

Presentation-12 Third Angel's message: Justification by faith

*** "The message of Justification by Faith is the third Angel's message in verity." This message is the Law and the Gospel combined which is to be witnessed to the world with a loud cry. Revelation 14:12 states "... here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" The next great event shall be the second coming of Christ.**

***In 1888 Materials p217.3 Sister White declared "The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand"**

***Sister White in Selected Messages, Volume 3, p184 [written in 1889] declared "The soul-saving message, the third angel's message, is the message to be given to the world. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are both important, immensely important, and must be given with equal force and power. The first part of the message has been dwelt upon mostly, the last part casually."**

In uniting the law and the gospel, the 1888 message by elders Waggoner and Jones at the Minneapolis General Conference session returned power to our Advent message and promoted the possession of a purified character.

***In 1888 Materials p1336.2 Sister White summarized the 1888 JBF message presented by Jones and Waggoner "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety (*Christ*); it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family"**

***Sister White in 1888 Materials p 1337.2 wrote regarding Jones and Waggoner's message "This message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say, Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not preach or believe Christ"**

***What is Justification by faith?**

Sister White provided a clear understanding to the expression "justification by faith" in Special Testimonies for ministers No 9 p. 62.2 "What is justification by faith? -- It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. When they begin to praise and exalt God all the day

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long, then by beholding they are becoming changed into the same image. What is regeneration? -- It is revealing to man what is his own real nature, that in himself he is worthless"

***Sister White put further emphasis on the meaning of the expression the "faith of Jesus" in Selected Messages, Volume 3 p. 172 "The faith of Jesus.' It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes the faith of Jesus that belongs to the third angel's message? ... He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus."**

***As recorded in Isaiah 28:16 "I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste"**

The faith of Jesus refers to Christ being more than able and willing to save fully, entirely, and to the utmost all who will come unto him and believe in him as their personal Saviour. This is Christ's faith that the Father has gifted to man.

Romans 12:3 "... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"

***The apostle Paul confirmed this point in Galatians 2:20 when he wrote "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"**

*** Christ's righteousness is our title and fitness for heaven.**

In Messages to Young People, p. 35 Sister White wrote "Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without... The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven." Both Justification and sanctification are one hundred percent God's work, empowering us through His Spirit.

***Sister White stated in Review & Herald, September 21, 1886 "God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin"**

***Romans 6:16 states "... of obedience unto righteousness" However there is no salvation based solely on obedience to God's Law.**

***Sister White in DA p324.1 cautioned "But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of**

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the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place"

*Man is entrusted with the Holy Spirit according our response to His promptings, to our capacity to receive it and our ability to impart it to others.

Sister White in RH 1896, No. 18 wrote "The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportionate to the measure of our desire and faith exercised to get it, and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given us. We shall be entrusted with the Holy Spirit according to our capacity to receive it and our ability to impart it to others"

*God allows trials in our lives so that we can exercise the faith of Jesus that we have received that it may grow exceedingly strong.

In 3T 555.2 she wrote "Faith grows strong by coming in conflict with doubts and opposing influences. The experience gained in these trials is of more value than the most costly jewels"

The question may be raised: In practice how may one be assured that the "faith of Jesus" is all sufficient?

***Sister White in DA p753.2 declared "The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal..."**

*In that hour of greatest need when the spotless Son of God hung dying on the cross, a propitiation for the past sins of the world, His faith did not for one moment waived. Christ did not know that His Father and the holy angels were right there beside the cross. This is confirmed in **DA p753.4 "In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed... And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him"**

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Whilst Christ did not know the Father was by His side. Whilst He could not see through the portal of the tomb, whilst hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice, yet He knew prophecy was being fulfilled and His faith in His Father was greatly strengthened to "trod the wine press alone", especially when he looked down from the cross and saw the soldiers casting lots upon His garments.

*All these are confirmed in Psalm 22:13-19 which foretold the cruel treatment He was to receive at the hands of satan, his evil angels, and the wicked persecutors.

Psalm 22:16 -19 state "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. 19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me"

*The question remains how can one receive the righteousness of Christ which is also the righteousness of God the Father?

Moses answered this question in **Genesis 15:6 through the experience of Abram "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."**

Abram expressed complete trust in the power and covenant promises of God. Abram "believed" which has the same meaning as "amen", in the same way we emphasize our desire that God may hear and fulfill our prayers. Abram put his faith in God. It was not merely a belief in something impersonal, but a personal trust and confidence in God. This was also not just Abram's historical experience for the moment, but an abiding character trait. Justification by faith was applicable to Abram. Praise be to God that it is also applicable to all.

***Sister White resonated this understanding in Selected Messages, vol 1 p 366 "But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul."**

***Sister White summarized this point succinctly in RH Nov 4 1890. "Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of his Son to the sinner's account."**

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***Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as he loves his Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light."**

Indeed, it is God doing for man that which is not in his power to do for himself. Therefore, there are none so debased and so vile a sinner as to be beyond the power of God to save. Everyone who will submit themselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit a new principle of life will be implanted in his heart.

The question may be raised, how does someone like me have the will power to obey God? I fall flat on my face every time I purpose in my heart to obey Him.

***Sister White gave a most comforting assurance in Signs of the Times, June 16, 1890 par. 6 "When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and he makes up for the deficiency with his own divine merit"**

***In Christ Object Lesson p311.4 Sister White distinctly defined what is meant to be clothed with the garment of Christ's righteousness "When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness"**

A serious question arose in the minds of many who heard the message of Justification by Faith presented at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session by elders Waggoner and Jones, as to the relation that message bore to the third angel's message. In their perplexity, a number wrote to Sister White for an expression of her views on this question.

***In this regard Sister White's wrote in the Review and Herald, April 1, par 8 1890 "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity."**

*The enemy of man and God is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented, for he knew that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. Indeed, the thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought.

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Sister White gave further emphasized on this in Manuscript Releases, Volume 7, page 357.3
“When we bring our lives to complete obedience to the law of God, regarding God as our supreme Guide, and clinging to Christ as our hope of righteousness, God will work in our behalf. This is a righteousness of faith, a righteousness hidden in a mystery of which the worldling knows nothing, and which he cannot understand.”

*Both the Law of God and Christ righteousness must be equally lifted up, both are critical to man's salvation.

Sister White further expounded on the message of justification by faith in RH August 13, 1889 par 15. “There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people. The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel's message. The Holiness people have gone to great extremes on this point. With great zeal they have taught, "Only believe in Christ, and be saved; but away with the law of God."

*This is not the teaching of the word of God. There is no foundation for such a faith. This is not precious gem of truth that God has given to his people for this time. This doctrine misleads honest souls. The light from the word of God reveals the fact that the law must be proclaimed. Christ must be lifted up, because he is a Saviour who forgiveth transgression, iniquity, and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty and unrepentant soul”

*Sanctification or imparted righteousness is also the third angel's message:

Sister White confirmed this point in Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 92 “All power is given unto His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.”

Justification and sanctification, are inseparable concepts which permeate Scripture. By including justification and excluding sanctification, Satan has a masterful deception. The unscriptural concept of forensic justification teaches a universal justification at the cross which qualifies every human being for heaven, provided he does not persistently reject it.

*In Dynamics of the Everlasting Gospel p13 EH (Jack) Sequeira expounded this concept which is completely not in harmony with the teachings of the Holy scripture “**This righteousness** ‘in

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Christ' is the only means of our salvation and unless we resist and reject it, it fully qualifies us for heaven now and in the judgment."

***Seventh-day Adventists prior to 1957 believed that, while the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was fully sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins, Christ's work of final atonement is to be completed in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.**

The sacrificial phase of the atonement was completed on Calvary by the death and spilt blood of Jesus, but the final atonement of Christ would not be completed until after Jesus, as our ministering heavenly High Priest, sprinkled His blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

***The work of atonement cannot be completed here on earth because the sanctuary message determines that the final work of atonement can only be performed by a priest and must be carried out in heaven. Jesus was not a Levite therefore he cannot be a priest on this earth.**

Sadly, and tragically the authors of "Questions on doctrine" QOD and their main advisors, including the then General Conference President, endorsed an official so-called authoritative SDA church document filled with reshaped pillar beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to gain favor with the prominent evangelicals, notably Martin and Barnhouse. Long-held Seventh-day Adventist pillar beliefs were dismissed as mere semantics, a defense frequently employed later by the "new theology" proponents of the 1970s and early 1980s.

***Sister White in EW p253.1 confirmed that Jesus made a final atonement for all in the most holy place "The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be offered by Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary"**

*But statements in QOD p264 1975 claimed that the atonement was completed at the cross for man.

"His heavenly ministry to be the mediation of His complete and ever-efficacious atonement, which He made and completed on the cross for man"

It is therefore not strange that Christ's imparted righteousness that is His sanctification, is so despised in God's church today. Holiness of living, when espoused and promoted by faithful church members, is frequently sufficient reason to be ostracized.

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*In 1888 the 27th General Conference Session was held at Minneapolis, with 91 delegates and approx. 475 attendees. God brings the truth of justification by faith to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. But it generated a great controversy among the leading brethren in leadership or in sacred positions like then GC president G.I. Butler, Uriah Smith, Dan Jones, J.H. Morrison, Isaac Van Horn, Leroy Nicola etc, whose negative sentiments were to a significant degree replicated throughout the denomination.

Sister White in Manuscript 40, 1890; 1888 Materials, ch115 wrote, "The prejudices and opinions that prevailed at Minneapolis are not dead by any means. The seeds there sown are ready to spring into life and bear a like harvest, because the roots are still left.... and will bear their unholy fruit, to poison the perception and blind the understanding of those you connect with, in regard to the messengers and messages that God sends..."

***In 1888 Materials p349 Sister white gave full support to Waggoner's JBF message presented at the Minneapolis meeting "I have had the question asked, 'What do you think of this light that these men are presenting?['] Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years—the matchless charms of Christ. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds. When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was the first clear teaching on this subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself and my husband..." And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen"**

***In 1888 Materials p608.2 she confirmed that God has sent Jones and Waggoner to deliver the JBF message "If we place ourselves in a position that we will not recognize the light God sends or His messages to us, then we are in danger of sinning against the Holy Ghost. Then for us to turn and see if we can find some little thing that is done that we can hang some of our doubts upon and begin to question! The question is, has God sent the truth? Has God raised up these men to proclaim the truth? I say, yes, ...**

***God has sent men to bring us the truth that we should not have had unless God had sent somebody to bring it to us. God has let me have a light of what His Spirit is, and therefore I accept it, and I no more dare to lift my hand against these persons, because it would be against Jesus Christ, who is to be recognized in His messengers" She made it absolutely clear on "what His Spirit is". It is in the form of these messengers, these instrumentalities, "these persons".**

If only we had listened as we should to the warning and appeal in that seemingly strange yet impressive manner at the 1888 General Conference session at Minneapolis. What uncertainty would have been removed; what wanderings and defeats and losses would have been prevented, even as ancient Israel at Kadesh-barnea right at the door step of the Promised Land. What light and blessing and triumph and progress would have come.

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***Sister White in 1888 Materials 152.6 wrote "If the ministers will not receive the light, I want to give the people a chance; perhaps they may receive it. God did not raise me up to come across the plains to speak to you and you sit to question His message and question whether Sister White is the same as she used to be in years gone by"**

***In RH, September 3, 1889 par. 11 she pointedly declared "There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare"** Delegates and attendees at the 27th Minneapolis GC session numbered only about 566, meaning perhaps little more than only Waggoner, Jones and herself understood the message.

***Sister White wrote at the Ottawa Kansas camp meeting July 23 1889 "At the Kansas meeting my prayer to God was, that the power of the enemy might be broken, and that the people who had been in darkness might open their hearts and minds to the message that God should send them, that they might see the truth, new to many minds, as old truth in new framework"**

The question remains, how many today who claim to believe this truth comprehend the third angel's message?

Ever since the 1888 experience, there has been a tendency among SDAs as a people to credit ourselves with accepting and experiencing the message of righteousness by faith. Since the 1920s, however, when this acceptance idea began to be questioned by some of the leading brethren, there has been a more determined effort through the writings of various leaders and church historians, to portray the acceptance theory, that Minneapolis is portrayed as a "glorious victory."

In numerous places Sister White confirmed that the message of JBF was rejected by the leading brethren in leadership or in sacred positions and to a significant degree their negative sentiments were consequently reflected throughout the denomination of that time.

***In 1888 materials p425.2 she wrote "The message of God has been presented to the people with clearness and force; it is the very message which God means that His church shall have at this time. Your refusal to listen to it, your rejection of it, while it will not stop the work, will result in great loss to your souls.**

***Every ray of light that God has given to His people is necessary for them in the emergency that is to come; but if the rays of heaven's light are not discerned, if they are not appreciated, accepted and acted upon, you will lose the heavenly benefit yourselves, and keep the light from others whom God designed should receive it through you"**

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***Sister White in TM97.1 1896 warned against despising God's message "I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ ... I entreat you now to humble yourselves and cease your stubborn resistance of light and evidence..."**

***Take home message**

The righteousness of Christ accepted by faith is crucial to man's salvation.

1 Cor 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived..."

The unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Their greedy, grasping, selfish carnal character is altogether out of harmony with the selfless, humble love that characterizes the inhabitants of Paradise.

***The rejection of the Christ's righteousness represents the rejection of those traits of God's character that qualify men to become sons and daughters of God. Men are acceptable in the presence of God-the-Father only when clad in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ His only begotten son, by virtue of His merits.**

The imperfect righteousness of a false god-the-eternal-spirit consigns unsuspecting souls to eternal perdition.