

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***“Feed My Sheep”*: *First and Second Peter***  
**Lesson 2. An Inheritance Incorruptible**

Our lesson gives us a general outline of what we need to know regarding the objectives of a book in the Bible—who comprises the audience, who is the author, what is the historical context, and “what message ... can we take from it”? In the case of this essay we will focus on a “message,” the message of Christ’s righteousness given to us in the 1888 era.

Ellet J. Waggoner, one of the 1888 “messengers,” provides us with an in-depth meaning of our lesson title: “An Inheritance Incorruptible.” He writes, “The word of the Lord is the seed by which the sinner is born again. We read that ‘every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, ... In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures’ (James 1:17, 18).

“And the apostle Peter says: ‘Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart. For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God’ (1 Peter 1:22, 23). So we learn that, while those who are Christ’s are born of the Spirit, the word of God is the seed from which they are developed into new creatures in Christ. The word, then, has power to give life.

“With the knowledge that the word of God is the seed by which men are begotten unto a new life, and that the hiding of the word in the heart keeps one from sin, we may easily understand 1 John 3:9: ‘No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ How simple!” [1]

Our Monday’s lesson topic is, “Elected.” This perhaps is one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted themes of the 1888 message.

Although we as Seventh-day Adventists have made little if any effort to tell the 1888 view to the Catholic and Protestant world, it resolves the centuries-old conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism. It agrees with Calvinism in that Christ’s work of justification accomplished on His cross was effective, He accomplished what He set out to do. It disagrees with Calvinism’s “limited atonement” confined only to the “elect.”

This “limited atonement” is a subtle denial of a “most precious” truth. It means that Christ did not die for every one of us, but only for those few who are “elect.” In contrast, “1888” sees that Christ has purchased *the gift* of salvation for “all men” and has *given* the *gift* to them “in Himself.” He wants all to be saved, and before the foundation of the

world He predestined all to be saved. But some of us will allow only that the Savior has “offered” the gift to “all men,” but has not *given* it, until they do something first to believe and accept it. In other words, our salvation is ultimately due to our own initiative. But “God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”—all this done at the cross before you and I came along (2 Cor. 5:19).

Christ has “tasted death [the second] for every man” (Heb. 2:9), which can only mean that He has paid the full price to save “every man.” This went beyond popular Adventism of its day and of ours, declaring that Christ has not only *offered* salvation to all, but has actually *given the gift*, placing it in every man’s hand, as it were. He became “the Savior of the world” (John 4:42), “the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 4:10).

It’s a breath-taking idea, and shocking, but it’s Bible. Those who are lost at last have made their true name to be “Esau.” He *had* the “birthright,” he didn’t need to do anything to obtain it, but he “despised” and “sold” what God had placed in his hands (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16). This is a free, full atonement *given in a legal sense* to “all men.” The only alternative is a “limited atonement.” If Christ didn’t truly save you when He “saved *the world*,” then *you* have been short-changed by a limited atonement!

Waggoner said it clearly: “By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life’ [Rom. 5:18]. *There is no exception here.* As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, He has given Himself *to every man*. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came only upon those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift.” [2]

Waggoner also made it plain that the 1888 view of justification is not the heresy of Universalism:

“‘Do you mean to teach universal salvation?’ someone may ask. We mean to teach just what the Word of God teaches—that ‘the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men.’ Titus 2:11, *Revised Version* [the Greek sustains this rendering]. God has wrought out salvation for every man, *and has given it to him*; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to every man and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession.” [3]

“The gift is ours to keep. *If anyone has not this blessing, it is because he has not recognized the gift, or has deliberately thrown it away.*” [4]

But why is this truth so important? By recovering the truths of both Calvinism and Arminianism while rejecting their errors, “1888” rediscovers the original truth of the cross of Christ in a way that none of the Reformers were able in their day to grasp, honest as they were.

The conclusion: *God has entrusted to Seventh-day Adventists a unique understanding of the cross that with His blessing is yet to lighten the earth with glory.* This cannot be grasped except in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

When an honest heart recognizes this ultimate truth of what happened on the cross, “the love [*agape*] of Christ constrains” (motivates) the soul to live “henceforth” only for the One who died our second death for us. The results, in God’s plan, are phenomenal: all old covenant, egocentric motivation is transcended.

The joy that Jesus will know will be unbounded. The long delayed wedding of two who have dearly loved each other is an occasion of great joy here on earth; think of a cosmic wedding! Four grand Hallelujah choruses with heaven’s symphony orchestras accompanying the massed choirs. “The angel said to me, ‘Write, Blessed [happy] are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God’” (Rev. 19:9, NASB).

You are invited; now “make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10).

—*From the writings of Ellet J. Waggoner and Robert J. Wieland*

#### **Endnotes:**

[1] Ellet J. Waggoner, “The Indwelling Word,” *The Signs of the Times*, July 14, 1890. Bible texts from the *New American Standard Bible*.

[2] *Waggoner on Romans*, p. 5.101 (italics supplied).

[3] Ellet J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 13, 14 (CFI ed., 2016).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

#### **Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

[https://youtu.be/wESK0Vsc\\_Oc](https://youtu.be/wESK0Vsc_Oc)

You may subscribe to the e-mail version of *Sabbath School Today* by sending a request to [sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org](mailto:sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org)