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# Rock of Ages

“**T**hroughout the history of God’s people great mountains of difficulty, apparently insurmountable, have loomed up before those who were trying to carry out the purposes of Heaven. Such obstacles are permitted by the Lord as a test of faith. When we are hedged about on every side, this is the time above all others to trust in God and in the power of His Spirit. The exercise of a living faith means an increase of spiritual strength and the development of an unflinching trust. It is thus that the soul becomes a conquering power. Before the demand of faith, the obstacles placed by Satan across the pathway of the Christian will disappear; for the powers of heaven will come to his aid. ‘Nothing shall be impossible unto you.’ Matthew 17:20

The way of the world is to begin with pomp and boasting. God’s way is to make the day of small things the beginning of the glorious triumph of truth and righteousness. Sometimes He trains His workers by bringing to them disappointment and apparent failure. It is His purpose that they shall learn to master difficulties.

Often men are tempted to falter before the perplexities and obstacles that confront

them. But if they will hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end, God will make the way clear. Success will come to them as they struggle against difficulties. Before the intrepid spirit and unwavering faith of a Zerubbabel, great mountains of difficulty will become a plain; and he whose hands have laid the foundation, even ‘his hands shall also finish it.’ ‘He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.’ Zechariah 4:9, 7

Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it. Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, ‘and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ Matthew 16:18. The presence of God gives stability to His cause. ‘Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man,’ is the word that comes to us. Psalm 146:3. ‘In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.’ Isaiah 30:15. God’s glorious work, founded on the eternal principles of right, will never come to nought. It will go on from strength to strength, ‘not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Zechariah 4:6” –*Prophets and Kings*, p.594–595

*Ellen G. White*

# Confess:

## You Are Not Your Own

*Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin*

One of the greatest mistakes that men have done is to think that they belong to themselves. They think that are their own, and that it is their own business as to how they live—how they spend their time, how they use their money, and how they treat other people.

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:19

We do not belong to ourselves. We are the property of God. The parable of the talents shows us that we are all servants of God, His stewards. And, in the end, we must give an account of our stewardship. “And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.” Luke 16:1–2

One day the Lord will call us, each one individually, to give an account. The man who hid his talent was cast into outer

darkness. He was found to be an unfaithful steward.

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2

Faithful in what?

“And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.” Exodus 19:8

Faithful in religious exercises, in prayer, in Bible study, attending church meetings, faithful in tithes and offerings. Faithful in witnessing, in missionary work. Also, faithful in dealing with our fellow men, governments. In dealing with others, strict honesty is required. Honesty in income taxes, in customs duties.

A few years ago, I had bought an item in the United States. At the border crossing I said that I had nothing to declare. Yet I had one item, and because I had not been in the United States for the minimum 48 hours, I should have paid duty on it. A few days later I sent the money for the duty to the customs house. I felt happy again after doing it.

“[God] prizes goodness and faithfulness above all else.” – *Gospel Workers*, p. 267

The earnest toil, unselfish work, patient persevering effort, will be abundantly rewarded. It is not the greatness of the work but the fidelity in all that has been done. We are tested on how we spend our time. Are we faithful in using our talents, including our time? Wasted hours are a sin. Idleness is a curse to us.

“Their veracity, faithfulness, and integrity are tested and proved in temporal things. If they are faithful in that which is least they will be faithful in much.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 309

Our faithfulness in everyday duties is being tested. It may be washing, cleaning, driving a car, working in a garden where our faithfulness is being tested. Not only how faithful we are in prayer, Bible study, or attending meetings. The little daily duties prove us faithful or unfaithful. God is testing us—how we speak—a kind answer is required of us. Angry, impatient words prove us unfaithful. Our speech is a talent that can be a blessing or a curse.

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” James 3:6–10

A person can pray to God, speak in the church, and then use angry words to insult someone. This is unfaithfulness. God gave us the tongue—our speech—and if we use it incorrectly, we are unfaithful stewards.

We all have a different amount of talents. “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” Luke 12:48

“To every man God has given ‘according to his several ability.’ The talents are not apportioned capriciously. He who has ability to use five talents receives five.

He who can improve but two, receives two. He who can wisely use only one, receives one. . . . The one to whom five talents have been committed is to render the improvement of five; he who has but one, the improvement of one. . . . In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 329

We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have the ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have done.

“And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto

him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:16–21

The man in the parable was rich, yet he was a fool. He laid up treasure for himself, and was not rich towards God. God measures how we use our talents in helping others. Our own selfish work does not count.

“Those who give their lives to Christlike ministry know the meaning of true happiness. . . . They themselves are growing as they try to help others. . . . Such ones receive wisdom from heaven.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 42

True happiness is given to us on the condition of working for others, saving souls. There are many sad, miserable Christians and this is the reason. A selfish person will never feel true happiness, because he is an unfaithful steward.

Our talents are to increase. We must develop our faculties, abilities, our mental and moral strength, and our knowledge. We all can reach perfection. We admire men of the Bible such as Moses, Daniel, Job, Enoch, and Elijah. We all can be like them. We can increase the capacity of our brain; we can develop and

“ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. ”

1 Corinthians 6:19

“ Well done,  
thou good and faithful servant...  
enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. ”

Matthew 25:21

improve our brain faculty for as long as we live. Our moral strength can also be increased. By our faithfulness, our spiritual strength and knowledge can also increase.

There is no limit to our mental, moral, and spiritual development. “And this development is gained through the constant unfolding to us of the character of God. . . . Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power.” *—Education*, p. 172

“The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite. The effect of such communion on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In this communion is found the highest education. . . . Every gleam of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world.” *—Ibid.*, p. 14, 13

“Love. . . is the basis of true education. [Therefore] the first and great commandment is, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.’ Luke 10:27. To love Him. . . means the highest development of every power.” *—Ibid.*, p. 16

To love our neighbour as ourselves, “brings the greatest

blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty.” *—Ibid.*

After we develop the use of our faculties, we can render better service to God and to our fellow men. It is unfaithfulness if we fail to develop our faculties to do better than we did before. Let us remember, the highest culture of development is not reached in worldly schools or universities, but in communion with God, and faithfulness in performing our daily duties.

Have we all been faithful stewards to God, and developed our talents by using them for others? What if you were unfaithful? Maybe you have been dishonest, or committed some sin against God or against your fellow men? What do you do now?

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13

We must confess our sins. The secret sins we must confess to God only. Sins against other men must be confessed to them and restitution made. Public sins must be confessed publicly.

“Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:24. God will only ac-

cept our gift once we have confessed our sin and are reconciled to our brother. If we have done wrong to someone, put down his reputation, spoken evil of him, this must be confessed to him, or our service to God is worthless.

“Peter’s denial of his Lord had been in shameful contrast to his former professions of loyalty. He had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. Before being called to take up again his apostolic work, he must before them all give evidence of his repentance. Without this, his sin, though repented of, might have destroyed his influence as a minister of Christ.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 811

Evil speaking calls for open confession before God can forgive; it must be confessed before God and before the church. We know that Peter made an open public confession and his sin was forgiven him; he later became one of the pillars of the early Christian church.

In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 632, Sister White recounts a time when she spoke of Malachi chapter 3, “Will a man rob God?” As a result of her talk, many confessions were

made upon this point. One brother had not paid tithes for two years. He paid his full tithes and with interest it amounted to \$571.50. Another brother gave \$300. One man gave \$1,000.00. And in the end, a total of \$6,000 had been collected in outstanding tithes and offerings to be used for missionary work. Not only did they promise to pay faithful tithes from then on, they also paid missed tithes from the past with interest.

"The preparatory service. . . [before the Lord's supper] the self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences, has all been done." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 659. In this self-examination, we need to decide if it is a sin against God or against our fellow man; dishonesty or evil-speaking; unfaithfulness in tithes and offerings; neglected duties; wasted moments; unfaithfulness in health reform; or in Sabbath-keeping. This examination must be done in preparation for the Lord's Supper to receive a blessing.

There is a great danger. We can make a confession too late. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." 1 Timothy 5:24. If we confess before the day of our

judgment, we can obtain mercy. If we wait until the time of our judgment, it will be too late.

Judas confessed his sin, repented, and returned the money, but it was too late. "Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." Matthew 27:3–5

Achan confessed his sin, but it was too late. "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." Joshua 7:20–21

Esau confessed his sin, but it was too late. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of

meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Hebrews 12:16–17

To hide our sin is weak and cowardly. To confess and repent is noble and honourable. Time does not erase sins from the books of heaven. They may be 20 years old. Only confession and repentance will blot them out.

Will we all hear the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord"? Matthew 25:21

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4

Satan wants us to have unconfessed sins so that they remain on the books at judgment time. We must confess our sins now, before our name is called in the judgment. Those who reach heaven will not count any sacrifice as too great, no duty too small to perform, no talent left unused in service to God. Amen.

“ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.

Revelation 3:4

”



# Dragons & Owls

By Wendy Eaton (ON, Canada)

Sometimes when I read some of the poetic and prophetic books of the Bible, I do not always understand the poetic language used. I have a mathematical brain that thinks logic, not poetic. I am therefore grateful for all the commentaries and concordances available for further explanations.

We believe that the Bible was written by God for mankind, and every word is of importance. Yet there may still be portions that we may not understand. "The secret [things be-

long] unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29. We cannot fathom the inner thoughts of God. They are His. The things He has revealed are for us and for our salvation.

I was reading in the book of Isaiah the other night and came across this verse:

"The beast of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the

owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen." Isaiah 43:20

It follows an encouraging verse where the Lord has promised to do something new and beautiful. "Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 43:19. Anyone who has been in a dry desert can understand the joy of finding water.

And the following verse tells us that all the people will be grateful for what He has done. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." Isaiah 43:21

I have read these verses multiple times because Isaiah chapters 41–43 are among some of my favourite chapters in the Bible. I have skimmed over them without giving a second thought, and I could have done the same again, but this time I stopped, and thought. In verse 20, it is written that all the animal kingdom in the desert are praising the Lord for water in the desert as they are very grateful. I am sure there are many different types of animals in the desert from the large animals like lions and wildebeests, to the smaller desert rats. In this verse the Lord mentioned, "The beast of the field," giving Him honour and then He mentioned two animals by name, "dragons and owls." The question that came to my mind was, why did the Lord choose to mention these two animals by name? Was there any reason for it? Or was it a random thought? Could He not have just said that all beasts will honour Him and leave it at that?

I could try to think of multiple reasons why, but I cannot enter into the mind of the Lord, however, He did choose to name these animals for a reason. Does it really matter in the light of eternity? Is it a matter of salvation? Not really, you could say, but nothing in the Bible was written for no reason at all.

Therefore, in this article I will try to gain a little understanding by looking at the characteristics of dragons and owls to try

to determine why they were mentioned by name rather than some other animals.

Firstly, if your Bible (KJV) has a marginal reading, you will see that the word "owl" has a marginal reading of "ostrich."

In this verse, the word "dragon" comes from the Hebrew word, "tanniym" which, according to *Strong's Concordance*, describes a "marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal." It is most often translated into English as dragon in various Bible verses. In this verse though, jackal being the desert animal, (as opposed to sea monster) is the interpretation that was likely meant.

And accordingly, the word "owl" came from the Hebrew word "ya'anah". The Hebrew word for ostrich is "ya'anah" but is translated in the KJV Bible sometimes as "owl".

So, now here we have it, ostriches and jackals. Now that we have determined the exact meaning of these Hebrew words and which animals are more clearly depicted,

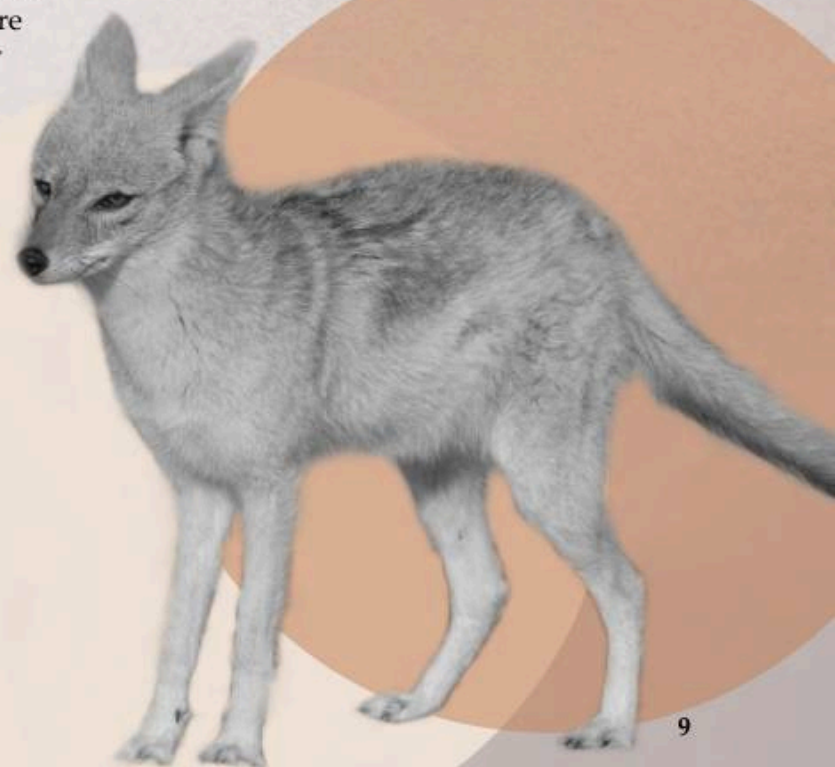
we will look at some of their characteristics and try to understand why the Lord may have mentioned these specific animals by name.

These two animals are mentioned together in some other verses in the Bible as well. We will look at those verses also to try to understand why these two animals were mentioned together.

Firstly I will write about a few of the characteristics of jackals and ostriches.

## THE JACKAL

Jackals are small-to-medium-sized canines and are highly adaptable. They are omnivorous, feeding on small vertebrates, insects, fruit, and carrion (decaying and putrefying flesh of dead animals). They exhibit high intelligence and are opportunistic scavengers and hunters. Their aim is survival—at any cost. The jackal represents intel-





of living in the ruins of former cities and other areas abandoned by humans. The animal represents deceit, loneliness, and survival

ligence, adaptability, and the ability to survive by finding resources in barren deserts. In the ancient world the jackal was renowned

for devouring the dead and dying that lay strewn on the battlefield.

The English word jackal dates back to 1600 and derives from French *chacal*, meaning 'the howler'. They are highly vocal, utilizing a variety of yips, barks, and howls for communication.

The jackal is frequently used as a literary device to illustrate desolation, loneliness, and abandonment, with reference to its habit

at all costs.

In biblical contexts, jackals symbolize abandonment and ruin. They are associated with the "wastelands" and the aftermath of destruction.

Jackals bear a negative image. They are believed to be cold-hearted calculating killers. Jackals got their bad reputation from Ancient Egypt. Anubis, the god of the dead, was represented as a jackal, or a man with the head of a jackal. It was believed that the evening yips and yowls of jackals were the haunting songs of the dead. These negative images still persist in modern cultures.

#### THE OSTRICH

The ostrich is the world's largest, heaviest, and fastest-

running bird. As flightless birds, they have massive eyes, and powerful legs for defense. Their kicks are powerful enough to kill a human or a lion. They also have large feathers used for insulation and display.

Ostriches are mentioned in the Bible as creatures that inhabit desolate and barren places, often alongside jackals and these birds are used in biblical literature to symbolize neglect and abandonment. Ostriches are known for their apparent lack of concern for their young, which is highlighted in the book of Job. "Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding." Job 39:13-17

God endowed different creatures with different characteristics. These variations cannot be explained or controlled by man. The ostrich lays her eggs in the sand, and leaves her eggs during the day to be warmed by the sun while she goes in search of food, but she incubates them at night. The apparently unintelligent bird seems not to be concerned about the dangers that beset her nest in the daytime, yet in spite of this lack of maternal instinct these birds multiply and thrive. The ostrich seems to lack sufficient intelligence to show concern about her offspring. Even though her eggs

are sometimes broken, and she has no little ones, she remains unconcerned. In making this creature, God apparently saw fit to endow the ostrich with limited intelligence. There is an ancient proverb frequently used in Middle Eastern culture, "as stupid as an ostrich." Despite her stupidity and her lack of concern for her young, the ostrich has been endowed by God with remarkable ability for speedy travel and amazing survival skills. It can outrun the fastest horse.

The eyes of the ostrich are actually larger than their brains and this is another reason they were thought of as stupid. They symbolize waste and folly. They live in dry deserts and represents lack of care and barrenness. The voice of ostriches can be very mournful, especially when heard at night in a lonely desert. It is said to be like the crying of a hoarse child. I am sure that God did not create a "stupid" animal. I believe its intelligence can be described as "simple" not "stupid." If it was not so simple, perhaps the desert would be overrun with ostriches. God knows best.

#### SPIRITUAL APPLICATION

In the Bible, jackals and ostriches are associated with desolation because they are creatures that inhabit ruined, uninhabited, or barren places, thus serving as symbols of divine judgment and abandonment. They represent desolation, judgement, and the consequences of the people turning away from God's commandments and

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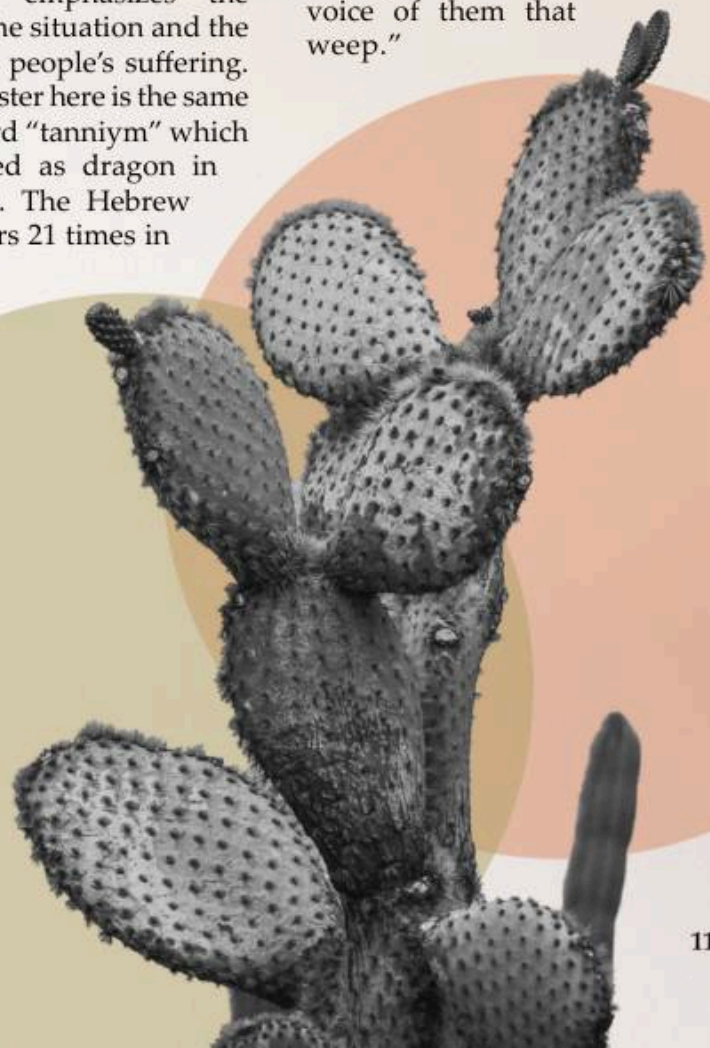
the stark reality of life apart from God's protection and guidance. Their presence in scripture signifies the reversal of civilization, where thriving areas become empty, silent, and wild after being forsaken. They represent the destruction of cities and the consequences of sin. Their howling and nocturnal nature link them to fear and sadness.

We will now look at some verses where the two animals are mentioned together.

In Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah, laments the destruction of Jerusalem and compares the suffering of the people to the neglectful nature of ostriches. "Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness." Lamentations 4:3. This comparison emphasizes the severity of the situation and the cause of the people's suffering. The sea monster here is the same Hebrew word "tanniym" which is interpreted as dragon in Isaiah 43:20. The Hebrew word appears 21 times in the Old

Testament and is translated as "dragon" every time except this once where it is translated as "sea monster". So again, the Hebrew words "tanniym" and "ya'anah" appear in the same verse. The word jackals here would fit better since these "monsters" draw out their breast and give suck to their young. This indicates likely a mammal. Jeremiah states that the people had become quite cruel, like these animals can be, which is one of the reasons for their punishment.

Job was in despair. He describes his situation as thus. "I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep."





become a wasteland. The majority were taken into captivity in Babylon, and the poor that were left to tend the land fled to Egypt. The land became desolate and wild animals made their habitation in the ruins. The only sounds that were heard in the ruined cities were those of the wild animals such as the jackals and the ostriches. Also, Micah here wails and howls like these animals for the prophecies he saw concerning the fate of Samaria and Jerusalem. He prophesied that it would become a dwelling place for wild animals. The people were spiritually a dead wasteland also, inhabited by wild animals.

Job  
30:28–31.

Job compares his complaints that he is making to the cries of wild animals—the noisy jackals, and the doleful noise made by the ostrich in the lonely desert. He regarded himself in a spiritual desert and wasteland, devoid of much life.

The next verses I want to address are Micah 1:7–9. “And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot. Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls. For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem.” Israel did

Going to the book of Isaiah, there are three times when Isaiah used the imagery of these two animals in his descriptions of Jerusalem and the people dwelling there. “They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.” Isaiah 34:12–13. In these verses we see a similar analogy as that in Micah. The city of Jerusalem was prophesied to become a wasteland one day. It would be a habitation for jackals and ostriches and a few other desert animals.

“But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful crea-

tures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” Isaiah 13:21–22. Again, Isaiah writes that Jerusalem would become a wasteland, and a habitation of desert animals, those that wail and howl. There would be spiritual wailing and crying of God’s people when the reality sets in that their city and their lives are a wasteland due to their own folly and sin.

Now, going back to the original verse mentioned in Isaiah 43:20. On a physical level, this would be a wonderful blessing in the desert where there is little vegetation and water is scarce. This would be a great reason to rejoice, as Ancient Israel did when wandering in the wilderness. The sign of food and water brought much rejoicing.

The verse presents a highly figurative picture by attributing wild animals with the emotions and attitudes of men. The entire wilderness was to be transformed. Instead of burning sand, there would be flourishing pastures and fertile fields. The wild animals rejoice, all of them, including the jackals and the ostriches. Why are these two animals mentioned? I can theorize that they represent the full spectrum of animals. The wise, cunning, crafty jackal that is associated with the most evil, to the foolish and simple ostrich. The blessing of the Lord is so great that it is offered to all and even to the ones considered most evil, and the most simple; and thus they will appreciate the blessing. They may be shunned

by humans and other animals, but the mercy of the Lord is for them also, so they rejoice.

On a spiritual level, we understand that glorious results were to follow the proclamation of the gospel in the spiritually desolate regions of the earth. Thus there is hope for all, and some of those who are so evil that we may least expect them to turn to the Lord, will turn and rejoice. Few of the Jews ever thought that Saul, the persecutor, would one day be one of the greatest apostles for the Lord. Yet, those who seem evil, can still be changed if they so desire. Isaiah is making a point when these two species are mentioned, to inform us that all of creation is to praise and glorify God from the jackals to the ostriches (those people that were most evil to the most simple).

“God calls for self-denying, self-sacrificing workers. Those who devote their God-given time to hunting for souls, traveling for souls, watching for souls as they that must give an account, will obtain a rich experience. As they communicate the precious truths of God's word to others, their own hearts will be opened for the entrance of the word. They will be instructed by the Great Teacher.

“Christ has opened a fountain for the sinful, suffering world, and the voice of divine mercy is heard: ‘Come, all ye thirsting souls; come and drink.’ You may take of the water of life freely. Let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come. Let every soul, women as well as men, sound this message. Then the work will be carried to the waste places of the earth. The scrip-

ture will be fulfilled: In that day the Lord shall open fountains in the valleys, and ‘rivers in the desert,’ and ‘with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ Isaiah 41:18; 43:19, 20; Isaiah 12:3.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 86

The Jews regarded the Samaritans as beyond any hope. They were underserving of salvation. They were spiritual desert dwellers, devoid of any spiritual life in the estimation of the Jews. Yet, Jesus came to the woman at the well and offered her living water. She rejoiced, as did many others in Samaria. This desert was showered with living water. We are called to preach to all – the most evil and the most simple. There is hope for the most cunning and evil, they can change. And also there is hope for the most simple. They can understand the way of salvation. The gospel is “just as simple as ABC.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 64

Think of yourself. Are you as unattractive as these animals? Evil or simple? Yet, with the blessing of God, He can bring new life into your soul, and you can rejoice in Him. Regardless of your background, or whether you have backslidden, today, while there is still time, the Lord is willing to turn your wasted life into something beautiful. Do not waste any more time in the wastelands of the earth.

And then, when the Lord has fed you with living water,

turning your wasteland into flourishing pastures and fertile fields, He sends you out to find others who are in the wastelands and bring them the good news of salvation and bring them to a place where they can be spiritually fed and watered. He is sending you to all, including the dragons (the most evil) and the owls (the most simple). Do not bypass anyone. The world is a large mission field, starting in your neighbourhood and going to far away places. Do your neighbours know of your faith? Will you answer the call of the Lord like Isaiah did, “Here am I; send me.”? Isaiah 6:8. My hope is that we can all say “yes” to the call of the Lord, then soon the Lord will come and we can enjoy the blessings of heaven with those who are saved by our willingness to work for the Lord. God bless you.

Amen



# 3 Men named *Jesus*

By Makoto Matsumoto (AB, Canada)

“**A**nd she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:10,12

“Jesus” is one of the most precious names in our faith. It is the name by which we are saved, the name in which we pray, and the sacred name of the Son of God. Because of this

deep reverence, I personally would not choose to name my own children *Jesus*. For me, that name is something I look up to in worship, and using it for my child would feel too sacred.

This is not a criticism of parents who do choose the name in the hope that their children will reflect Christ’s character. I fully respect that. After all, “Jesus” (or *Yeshua/Joshua*) was a common name during His earthly life. My hesitation is simply a personal feeling of reverence, not a judgment on others.

Because of this personal perspective, I was genuinely surprised when I discovered that God named several individuals in the Bible as “Jesus.” Besides our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus called Justus, who worked

alongside Paul (Colossians 4:11), Scripture mentions three other men who bore the same name. To better understand this, let us look at the history and meaning of the name *Jesus*.

## The History of the Name Jesus

The origin of this name in the Bible begins with a man called Oshea, a Hebrew name meaning “salvation.” This name is also written as Hosea. Just as God changed “Abram” to “Abraham,” Moses gave Oshea a new name: Jehoshua. The prefix “*Jeh-*” is an abbreviation of Jehovah, making the full meaning “Salvation of Jehovah” or “Jehovah is salvation.” Over time, Jehoshua came to be used in its shorter form, Joshua—yes,

Joshua the son of Nun. Joshua was not his birth name. He was named Oshea, and later received the name Joshua.

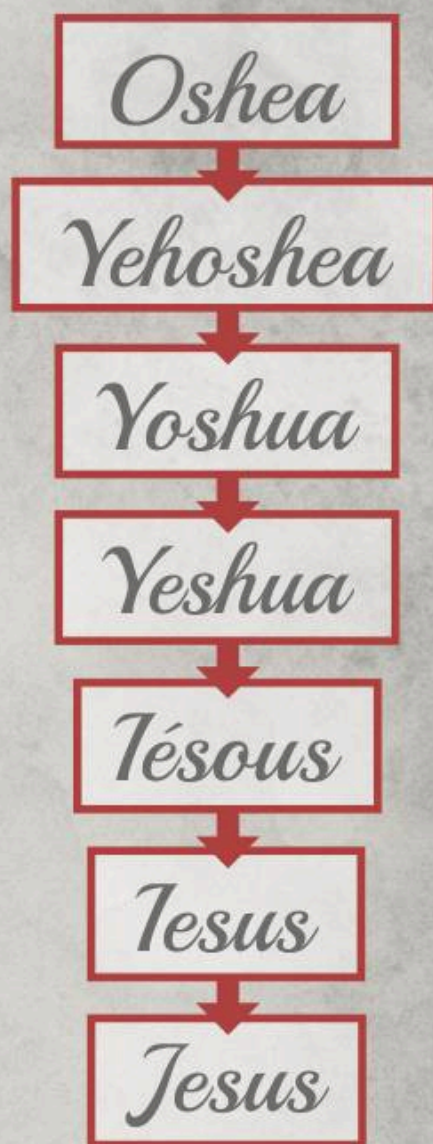
"These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua." Numbers 13:16

At this point, we already reached the name Jesus, as the name Jesus in Hebrew is Yehoshua, and indeed, Luke and Paul wrote "Jesus" as they were talking about Joshua the son of Nun in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8.

As Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the common language, Joshua became Yeshua, which was written as *Iñsous* in Greek. In English, the name eventually became Jesus because of changes in pronunciation over time. When the Greek name *Iñsous* was brought into Latin, it was written as *Iesus*. In Latin, the letter I was used for both the vowel sound (as in "machine") and the consonant sound (similar to a soft "y"). So "Iesus" was originally pronounced very close to "Yesus."

However, during the Middle Ages, English pronunciation changed. The consonant "I" developed into a new sound—what we now pronounce as the English "J." Around the same time, the letter J began to be used to distinguish the consonant form from the vowel form of I. As a result, Iesus became Jesus in spelling, and the first sound shifted from a "y" sound to the modern English "j." This sound change is unique to English and some related languages.

German, however, preserved the older pronunciation. In Ger-



man, the letter J is still pronounced like the English "Y." So the German name Jesus is pronounced "Yeh-zoos," which is much closer to the original Hebrew Yeshua and Greek *Iñsous*. Many other languages also keep this older sound. For example, in Japanese and Korean, Jesus' name—and any name beginning with J, such as Joshua, Jacob, Joseph, Jonah, or John—is pronounced with a "y" sound.

With this in mind, we can now look at the other individuals in Scripture who were named "Jesus." These are Joshua the Cap-

tain, Joshua the High Priest, and Hosea the Prophet. And when we study the lives of these three men, we find that each of them reflects, in a meaningful way, aspects of the ministry and character of Jesus our Saviour.

### Joshua the Captain

From the very first time Joshua appears in Scripture, he is introduced as a leader in battle. "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek" Exodus 17:8-13. This is the well-known battle in which Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands until victory was secured.

God had chosen Joshua long before Moses' death, blessing, shaping, and preparing him for his future mission (Deuteronomy 31:23). He alone accompanied Moses partway up Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:17). He was selected to represent the tribe of Ephraim among the twelve spies (Numbers 13:16-17). And at Kadesh, he stood faithfully with Caleb on the Lord's side against the rebellion of the people (Numbers 14:6-9), which is why the two of them became the only men of their generation—those who were adults when they left Egypt—to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 32:11-12).

To this man, God entrusted the long-awaited mission that generations of Israelites—from Abraham onward—had hoped and prayed for: the conquest of

the Promised Land. And God confirmed His calling through many mighty acts, including the miraculous crossing of the Jordan (Joshua 3:14-17) and even the stopping of the sun in the sky (Joshua 10:12-14).

The part of Joshua's life I would like to emphasize in this article is the conquest of Jericho. Jericho was a great and strongly fortified city—humanly impos-

sible to conquer. It appeared overwhelming in human eyes.

Jericho can represent the great "city" that seems invincible in our own time—spiritual Babylon, the final Papal power described in prophecy. It symbolizes the earthly systems that oppose God and, in the last days, will persecute His people. From a human perspective, such powers appear unbeatable.

Jericho can also represent the strongholds of sin in our own lives. At times, we feel as though our sinful nature and temptations are too deeply rooted, too towering, too impenetrable to overcome. Like Israel before Jericho's walls, we are powerless before these spiritual fortresses.

Yet God, through Joshua, led Israel to victory in a most unexpected way. "And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout." Joshua 6:10. They were to march in si-

lence, and then, at God's command, shout.

This powerfully illustrates how Jesus—our Joshua, the Captain—leads us to victory. First, we must be silent; we are not to fight our spiritual Jericho with our own thoughts, strategies, abilities, or words. Human strength cannot bring down spiritual Jericho. We must quiet our own will and trust wholly in the Lord.

Then we are to shout His name—to call upon His power, His righteousness, His authority. When we learn to be silent toward self yet shout to God, the walls that once seemed immovable begin to fall. By surrendering our weakness and clinging to the power of His name, we will see the spiritual Jericho collapse before us.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Hebrews 11:30. The Captain of the Lord's host communicated only with Joshua; He did not reveal Himself to all the congregation, and it rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to obey the commands given by him in the name of the Lord, or to deny his authority. *They* could not see the host of angels who attended them under the leadership of the Son of God. They might have reasoned: 'What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams' horns. This can have no effect upon those towering fortifications.' But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development



# Jesus

is our Captain & King,  
our High Priest & Mediator,  
and our Husband & Prophet.

of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493

The Bible consistently presents Joshua as a captain and a conqueror. He is first introduced in Scripture as the commander who led Israel in battle against Amalek. Throughout the narrative, the Bible records several major victories under his leadership, culminating in the state-

ment that Joshua conquered thirty-one kings (Joshua 12:7–24).

Through these emphases, God is pointing us to Jesus, our true Captain—the One who defeats our real enemies: the spiritual Jericho before us. This includes both the powers of this world and the strongholds of sin within our own hearts. Just as Joshua led Israel to victory and into the earthly Promised Land, Jesus will lead His people to triumph and bring us safely into the heavenly Canaan, the eternal Promised Land.

## Joshua the High Priest

Now, let us turn to another man who bore the name Joshua. This Joshua served as the first high priest after the Babylonian captivity and played a crucial role in the restoration of Jerusalem. He was among the earliest leaders to return and rebuild the city and restore its worship, following Cyrus's decree (Ezra 1:1–4; 5:1–2).

This is the high priest whom Zachariah saw in his vision. “And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And He answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.” Zachariah 3:1–5

In this passage, Jesus is revealed as the Angel of the Lord, interceding on Joshua's behalf. Yet at

the same time, Joshua himself is a symbol of Jesus—the One who represents spiritual Israel and bears the guilt of His people. In Zechariah’s vision, Joshua stands clothed in filthy garments, symbolizing how Christ took upon Himself our sins and bore them before God.

Later in the vision, Zechariah sees Joshua receiving royal honor, pointing forward to the time when Christ, our High Priest, will also reign as King upon His throne: “Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: Even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”  
Zechariah 6:11-13

Now, as we put these pieces together, we learn a beautiful lesson about Jesus our Lord through the story of Joshua the High Priest. Jesus is our true High Priest who leads us out of spiritual Babylon. In order to bring us out of captivity, He became one of us and took all our sins upon Himself. As our High Priest, He stands before the Father as our Representative. Not only this—He also serves as our Mediator, pleading our cause and applying His righteousness to our lives.

Through this work, He restores the true Jerusalem. He rebuilds the temple of our hearts, which has been trampled down by the world and by sin. And just as Joshua in the vision was crowned, Jesus will also become our King—first reigning in the Jerusalem of our hearts, and ultimately reigning in the Jerusalem of glory above.

### Hosea, The Loving Husband

The name Hosea (or Oshea) is technically different from the name Jesus, but because it is the root from which the name Jesus eventually developed, God teaches us a profound lesson about Christ through the prophet Hosea.

Hosea married a woman named Gomer (Hosea 1:3). Yet she was unfaithful to him, committing adultery, leaving her home, and eventually falling into slavery (Hosea 2). By every standard, she no longer deserved Hosea’s love. According to the law, he could even have sought the penalty of stoning for her bold betrayal. But instead, Hosea went in search of



his wife, found her in her broken condition, paid the price of a slave, and brought her home again. "Then said the Lord unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee." Hosea 3:1-3

This was a symbol of God's love for Israel. Israel had entered into a covenant with God—a spiritual marriage. But through sin and the worship of other gods, they committed spiritual adultery. Yet God still loved them, and He bought them back at a price.

The same applies to our own lives. We, too, were spiritually married to God, for He created us and we belonged to Him. However, by sinning and loving the world, we committed adultery against our Creator. Yet our heavenly Husband did not forsake us. He paid the greatest price in the universe—the blood of His only begotten Son—to redeem us.

Thus, Hosea becomes a symbol of Jesus, our loving Husband, who did not abandon us despite our sins and unworthiness. Instead, He sacrificed Himself, paid the penalty for our sins, and purchased us back so

that we might be freed from the slavery of sin.

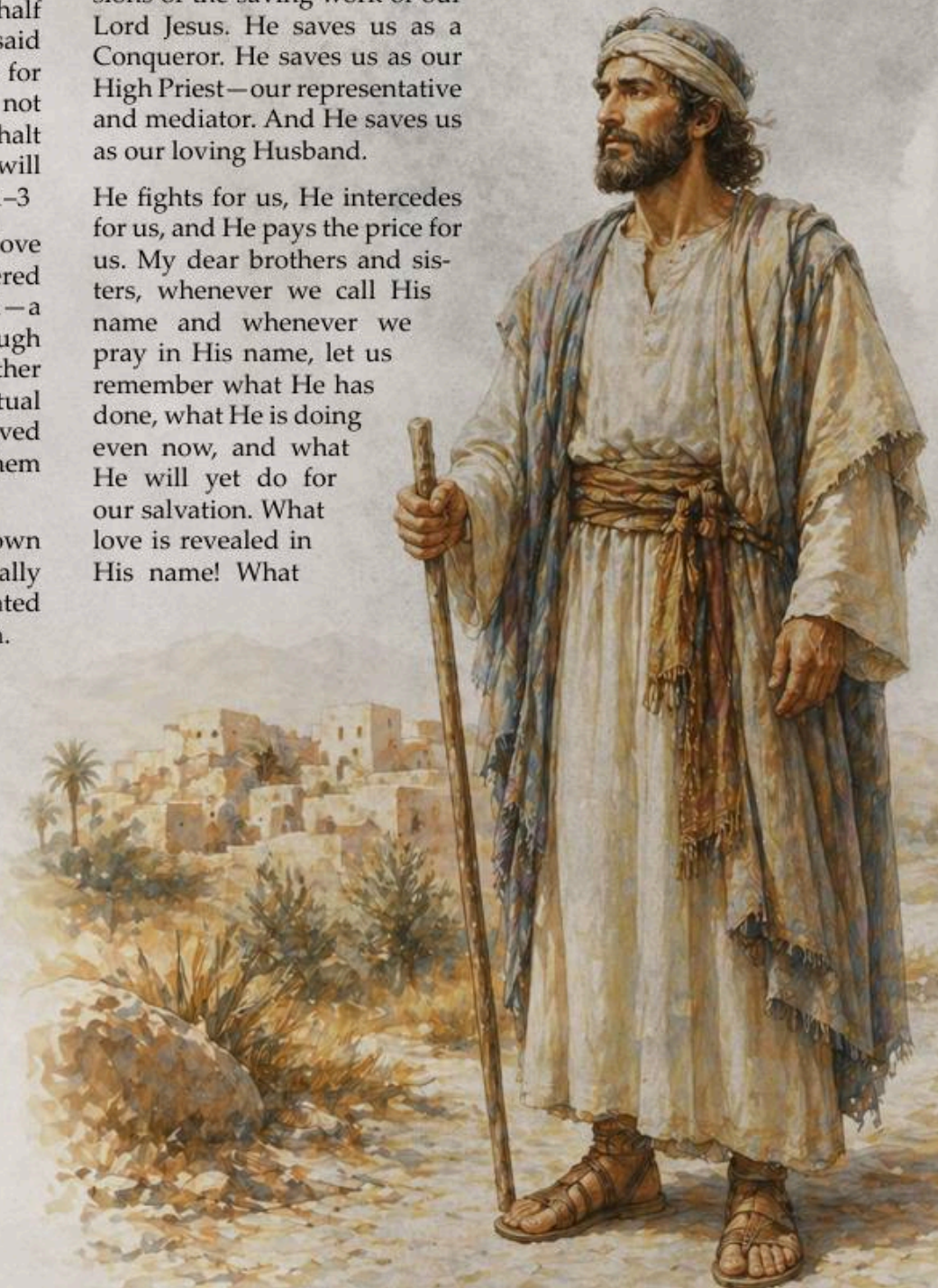
### Conclusion

The name Jesus means "Salvation by Jehovah" or "Jehovah is Salvation." And truly, in the three men in Scripture who bear this name, we see three dimensions of the saving work of our Lord Jesus. He saves us as a Conqueror. He saves us as our High Priest—our representative and mediator. And He saves us as our loving Husband.

He fights for us, He intercedes for us, and He pays the price for us. My dear brothers and sisters, whenever we call His name and whenever we pray in His name, let us remember what He has done, what He is doing even now, and what He will yet do for our salvation. What love is revealed in His name! What

power is contained in His name! Jehovah is indeed our salvation. Our salvation is indeed by Jehovah. Truly, there is no greater name than this.

May you know, feel, and experience this great salvation in your life. This is my prayer for you, in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.



# CONCIENCIOUS OBJECTION

Experience of brother Giuseppe Di Costa

*By Giuseppe Di Costa (Italy)*

*Adapted from L'osservatore del sabato, Vol. 41, No. 2*

I was just over 17 years old when, in 1964, my brother Antonio took me with him to Germany.

My two older brothers, Silvestro first and Antonio later, had already emigrated due to issues of conscience. They did not want to perform military service, and be trained to kill their fellow man (the enemy).

As a conscientious objector, at that time, I was called to choose whether to serve in the military or be confined to a military prison as a deserter. Every six months, I had to appear before a court-martial that asked the prisoner if they had changed their mind about the "military service." If the answer was no,

the person would be condemned to remain in prison for another six months.

My father, Mr. Di Costa, had already lived through a harsh experience, as a soldier having miraculously returned home after seven long years of war. So, together with my mother, he accepted the Adventist faith and they both worked hard to observe God's law. Among the various teachings passed down by my father to us children, we learned of his repudiation of war and all the evil things that surround it. Often, he would tell us stories from his long experience as a soldier; stories so painful and atrocious that they only served to deepen our hatred of war.

From all this, it is easy to understand how we children all had a sincere and deep aversion to military service, in harmony with the sixth commandment, which says: "Thou shalt not kill." Exodus 20:13

As I said, I left Sicily with my brother Antonio in October 1964. The weather was still pleasant, the trees were beginning to display the various autumn colors, from yellow to brown to green; in some vineyards, the last grapes of the season were being harvested. Life was beautiful, simple, and sweet at that time: perhaps part of the credit was due to youth and life in fraternal communion. I refer to the Adventist Reform church in

Troina, which was full of love, affection, and friendliness. In the following years, I missed all these things. I will never forget Aunt Carmelina, a woman who, despite being widowed at a young age, took care of her family with so much devotion and humility. For many years, this poor widow was the church leader who led the community, even winning souls for Christ.

Around the middle of October, I found myself in Germany: the weather was cold and rainy, life here in Germany was hard. I couldn't understand anything or anyone. The people were devoid of warmth, and they almost never laughed. The moments of joy and laughter that my father used to make us have were over: oh! How we missed them! All in all, however, I considered myself luckier than the others because my brother Antonio was with me.

I often thought of my poor mother, who, after the departure of her third son from home, became ill with asthma. Some people complained that the illness had been caused by the anxiety she felt whenever one of her children left! Others said it was the result of severe bronchitis. The fact is that she never recovered from that illness, up until the day of her death. Poor mom, I wonder how much she suffered.

A few days after arriving in Germany, my brother Antonio and I found a job. It consisted of standing in front of a press, taking some warm plywood sheets, positioning them properly, and then folding them by operating the press. It was a nice, simple, and very enjoyable

job for me. However, there was a problem: the work was divided into three weekly shifts. One week, we worked from 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the second week from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM, and the third from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

One morning, when leaving work to return home, which was about three kilometers away, I realized it was very cold. I noticed that my winter cap, the famous Russian beret, was not in the bag I took with me to work. Unfortunately, I had left it at home! So, I raised the collar of my coat and quickly tried to reach home.

When I opened the door to my little room, it was instinctive to run my hand over my head. To my great dismay, a large amount of hair stayed in my hand. The great cold had severely damaged my scalp.

By noon, I learned that during that night, the temperature had dropped to about 28 degrees below zero! In Ansbach, the wind rarely blew, so even the sharpest cold wasn't felt, especially when walking briskly. So, I had to say goodbye to my beautiful hair! At 18, I no longer had much hair on my head, but I had many plans.

During that period, my friend Vittorio Di Franca also lived in the city of Ansbach. We had been friends since childhood, in fact, we had grown up in the same church in Troina. For me, it was a joy and a comfort to have a companion in life, in addition to a brother in faith. We spent almost all of our free time together. On Sundays, we often went mushroom hunting in the woods, and we found many.

One national holiday in Germany, my brother Antonio invited Vittorio and me to take a drive with him. When we arrived near the forest, not far from the city, he told us that in this area, there were very fine mushrooms, the so-called *pfifferlinge* (chanterelles). That was enough to excite Vittorio and me to leave the car and go in search of mushrooms in the forest. My brother Antonio continued his journey because he had to deliver building materials to a client. He would pick us up on his return to take us back home. However, things didn't go as planned. We, still young, split up to expand our search, and consequently, we got lost in the woods. Dear readers, it is really a bad feeling to get lost in the woods. A silence that takes your breath away! To cut a long story short, brother Vittorio quickly realized he was lost and returned to the main road, where he was able to hitchhike back home. At some point, I too realized I was lost but couldn't find my way back. I spent hours wandering in circles as my anxiety grew. In the end, I knelt in prayer to the Lord. When I stood up, I saw some glimmering glass in the sunlight. It was from the cars passing on the main road. I walked in that direction and, when I finally reached the road, I met my brother Antonio, my savior, who, after completing his delivery, had been looking for us. For this happy-ending experience, I thank the good Lord for being so kind and merciful to me.

Thus passed my first year in Germany. The company I worked for closed for vacation



during the entire month of September... I was happy to return to Italy to embrace my parents, friends, and relatives... It was not so easy to return to Italy for those who hadn't done military service. In fact, I had to go to the Italian consulate in Nuremberg to obtain an exemption that allowed me to stay in Italy for 30 days without being arrested or forced to serve in the military. This exemption had to be validated by the carabinieri in the hometown, both on the day of arrival and the day of departure. This dispensation was only valid for young people who went abroad for work while they were of enlistment age.

It was a regulation that allowed us, Reform Adventists who are conscientious objectors, to bypass the law requiring military service. If the carabinieri found us without the dispensation form, they would no longer allow us to leave the country. I repeated this ritual of going to the consulate to collect the form with the authorization ten times! The eleventh year of my stay in Germany, I received a letter from the consulate notifying me that I was about to lose my Italian citizenship, as I had now been living abroad for more than ten years. At the same time, I received a letter from the German government inviting me to take German

citizenship. What a dilemma! In the end, I applied to the consulate in Nuremberg to be reinstated as an Italian citizen.

In reality, what I really desired and still long for is to become a citizen of heaven. This is the only desire I truly hold in my heart.

During the second year of my stay in Germany, many things changed. Brother Vittorio Di Franca went to missionary school in Jagsthausen, Baden-Württemberg, so the little room he had rented became mine. That room, with a bathroom and an attached cellar for storage, was a historic room. It had been first used by a colporteur from the church for a few years; a certain Karl Bons.

After him, it was occupied by my brother Silvestro Di Costa, then Antonio, then Vittorio Di Franca, and finally me. I was so happy to be independent. Mrs. Sturznoifecher, the owner, was a very kind person who, despite not accepting our faith (she was Lutheran), loved and respected Adventists. I stayed in that little room for two years. Enough time to learn to understand and speak the German language. My goal wasn't to stay in Ansbach, but to go to missionary school.

In the third year of my stay in Germany, I was almost happy to live in that land. In the meantime, I had found work in a tailor shop, a trade I had learned from a young age. Over time I realized that the tailor shop I worked in was the best in the city. The owner of the tailor shop was named Holfelder, and he was a good man, very humane even with foreigners. His face bore the scars of the Second World War. As a soldier, he had also been in Italy. His very visible scars did not prevent him from being a handsome man.

I found comfort in the fact that I had emigrated precisely to avoid military service: Not being trained to do harm and to inflict upon others such terrible scars, as those helped me keep my spirits high.

One day my employer handed me a uniform of a cavalry soldier, a "Uhlan." It had been well cut and assembled. I only had to sew it. That job had also been offered to other tailors, older and more experienced than I, but they had refused to do it because that kind of stitching required a lot of time

and great patience to piece everything together. It was difficult to carry out, and in the end, once the job was done, the earnings were minimal. Our employer did not pay us by the hour but per finished piece. I was the latest hire, and a foreigner at that. I could not refuse to do the job. With God's help, it was completed according to the highest standard, and my colleagues congratulated me. I thanked especially the Lord who had helped me because, in any case, I was able to practice my trade in a clean place and in a heated environment. Cold was what I feared most in Germany.

Sometimes it happened that the museums would remain open on Sundays and could be visited for free. On one of those Sundays of free access, I went to visit a Museum of Art and History that was near the tailor shop where I worked. Walking through all those halls—truly very many—my eyes fell upon a figure, a mannequin dressed as a Uhlan soldier (as a testimony to the glorious past represented by the old local soldiers). I looked at that uniform several times. It was very similar to the one I had sewn in the tailor shop.

On Monday morning, upon arriving at work, I told the owner about my discovery. How great was my surprise when he confirmed to me that it was precisely the uniform I had sewn! The fruit of my labor had even been displayed in the Museum!

I remember with great pleasure my stay in Ansbach, in central Bavaria, but my desires were aimed elsewhere. I had left Sicily with the firm purpose of

going to missionary school. I had already saved enough money to pay for the two years of tuition: so in April of 1968, I reluctantly left the beautiful city of Ansbach, with its proud medieval architecture, to go to Jagsthausen. Thus I moved from Bavaria to Baden-Württemberg. Having learned that in April 1968 a new course of study was beginning, I did not miss the opportunity. I packed my bags and moved to Jagsthausen, where I stayed for two years.

My greatest surprise was to find at the missionary school Brother Salvatore Timpanaro and Brother Calogero Cordovana (who today rests in the Lord). They had already completed the two-year study course, but not knowing the German language well, and having had serious difficulties of comprehension especially in the first year, they decided to stay another year to become better acquainted with biblical doctrine now that they had acquired a certain command of the language. Brother Vittorio Di Franca also remained to work at the headquarters for another year before being sent to Spain as a Bible worker. Four Italians in the same school, ready to socialize.

Looking back, I can say—now that I am elderly—that those were the best years of my life.

The village of Jagsthausen, famous throughout Germany because it was the birthplace of Count von Berlichingen, to whom is historically attributed an expression well known to all Germans, whose meaning is: "I don't care." His castle still exists in the town, which I had the

opportunity to visit. This castle is well maintained, and many tourists go there to see his armor and his iron hand.

Our missionary school was built on a hilltop, with a beautiful frontal view. All around were newly built villas; at the foot of the hill was a small children's garden with many cartoon character statues. Although the village was small, on every street corner there was a pastry shop with beautiful cakes in the window. In my opinion, only the Germans know how to make cakes that good. For us students, they were a strong temptation. Following the teachings of health reform, we were not even supposed to taste them—but in reality, it happened at times that we ate them!

The missionary school was directed by Brother Otto Welker, who among other things was very knowledgeable in the field of history and prophecy. He was an excellent teacher; he knew how to explain well, but also simply. The other subjects of study were: anatomy (taught by Dr. Drogenik), biblical history, doctrine, health reform, and homiletics.

The study of the Word of God was conducted for four hours in the morning, with an additional three hours in the afternoon. There were also a few short breaks. This lasted for four months, followed by three months of break, during which we were sent to various churches to colporteur and thus earn what was necessary to pay for tuition and allow ourselves a small treat. In this way, we also took care of churches that had no resident preacher.

Personally, I sometimes spent time with isolated members and organized Sabbath worship with them.

I personally did not need to colporteur to earn tuition money because I already had savings from previous work. But I can assure you that I did not touch a cent of what I had set aside, because the Lord allowed me to earn enough to live and also to pay the tuition for the school.

My favorite subject was the study of biblical prophecy.

After the first year of school, during the vacation period, I went back to Sicily, always securing in advance the famous military exemption, issued by the Italian Consulate in Stuttgart, so I could embrace again my dear parents who, in the meantime, had moved from Troina to Mazzarrone, where my brother Antonio already lived. It was the time of the grape harvest and the grape festival. During the festival, the most luscious bunch of grapes of the whole harvest was given an award. It weighed a full five kilograms—a true spectacle! Seeing it, my thoughts traveled back to that time when Joshua had sent the twelve spies into the land of Canaan, and they had returned with a cluster of grapes so large that it had to be carried on a staff between two men.

It was around 1967, and war had broken out in the Middle East, with Israel on one side and the Arabs on the other—the so-called “Six-Day War.”

At the missionary school we had studied the history of Abraham and his descendants:

- Abraham was the father of Ishmael, born from his maid

Hagar, while Isaac had been conceived by Abraham with Sarah, his lawful wife. From these two brothers on the father's side came two great nations. Isaac, according to biblical teaching, was the only one to receive the promises of God together with Abraham's earthly inheritance (see Genesis 25:5–6).

- Ishmael, on the other hand, received from God only the promise of becoming a great nation (see Genesis 21:18). Ishmael, father of the Arab and Bedouin peoples, received no earthly inheritance either from God or from Abraham, but only the promise to become a great nation. This was the first Bible study I presented to my father, and I remember that while I spoke, he wept. The descendants of Ishmael have been the enemies of the Jews from the beginning until our day. (Between me and my father there was a beautiful relationship that I still hold in my heart and mind. I must admit I still miss him even now, although I have already reached seventy-six years of age.)

That year, for the first time in a long time, after finishing vacation I no longer wanted to return to Germany, but I couldn't remain in Sicily either, due to my unfulfilled military service.

So I returned to Germany, to our beautiful missionary school, and I realized I was the only Italian left in the whole school. Brother Salvatore Timpanaro, having finished his year of review, was sent to colporteur in the Mannheim area; Brother Calogero Cordovana was sent to Sweden to colporteur; while Brother Vittorio Di Franca was sent as a



Bible worker to Spain, where he still lives today.

From that moment, my longing for Sicily and for my parents became increasingly strong.

When the missionary course ended, the leaders of God's work sent me to work in the city of Stuttgart, where I took care of the church and dedicated myself to colporteur ministry. During my stay in that city, the General Conference was organized in Killesberg park, a lovely place. It was the first worldwide conference I had ever attended. During that conference, still very young (if I remember correctly, it was 1972), I was about to turn

twenty-five, I met a middle-aged woman who asked me to present to her the Word of God and to visit her to talk about Jesus. This I gladly did. The result was that, after a year, she was converted and made a covenant with the Lord, through baptism.

At that time, I was also working with the church of Heilbronn. This congregation was unique because there were many young people, who were children of our Adventist brethren. Three of these young people asked me to study with them in preparation for baptism. Some older brethren warned me, saying that these youths had

made that decision only to mock me. But in the end, after two years of study, those young people were baptized.

The most beautiful event of my time in Stuttgart was my wedding in 1973, when I married Filippa. Our firstborn, Lucas, was also born in Stuttgart. During my stay in Stuttgart, I collaborated many times with Brother Salvatore Timpanaro and Brother Hans Fleschutz during the colporteur campaigns. Those were truly beautiful days!

During Field Conferences or workers' meetings, we would meet with Brothers Vittorio Di Franca and Calogero Cordovana.

The whole period spent in the Stuttgart church was a beautiful chapter of my life, full of unforgettable memories.

After about four years of working in Stuttgart, the brethren decided to send me to Nuremberg, Hitler's city, where he had built his headquarters. During the time I was there, the famous Nuremberg Trials were taking place, where Nazi criminals were judged.

I found myself very well in Nuremberg; the church was small, about fifteen members, while Stuttgart had more than fifty. Some attended the meetings without ever making a decision to be baptized. Nuremberg was a very loving community. Even my Filippa was happy there. We remained for six full years. Our second daughter, Tania, was also born there. She was the wonder of the Sant'Anna Clinic, a Catholic institution. Never in the history of that clinic had such a large baby girl been born! She measured fifty-seven centimeters and weighed four and a half kilograms—to the great joy of her parents. We are deeply grateful to the Lord for that moment.

My stay in this city was blessed with the conversion of three souls, one of whom was of Russian origin; they accepted Jesus and were baptized. The years passed quickly, and my thirtieth birthday was drawing near. The time of my exile in Germany was about to end, for the obligation to perform military service had expired. The Italian government granted me a permanent exemption, and I was finally a free man: I no longer wished to remain in Germany. So in April 1980, I returned permanently to Italy. Even in Italy I continued to work for the Lord's cause, but that is another story—perhaps one day I will tell you about it.

May the good Lord be with you and your families, just as He has been with me and my house!

Amen.



## Samuel Part 2

# *The Young Prophet*

Based on 1 Samuel 3:19 - 7:17

By Edda Tedford (BC, Canada)



Samuel grew and the LORD  
was with him.  
He did not let God's word  
grow dim,  
And all Israel perceived that  
Samuel  
Was set up for a prophet of the  
LORD.  
And the LORD appeared again  
in Shiloh  
For He revealed Himself to  
Samuel  
By the word of the LORD for  
Israel to be heard.

.....

Then Israel went out to battle  
against the Philistines,

But they were smitten;  
Retreating to the camp  
wondering why God  
Did let this happen.  
But instead of seeking the  
LORD in contrition to prayer  
and submission - They trusted  
in the vision to have the  
presence of the ark  
Of the covenant among them -  
sending a commission  
To fetch it for their defence and  
be thus content.  
When the priests Hophni,  
Phineas with the ark of the  
covenant  
Of the LORD of hosts came  
into the camp,  
Then from Israel a mighty

shout was heard over all the  
land.  
The Philistines panicked, were  
sore afraid,  
Perceiving that God had come  
into the camp.  
"Woe to us, woe to us, who  
shall deliver us from these  
Gods!"  
These are the mighty Gods,  
that smote the Egyptians with  
all the Plagues. Be strong, quit  
yourselves like men and fight!"  
And the Philistines fought with  
all their might, waged a great  
slaughter, Putting Israel to  
flight.  
30.000 footmen have been lost,  
the ark of the covenant of the

LORD  
 Was taken, Hophni, Phineas  
 were slain, all of Israel was in  
 shock  
 And greatly shaken...  
 When Eli hearing of this  
 tragedy,  
 From his seat fell on his back,  
 And died from a broken  
 neck...  
 By this and his son's death the  
 curse and decline of his house  
 had begun – For Phineas'   
 pregnant wife in her grief  
 suddenly in great agony  
 Brought forth a son;  
 Breathing out her life was  
 saying: "Ichabod! The glory of  
 Israel  
 Is departed, for the ark of God  
 is taken!"  
 Samuel deeply mourned for  
 his Mentor  
 Having been close and dear to  
 him like a father.

.....

However, the stolen ark  
 proved to the Philistines a  
 curse –  
 For God sent plagues –  
 Instead of triumph they were  
 put to the worse.  
 The hand of God was heavy on  
 the land  
 With great destructions, and  
 slaying many thousands of the  
 men.  
 They moved the ark from place  
 to place, but had to face  
 The scourge Divine of death  
 and emerods upon many of the  
 Philistines.

.....

Seven months later counsel  
 was given to send back the ark  
 with golden images of  
 emerods, and mice that marred  
 the land in a offer,

On a new cart, to give a  
 trespass offering unto the  
 LORD,  
 With two milk kine alone, not  
 guided by anyone.  
 By an unseen hand the kine  
 went straightway through to  
 the borders  
 Of the land till they stood in  
 the field of Joshua a  
 Bethshemite.

The Israelites rejoiced and were  
 glad to see the ark,  
 They clave the wood of the  
 cart, the Levites slew the kine  
 for a burnt Offering unto the  
 LORD.

The ark remained there – but  
 the men looked into the ark  
 and  
 The LORD smote of them fifty  
 thousand and seventy men...  
 The people greatly mourned,  
 they bade the people of  
 Kirjathjearim

To urgently fetch the ark of the  
 LORD, where it stayed for  
 twenty years in the house of  
 Abinabad, who sanctified and  
 ordained his son Eleazar to  
 keep the sacred ark.

.....

During these years Samuel  
 judged Israel.  
 God gave him a wife and two  
 sons with her.  
 And all Israel lamented after  
 the LORD but to their own  
 hurt,  
 Had a divided heart,  
 For they also served Baalim  
 and Ashtaroth....

They asked not Baalim to  
 deliver them from the  
 Philistines – but God,  
 Even though devoted to Him  
 were not!

Then Samuel spoke unto all the  
 house of Israel  
 To put the strange gods away

and gather together there in  
 Mizpeh  
 Where he for them will pray.  
 And Israel obeyed, drew water,  
 poured it out there for the  
 LORD,  
 And fasted on that day,  
 Confessing their sins sincerely,  
 and earnestly set their hearts  
 To serve the LORD only.

.....

And Samuel lived and judged  
 the people there in Mizpeh.  
 When this was known to the  
 Philistines,  
 They went up to Mizpeh to  
 fight against Israel.  
 But their hope for victory this  
 time was vain.  
 For Samuel prepared a sucking  
 lamb wholly unto  
 God as a burnt offering, crying  
 fervently unto God  
 To save His people – and his  
 voice was heard.

For when the enemy drew near  
 to battle,  
 The LORD discomfited them  
 with a mighty thunder,  
 Put them by His great power  
 wholly under  
 The swords of Israel, they were  
 smitten mightily and pursued  
 Till they came to Bethcar.  
 Then Samuel took a great stone  
 and set it between Mizpeh and  
 Shen,

Calling it "Ebenezer",  
 Saying: "Hitherto hath the  
 LORD helped us!"  
 The defeated Philistines never  
 more invaded Israel  
 In all the days of Samuel.  
 And Samuel judged the people  
 all the days of his life, making  
 his rounds from place to place.  
 Then returning home to Ramah  
 for there was his house.

Amen.  
 To be continued.



# Blueberry Lemon Muffins

**Ingredients:**

- 1 Cup (250) whole wheat flour
- 1/2 Cup (125 mL) wheat bran
- 1 tsp. non-aluminum baking powder
- 1/2 Cup (125 mL) liquid honey
- 1/3 Cup (75 mL) almond milk
- 1 Cup (250 mL) fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/3 Cup (75mL) oil
- 1 flax egg
- Lemon zest of one lemon
- 1/2 tsp. Himalayan or sea salt

**Instructions:**

To make Flax Egg:

- 2 Tbsp. ground flaxseed
- 3 Tbsp. warm water

Whisk the flaxseed and water for 30 seconds. Refrigerate for approximately 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400F (200C).

In a bowl, combine flour, wheat bran, salt and baking powder. In another bowl, stir together almond milk, flax egg, oil and honey. Add to the dry



ingredients; mix well with a fork. Stir in the blueberries and half of the lemon zest. Mix gently. Divide the batter evenly into oiled or paper-cup-lined muffin tins. If you wish, you can sprinkle the remaining lemon zest on top of the muffins and then bake. Or if you prefer, you can sprinkle the lemon zest on top of the muffins as soon as you take them out of the oven, while still hot.

Bake on the middle oven rack for 20-25 minutes.

Cool on a wire rack. Remove from tins. Enjoy!

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*Canadian Field*

# Newsletter

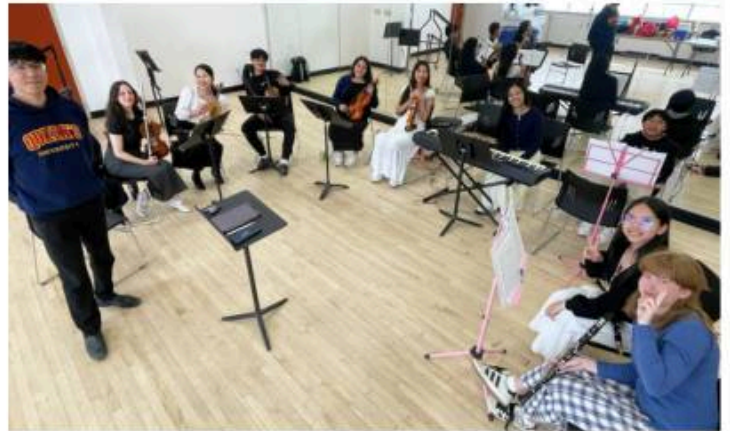
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## Music Weekend

From May 1–3, the Canadian Field Music Department, in collaboration with the Calgary Church Youth Department and Music Department, held a special outreach in an open area of a busy downtown Calgary park, bringing heavenly music to the busy worldly city. Under the theme “Sing the Light,” the youth presented a variety of sacred songs that uplifted hearts and drew the attention of many passersby.

Numerous copies of *The Reformation Messenger* were distributed to those who paused to listen and showed interest in the program.

May God add His blessing to this effort of music and publication ministry, that these messages may sing the light into hearts, homes, and lives.



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# Calgary Nursing Home Visit

On April 26th, the youth from the IMS Calgary church visited a retirement home in downtown Calgary to share music and encouragement with the seniors.

The group sang several hymns and spiritual songs, bringing joy and

comfort to the residents. Many seniors listened attentively, smiled, and joined in singing familiar melodies. The visit was a meaningful opportunity for the youth to show kindness, fellowship, and Christian love through music ministry.

We thank God for this blessed experience and pray that the songs and conversations brought peace and hope to everyone who attended.



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# GTA Outreach

As warmer spring weather has arrived in Canada, outdoor outreach efforts began in the Greater Toronto Area on Sunday, April 26, led by a group from the Toronto, Woodbridge, and Hamilton churches. They gathered at Bayfront Park in Hamilton to distribute flyers and books. This united effort between the three churches will continue at various locations throughout the summer months.



# East Wind Blows West Seminar



On May 17th, 2026, at 10:00 EST, Part 3 of the seminar series East Wind Blows West was presented online through Zoom under the title "Hidden in Plain Sight."

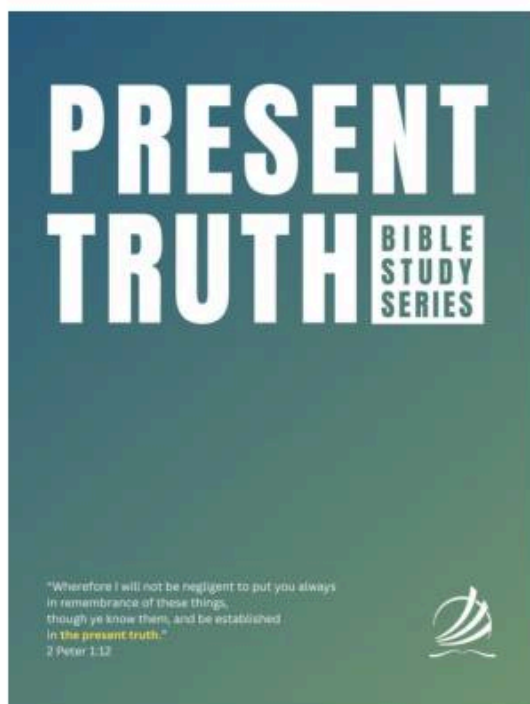
The presentation focused on the growing influence of Eastern mysticism and spiritual practices within modern Christianity. Through Bible-based study and discussion, attendees learned how certain trends in relaxation, meditation, and self-help may subtly introduce unbiblical ideas that weaken genuine Christian faith and dependence upon Christ.

Participants from different lo-

cations joined the meeting and listened with great interest as the speaker explained the spiritual dangers hidden behind many popular modern practices. Several attendees expressed appreciation for the clear biblical principles shared during the seminar and for the opportunity to better understand current spiritual deceptions affecting society today.

We thank God for the opportunity to conduct this important online outreach ministry and pray that the truths presented will help many stand firmly for some Bible doctrine in these challenging times.

# New Bible Study Series on Present Truth



We are pleased to announce a new video Bible study series on The Present Truth, featuring important biblical themes such as The Three Angels' Messages, The Sanctuary, The Great Controversy, The Sealing of the 144,000, and other prophetic subjects.

The series shows how these teachings are not separate ideas, but connected parts of one harmonious message revealing God's plan for our time. Through simple and Bible-based studies, viewers are invited to better understand the unity and beauty of present truth.

As written in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, p. 28:

"Honest souls will see the straight chain of present truth. They will see its harmonious connections, link after link uniting into a great whole, and will plant their feet upon it. The present truth is not difficult to be understood, and the people whom God is leading will be united upon the broad, firm platform of truth."

The studies are available on the official IMS Canada YouTube channel and on [4Truth.ca](https://4Truth.ca).



## Calgary Outreach

Members of the IMS Calgary Church gathered on May 23rd near Peace Bridge in downtown Calgary for a literature evangelism outreach during a beautiful spring weekend. More than 100 books and over 100 booklets were distributed to people of all ages, including youth, children, and families enjoying the sunny weather along the river pathways. Literature shared included *The Desire of Ages*, *Prophets and Kings*, *Steps to Christ*, materials on Bible prophecy and

the Sunday law, as well as *The Reformation Messenger*. In addition to distributing literature, many meaningful conversations took place throughout the afternoon, as several individuals stopped to ask questions and engage in longer discussions on spiritual and prophetic topics. We thank God for the opportunity to share the gospel message with the community and pray that the seeds planted through this outreach will bear fruit in many hearts.





Panama



Mexico



Chile



Zambia



The Philippines



USA

**WE BELIEVE:**

The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer.

He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.

The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness.

The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.

His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.

Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.



**International  
Missionary Society**

Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Reform Movement