that it was standard procedure for rulers to express or be described as descendants of their predecessors, regardless of genetic linkage. The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III calls Israel's King Jehu Omri's son, even though Jehu had no relationship with Omri. Kings often called themselves "son" of their tribe's or nation's legendary ancestor. Biblically, many kings of Judah are referred to as son of King David, including Hezekiah, son of Ahaz (2 Kings 18:1, 3), and Josiah, son of Amon (2 Kings 21:25; 22:2). Joseph, Mary's betrothed, is David's son (Matt. 1:20), as is Jesus Himself, in Matthew's genealogy (verse 1); in the desperate cries of calamity's victims—a Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:22), blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46, 47); in the ecstatic shouts of His coronation crowd (Matt. 21:9). "Son of" applies to genetic categories, royal aspirations, international political identifications, and character equivalency—"sons of Belial" (see Judges 19:22; 1 Sam. 2:12). Disputes over Belshazzar's title of "son of Nebuchadnezzar" are among the weakest arguments ever levied against biblical historicity.

With Nebuchadnezzar as Babylon's ruler without equal, it is not the least surprising that Belshazzar is called his son, whether after he ascended to the throne or in order to gain legitimacy to the throne.

FINDS IN JERUSALEM AND EGYPT

Excavations in and around Jerusalem have supported the text of Daniel in exciting ways. They show massive fire damage caused by the Babylonians when they destroyed Jerusalem. The main attack was on the northern side of the city, at a vulnerable part of the defense system. Many Babylonian arrowheads have been found in a tower that was part of the defense system just north of the city. A possible archive or public office had 51 inscribed seals with identifiable names, including that of Gemareyahu ben Shapan, the scribe who had chambers in Jehoiakim's court in 604 B.C. (Jer. 36:9-12, 25). An assemblage of bones, once analyzed, shows that domestic animals were the source of meat, along with wild game and chicken. The lack of pig bones and other nonkosher animals around

Daniel's prodigious linguistic skills and administrative experience in national and international affairs are evident.

Jerusalem not only inform us about the diet then, but show that the population was Jewish.¹³

Regarding the coming of the Messiah, Daniel 9:25 states that Jerusalem “shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time” (ESV).¹⁴ Ancient cities had a square or plaza as a social, business, and administrative center just inside the city gate. In Jerusalem, squares were found before the Water Gate (Neh. 8:1, 3, 16), next to the Gate of Ephraim (verse 16), and near the Temple (Ezra 10:9). The moat or trench was a defense apparatus dug at vulnerable places outside the city wall to provide security. Several such moats have been found around the walls of Jerusalem.

Correspondence from Elephantine in Egypt provides clear confirmation of Daniel 9:25, for it shows that by 408 B.C. Jerusalem had been built, marking the end of the 49 years since the decree of Artaxerxes I in 457 B.C., as predicted in Daniel 9:25.¹⁵

LIFE IN CAPTIVITY

In 598 B.C. King Jehoiachin, with his wives, children, and mother, were taken captive (2 Kings 24:15). A record of Jehoiachin's food rations from Babylonian texts casts direct light on Jeremiah's report of the king's captivity (verse 15; Jer. 52:31-34):

“10 (*sila*) to *Ia-ku-ú-ki-nu* [i.e. Jehoiachin], the son of the king of *Ia-ku-du* (i.e. Judah)

“2½ *sila* for the 5 sons of the king of Judah (*Ia-ku-du*) through Qana'a [. . .].”¹⁶

Other Bible writers reflect the times of the book of Daniel on which the book itself does not say much (Jer. 29:1-15; also Eze. 3:15; Ezra 2:59), and the archaeological finds show consistency with the biblical picture. A 498 B.C. administrative text was published from a place called “Judahtown” (Babylonian *ál-Yāhūdu*).¹⁷ Hundreds of tablets discovered in Nippur in 1893, known as Murashu Tablets, from the century after Daniel, the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, show Jewish names on documents as principals, contracting parties, tax collectors, bankers, and brokers.¹⁸ These recovered texts show that Judean seals bear no pagan impressions or symbols.

Judean documents were not issued on Saturdays or Jewish holidays, and contain no oaths to foreign gods. While in captivity, the Jewish community, for the most part, maintained its religious heritage and practice as demonstrated in the archaeological finds, reminding us of the faithfulness of Daniel and his friends in the book by his name.

Archaeological finds help us in the dating and interpretation of the book of Daniel. They also provide the history and cultural setting of the world of Daniel. In a remarkable way, these artifacts can increase our understanding of the book of Daniel as the sure Word of God. 📖

¹ A. R. Millard and P. Bordreuil, “A Statue From Syria With Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982): 135-141.

² T. R. Bryce, “A Recently Discovered Cult in Lycia,” *Journal of Religious History* 10 (1978): 115-127.

³ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Rosetta Stone* (London: British Museum, 1955), pp. 1-8.

⁴ John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), p. 25.

⁵ Kenneth A. Kitchen, “The Aramaic of Daniel,” in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, ed. D. J. Wiseman et al. (London: Tyndale, 1965), pp. 31-79; see also Zdravko Stefanovic, *The Aramaic of Daniel in the Light of Old Aramaic* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

⁶ See Patrick Mazani, “The Book of Daniel in Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Literary and Material Finds: An Archaeological Perspective” (PhD dissertation, Andrews University, 2008).

⁷ D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924), p. 75, lines 87, 88.

⁸ William W. Hallo, and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *The Context of Scripture* (Boston: Brill, 2003), vol. 2, p. 259.

⁹ James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 281.

¹⁰ Arguments for this view are summarized in Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (Eugene, Ore.: WIPF & Stock, 2008), pp. 11-15.

¹¹ A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), p. 106.

¹² Charles Bouffflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), p. 118.

¹³ Abra Spicariach, “The Jerusalem Diet,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 44 (2018): 43.

¹⁴ Texts credited to ESV are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

¹⁵ See “Correspondence From Elephantine in Egypt,” *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 491, 492.

¹⁶ *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 308.

¹⁷ Laurie E. Pearce, “How Bad Was the Babylonian Exile?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 42 (2016): 52.

¹⁸ Ran Zadok, *The Earliest Diaspora Israelites and Judeans in Pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2001), pp. 11-80.

Patrick Mazani is a district pastor in the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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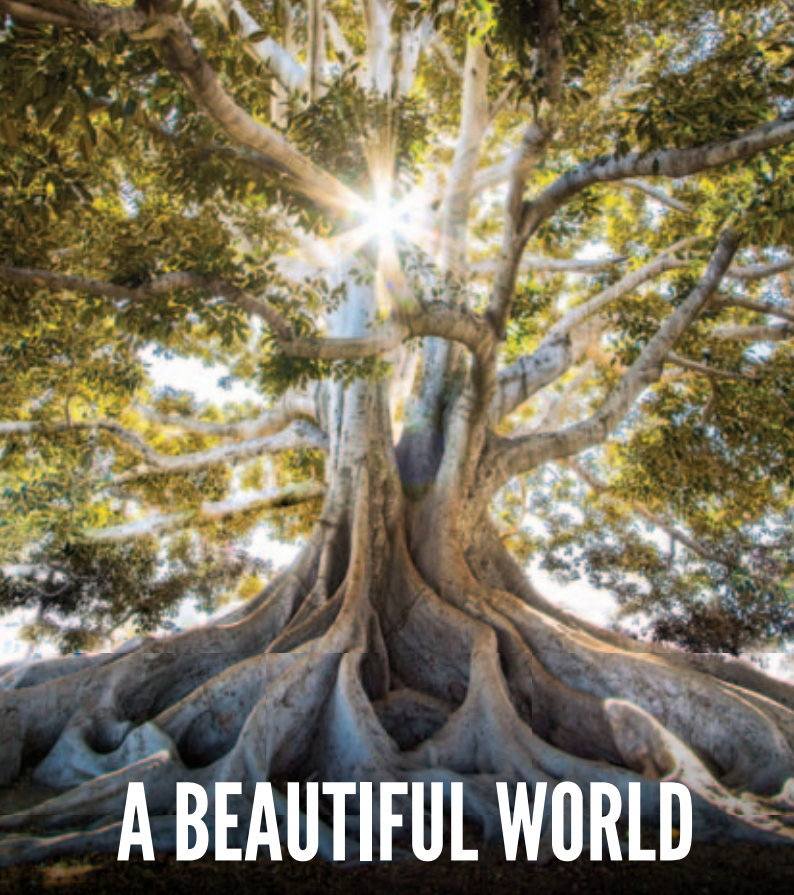
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A BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Reveling in God's handiwork

ELLEN G. WHITE

As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, interspersed with noble rivers and lovely lakes; but the hills and mountains were not abrupt and rugged, abounding in terrific steeps and frightful chasms, as they now do; the sharp, ragged edges of earth's rocky framework were buried beneath the fruitful soil, which everywhere produced a luxuriant growth of verdure. There were no loathsome swamps or barren deserts. Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers

greeted the eye at every turn. The heights were crowned with trees more majestic than any that now exist. The air, untainted by foul miasma, was clear and healthful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace. The angelic host viewed the scene with delight, and rejoiced at the wonderful works of God. . . .

FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." Everything that God had made was the perfection of beauty, and nothing seemed wanting that could contribute to the happiness of the holy pair; yet the Creator gave them still another token of His love, by preparing a garden especially for their home. In this garden were

trees of every variety, many of them laden with fragrant and delicious fruit. There were lovely vines, growing upright, yet presenting a most graceful appearance, with their branches drooping under their load of tempting fruit of the richest and most varied hues. It was the work of Adam and Eve to train the branches of the vine to form bowers, thus making for themselves a dwelling from living trees covered with foliage and fruit. There were fragrant flowers of every hue in rich profusion. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, surpassing in glory all other trees. Its fruit appeared like apples of gold and silver, and had the power to perpetuate life.

The creation was now complete. "The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Eden bloomed on earth. . . . No taint of sin or shadow of death marred the fair creation. "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7.

The great Jehovah had laid the foundations of the earth; He had dressed the whole world in the garb of beauty and had filled it with things useful to man; He had created all the wonders of the land and of the sea. . . .

The beauty that clothes the earth is a token of God's love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God. ▀

Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry. This excerpt was taken from the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44-48.



CAN AN ATHEIST GO TO HEAVEN?

What qualifies people for glory?

CHARLES MILLS

A self-proclaimed atheist lies on his deathbed. Friends and family gather around, pleading with him to accept Christ as His personal Savior “before it’s too late.” But alas, the disease wins, and the man’s eyes close as his shallow breathing ceases. He’s gone.

But is he gone forever? Is his deathbed choice to reject God the last straw that assures his eternal destruction?

ATHEISTS AND OTHER SUCH

Christ came into contact with many seemingly “unsavable” folk during His short ministry on earth. The rich young

ruler, the woman taken in adultery, corrupt tax man Zacchaeus, the thief on the cross, those standing around at the Crucifixion with bloody hammers in their hands—they’d all rejected, in one way or another, the pure principles of love outlined in Scripture. They’d put self-rule over God rule just as the children of Israel had done when they campaigned for an earthly king to lead them. Samuel didn’t mince words when he told them: “You have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities” (1 Sam. 10:19, NIV).

It’s a firmly held Christian perspective that the only way to salvation is to accept Christ as your personal Savior. Didn’t Jesus say, “I am the way and the truth and the life. . . . No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6, NIV)?

This is absolutely true. Rejecting Christ does take you out of the running for a spot on the sea of glass. Why? Because God makes heaven available only to those who are willing to believe there is one. It’s a destination for people who trust divine truth and reject Satan’s lies. But in His statement Christ cracked open a door that many overlook. He said, “I am the way. Except through Me.”

Which begs the question: What if a person never knew the real Jesus? What if he or she had only come into contact with one of

the many false christs mentioned in Matthew 24:24 and, based on what they'd seen or heard, rejected the whole idea of God out of hand?

We see and hear these false christs heralded from pulpits, TV screens, and books all the time, and I can't say I blame some atheists for their unbelief. When it comes to such gods, I'm an atheist, too.

REWARD

Many firmly believe that heaven is the big payoff for all the sacrifices you've made over the years; for all those times you wanted to do something evil but didn't. If the prize for decades of self-denying and putting others first is eternal life, then it's totally worth it, right? "Why should someone who didn't fight that good fight of faith—or even acknowledge the existence of God—be admitted?" they say in their hearts; "they didn't earn it!"

Thankfully, for us all, this isn't the way God thinks—as demonstrated by His Son, Jesus. What we do, what we say, how we act, and what we believe aren't a measure for anything other than representing our hard-earned victories over sin, or revealing our glaring need for forgiveness and divine intervention. So before I pass judgment on someone's eligibility for the earth made new, I must take a long, hard look at myself. The "filthy rags" of my righteousness (Isa. 64:6) are useless. While my striving for perfection and following God's principles do provide a safer, happier, healthier, and more fulfilling life here on earth—benefits totally worth the struggle—my salvation hinges on Christ's sacrifice *alone*.

I know for a fact that many atheists are sincere, kind, loving, generous, and forgiving souls. They're faithfully following the blueprint for love that God planted in their hearts. What they're not doing is acknowledging the source of their devotion.

Paul understood this when he wrote: "(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God judges

They're faithfully following the blueprint for love that God planted in their hearts.

people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares" (Rom. 2:14-16, NIV).

What a wonderful opportunity this affords us to not judge atheists or call them unworthy of heaven, but to demonstrate with our lives and testimony our personal belief in Jesus and how He's a God of forgiveness and second chances.

Which brings us back to our dead atheist. Perhaps he never had anyone demonstrate God's true character in a way that was life- or belief-changing. Maybe no one ever introduced Him to the type of Savior who could eclipse the pain in his life or the doubt that shadowed his heart. He may have closed his eyes in death never knowing the gentle touch of Jesus because, here on earth, that gentle touch was supposed to be delivered through human hands—the same hands that belonged to people who considered him unfit for heaven—and told him so.

ONE-ON-ONE

That's why I like to imagine another scene: Jesus appears the second time. The graves of those whose hearts God knows are pure—those who followed the light they had, even though they'd rejected the human-inspired versions of God presented to them—burst open. What they and our atheist friend experience at that moment is what they'd missed throughout their earthly existence—the direct, unfiltered call of the Savior and the gentle touch of the same Jesus who died so they could live again.

They see His true character unshadowed by human frailties and Satan's lies, and fall in love with their Savior. With shouts of praise, those who finally know the whole truth—including our atheist friend—embrace the God they never knew, and leave behind their unbelief forever. ♣

Charles Mills, author, radio show host, and media producer, has published several books, including *Religion in the Real World*, *Refreshed Parables*, and *Surprising Nature*.



THE HUTIA HUNTER

The hunter who fell into Jesus' arms

HENRY AND ARLEEN STUBBS

Freddy avoided looking down as he climbed higher and higher up the swaying treetop, some 60 feet off the ground.

FOR FAMILY'S SAKE

Determined not to go home from the hunt empty-handed and unable to provide for his family, Freddy chased the evasive hutia up to the very tip-top branches. The hutia, Cuba's largest endemic mammal, is a large tree-dwelling rodent that grows to two feet in length and can weigh up to 20 pounds. A live hutia

can sell for nearly a month's wage (\$30) in Havana.

Hunting without guns requires strength and bravery. Focused on the hutia, Freddy chased the animal out onto smaller and smaller branches, high above the forest floor. Suddenly the limb supporting him snapped, and he plummeted more than six stories to the ground. Landing miraculously between two jagged tree stumps, Freddy found himself on the ground with a broken spine, several fractured ribs, and a punctured lung.

Two friends heard his falling cry and ran to help. Together they carried Freddy to the edge of the forest, where they summoned a horse cart. Traveling several kilometers on a cart jostled his broken spine and bones. Barely able to breathe with insufficient oxygen, Freddy passed in and out of consciousness. At the edge of a dirt road his friends appealed to a driver of a farm tractor with a cart to take him to the nearest paved road, where an ambulance could pick him up.

AFTER THE FALL

Despite several operations over the next eight months, Freddy lost his ability to move except to shake his head. With a crushing sense of his loss, Freddy knew he could no longer care for his family, pursue the hidden dreams of his heart, or even be a normal man. Freddy cried, becoming angry, bitter, and ultimately depressed. He thought about his life and past. He remembered his mom taking him to church as a boy. He remembered the stories from the Bible that engaged him and spoke of such a powerful God. Could they be true?

The more Bible stories he tried to remember, the more Freddy wondered if the Author of those miracle stories would listen to his own painful story. *What do I have to lose?* he thought. Alone one night in a Cuban hospital bed without chaplains or counselors, Freddy cried to God, asking for faith to believe in Him and asking for forgiveness for the years of unbelief.

Freddy states, "To my surprise, I immediately sensed that God heard my cry and that I was accepted and forgiven. I felt a peace I had never known. I asked God to take all of the remains of my life and . . . to give me this one thing, the presence of Jesus in my heart." Freddy continued, "From the moment I invited Jesus into my heart, I knew I had made the right decision, as hope and energy returned to me. The next morning I asked to be

**I immediately sensed
that God heard my cry
and that I was accepted
and forgiven.**

placed in a wheelchair in a sitting position, and rejoiced at how well I did. The following day, I asked to be taken to the new church (WYG plant—see bio) in my town. I went joyfully and had no pain. In fact, my pain is totally gone now. I don't need any more pain medication. I am now moving my arms and beginning to get a little feeling in my lower extremities, and I know it is because of God."

WYG MISSION WORK

WYG's medical missionary/Bible worker (MM/BW) couple in the town began applying treatments to Freddy's bed sores and studying the Bible with him and his wife. Recently Freddy, his wife, Annibel; and eight of their friends were baptized. Freddy declares: "Yes, I'm an invalid. I can't chase hutia and do the things I once thought important, but I've never known the happiness I now know. With all I am, I am grateful God saved my life, allowing my testimony to impact many who are now studying the Bible with my pastor and giving both my wife and me the joy of eternal salvation!"

"God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Thank you for keeping Cuba in your prayers. 📌

This story first appeared in the ASI magazine, Summer 2020.

Henry and Arleen Stubbs founded ASI organization World Youth Group Inc. (WYG), which trains—and supports—medical missionaries to plant churches in unreached regions of Cuba. Get involved at: worldyouthgroup.org.



SABBATH SAFARI

Mary finds the Lord of the Sabbath.

MEIRING PRETORIUS

We were entering an open market where a young Muslim woman was selling her produce. While she was waiting for customers, her attention was absorbed by a familiar piece of literature from the Light Bearers Ministry. The pastors and elders with me approached her for a possible impromptu interview and video. Suddenly the atmosphere of the market changed. The woman was friendly, but the atmosphere around us was not. Noticing the seriousness of the moment, one of the pastors

whispered, “We are putting this woman in a difficult situation.” Many of the other marketers were also Muslims. “Her family and community may shun her,” he added. We quietly left the market.

REACHING MUSLIMS: MARY’S STORY

This incident was a sharp reminder of the difficulty in reaching the Muslim community with the gospel. Even so, many in Tanzania are receiving Bible lessons from Light Bearers Ministry and are reading them privately. Silently God’s Spirit is touching many of the 17 million Muslims in Tanzania who are searching for the truth.

I met another woman named Mary Paul Luziga. She was a Muslim, but had been born in a Christian home. From a young age she had been on a safari to know more about the Sabbath. Safari means “a journey with a purpose” in the Swahili language. Her purpose in this journey was to find the meaning of the Sabbath. Answers from her own Christian community were disappointing and inadequate. She felt unfulfilled in her worship. “Maybe I will find the Sabbath in Islam,” she hoped, turning to the Muslim faith for answers. She remained a Muslim for 18 years.

One day Mary fell ill and had to go to the hospital for treatment. Doctor Mbogo attended to her. After the treatment she jokingly remarked, “Any other things to be treated, Doctor?” In answer to her question, the doctor opened a drawer and handed her a Swahili Bible lesson entitled, “Search the Scriptures.”

Mary asked herself, “Am I not a Muslim? What Scriptures do I need to search since my childhood Christianity could not give me the answers on the Sabbath? This is why I turned to Islam, which has not satisfied my desire for worship either.”

She took the tract home but did not read it, because Islam says that Christians are blasphemers. But Islam also says that it is an abomination to destroy the Holy Word written on paper. This was contradictory to her. “Was this tract not speaking the Word of God?” she reasoned. She took the piece of literature, unstitched her pillow, pushed the tract inside, and stitched it closed again. For three years she slept on that same pillow. The message was preserved under her head.

After three years she moved closer to the city. In the city someone handed her a tract with the same title: “Search the Scriptures.” The Holy Spirit

If Jesus rose from the grave, why can’t I also be healed from my illness?

was speaking to her heart. Mary went home, unstitched her pillow, and started reading the hidden lesson, continuing her safari for the Sabbath. She then attended a series of Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic meetings in the city.

MARY NOW

During a Q&A at the meetings, Mary’s first question was on the truth of the Sabbath. “Why don’t you Seventh-day Adventists worship on the first day of the week like others?”

On her safari through these Bible lessons, she learned the amazing truth that Jesus conquered death. She started studying the resurrection. The resurrection made sense to her, more than anything she had heard before.

If Jesus rose from the grave, why can’t I also be healed from my illness? she thought. *Maybe if I am baptized I will be healed physically.* She decided to be baptized. God gave her not only spiritual healing but also physical restoration.

Now she tells Muslims that Jesus overcame death and that He is alive! He is interceding for us in the most holy place and preparing places for us in heaven. He is with everyone, speaking to their hearts, because He wants every human to be saved. On her safari in search of the Sabbath, she met the Lord of the Sabbath. 🍀

This story was first printed in the ASI magazine, Summer 2020.

Meiring Pretorius and his wife, Juanita, train medical missionaries together in a publishing and evangelism ministry called LIGHT. Meiring is Africa publishing correspondent for Light Bearers Ministry.



“CAN’T TAKE YOUR HONDA TO MEXICO!”

God picks the right car for mission too.

LUELLA NELSON

I didn't know I was going to become a missionary volunteer until after I heard myself saying to an elementary school principal in La Paz, Mexico, "Well, I could become certified in two to three months and return in August." That was April 2017. I had flown to La Paz to see my friend who was giving me complimentary treatments for a neck issue. Upon my return to San Diego, I studied hard and fast, completed the Teaching English as a Foreign Language course in 2.5 months, and began making plans to retire from nursing. I also began the process of packing, trying to keep my

luggage down to what I could put in the back of my Honda Fit. However, God had other plans.

NO HONDA TO MEXICO

The Sabbath three weeks before I was to leave, I drove from San Diego up to the San Marcos church. As I drove, I heard a voice: "You cannot take your Honda to Mexico." Immediately I began questioning this voice: "Lord, my Honda is paid off, it gets good gas mileage, and it is versatile for hauling my stuff." For a few minutes I reiterated my arguments. I dismissed the voice as soon as I reached my destination. I didn't

think about it again until Tuesday, when I heard the voice a second time: “You cannot take your Honda to Mexico.” Now it had my full attention.

Two years prior when I was hunting for a new car, the only two cars that I could comfortably get in/out of were the Mazda 5 Sport Minivan and the Honda Fit. I bought the Honda because of the much better gas mileage and its versatility in carrying my nursing bags and supplies. It was perfect. Now it had 48,000 miles on it.

Considering the voice, I went online to several sites to see what my Honda was worth and to research more about the Mazda 5. I was disappointed that the Honda was so devalued and again disappointed that the Mazda had held its value. I did find a Mazda that I thought might fit my needs. After a few minutes of conversing with the owner over the phone, I asked, “Where are you located?” The salesman quickly said, “Vermont.” Well, that was certainly too far. I decided to drive to a much closer dealership.

As I entered the dealership, a salesman approached me. I asked whether he had any used Mazda 5 Sport Minivans. He paused for perhaps five seconds, then answered, “Yes, I believe we just took one out from the detailer. Let me get the keys.” We took it for a spin. It was as I remembered. Easy to get in/out of, comfortable to drive, room for six to seven people, and seats that folded down for lots of cargo space. But I still didn’t understand why I needed this car.

The salesman and I chatted about my decision to go to La Paz, Mexico (in the southern part of the Baja California peninsula), to teach English in a small parochial elementary school (more specifically, a Seventh-day Adventist school). The salesman seemed genuinely interested. The fact that I was going to be a missionary volunteer, giving my time away for free, was a new concept for him. He wanted to know more. Eventually we got back to the subject of the car. I said I needed more time to think before purchasing.

I went home and discussed the car with some of my family. They wanted to drive back to the dealership immediately and see it. After another test drive and inspection, we all sat down to talk with the salesman. We were several thousand dollars apart on the sale price and the price I was able to pay. After a few trips to the dealer’s finance man, our salesman brought us a good figure.

So no matter what, listen to that “still small voice.”

Esther, one of my family members, said, “I think you just need to trade pink slips.” And 20 minutes later that’s just what we did. I had to pay only for the tax and license.

MAZDA TO MEXICO

Now I had a car that got much worse gas mileage but was a bigger vehicle that could haul more stuff. Upon arriving at the school in La Paz, I found out that none of their seven teachers had a car, and it was a two-mile-plus walk from their homes to school and church. I became their “Uber driver.” Later my car was used to transport students on field trips, and, most recently, was extremely useful in hauling 10-20 sacks of cement and other building supplies to a church that was being completed.

The concept of “You can’t take your Honda to Mexico” and the fact that we merely “traded pink slips” will always be a miracle in my eyes. The Honda Fit would not have been large enough to handle any of the vehicular needs at the school. So no matter what, listen to that “still small voice” (or perhaps not so still and small)! It is telling you something you need to hear. God is the owner of this car; He has merely entrusted me to use it for His honor and glory. 🍀

This story was first printed in the ASI magazine, Summer 2020.

Longtime nurse **Luella Nelson** was impressed, in 2017, to leave the United States to become an English teacher in La Paz, Mexico.

CHAPTERS WITH GOD

Doing what God wants

OLIVIA HALE

Dust hung in the morning light that danced across shelves stacked high with books. I peeked at the cover of one book and, not seeing what I wanted, continued digging deeper into the stack. Something familiar caught my eye, but the title was almost worn off. I gingerly opened the vintage cover, and the hidden gem was revealed: *The Great Controversy*, printed in 1888. I couldn't wait to call my customer back and tell them the good news.

THE NURSE BECOMES A PUBLISHER

When God moved me away from a career in medical industry and into the book industry, I had conflicting emotions. I knew I was following His leading, and I knew there was ministry in books, but I felt it wasn't as tangible as walking into a hospital room and getting a sick patient out of bed. Others I met who had similarly been called into new ministries understood and supported the transition, but it was those who questioned my move that sparked in me a desire to truly understand the importance of the publishing and writing ministry.

Working for TEACH Services was an immediate blessing and the perfect place to gain an appreciation for the reach of the written word. My main responsibility was as the director of LNF (lost and found) used books, but when I began taking on other roles, I was inspired by what I saw. In a world in which money is the focus for many, it was refreshing to start working for a place focused on responsible publishing.

It became clear to me what a precious responsibility we have as publishers, writers, and book-sellers to present only materials that glorify God. I found myself on the phone or e-mailing with people from all around the world who were excited to pursue their writing ministry, or excited to find an out-of-print book with an important message they feared had been lost forever. I was exhilarated when I filled up my first box of books for the mission field, knowing many would use them to learn about their Creator while also learning English.

When I started writing and helping design for projects, I became even more aware that my work isn't just a job or a paycheck—it's an honor and a meaningful responsibility in the service of our King. When we call ourselves Christians, we are

I used to think we had to choose one career path and work our way to the top.

representatives of Christ, and what we put into digital or physical print may have a lasting impact of which we know nothing. I think of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Jesus made it clear that those talents were to be multiplied faithfully in the service of the Master.

OUR REAL CALLING

I used to think that we had to choose one career path and work our way to the top, or that we all needed college degrees. I've learned from joining the book publishing ministry that God just wants us to follow Him wherever He leads, even if that means multiple career changes or no career at all. Whether writers or publishers, doctors or physical therapists, truck drivers or mechanics, teachers or volunteers, we are to do whatever He gives us to do with all our might (see Eccl. 9:10).

When I followed God's leading away from the health field to TEACH Services, I felt certain I wouldn't be reaching as many souls. Yet God showed me instead that when we go where He wants us to go in ministry (even when it doesn't make sense from a human perspective), we may well reach more people and be used in more ways than we could ever imagine. No matter where God places us, remember, "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:6). 🍀

This story was first printed in the ASI magazine, Summer 2020.

When **Olivia Hale** is not writing and editing for TEACH Services in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, she is traveling, adventuring outdoors, or playing her ukulele.



JESSICA DELIP

HOW MUCH I MEAN—TO GOD!

Learning of how God feels about me

I was never physically abused, but the psychological damage from my father’s alcoholism was deep and painful. Peace and security were feelings that belonged to others, but not me.

What I do remember, vividly, is the day I decided to shut down my feelings. It didn’t take a lot of effort, because I had already started ignoring them. I reasoned at a young age that neither I nor my feelings were of any great significance. Yet I always wanted someone to love me, to make me feel valued. I also looked for people to make me feel safe, but I struggled with allowing people to get too close. The few times I risked letting my guard down I was left wounded, disappointed, and alone. These experiences fed my belief that I had no real value.

Only as an adult did I understand that my father had learned to deaden his feelings and emotional pain through alcohol. As a result, he was unavailable to his family on many levels. I would spend years digging my way out of the pain this caused.

For example, I believed if I gave people what they wanted or did the right thing, they would like me and think of me as important. I also reasoned that if I did the right thing, it would prevent or alleviate any need to confront difficult situations.

The decision to shut down my feelings was the result of fearing to trust what I was feeling and that what I was feeling was OK. But those feelings of not being safe and accepted by people would not go away, and they became the filters through which I viewed the world for years.

TURNING POINT

As far back as I can remember, I attended church with my family. I confessed hope in Christ at a young age; however, I had no idea what it meant to have a personal relationship with Christ. Accepting Christ seemed to be what was expected of me. Unfortunately, nothing in my life changed after that. I wasn’t given Bible studies, nor was I reading or studying the Bible on my own. I still attended church, but there were no significant changes in my life.

Time and life moved on, and at the age of 17 I graduated from high school and went on to college. By 1986 I was divorced from my first husband and had two children.

Although I was older, I was still seeking to validate my worth. I was restless, searching for something or someone to fill the emptiness in my life. I started going to clubs. I didn’t smoke or drink; I was into the music, and I enjoyed dancing. After a couple of years I still wanted more, but I didn’t know how to move forward. I felt trapped by my inabil-

ity to make wise choices about relationships, often failing at engaging in healthy ones.

A CHANGED LIFE

In 1988 the most beautiful thing happened: Jesus came into my life in such a gentle way. He brought peace and security, and told me my worth by pointing me to the cross.

Early in the year, the organization I was working for transferred me to a different work site. My new office was located in an Army hospital. I was meeting new people, and a few of them that stopped by my office told me about their relationship with Christ. I wasn't turned off by this, but no one had ever engaged me in conversations about their religious experience. I always thought a person's relationship with Christ was a private matter, not something to be discussed openly.

A couple of people started inviting me to their churches, and out of politeness and curiosity I would attend. I found the services interesting, but wasn't motivated to explore the possibility of joining.

One day I received a call from a high school classmate. I hadn't spoken to her in 10 years. How she found me, I do not know. She called to invite me to her baptism. I was amazed and excited for her, so I agreed to attend. By the end of the service I knew I had found what I longed for. I can't tell you what the message was that day, but the presence of the Lord was in that place.

I remember sitting in that church longing to belong, to feel, to know this God everyone around me seemed to know.

I immediately requested Bible studies, and my life started to change . . . finally. Why? Because the psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130, KJV).

I learned through those studies that Jesus loved me just the way I was, but He refused to leave me the way He found me. He planned to restore His image in me. I can't tell you how excited and appealing this was to me, because I didn't like the person I had become. I was tired of the emptiness, trying to fill it, often failing. I was tired of being afraid of relationships and avoiding them so I wouldn't be hurt.

In those studies and conversations with individuals in my Bible study group, I learned that Jesus loved me simply because I existed, and He cared for and about me. I knew that I didn't

In 1988 the most beautiful thing happened: Jesus came into my life in such a gentle way.

deserve His love, but praise God, He believed that I was worth dying for. The following year, on November 3, 1989, I was baptized in that same church and baptismal pool.


MY LIFE TODAY

Although I've had many challenges since giving my heart to the Lord, through the grace of God I am not the same person who walked into that church 30 years ago. I have grown and continue to grow in Christ, and I have never regretted my decision to give my life to Him.

One such challenge came in the form of a learning disability. In 1993 I was officially diagnosed with a learning disability that affects my ability to read, write, and spell. For years, even after becoming a Christian, I was ashamed of my reading and writing skills.

Somehow (only God knows) I finished my bachelor's degree and went on to receive my doctorate in educational psychology. God wasn't finished—He wanted me to write for Him. Imagine that, a person who struggles with writing and spelling writing for God. I often say that God has an interesting sense of humor.

As has been said, He does not call those who are qualified, He qualifies those who respond to His call. It took some convincing from Him, but I finally said yes to Him.

Now I encourage others to say yes. Not just to work for Christ, but to live for Him. I can and do attest that living for and working with Christ is the greatest and most fulfilling relationship and experience you will ever have. I am daily humbled that God so loved me that He sent His Son to die for me, the ungodly, that I may live His righteous life. Oh, how great is His love, mercy, and grace toward me! 

This testimony was first published in the ASI newsletter, November 2020.

Hope Beale is an education psychologist and author of *Dyslexia: Dare to Be Restored to the Image of Christ*; her White Raiment Publication ministry focuses on deepening relationships with Christ.



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PETER N. LANDLESS

ZENO L. CHARLES-MARCEL

DEAD MEN DO TELL TALES

Q: Does archaeology contribute anything to health?

A: Archaeology indeed contributes to our health science knowledge and has recently stimulated a fundamental shift in our understanding of the leading causes of death worldwide.

Let's consider atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), the underlying problem for the number-one killer of humans, heart disease. It's common knowledge that atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ACVD) has grown globally because of the worldwide adoption of lifestyles, diet, sleep patterns, and environmental risk factors previously associated exclusively with Western countries. Scientists surmise that this modern condition accompanied affluent lifestyle patterns and was absent from ancestral societies, especially the poorer classes. Infectious diseases were thought to be the assassins of old, as noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and heart attacks are thought to be their contemporary counterpart.

While archaeology studies the human past using material remains, its subdiscipline, paleopathology, investigates disease in ancient cultures. The latter has recently given cause for rethinking what we postulated as medical "fact" just a few years ago.

The curiosity of two cardiologists in 2008 led them to investigate why Egyptian mummies of poor people in their 40s and without modern risk factors (unhealthy diet, cigarette smoking, sedentary lifestyle, poor sleep, and obesity) have atherosclerosis. After examining more than 130 mummies from Egypt, Peru, Utah, and the Aleutian Islands, covering a 4,000-year period, they had strong evidence that ACVD was common among ancestral peoples and not an exclusively modern disease. So, while diet, lifestyle, and genetics all contribute to the risk, other risk factors have transcended human history.

Of interest to the paleopathologists was the finding that most of the specimens had one or more chronic infections, such as tuberculosis, malaria, worms and other parasites, as well as other microbes. This has subsequently led to a unifying

hypothesis about the underlying "cause" of atherosclerosis across the ages: chronic inflammation.

Modern researchers have increasingly recognized that inflammation is an ever-present accompaniment of noncommunicable diseases. Inflammation is also associated with mental and emotional disorders and is part of the emotional and oxidative stress responses to unhealthy habits. Inhaled smoke from tobacco or from wood fires used for cooking, heating, and lighting also provokes chronic inflammation. So, regardless of historic age, it's possible that ancient peoples had the same underlying condition as modern people—inflammation—which affects the heart, blood vessels, brain, and all organs.

While diet, lifestyle, and genetics all contribute to the risk of heart disease, other risk factors have transcended human history.

"Poor lifestyle" in any age appears to contribute to chronic inflammation, and therefore multiple diseases. The mummies are telling us their secrets about heart disease and other diseases today. We don't have all the answers, but we can say until proven otherwise that a person who's peaceful (low stress), physically and mentally active, appropriately restful, and adequately nourished—that is, a lifestyle based on trusting God and His prescription—will have low risk of contracting the diseases that so devastated the ancient Egyptians.

"If you listen carefully to the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you" (Ex. 15:26, NIV). 🍌

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference. **Zeno L. Charles-Marcel**, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.



**IN THE
MIDST OF
CAREGIVING**

*Where do you turn when
patience wears thin?*

BETTY KOSSICK

In midlife my husband, John, became denominationally employed with the Adventist Church's health system. After retirement it took several moves to settle down, and finally a move to a Seventh-day Adventist retirement community seemed to provide a new impetus for him.

He appreciated the Christian community's atmosphere of grace that provided us, while we aged, with good fellowship all week long, not just on Sabbath. We both became involved with the campus church, a service of blessing we learned at our home church in Akron, Ohio, when we met and married. John seemed quite content.

Yet discontent began to move in, and something I'd sensed happening for a while became more evident. During a visit with our new nurse practitioner, she detected John's lack of cognizance. She suggested that he see a neurologist. A series of silent strokes were discovered, and dementia was labeled. John also struggled with congestive heart failure, blindness in one eye, and the fading of vision in the other eye.

At the same time, COVID-19's black cloud draped itself across our globe like a pall, affecting nursing homes worst of all. It came to the point when no visitors were allowed, even for the dying. In most cases, no funerals were allowed either—people were dying without recognition or closure for those left behind.

Thus, I determined that I would do everything possible to keep my husband at home. So caregiving began. After being his helpmeet for more than 70 years, this was not the time to bail out. He needed me. I didn't go into this new role blindly, but I wasn't expecting such a change in me. Stress became my albatross.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

I sensed impatience in myself as I cared for John's needs. His unwillingness to cooperate and his daily agitation produced behavioral difficulties hard to deal with. I listened to the advice of others who had already traveled this crinkum-crankum road. Yet as I listened to and read of others' travails, especially from the caregivers of those with cognition/memory problems, the same frayed thread was woven throughout: impatience. And weariness is a twin of the impatience malady for caregivers, as it leaves one feeling failure for the calling.

I'm a creative woman, and I found that part of me fading away because of my responsibilities. I resented not having time for my creative outlets because they're tied to my "others" motto of personal ministry.

Fortunately, I belong to some artistic groups that offer creative individuals new challenges throughout the year to keep our gifts and skills in good repair. Because I no longer drive, and because COVID-19 has been hanging over us like a shroud, we have largely been kept corralled at home. I feel grateful for my outside involvements, especially with my fellow poets via e-mail. There's something about poetry that's especially calming. I believe that's one reason the biblical psalms provide so much comfort—particularly David's honesty of soul. Those psalms call me to derive spiritual strength from God. Thus, as I deliberately set aside time for this part of my infilling, my ability to continue with caregiving revives.

EVEN STRANGERS CARE

Dementia's social issues can be heart-touching, especially when John and I go for frequent doctor's visits. John is constantly declaring "I love you" loudly. Once he stood up and shouted the words. Strangers in waiting rooms responded with thumbs-up and hand clapping to support us. One precious woman clasped her hands to her chest and said, "Thank You, Jesus!" They are in essence praying for us strangers.

My advice to other caregivers is this: be honest with your family, friends, and medical team about your situation. I've sometimes shed tears with them. Pretense that everything is all fair weather makes the storm worse.

For us, continuing our daily ritual of devotional time together morning and night by inviting the heavenly Trio is solace. So what if John can't remember names of close friends and family sometimes? God knows whom he's bringing to Him in prayer. With that Team to guide us, I'm trusting that this valley will be another lesson here on earth to prepare us for heaven.

Knowing that prayers surround us is a comfort. Bless every one of those who are praying for us! ▀

*Sadly, Betty Kossick's husband, John, passed away after this article was written.

Betty Kossick writes from Longwood, Florida.

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SCAN ME

THE HEARTBREAK AND THE MIRACLE

It was an ordinary comment, stuck in the middle of a weekly report from 3ABN Russia. Every week our team from Nizhny Novgorod produces an amazing spreadsheet, detailing the programs they've recorded, the literature they've sent, the cable contracts they've landed—and so many other details that it makes me tired just to read it. *How do they find time to accomplish so much?*

In this particular week's report there was a message about one of our Russian workers. "He and his wife have endured a difficult illness and the loss of a family friend—a dog—but we hope he will start recording again soon."

I sent a simple message back, offering my sympathy and prayers. Within a couple of days a heartbreaking e-mail returned. They were childless, and this dog had become part of their family. Not only that, but they had experienced great pain when the dog suffered at the end and they were unable to help him. *Why is pain worse when there's nothing I can do to make the situation better?*

My part should have ended there. A few heartfelt prayers, offered up over the course of the next few days. A short e-mail expressing my sorrow for their loss. A moment of my time in the busyness of life.

The problem was, I forgot about answering the e-mail. I was caught up in a hectic recording schedule and endless deadlines, and it got buried. Overlooked for weeks. In fact, I forgot all about it.

A month later I awoke and checked my e-mails, as I always do in the morning. Only this time there was another e-mail, a forward this time, about the couple and their dog. Guilt washed over me. *Jill, this*

woman from Russia was hurting. She needed you. And you didn't even take the time to answer her when she needed you most.

Arriving at work, I began composing the e-mail, expressing my sorrow along with my belief that suffering and grief are not so heavy that our God cannot lift, that our burdens are not so great that He cannot relieve, that He walks with us through our storms and brings us out on the other side. It was sent with a prayer that God would use it to bring encouragement to the woman I'd never met halfway around the world.

Later that day I received an e-mail from our executive director at 3ABN Russia. She had translated my e-mail into Russian so this woman could receive it. And then she shared the miracle: nobody had forwarded that e-mail to me. As far as anyone could tell, it had never been sent. *How did it get to me? I still have no idea.* And not only that, the woman who lost her dog had stopped attending church. She and God were not on the best of terms.

I read the e-mail and cried. *God had sent me an e-mail just to remind me to answer this woman in Russia. He cared that much for her. In spite of my busyness and neglect, He orchestrated events so this woman—who didn't want anything to do with Him—would be reminded of His love.*

The depth of His love for her amazed me. The measures He took to reach her overwhelmed me. The fact that He wanted to use me humbled me. What a God we serve! ▀

Jill Morikone is vice president and chief operations officer for Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN), a supporting Adventist television network. She and her husband, Greg, live in southern Illinois and enjoy ministering together for Jesus.

JOURNEYS
WITH JESUS
JILL
MORIKONE



THE DEPTH OF HIS
LOVE FOR HER
AMAZED ME.

WHAT IT WILL TAKE FOR JESUS TO COME

Just a guess

Most fishing stories aren't really about fishing. When I was little, my family would tell me about my great-grandfather heading out onto a frozen Minnesota lake toward his ice fishing hut. The tales I heard focused more on his ice escapades than the actual fish he caught.

And so it is with biblical fishing stories, especially when Jesus is placed in the narrative. Recently I watched a series that brings Bible stories to life on the screen. In one episode Simon Peter, after an unsuccessful and disappointing night

of fishing, glides to shore on his boat as Jesus stands on the sand in front of him. There's an audience faced toward Jesus, but He turns and asks Peter if He can use a net, as an illustration, to finish up the parable He was telling the people.

"This net gathers fish, all kinds of fish, yes?" Then He looks Simon Peter directly in the eyes. "All kinds of fish." He switches His gaze back to the group sitting on the shore.

"And the kingdom of heaven is like what happens next. Simon and the others draw it to the shore, sit down, and sort out the fish. The good fish go into the barrels, and the bad fish are thrown away. So it will be at the end of the age."

I like this dialogue because though it might not be verbatim of what happened on that sea centuries ago or what is chronicled precisely in the Bible, it illuminates a story with sentiments that transcend a sad night of fishing.

After this, Jesus performs one of His most memorable miracles. He tells the

skeptical Peter to row back out and throw His net on the other side. In a matter of moments the fisherman's net starts to break (Luke 5:6); his boats were so full of fish "that they began to sink" (verse 7). Peter is overwhelmed with gratitude; the stories he has heard about Jesus are now a reality that he's experiencing in his own life.

This is one of the first moments that Peter meets Jesus. But immediately he pledges the rest of his life to whatever Jesus asks of him.

"Follow Me," Jesus says, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19).

And, in the series' depiction, He continues: "And you are to gather as many as possible, all kinds. I will sort them out later."

The men probably caught hundreds of fish that morning on the Sea of Galilee. Though I believe in the empathy of Jesus, I doubt His main incentive was producing a wealth of fish. This story isn't really about fishing. It's about seeking others before ourselves. It's about seeking a higher and holier standard of living. More important, it's about encouraging people from all backgrounds, pasts, and reputations, to do the same. We don't need to do the sorting, just the gathering.

Frequently people look at the world and wonder, When will Jesus come? What is He waiting for?

If Jesus were to answer audibly, we might hear Him say, "I'm waiting for the boats to sink and the nets to break."

He's waiting for the fish to overflow. All kinds. ♣

**"FOLLOW ME,"
JESUS SAYS, "AND I
WILL MAKE YOU
FISHERS OF MEN"
(MATTHEW 4:19).**

Juliet Bromme is a senior at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, and interned for *Adventist Review* this summer.



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