



A Magazine for Members and Friends of Arden Seventh-day Adventist Church

Arden Adventist

# GRACE NOTES



NOVEMBER 2023

Making Friends for Jesus and Sharing God's Love In Our Community



## Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving, and the Adventists



Inside...





by Chris Small

## What do the Thanksgiving holiday, early Adventists, the sixteenth U.S. President, and the author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" all have in common?

***well, it happened like this. . .***

**E**arly in the American Civil War, most Northerners and Southerners alike had the same thought: "This war won't last long." Their majority view was shattered after the first battle of Bull Run/Manassas, and the Civil War dragged on for five very long years.

As it grew obvious the Civil War would not end quickly, leaders of both sides began thinking about morale. The troops needed to keep their spirits up; as did everyone on the home front. In 1861 and 1862 both U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis issued various calls for public days of thanks or of prayer and fasting, either to thank God for some success or to seek God's blessing upon their national cause. Lincoln would later highlight the irony when he said in his second inaugural address: "Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God and each invokes His aid against the other."

Surely, good church folks would take every opportunity to offer thanks or to seek God's assistance. However, some Christians—advocates of abolitionism especially—took issue with these calls for national thanks or fasting. Let's let Adventist pioneer Ellen Gould White explain the issue:

"A great share of the volunteers enlisted fully believing that the result of the war would be to abolish slavery. Others enlisted to be very careful to keep slavery just as it is, but to put down the rebellion, and preserve the Union. . . . In this state of things proclamations are issued for national fasts, for prayer that God will bring this war to a speedy and favorable termination. I was then directed to Isaiah 58:5-7: 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen. . . ?' I saw that these national fasts were an insult to Jehovah. He accepts of no such fasts. . . . The escaped slaves endure untold hardships and dangers to obtain their freedom . . . [and are] deprived of liberty and free air which Heaven has never denied them, and then left to suffer for food and clothing. In view of all this, proclaim a national fast! Oh, what an insult to Jehovah . . . ! Saith the Lord, 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?' When our nation observes the fast which God has chosen, then will he accept their prayers as far as the war is concerned; but now they enter not into his ear. He turns from them. They are disgusting to him. . . ." (January 4, 1862. Testimony for the Church — No. 7.)

Adventist abolitionists (and others) saw these nation-

al calls for thanks or aid as a kind of hypocrisy, if slavery still existed. What they did not know? By spring of 1862, Lincoln was privately writing notes for what would become the Emancipation Proclamation. When he finally presented these ideas to his cabinet, they warned him that he could not issue such a war measure until after some kind of Union victory. Lincoln agreed, but said it was a matter of "when," not "if," he would issue the Proclamation, for he already "made a promise to his Maker" that at the right time it will be done.

The Battle of Antietam/Sharpsburg gave President Lincoln the moment he needed, despite being the single deadliest day in all American war history. The North seized it as a victory and Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that would ultimately go into effect on January 1, 1863. Now Ellen White, Adventists, and thousands of Christian abolitionists throughout the United States felt that national policy on this issue was coming into harmony with what they believed was God's will regarding the end of slavery. As you might imagine, Southern slaveholders had a very different view concerning what they believed the Bible taught about slavery. But for African Americans and many Northern Christians, the Emancipation Proclamation (and subsequent constitutional amendments more fully ending slavery and granting certain rights) was the outworking of God's purposes. Now they believed they could ethically participate in these days of thanksgiving or prayer.

Enter a woman named Sarah Josepha Buell Hale . As a child, she loved education and was taught at home. When her brother Horatio went to Dartmouth, he shared his textbooks. Sarah learned everything he did. At the age of 18, Sarah Buell founded a private school, teaching until she married David Hale in 1813. Nine years later, Sarah Hale's husband died, leaving her a single mother with five children. She ultimately turned to writing as a source of income. Hale's most famous poetry book, "Poems for Our Children," included "Mary's Lamb," (the famous school visit of the sheep with fleece as white as snow based upon an incident she observed as a child.) In 1827, Hale included in her book "Northwood," a chapter in which a New England family celebrated an annual Thanksgiving holiday, as she herself had done, growing up in New Hampshire. Hale promoted many causes: abolition, women's education, creation of Vassar College, construction of a Bunker Hill Monument, saving Mount Vernon, white wedding dresses, Christmas trees, and more, including—of course—creation

of a national Thanksgiving Day holiday.

Many days of thanksgiving, were proposed—from the Pilgrims to Continental Congress during the Revolution, to George Washington, John Adams, and James Madison. Thomas Jefferson, however, was concerned about the separation of church and state. Thus, these one-off declarations of national days of thanksgiving moved to the purview of individual states. Some states (primarily in the Northeast) celebrated a Thanksgiving Day almost annually, others more sporadically or never. As we have seen, both Lincoln and Davis proposed days of national thanksgiving and fasting during the early Civil War years.

Sarah Hale had a far-reaching platform to popularize her views about an annual national Thanksgiving Day. In 1828, Hale became the first female editor of a magazine in the United States, “American Ladies’ Magazine,” later merging with “Godey’s Lady’s Book.” Between the two, Hale served as editor for almost 50 years. Just before the Civil War, “Godey’s” had a circulation of more than 150,000, one of the most influential periodicals in the country. At least twice a year in the pages of “Godey’s,” Hale urged the creation of a national day of thanks, to be held on the last Thursday of November. Even during the war, she thought this could help reunify the country. Over the years, Hale also wrote thousands—yes, thousands—of handwritten letters to Congress members, Presidents, governors, and others, promoting Thanksgiving in both states and the nation. One of her letters, written September 28, 1863, still preserved in the “Papers of Abraham Lincoln” at the Library of Congress, finally hit its mark.

The end of Hale’s letter read: “Now the purpose of this letter is to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation, appointing the last Thursday in November (which falls this year on the 26th) as the National Thanksgiving for all those classes of people who are under the National Government particularly, and commending this Union Thanksgiving to each State Executive [Governor]: thus, by the noble example and action of the President of the United States, the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured.”

Hale also wrote to Secretary of State William Seward, and possibly she even met with Lincoln in 1863. Both Seward and Lincoln approved the idea and a Thanksgiving Proclamation was issued on October 3. The text was written primarily by Seward and signed by Lincoln. This short, but beautiful document (worth looking up the whole text online sometime) reminded people of God’s “bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come” and other gifts so extraordinary “that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.” It invited every citizen “to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father,” as well as to “commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore if, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.”

With the Emancipation Proclamation now in effect, and hopes high finally for the end of slavery, Seventh-day Adventists and others agreed with the sentiments of this Thanksgiving Proclamation, which would become the basis for the annual U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving. Additionally, in the spring of 1865, the Seventh-day Adventist Church made its own call for days of fasting and prayer concerning the Civil War. The church paper, the Review and Herald, urged every church to “set apart four days, commencing Wednesday, March 1, and continuing till the close of the following Sabbath” to pray for the end of the Civil War. “The mind of the nation,” said the article, “is so absorbed in this dreadful contest that it is almost impossible to call attention to religious subjects. . . . The war must stop, or our work in spreading the truth will stop. . . .”

The Adventists held their four days of prayer and fasting, concluding on the very day of Abraham Lincoln’s second inauguration and famous address which concluded: “Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago so still it must be said, ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’ With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

The prayers of Adventists and many other Northern Christians seemed to be answered. Exactly one month later, on April 4, Lincoln was on the streets of the fallen Confederate Capital of Richmond, surrounded by cheering crowds of African Americans once enslaved, but now free. Five days later, on April 9, General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant. The long war was finally coming to an end. It was a reason to give thanks again. As the April 11, 1865, Review and Herald put it: “None have more reason to rejoice than the commandment-keeping people of God. . . . Not only the cessation of slaughter and bloodshed, but . . . an answer to prayer. . . . We thank God for the visible manifestation of his hand.” □

End Notes:

- (1) It was during the Civil War period that the Adventist Church was officially formed. The denomination voted to call itself “Seventh-day Adventist” in 1860. The first Conference (Michigan) was formed in 1861. The General Conference was formed in 1863, just weeks before the Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg.
- (2) Later on, in the 1870’s, Sarah Hale began urging that the annual national Thanksgiving Day be proclaimed not by the President but by an act of Congress. It would take a long time: in 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt finally signed such a bill into law, settling the fourth Thursday in November as the Federal Thanksgiving Day holiday.

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Pastor Eric Bates, D. Min.

**A**s an adult convert, sometimes I feel like a nineteenth century journalist standing on a hill observing a Civil War battle in the valley below.

## A QUESTION OF REPENTANCE.

Maybe you too have seen it over the years. The theological pendulum swings back and forth. In the 1950's, the pendulum swung to the legalism of salvation by works. We focused more on what we didn't believe than what we did believe! The saints were continually afraid they had a sin or two unconfessed that pushed them into the "lost category." People hoped that they somehow would be "good enough" for heaven, but were fearful there might be one sin which they had overlooked, never repented of, and that it would disqualify them for salvation. What a scary way to live.

Ironically, that era was called "Historic Adventism," making it sound like Adventism had no history before the 1950's. It totally ignores those last two decades of the 1800's when the message of Righteousness by Faith swept our church and brought a great spiritual revival.

Lately, there has been a lot of discussion in some community circles on the topic of repentance. Could it be that the pendulum is again swinging (partially in reaction to the works focus of the past) and that the pendulum has overshot the truth, and swings too far to the other side?

It's been said recently by some in our community that repentance is no longer necessary. You can believe in Jesus and be saved even if your life goes on just as it was before you became a Christian—so the claim goes. Some people even claim that if we say repentance is necessary for salvation, we're adding "works" to the gospel. They claim that if repentance is required, then we're no longer saved by God's grace alone, but also by what we do. It's been said that the Bible has little to say about repentance. Therefore, it must not be very important. But this is a logical fallacy, "the argument from silence," argumentum ex silentio. However, is that even a true claim—that the Bible has little to say on repentance?

Listen to Jesus, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). After His resurrection when Jesus was briefing the disciples on what the message to the world would be, He said proclaim "repentance and forgiveness of sins" in His name to all nations (Luke 24:47). When the apostles preached throughout the Book of Acts, repeatedly they called people to repent of their sins in order to be forgiven (See Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:32, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20). The Apostle Paul also made it clear that believers in Christ do not live lives of sin, but "put on the new man." Those lives characterized by sin "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; see also Romans 8:12, 13; Galatians

5:21, Ephesians 5:5). There clearly must be a turning away.

According to the overarching testimony of Scripture, repentance is absolutely necessary in order to be saved. Only those who turn from sin, trust in Christ, and live lives that are characterized by righteousness will be saved on the last day.

But, you might be thinking, "Pastor, are you saying that repentance is a 'work' we must perform in order to earn our salvation?" Not at all!

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Faith comes from "hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). This "word" is ultimately from God, "inspired" (literally "breathed out") by God through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance and faith are really two sides of the same coin. On one side, repentance is turning from sin (a change in heart and a change in direction). On the other side, faith is turning to, trusting in, and relying on Christ. But, somehow, some have gotten into their minds that faith is a "gift" but repentance is a "work."

Repentance is not a "work" any more than faith is. Repentance is just as much a gift as faith is.

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31 NASB). "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life'" (Acts 11:18 NASB). "And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth . . ." (2 Timothy 2:24, 25 NASB).

Does the Bible have anything to say about repentance? Absolutely! Has the pendulum swung too far when repentance is thrown out as a "salvation of works?" Indeed! Repentance is not only necessary, it is required.

This is critical: Repentance isn't something that we muster on our own and when we have "enough," we are saved. Repentance is granted to us by God through the Spirit. Just as being justified is a gift of God, just as being made holy through the work of the Holy Spirit over a lifetime is a gift, repentance is also a gift of grace.

Finally, if you were a journalist standing on a hill overlooking the theological civil wars taking place in the Body of Christ, you would see an enemy who does not care how he trips us up. Whether we believe that we—and everyone else—must be saved by our own works or that no turning from sin is required because "it's already been forgiven," the enemy has won.

We serve a Victor who not only has the power to forgive our sins of yesterday. He has the power to lead us to repentance, and the power working from within to transform our hearts.

The pendulum stops there. □

Arden Adventist  
**MINISTRIES in ACTION**  
 by Pen Braister-Sturgis  
**Brittany's Books**

**I Love Books.** I love buying them, reading them, browsing in bookstores, checking them out in the library, borrowing them from friends, etc. In fact, the only government buildings I really enjoy going into are the libraries. I remember coming from a communist country to the United States and finding out that I can borrow any book I want for free. What an amazing concept. What a privilege. But not everyone is this fortunate. Not every child has the opportunity to borrow books because not everyone has a library from which to borrow books.

When our daughter, Brittany, expressed her desire to take a teaching job on the South Pacific Island of Palau, little did I realize her mission year abroad would be my mission here in the United States. Let's face it, who doesn't at one point or another dream of living on a beautiful island? Few of us can make that dream a reality. When Brittany flew to Palau this past August for her first teaching position after graduating from college, we were very excited for her.



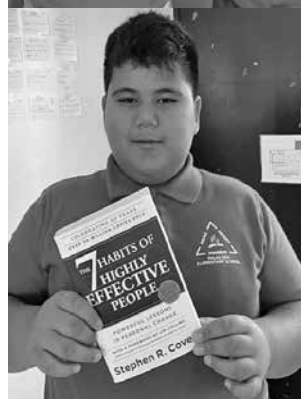
But within days of arriving there, she was disappointed to discover that her fifth graders didn't enjoy reading because they didn't have books for their age group. The few books the Palau Seventh-day Adventist School had were "boring books, mainly for adults," and of little interest to young minds eager to learn. This is the part of Brittany's mission year that became my mission project.

Brittany and I discussed the idea of me collecting books in our Arden, North Carolina, area and sending them to Palau for Brittany's fifth grade class to enjoy. Starting a library for her class sounded fun and to my amazement, many "came on board" in our community to donate books for this project. After the first church bulletin announcement asking members to donate age-appropriate books, I promised to cover the shipping costs and send the books to Palau. Initially, my goal was 250 books, which I thought would be a good number of books for Brittany's 18 students to share and enjoy. But as books kept coming in, I realized not all the books were geared toward fifth graders. Many of the donated books were more suitable for younger ages. I sent them anyway. Why not have our daughter donate those books to the lower classes? When I first started this project, I promised my daughter that I would send two



boxes a month. Even with Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes, this mission project would get expensive.

Then Sarah Wilson, the principal of Captain Gilmer Christian School graciously volunteered her school to do a book drive and boxes and boxes of books were donated. At this point, I was mailing a box to Palau every week. My goal went from 250 books to 500 books for this project. As I previously mentioned, not all the books were age appropriate for fifth graders but I didn't have the heart to turn them away. Why shouldn't the younger students at Brittany's school benefit from all these wonderful donations?



The more books donated, the more trips to the post office, the more boxes sent. I am currently sending two boxes a week to Palau and my goal is now 1,000 books! Brittany's class is so excited to receive these boxes from America, which she opens in class so all the students can see what books are in there. The excitement is contagious. The younger grades' teachers are also excited to see what books they are getting from Brittany's class.

To date, 400 books have been sent to Palau for this amazing project. If you have books on history, geography, astronomy, animal stories, and Christian books that you would like to send to Palau, you can send them to Brittany Braister-Sturgis, P.O. Box 1166, Koror, PW. 96940. Palau. (Our two

post masters have memorized this address as I've shipped so many boxes from their post office). Together, we can all make a difference in the life of a young child we will never meet, but can inspire to become a better person because of a book that was sent to them. You, too, can make this your mission project. All together we can reach that goal of 1,000 books for Palau!!!



Many organizations work together through Adventist Laymen Services & Industries (ASI) with the Seventh-day Adventist Church to reach foreign mission fields.

# Stories of World Missions

## Finding Life's Essentials Global Mission 360°—General Conference

Even before the first brick was laid, the Lord had His hands on the Essential Life Center, an urban center of influence (UCI) in Battambang, Cambodia's third largest city. A man named Phon was hired to do welding by Gary Rogers, the superintendent of the building project. Gary is the Global Mission director for the Cambodia Mission and also an Adventist missionary. Phon liked having a day and a half off each week to relax rather than the demanding seven-day weeks he had to put in at other companies. He also enjoyed the morning worships led by Gary.

One day as Phon sat down to take a break, he overheard Gary talking on the phone about not taking on a particular job on an upcoming Saturday. Phon knew Gary wanted to get the project done quickly, but he couldn't figure out why he wouldn't budge about that one particular day. "Why is Saturday so important?" he asked Gary pointedly. "I've been going to church for more than ten years, and no one has told me not to work on Saturdays." Gary seized the moment and gave Phon a brief Bible study on the Sabbath day. He also invited Phon to engage with him in a more in-depth study.

Phon believed the Bible to be the Word of God, so when Gary opened the Scripture and showed him about the Sabbath, tithe, the health message, and the true meaning of baptism, he accepted its teachings. He began keeping the Sabbath day holy from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. He also decided to be baptized and become a member of the Adventist Church.

Around this time, the UCI nearly came to completion, and Phon became one of the first batch of students at its language center. Although in his 60s, he didn't shy away from learning in a classroom with teenagers. He also enrolled in the music school at the center to learn to play the piano. On Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday nights, he actively participated in the evening Bible studies and joined young people at church to do door-to-door Bible work.

However, this was not enough for Phon. "I wanted to bring my whole family to this newly discovered, wonderful truth!" he said. A few months after Phon's baptism, he brought his wife to church. She clearly didn't enjoy it, yet over time, something inside her began to change.

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down all churches and schools in Cambodia, Phon spent more time with his family and gave them Bible studies. They, too, have accepted the Sabbath and dedicated their lives to Christ through baptism.

Many others have come to know Jesus through the UCI's ministries, and the Battambang Central Church is very




thankful for the work the center is doing to connect seekers like Phon to its church family. People of all different backgrounds who wouldn't otherwise enter a church walk into the UCI and Battambang Central Church looking to better their lives. Whether through the language class, music classes, or the vegetarian restaurant, the UCI offers a perfect meeting place for people from different walks of life. Before the pandemic, more than 100 people were coming to the center each day, and trained members from the Battambang Central Church welcomed them with open arms and shared about Jesus. Some 20 people have already given their lives to Jesus through the joint ministry of the UCI and Battambang Central Church, and many more children and young people are studying the Bible.

Please continue to pray for this ministry in Battambang. Due to the stereotype of Christian churches being a place where beggars get free rice, wealthy people or those who wish to associate with the rich social class often avoid church events. The UCI provides a comfortable meeting ground for all social classes and particularly attracts the upper economic class. Its vegetarian restaurant is known as the trendy place that sells the best vege-burger in town, and the language school attracts young people from nearby elite private schools wanting to better their foreign language skills by conversing with native speakers. The UCI's music school is the only school in the whole province that teaches classical music, and wealthy parents boast on social media by posting pictures and videos of their kids playing on the center's grand piano.

It is written that before the close of probation, the rocks will cry out. The building rocks of the Essential Life Center have brought Phon and many others to Jesus. Musical instruments, vegetarian foods, and merely speaking in English have helped bring souls to Jesus. What is in your hand that you can use for Jesus?

### Urban Centers of Influence

Global Mission supports urban centers of influence in providing long-term, on-the-ground ministry that helps meet people's needs and start new groups of believers. To learn more visit [MissionToTheCities.org](http://MissionToTheCities.org). 

# A SERMON *for* KIDS

## An Unexpected Gift. . .

A Children's Story as told by Pen Braister-Sturgis

**O**n Thanksgiving Day, 2019, Mr. Jerry and Ms. Pen with their son Andy went to the Asheville Rescue Mission to help feed their friends, who had no homes or families to help them. Ms. Pen always wants to take care those who have no families, especially on a holiday like Thanksgiving.

The family had worked hard for many hours preparing and serving food. Now, they were ready to rest. Ms. Pen started their car to drive home when Mr. Jerry said, "Wait! There is something next to the wheel of the car."

"Is it a box or a package?" Ms. Pen asked.

"Is it something sharp or dangerous?" Andy asked.

Mr. Jerry opened the door and stepped out. "No. It is a baby cat."

Mr. Jerry does not like cats and has never wanted a cat as a pet. "I will take the kitten into the Rescue Mission. Maybe they will take care of it."

Ms. Pen laughed. "The Rescue Mission is for people. It is not for cats."

"I do not want a cat as a pet," Mr. Jerry said. He picked up the kitten and took it into the Mission.

Ms. Pen looked out her window.

"How long will it take for him to learn that the Mission does not rescue cats?"

"What will we have to buy at Wal-Mart for such a small kitten?" Andy asked aloud. Ms. Pen and Andy both knew they would have to take the kitten home.

When Mr. Jerry came back to the car, he did not have the kitten.

"What happened to the cat!?" Ms. Pen cried.

"The people said they would take it to the animal shelter," Mr. Jerry said. "It's not my cat. I don't want a cat."

"The cat was not beside my tire," Ms. Pen said.

"The cat was not beside my tire," Andy said.

"The cat was beside your tire," Ms. Pen added. "Of all the cars in this parking lot, God placed the kitten next to this car, next to your tire. I think God has given you that cat as a special gift."

Mr. Jerry sat in the car while everyone waited. Then he got out of the car and walked into the Rescue Mission. When he came out, he had the kitten in his hand. "I think we should go to the store and buy some food for this kitten. But I don't want to keep him."

Ms. Pen drove to the nearest Wal-Mart which was having a Black Friday sale. Andy and Mr. Jerry went into the store while Ms. Pen held the tiny kitten. Ninety minutes later, they came out with a litter box and cat litter, several cans of tuna, a dish for water and food, and a cat bed.



At home they opened a can of tuna and placed it in the dish. The little kitten ate all of it and meowed for more. They opened another can of tuna. The little kitten ate half of it. His tummy was so big he could hardly walk. They placed him on the couch where he quickly went to sleep. In the morning, Ms. Pen heard a meowing sound. "Oh," she said. "I forgot. We have a cat." She hurried into the kitchen to feed the cat. "I think we should name the cat Sylvester," she called out.

"Cat, not my idea," Mr. Jerry answered from the bedroom.

"The cat was God's gift to you on Thanksgiving Day," Ms. Pen responded.

"I don't want to talk about it," Mr. Jerry said.

The next year, 2020, was the year that COVID began. Mr. Jerry had to do all his work at home. When he rested on the couch after lunch, Sylvester—who was getting bigger—slept on his tummy. When Mr. Jerry began working at the office again, Sylvester stood on his hind legs and watched at the door for him to come home, met him at the car, and waited by his chair to be petted.

Sometimes Sylvester would catch a mouse or a mole. He would bring it in the house and place it next to

Mr. Jerry's shoe. When Mr. Jerry came home, Sylvester would stand beside Mr. Jerry's shoe and meow, as if to say, "See, I brought you a gift."

"Remember, he is God's special gift to you," Ms. Pen added.

"I don't want to talk about it," Mr. Jerry said, shaking his head.

One day, Sylvester came home limping. Mr. Jerry saw that Sylvester had been in a fight and was badly hurt. He quickly bundled the cat in a towel and took him to the vet. Mr. Jerry was very worried. When the vet had finished his work, Mr. Jerry brought Sylvester home and took care of him until he was all healed up.

Every morning at 5 o'clock, Sylvester wakes up everyone in the house by meowing very loudly, until someone feeds him. He is a very good alarm clock. At times like this, Mr. Jerry sometimes forgets that Sylvester was a special gift from God.

Sometimes we forget that we have a special gift from God. At 5 o'clock in the morning and every hour of the day, when we get busy or tired or angry, God sends His Holy Spirit to remind us that He sent Jesus to be our special gift—even when we sometimes forget. □



## LIFESTYLE FOCUS

### Happy Holiday Plate

by Max Hammonds, MD, MPH, MHA

**A**round the first of November each year, we begin to worry about the holiday meals and our weight. We know that three holidays are back-to-back, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. We begin to contemplate how we will contend with so much food in such a short time and maintain the weight we have struggled to bring under control since these holidays invaded our lives last year.

Forty years old is when people stop working and playing quite so vigorously, but we continue eating vigorously as we always did. Over the holidays, we gain five pounds, which is the usual weight gain. Each year another five pounds, and another five pounds, and another five pounds.

After ten years, at age fifty, we are now fifty pounds heavier and can't understand how or why we got to be so heavy. What can we do to prevent these holidays from adding the extra pounds? Here are ten simple rules to insure a Happy Holiday plate with little or no weight gain. Five rules around the plate and eating, and five rules around the nutrition on the plate.

#### Rules about Eating

#1—When we go through the buffet line or are being served at the Thanksgiving dinner, we must insist on an ordinary plate size, not a platter and not a saucer. Platter-sized plates encourage us to load up the plate with something of everything, a sure way to overeat. Saucers encourage us to come back for seconds for the things we passed over the first time.

#2—With our normal-sized plate behind our backs, we look over the offerings on the table or on the buffet line. Of all that is offered, we decide which foods we will choose, then place **ONLY** those foods we really want and leave everything else alone (which is easier to do in a buffet line than when every bowl is passed under our noses on its way around the table.)

#3—This one is hard. Eat only at an organized meal, at a set table. We must **NOT** eat snacks or leftovers during the game or over holiday activities. Most snacks have lots of calories and very little real nutrition. And save the leftovers for the next meal. This is hard. But just like the battle on

the football field, we are fighting a battle for our long-term health. Snack calories end up on waist lines. Don't do it!

#4—Slow down when eating. Put the fork down next to the plate after every bite. Talk with the people at the table; enjoy the fellowship of the holiday. Generally, the body requires a half-hour to digest enough food to register as getting full. Eating too fast encourages eating too much.

#5—Do not eat and then sleep. Sumo wrestlers get up very early in the morning and exercise extremely hard until early afternoon. Then, they are given a huge meal and are put to bed for a long nap. That's how they manage to get so heavy. They eat, and then they sleep. And all those calories they are not burning immediately are converted to fat.

#### Rules about the Food

#1—Don't plan meals around carbs, fats, protein, and fiber. Think of a balance of the kinds of real foods we eat. And think about each meal as fitting on a single plate (even though some meals are served by courses or in bowls and saucers.) Divide this "imaginary" plate into fourths. All the foods we will choose for each meal will now fit into one of these "imaginary" quarters, with **NO** overlaps!

#2—One fourth of our "imaginary" plate is reserved for whole grains, the source of energy-producing complex carbs, healthy fats, protein, and fiber. Whole grains contain the outer fibrous coat and the inner protein/fat/mineral-loaded kernel. Whole grains are called "the staff of life" for a reason. Whole-grain rice, couscous, whole grain bread, and cereals fit in here.

#3—One fourth of our "imaginary" plate is reserved for legumes—that is, beans—with seeds and nuts (plant-based protein and fiber) or the meat, which must fit within this one-fourth space (but has **NO** fiber). Most people eat too much protein, not too little.

#4—The remaining half of the plate is for fruits and vegetables, depending on the kind of meal being consumed. Eat for color (brown, white, and gray are not nutritional colors). These colorful foods are the source of healthy carbs, lots of fiber, and most of the vitamins and minerals essential for our body to use the other nutrients.

#5—Add sparingly foods that are high in fats. We make all the fats we need (and we do need them.) So, fats are for garnish, like salad dressings and nut cups, not as a main course. Fats have almost twice the calories of other foods. Be careful of hidden and added fats (deep fried food, sauces, and creamed toppings.)

In general, the higher the calories, the lower the nutrition and fiber. The lower the calories, the higher the nutrition and fiber. Preserve carefully the cultural and familial traditions we will include in our holiday celebrations. Emphasize personal relationships and cultural observances. But carefully protect our health by our food choices. Happy Holidays! □

Disease is an effort of nature to free the system from conditions that result from violation of the laws of health. In case of sickness, the cause should be ascertained. Unhealthful conditions should be changed, wrong habits corrected. Then nature is to be assisted in her effort to expel impurities and reestablish right conditions in the system. —*The Ministry of Healing*, page 73.

**Editor's Note:** The sole purpose of any health information provided by Grace Notes is for **information only** and is not intended to recommend or assist in self care, or to be a substitute for diagnosis and/or treatment by your personal physician. Please see Disclaimer on page 11.



# Stories of Ancient History. by Chris Small

## Xerxes and Esther: The Story continued.

Come, O Reader, and let us continue the exploits of Khshayarsha (“Shay-ar-shah” or “Shah-yar-shah,” who is Xerxes to the Greeks and Ahasuerus to the Hebrews), Great Emperor of the Medes, Persians, and far-flung lands.

May it be recalled that Khshayarsha—following the death of his father, the Emperor Darius, of noble memory—personally led the hosts of Persia to Egypt, decisively crushing a serious revolt. That same year, a rebellion sprang up in Babylon and the forces of Khshayarsha ended the short sway of the rebel Bel-shimmani within weeks. In almost exactly two years-time, a second Babylonian nationalist pretender, Shamash-eriba, seized Babylon, Borsippa, and other cities. This revolt took nearly seven months and a devastating siege of Babylon to bring the rebels to heel. Nevertheless, Khshayarsha re-stabilized the empire, winning a string of vital, noteworthy victories during the first years of his reign.

Now, talk turned to another problem left to Khshayarsha by his father, Darius. The Greek region of Ionia, sitting on the eastern shore of the Aegean Sea from the Greek mainland, had fallen to King Croesus of Lydia (of whom the proverb “rich as Croesus” was spoken after the Lydians pioneered the minting of gold and silver coins). Lydia, in turn, fell to the grandfather of Khshayarsha (on his mother’s side), none other than Cyrus the Magnificent. Darius sought to expand and strengthen the territory left by Cyrus. His satraps (local governors and strongmen) in Asia Minor—former Lydia, Ionia, and neighboring areas—secured Greek Thrace, Macedonia, and the islands of Lemnos and Imbros in the Aegean Sea. This would make it easy for the empire of Persia to launch a conquest of Greece itself at the right time. When the city-states of Athens and Eritrea supported an Ionian revolt against Darius, the time had come.

Darius sent Mardonius, not only a trusted general, but also his son-in-law, husband of Darius’ daughter Artazostra. Mardonius made an excellent start, but when his fleet was grievously wrecked in a storm near Mount Athos, his expedition came to an end. Two years later, Datis the Mede devastated Eritrea and enslaved its people. He marched upon Athens, whose army met him upon the plain of Marathon. They dispatched the long-distance soldier runner Pheidippides to seek help from Sparta, but he returned with the news that it would be nearly a week before the Spartans could set out to lend aid. The brave archers of our Persian army met the Athenian advance on Marathon with a withering hail of arrows, then our infantry pushed far into the weakened Athenian center. Unfortunately the Greeks flanked our valiant force, both right and left, and both the day and the invasion were lost. Darius began planning a third expedition, but—as you know—the insurrection in Egypt and Darius’s death delayed these plans while Khshayarsha secured his throne and was victorious over Egypt and Babylon.

Between the two Babylonian victories, Khshayarsha’s brother-in-law and cousin, the same Mardonius who led the first expedition to Greece, solicited the Great Emperor to renew the campaign. Mardonius was supported by Greeks exiled in Persia, and—it is no secret—if victorious, he desired to rule as Satrap in a conquered Greece. On the other hand, Khshayarsha’s uncle Artabanus advised against returning to Greece at this time. Nevertheless, the arguments of Mardonius and the desire for revenge over the shame to the Persian army and, by extension, to Khshayarsha’s father Darius swayed the mind of Khshayarsha. He began the slow practical military and dip-

lomatic preparations for war, which would require almost four years to complete. Each of the 127 satrapies must send troops while a new navy was gathered and built.

In this period, the first great “banquet” described in the Hebrew scroll of Esetare was held. Over the course of 180 days, all the great military leaders of Persia gathered, along with the Satraps and nobles of each province. Here was a chance for all to visibly express their loyalty after Khshayarsha’s victories in Egypt and Babylon. And here was a calculated time for the Emperor to deploy diplomacy to win support for a new Greek invasion. The royal citadel at Shushen was bedecked in all its finery to impress the guests.



At the end of the 180 days of celebration and diplomacy, Khshayarsha had mainly achieved his aims. With great gladness, he decreed an additional week-long feast for every person in the royal city, from his own family and most trusted advisors to the very least of the nobles who were still in the city. The magnificent Apadana was filled with festivity and there was no limit to the wine being continuously brought up from the royal cellars.

Of course, the queens of Khshayarsha and the noble women of the Satraps’ entourages were not expected to mix with the men, and the chief queens of Persia entertained them within the harem, the houses of the Emperor’s wives and concubines. Among those who planned the women’s banquets was Vashti, a secondary queen, who currently had the express favor of Khshayarsha.

On the final day of the celebration, the Emperor, giddy with success and wine, thought he would awe his subjects with one last “object” of beauty. He ordered seven loyal eunuchs—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas—to interrupt Vashti from her party and bring her to the Apadana, where she might wear a royal crown and, by her beauty, demonstrate what a great ruler Khshayarsha was and how favored by Ahura Mazda, the great god of Persia. What a result this one order would have! 📖

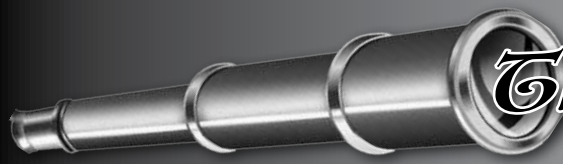
Notes:—\* The idea of a personal narrator here is fiction, but all the other events and individuals are mentioned in the Bible and/or in other historical records.

\*\* Not the Darius of Daniel 5-6 who ruled over the province of Babylon for Cyrus beginning in 539 BC, but rather Darius the Great who ruled the Achaemenid Empire from 486-465 BC.

\*\*\* Some of the detailed information is from Encyclopaedia Iranica article on Susa in the Achaemenid period.



**Chris Small** is an Adjunct History & Religion faculty member at Fletcher Academy. He writes from his home in Hendersonville, North Carolina.



# The Long View

by Max Hammonds

## Understanding Christian Metaphors: Steward



**In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy,<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:2.**

“Mr. Tolman, what’s a steward?” Corinne was a sophomore in Mr. Tolman’s Bible class. “I didn’t understand why Eliezer is called a servant. Didn’t he function as a steward?”

Mr. Tolman smiled at Corinne, but addressed the class. “An excellent beginning, the role of Eliezer to Abraham. How did he function?”

Tod quickly answered, “Genesis 24:2 says he’s a servant.” He looked up from his Bible. “But does that mean he’s a slave? Can you trust a slave?”

“Two more excellent questions.” Mr. Tolman raised his bushy eyebrows in delight. “First, the word in Hebrew can mean anything from the lowest slave to the highest bond-servant, that is, someone who is committed—by choice—to the master for life.” Mr. Tolman turned a page in his open Bible. “But, for the second question about trust in Genesis 24 and all the treasure Eliezer is carrying.” He paused. “To whom does it belong?”

“It belongs to Abraham, obviously,” Betty answered, her hands folded in front of her.

“Yes, it does. But how does Eliezer handle it, say in verse 22 and in verses 33 to 35?” Rick raised his hand slowly. “Yes, Rick.” Mr. Tolman nodded to one of his best pupils.

“I think he is careful. Beginning in verse 12, he prays for guidance, then watches in amazement as his prayer is answered in detail. He takes out a ring and bracelets, but does not give them to Rebecca until he has extracted the information he needs. Then, beginning in verse 33, he does the same with the family, sharing none of the wealth until he is sure that his mission—to find a wife of Abraham’s family for Isaac—is completed.”

“Very good, Rick,” Mr. Tolman nodded, “thank you.” To the rest of the class, “What do you think? Abraham can trust Eliezer. But, does Eliezer trust Abraham? Trust is a two-way street. The trust has to go both ways.”

Armon raised a tentative hand. “Well, at least, Eliezer trusted Abraham’s God.”

“So, Eliezer trusted Abraham, knowing that Abraham trusted God.” Mr. Tolman nodded his head vigorously as he followed Armon’s thinking. “Is this the essence of being a steward?” Everyone knew Mr. Tolman’s question was his way of turning the conversation in a new direction. “Let’s look at another example of stewardship, both bad and good.” Mr. Tolman lifted his Bible and leafed through the pages. “Turn with me to Matthew 25, starting with verse 14.

“Is everyone there? Okay. Trust.” Mr. Tolman began reading. “A man went on a long journey. He called his own slaves—like the word in Hebrew, the word in Greek can mean a high-placed servant or a menial slave—and entrusted his possessions to them.” He paused. “Does he trust them?”

Betty responded without raising her hand. “It could be a test to see if they can be trusted.”

“Hmmm. Interesting idea. Does God do that—test us?” Mr. Tolman held up his hand to Betty as he watched for others to respond.

Tod’s hand shot up. “Yes. God tested Abraham and Abraham passed the test!”

“Did God already know how that test would turn out?” Mr. Tolman quickly asked. “Of course. Then why the test? Who needed to know?”

Rick lowered his crossed fingers from his lips. “I think most of God’s tests are to teach us—where we are and how we’re doing—learning to be trustworthy.”

“So, God wants to trust us and help us learn to be trustworthy. But what’s the flip side of trust?” Mr. Tolman bored in, wanting someone to grasp the essence of stewardship.

“Do we trust God?” Jenny had been very quiet until now. “But, do we?” she said, looking around.

“Good question, Jenny! Let’s find out.” Mr. Tolman ran his finger down the page of his Bible. “In verses 16 and 17. These two servants immediately began taking risks with the money entrusted to them. Do they trust their master? How do you know?”

“They know it’s not their money.” Corinne spoke slowly, trying to work out her understanding, even as she spoke. “They’re only the managers. But they also know what the master expects them to do, and that he will not be angry, even if they try and fail to gain an increase, or even lose it all.”

“How do you even know that?” Jenny turned to challenge her.

“Because they went out immediately and started trading. They trusted the character of the master, therefore, they weren’t afraid to fail.”

“And what about the third slave? Does he trust the master?” Mr. Tolman quickly queried.

Again, Betty responded. “He thought the master was harsh, greedy, and exacting, and he was afraid. So, no. He didn’t trust the master at all.”

“What’s the essence of stewardship?” Mr. Tolman hoped someone finally understood.

Rick raised his hand. “I think stewardship is a trust relationship between master and steward. The master, who owns everything, trusts the character of his steward to manage it well. The steward, who owns nothing, but manages all that the master has, trusts the character of the master to support him in his work.”

“Is stewardship about giving money, Rick?”

“No,” he answered, “it’s about value and the trust relationship between master and steward in managing those things of value.”

“Very good,” Mr. Tolman said with relief. “Assignment: Write 500 words about what stewardship is and what you personally are the steward of. Class dismissed.” □



**Max Hammonds** is a retired anesthesiologist, writer, health lecturer, musician, and sailor, and writes from his home in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

# Arden Adventist FAMILY FOCUS

by Jean Davey

Our Family Focus this month features Michael and Sheri Baker. Sheri has been a member of the Arden Seventh-day Adventist church since 2011 and Michael since 2015.

Michael was born in Gaffney, South Carolina, and lived there through his childhood. He was raised as a Seventh-day Adventist. He has one brother who currently lives in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Sheri was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and was also raised as a Seventh-day Adventist. Her father was a pastor and they moved about every three years, living in Kentucky, Washington State, and Ohio. By the time she was fourteen, she had lived in fourteen houses! Sheri has one sister, Arden church member Karin Small.

Michael attended Mt. Pisgah Academy and graduated in 1985. He has Associate Degrees from Spartanburg Technical College in Textile Engineering and in Electrical Engineering.

Sheri attended Mt. Vernon Academy and graduated in 1990. She graduated from Southern Adventist University in 1993 with a B.S. degree in Elementary Education.

Michael has worked as the Director of Maintenance for twenty-five years for several different textile mills including Carolina Cotton. He now is an independent owner/operator of his own trucking business.

Sheri has worked as a teacher during her career. She first taught for five years in Tryon, North Carolina, in a one room school. She then taught two years in the Spartanburg Seventh-day Adventist Church school. Sheri decided to take ten years off to raise her two daughters, Ashley and Amanda Blake. She then began teaching at Captain Gilmer School and has been there for twelve years.

Sheri and Michael met at the Spartanburg Adventist church and they have been married for eight years. Michael has two children, Mathew who lives in Gaffney, South Carolina, and a daughter Megan who lives in Newberry, South Carolina. Megan and her husband have a one year old son named Carter.

Sheri has two daughters. Ashley who works at Advent Health in Orlando, Florida, and Amanda is now a senior at Southern Adventist University.

Sheri moved to the Western North Carolina area when she took the job at Captain Gilmer. She already knew the Viars and Hakes families and she remembers the first two Sabbaths she attended the Arden church, the Viars and Yoons graciously invited her and her girls to their homes. She felt Arden was so friendly, and she decided to join. Once she and Michael were married, Michael joined, too. They also felt it was a great church for children.

Michael's hobbies include working on cars and rebuilding engines. He really enjoys fixing just about anything. Sheri enjoys 5K and 10K runs, enjoys music, plays the flute and piano, and she enjoys reading and traveling.

They have traveled to Panama on a mission trip and Sheri also went to Dominican Republic, and during this last summer they went to Zambia. She also has been to England and Spain to visit her children. She and Michael enjoy going to Cades Cove, Tennessee, every year around their anniversary.

Michael and Sheri enjoy the Down Under Sabbath School class and once a month Sheri teaches the class. She also enjoys sharing her musical talents with the church. Michael enjoys his own ministry of sharing the Gospel with his fellow truckers, and also helps many to make repairs to their trucks.

We are so happy to have Michael and Sheri as part of the Arden church family! 📱



**Jean Davey** is retired from the University of South Carolina, where she worked as a computer programmer in the Payroll, Budget and Human Resources Departments. Jean writes from her home in Hendersonville, North Carolina.



## Arden Seventh-Day Adventist Church Is a Safe Place to Grow.

Our Purpose is, by God's Grace, to reflect His character in our community, to demonstrate a quality of life that will attract all to be reconciled to Jesus Christ, and to encourage people to become His loving, maturing disciples.

### Grace Notes Editorial Staff:

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Max Hammonds Assistant Editor  
Ann Marie Bates . . . . . Columnist  
Chris Small . . . . . Columnist  
Jean Davey . . . . . Columnist  
Max Hammonds . . . . . Reporter & Columnist  
Pen Braister-Sturgis . . . . . Reporter  
Jim & Carolyn Sullenberger . . . . . Proofreaders  
Comments, suggestions and praises are always welcome. Please email or contact the church office.

### Services each Saturday morning:

Sabbath School Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.  
Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.

Location: 35 Airport Road, Arden, NC 28704  
Located on Highway 280, (Airport Road),  
1.5 miles east of I-26 exit 40, and a quarter  
mile west of Highway 25.

### Church Office:

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*Grace Notes* is published monthly by the Arden Seventh-day Adventist Church. Subscription is free by calling or emailing the office. †

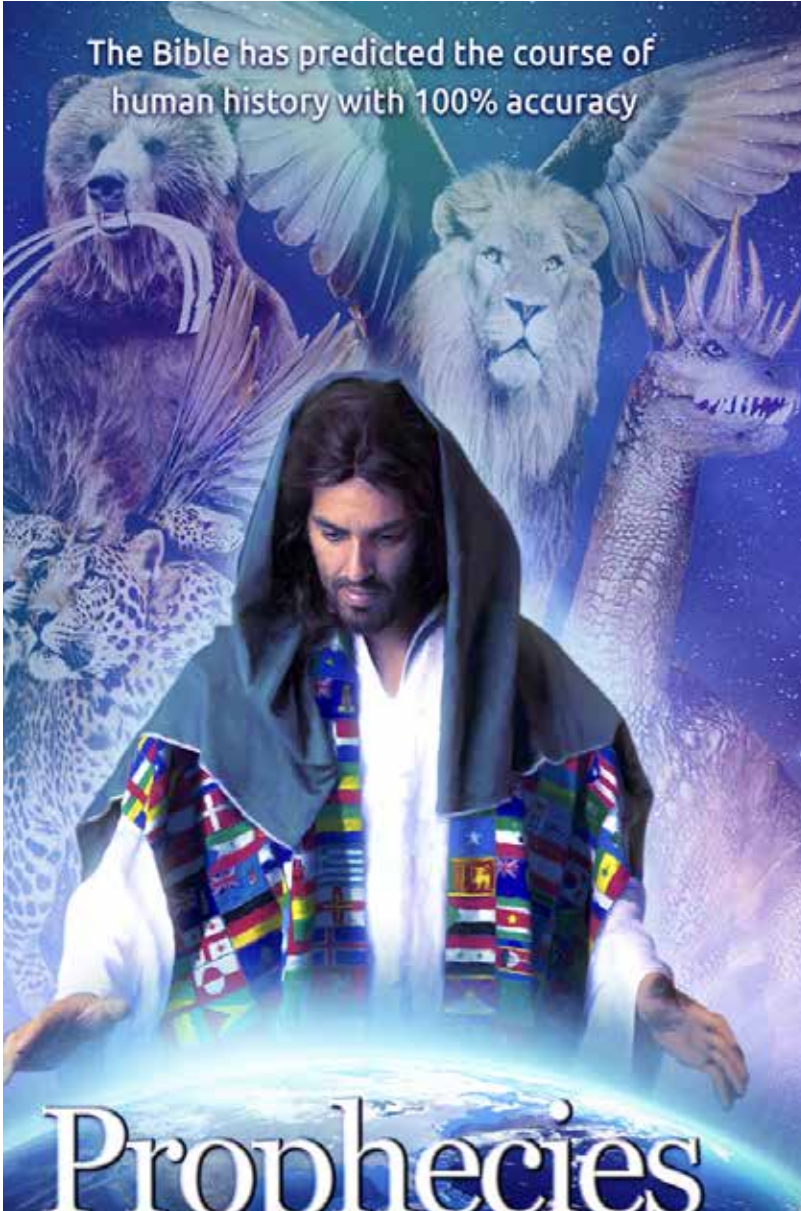
If you have questions about what Adventists believe? Would you like to become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Would you like to study the Bible? You are invited to attend a Pastor's Bible Study Class. Please call for location and time. All are always welcome.

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The Bible has predicted the course of  
human history with 100% accuracy



# Prophecies of HOPE

Unlocking the Books of Daniel & Revelation

**A Bible Prophecy Conference  
Coming to Arden**

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 2023 / 7:00 PM**

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE—A MESSAGE OF HOPE

With the world in chaos, political unrest across our nation, and senseless violence tearing into the safety of our homes, people across the country are looking to the future with fear. But the Bible has proven itself accurate throughout history, and it tells us what will happen soon. The books of Daniel and Revelation will dispel your fears and give you a foundation for how to prepare for upcoming world events. Discover the keys to unlocking these prophecies and the hope found in their revelation.

### **DON'T MISS OPENING NIGHT! SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 2023 / 7:00 PM New World Order**

Bible prophecy predicts the rise and fall of nations up to 2000 years into the future! Then a new world order is prophesied as the last government on Earth. Is it already here?

### **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023 / 7:00 PM**

#### **Session 2 | On the Verge of the Apocalypse**

World events today are aligning with the prophecies of the Bible. Discover the keys to unlocking these mysterious symbols in the books of Daniel and Revelation, and what the Bible says will happen next.

### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023 / 7:00 PM**

#### **Session 3 | Three Angels of the Apocalypse**

We hear of a judgment day, but what does the Bible really say about judgment? Join us as we explore this and learn why we don't have to live in fear, but can look to the future with hope.

### **Your Speaker is Dr. Eric Bates**

Eric Bates has taught Bible prophecy internationally. Eric's clear grasp on prophetic times has given hope to many as he unfolds, with clarity, the keys to understanding Bible prophecy. Even if you have never opened the pages of the Bible, this seminar will give you a sense of peace and well-being as you learn its relevant application to your life.



### **EVENT LOCATION**

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