

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 173

“Marriage in the World to Come”

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A THANK YOU NOTE

The responses to my last newsletter no. 172 on "Ellen White and the Future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," surpassed my fondest expectations. Within three hours from the posting of the newsletter, I received about 50 messages of appreciation, including over 20 orders of the new edition of Prof. Graeme Bradford's book *More than a Prophet*.

I would like to express my wholehearted appreciation for taking time to read my **lengthy** essay and to email me so many notes of thanks. Many of you told me that *More than a Prophet* was long overdue and will help to restore confidence in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White by helping people gain a balanced picture of her ministry.

If you or your church have not ordered yet *More than a Prophet*, you are still in time to take advantage of the special offer. See the details below or by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BradfordOffer/offer.htm> Note that with your order you will receive also one FREE DVD with Prof. Bradford's two hours lecture on Ellen White. Thank you for sharing this timely book and the DVD with your church members.

GOOD NEWS ON MY LIVER CANCER RECOVERY

In my previous newsletter I gave an extensive report of the providential recovery from my colon cancer surgery and liver cancer treatments. You may have seen the image of the PET/CAT scan taken on April 24, 2007, showing how shows that the presence of cancer in my liver has been reduced by almost 80% after three treatments. To see the impressive color image of the PET/CAT scan, click on this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/colon/>

Since then, I have had two more treatments which have further reduced the activity of the cancer cell. The latest PET/CAT scan shows that the substance produced by the cancer cells, known as Carcino Embryonic Antigen (CEA), has been reduced from 1760 before the treatment to less than 80 after the last treatment.

One thing is sure. I feel like a new man, with an unprecedented surge of energy and a burning desire to praise God for restoring my health and for giving a new lease on life. Few months ago the major cancer treatment centers in the USA that viewed by CAT scan, gave me from few months to a couple of years to live. Now I feel like a new man with a new lease on life. The only thing that I can say is: **Thank you God for healing my body and restoring my health!** God still has a work for me to do. To this end I want to with to dedicate the rest of my life.

How to Contact the Center for Cancer Care in Goshen, Indiana

To express my gratitude to God for leading me to this unique Center for Cancer Care, in Goshen, Indiana, I decided to post the information on how you can contact the Center. The Assistant to the President is Vladimir Radivojevic, who is a gracious and caring Adventist Christian. Feel free to contact him at this address:

Vladimir Radivojevic MS, MBA

Assistant Vice-President

The Center for Cancer Care

200 High Park Ave.

Goshen, IN 46526

574.535.2970 phone 574.535.2535 fax

Email: vradivoj@goshenhealth.com

Websites: www.goshenhealth.com or www.cancermidwest.com

If you or someone you know has cancer, feel free to contact Vladimir. He will talk with you personally, gather your information, and place you in contact with an oncologist who can examine your situation. Vladimir informed me that it is very important for them to receive the medical records, especially CAT/SCANS. That will help them determine if one of their clinical trials programs fits the cancer needs of the patient.

What is unique about this Center for Cancer Care, is that they have a dozen of clinical studies on different forms of cancer. This means that they use different procedures not available in most hospitals. I contacted various Cancer Centers in Chicago, Dallas, Loma Linda, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Detroit, but none of them conduct clinical trial on cancer. All what they have to offer is chemo treatments. Chemo alone would hardly have shut down the activity of 95% of the cancer cells.

Feel free to contact Vladimir by email or by phone. You will find him to be most helpful. Incidentally, the Center provides free accommodation in a nicely furnished Guest House with several rooms, each with private bathroom facilities. Vladimir will also arrange for someone to pick you up at the South Bend airport, which is about 30 miles away. You will be impressed by the caring and compassionate service the Cancer Center offers.

UPCOMING SEMINARS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

Gradually I am rescheduling some of the invitations I had to cancel because of the colon cancer surgery and liver treatments. Here is a list of the upcoming weekend seminars for the months of June:

JUNE 8-9: TYLER (TEXAS) SDA CHURCH

Location: 2935 S. Southeast Loop 323, Tyler, Texas 75701.

For directions and information call Pastor Elton DeMoraes at 903-258-5757

JUNE 15-16: LOS ANGELES: PASADENA SDA CHURCH

Location: 1280 E. Washington Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91104.

For directions and information call Pastor David Recalde at 323 258 2827.

JUNE 29-30: ENGLAND - CHELMSFORD SDA CHURCH

Location: 43 Roman Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 OHA.

For directions and information call Elder Cliff Hilton at 01376 334 848

JULY 6-7: ENGLAND - TOTTENHAM W GREEN SDA CHURCH

Location: 253-255 West Green Road, Tottenham, London N15 SED

For directions and information call Elder Orville Baxter at 01992 621 599

NEWLY RELEASED DVD OF PROF. JON PAULIEN'S LIVE SEMINAR ON *SIMPLY REVELATION*

Prof. Jon Paulien is one of the most respected Adventist scholars. Besides serving as the chairman of the New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, he writes and lectures extensively in many parts of the world. He is rightly regarded as a leading Adventist authority on the book of Revelation which he has taught at the Seminary for the past 20 years. His doctoral dissertation as well as several of his books deal specifically with the Book of Revelation.

The constant demand for Prof. Paulien's CD albums with his publications and articles, led me to discuss with him the possibility of producing a live video recording of a mini Revelation Seminar, which he chose to call *Simply Revelation*, because its aim is to *simply* present the message of Revelation.

The preparation of this video recording took several months. The *Simply Revelation* seminar consists of four one-hour live video lectures, which have just been recorded in the studio of Andrews University. An impressive virtual studio provides the background of the lectures. Each lecture is delivered with about 50 powerpoint slides. I have spent long hours looking for suitable pictures to illustrate the text of each slide in order to enhance the visual effect of each lecture.

In the first video lecture Prof. Paulien discusses the proper *method* to interpret Revelation. In the following three lectures he focuses on the essential *messages* of Revelation and their relevance for today. This mini Revelation seminar will offer you and your congregation fresh insights into the Book of Revelation.

Listening to the four one-hour lectures during the taping was an enlightening experience for me. I was spellbound by his profound insights into the meaning of the imagery of Revelation. He speaks freely without notes, out of the abundant knowledge derived from 20 years of painstaking research. For me it is refreshing to listen to a scholar like Prof. Paulien who knows what he is talking about.

Your church will be richly blessed by viewing *Simply Revelation*, which offers a profound and yet popular presentation of the messages of Revelation for today. If your church is equipped with a DVD player and a projector, the whole congregation can benefit from these timely messages. Be sure to inform your pastor about the newly released *Simply Revelation*.

The video editing of *Simply Revelation* has just been completed. We are now **airmailing** the new DVD album to Adventists in the USA and overseas. The album has two DVD disks, each containing two live, video lectures illustrated with powerpoint slides.

You will be pleased to know that we have placed on a separate file all the powerpoint slides and text used for the live video presentations. Each slide has the script of the live lecture. This means that if you are a pastor or a lay members who want to use Prof. Paulien's *Simply Revelation*, you can pick and choose the powerpoint slides that you like.

The file with the powerpoint slides is placed on Prof. Paulien's CD album containing all his publications. The reason is that there was no memory left on the DVD disks. In spite of my pleas, Prof. Paulien was so full of the subject that he used the full 60 minutes for each lecture, leaving no space for the slides' file.

This has been a very expensive project, both in time and money. The regular price of the DVD album is \$100.00, but you can order it now until June 30, at the introductory price of only \$50.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

If you have not ordered before the CD Album with Prof. Paulien's publications, we will be glad to add it to your DVD order for only \$20.00,

instead of the regular price of \$60.00. This means that you can order both the DVD album with Prof. Paulien's four live video lectures on Revelation and the CD album with all his publications and powerpoint slides of *Simply Revelation*, for only \$70.00, instead of the regular price of \$160.00.

INTRODUCTORY OFFER OF PROF. PAULIEN DVD ALBUM

- **ONE DVD Album** of Prof. Paulien's four video lectures on *Simply Revelation* at the pre-release price of \$50.00, instead of \$100.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.
- **ONE DVD Album of *Simply Revelation* and ONE CD Album** with Prof. Paulien's **publications** for only \$70.00, instead of the regular price of \$160.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.
- **QUANTITY ORDER:** Please contact us by email <sbacchiochi@biblicalperspectives.com> or by phone (269-471-2915) for a special discount on quantity orders.

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“Will There Be Marriage in the World to Come”**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,****Retired Professor of Theology and Church History,****Andrews University**

Will there be marital relations in the world to come? The answer of many sincere Christians is “NO!” They believe that at the resurrection the redeemed will receive some kind of “unisex” spiritual, angelic bodies which will replace our present physical and heterosexual bodies. Consequently, marital intimate relationships will no longer exist in the world to come.

Is this what the Bible teaches about life in the world to come? Will the redeemed receive a spiritual, angelic, unisex body that precludes marital relationships? Will they spend eternity in a kind of monastic retreat center, devoted to everlasting contemplation and meditation, or will they engage in the normal activities of the present life?

The thought of spending eternity in an ethereal center somewhere off in space, wearing white robes, plucking harps, singing, meditating, and contemplating, was attractive to medieval Christians who envisioned Paradise as a kind of monastic retreat. Such vision of Paradise, however, can hardly appeal to twentieth-century Christians in love with the sights and sounds of the great metropolis. This may explain why most Christians today do not seem to be eagerly waiting for the coming of the Lord to establish His eternal kingdom. They are not so sure if they want to live like monks for all eternity in the beatitude of an ethereal Paradise which is too chaste, too disinfected, and too unreal.

Two Sources Inspired this Bible Study

The inspiration to prepare this essay came from two different sources. The first, is an essay entitled “Will There Be Sex in Heaven?” by Mike Leno. He is currently serving as a pastor of the Ontario SDA Church in California. Over the years Pastor Mike has invited me several times to present my seminars at the churches he pastored in the Northwest, Georgia, and California. He is a keen and engaging thinker. He posted his essay in the May issue of his *GraceNotes* Newsletter which can be accessed at <http://mikeleno.net/> You will enjoy his pastoral newsletters. They are short (not long like mine), perceptive, and engaging.

The second source is a compilation of statements from Ellen White about the reunification of families in the world to come. The compilation was prepared by Raymond Mayer, MD, a retired medical doctor who has been a most gracious and helpful next-door neighbor for the past 13 years. Recently he lost his wife to cancer after been happily married for 52 years. Though he is still a very healthy and energetic man, he has decided not to re-marry, because he is looking forward to be reunited to his devoted wife. He found support for his conviction in some of Ellen White's statements which will be cited later.

This essay "Will There Be Marriage in the World to Come?" is excerpted from two of my books *The Marriage Covenant* and *Resurrection or Immortality?* For the sake of brevity, I have selected only those paragraphs that relate more directly to our topic. If you are interested in a fuller treatment of the subject, I will gladly mail you the two mentioned books. The information on how to order them is given at the end of this Bible Study.

Objectives of this Bible Study

This Bible Study seeks to understand the biblical teachings on the World to come. Christians should be eager to learn as much as possible about the new world that awaits them at the end of their earthly pilgrimage. A clearer vision of the new earth, can nourish the hope and strengthen the faith of those called to live among the uncertainties and troubles of the present life.

This Bible Study is divided into three parts which are closely related. The first part addresses the question: **What will people be like in the world to come?** Will the redeemed be resurrected with a physical body like the present one, or will they receive a radically different spiritual/etherial/immaterial body? Will they be the same persons as those who existed previously on earth or will they be completely different?

The second part examines the question: **What will life be like in the world to come?** Will the new world be a material place like the present one or a "spiritual/etherial" realm radically different from our present world? Will the redeemed engage in the kind of activities we know today, or will they spend eternity in everlasting contemplation and mediation?

The third part discusses the question: **Will there be marital relations in the world to come?** Will the redeemed live single life-style like monks? Will the husband/wife relationship still continues in the world to come? Or is God going to change the creational design by recreating the redeemed as “unisex” persons who will live single life-style?

These are vital questions that deserve careful Biblical investigation because what Christians believe about their life in the world to come largely determines how they live their life in the present world. Historically, most Christians have envisioned the world to come as a place that is beautiful but ethereal, a place where the solid joys of this present life must be exchanged for a spiritual existence of continuous adoration and contemplation. Such vision of the world to come is reflected in the lines of popular hymns such as the one that says: “In mansions of glory and endless delight, I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright.”

The ethereal vision of Paradise has been inspired more by Greek philosophical dualism than by Biblical wholistic realism. For the Greeks, the physical body and the material components of this world were evil and, consequently, not worthy of survival. Their aim was to reach a spiritual realm where their souls, liberated from the prison-house of a physical body and of a material world, would enjoy eternal bliss.

Biblical Realism

The Bible rejects the ethereal vision of the world to come because it affirms the goodness of God’s physical creation. “It was good,” is the ringing divine proclamation of each stage of the creation of human and subhuman life (Gen 1:10, 18, 21, 25, 31). The purpose of redemption is not the liberation of spiritual souls from the bondage of a the physical body and of a material world, but the restoration of the whole human and sub-human creation to their original perfection. The “new heaven and new earth” (Is 65:17; Rev 21:1) are not a remote and inconsequential world somewhere off in space; rather they are the present heaven and earth renewed to their original perfection.

PART I

WHAT WILL PEOPLE BE LIKE IN THE WORLD TO COME?

Before taking a closer look at the Biblical glimpses about life in world to come, let us consider what will people be like in the new world. Will the resurrected/translated saints receive a physical body like the present one or a spiritual body radically different from the present one?

We are rather fortunate to have Paul's discussion of this very question which had been raised by the Corinthians: "But some one will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body" (1 Cor 15:35-38).

What Paul is saying here is that as God gives a body to each kind of seed that is sown, so He will give a body to each person who is buried. The fact that deceased bodies are buried like the seed in the ground suggested to Paul the analogy of the seed. Paul further develops the analogy of the seed by giving us the clearest description we find in the Bible of the continuity/discontinuity between the present and future body: "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:42-44).

In this passage Paul explains the difference between our present body and the future resurrection body by means of four contrasts. These contrasts are equally applicable to the bodies of the living saints who will be transformed at Christ's return without seeing death. First, our present bodies are **perishable** (*phthora*)—subject to sickness and death—but our resurrection bodies will be **imperishable** (*aphtharsia*)—no longer liable to sickness and death. Second, our present bodies experience the **dishonor** of being lowered into a grave, but our resurrection bodies will experience the **glory** of an inner and outward transformation.

Third, our present bodies are **weak**, as they easily become tired and exhausted, but our resurrection bodies will be **full of power**, with bound-

less energy to accomplish all our goals. Fourth, our present bodies are **physical** (*soma psychikon*), but our resurrection bodies will be **spiritual** (*soma pneumatikon*). This last contrast has led many to believe that our resurrection/translation bodies will be “spiritual” in the sense that they consist of a non-physical, non-material substance, whatever that may be.

A “Spiritual” Resurrected Body

Did Paul believe, and does the Bible teach that at the resurrection/translation believers will receive non-material and non-physical bodies, totally devoid of physical substance? This is indeed the view of many Christians today. They define “**spiritual body**—*soma pneumatikon*” as meaning **a non-physical body** suitable for the new “heavenly environment.”

This popular belief rests on the assumption that God will condemn this earth to eternal desolation and create, instead, a new “heavenly” world suitable for the habitation of spiritual saints. This assumption raises serious questions about the wisdom of God in first creating this planet to sustain human and subhuman life, only to discover later that it is not the ideal place for the eternal habitation of the redeemed. To remedy the problem, God would then be compelled to create a non-material “heavenly planet” and to equip the resurrected saints with “spiritual bodies” suitable for such a heavenly environment.

This reasoning is ludicrous for anyone who believes in the omniscience and immutability of God. Changing models and structures is normal for finite human beings who learn by trial-and-error, but it would be abnormal and inconsistent for an infinite God who knows the end from the beginning. If God discovered that matter had become intrinsically evil so that it had to be banished, then, in a sense, the devil and the Greek philosophers would have been proven right. But matter is not evil because it is part of God’s good creation. The Bible affirms that this material world was “very good” (Gen 12:31) at creation, and there is no reason to believe that it will be “very bad” at the final restoration.

The most compelling proof of the goodness of the present creation is the teaching of the resurrection of the body — a teaching that was absurd

and particularly offensive to Greek thinkers who believed that the physical body as well as the material world are evil, and thus to be discarded at death. For them only the disembodied soul survives the death of the body.

Apparently some Corinthian Christians were influenced by this prevailing Greek dualistic view of human nature and destiny. This is indicated by Paul's question: "How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor 15:12). Paul refutes this error by affirming the resurrection of the body. This teaching provides the most convincing proof of the continuity between the present life and the life to come.

Spirit Led Life

Some challenge the notion of continuity because Paul contrasts the present "**physical**—*psychikos*" body with the future "**spiritual**—*pneumatikon*" resurrection/translation body. To them this contrast indicates that the resurrection body will no longer be physical consisting of "flesh and blood." This interpretation ignores that for Paul "spiritual" does not mean "non-physical." This is evidenced by his usage of the same two words (physical-*psychikos*/spiritual-*pneumatikos*) in the same epistle with reference to the present life: "The unspiritual [*physical-psychikos*] man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual [*pneumatikos*] man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one" (1 Cor 2:14-15).

It is obvious that the spiritual man in this passage is not a non-physical person. Rather, it is someone who is guided by the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction from someone who is guided by natural impulses. Similarly, the resurrection body is called in 1 Corinthians 15:44 "spiritual" because it is ruled not by carnal impulses but by the Holy Spirit. This is not an anthropological dualism between a "*physical-psyche*" and a "*spiritual-pneuma*" nature, but a moral distinction between a life led by the Holy Spirit and one controlled by sinful desires.

This insight helps us to understand Paul's statement a few verses later: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perish-

able inherit the imperishable” (1 Cor 15:50). It is evident here Paul is not saying that the resurrection body will be nonphysical, because, writing to the Romans, he says: “But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you” (Rom 8:9).

By the phrase “not in the flesh” Paul obviously did not mean that Christians had discarded their physical bodies. Rather, he meant that already in the present life they were guided by spiritual rather than by worldly values (Rom 8:4-8). If Paul could speak of Christians as being not “in the flesh,” already in the present life, his reference to the absence of “flesh and blood” in the Kingdom of God, simply means the absence of the natural, carnal, and sinful inclinations of the present life because the redeemed will be led fully by the Spirit.

The Meaning of the Resurrection of the Body

What, then, does “the resurrection of the body” mean? Biblical writers knew as well as we do that it could not possibly mean the rehabilitation of our present physical bodies. First, because many bodies are sick or deformed, and second, because at death they decompose and return to dust (Ps 104:29; cf. Eccl 3:20; Gen 3:19).

In the Biblical wholistic view of human nature, the term “body” is simply a synonym for “person.” For example, when Paul appeals “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1), he is clearly thinking of the whole person. In view of this fact, to believe in the resurrection/translation of the body means to believe that my whole human self, the human being that “I” am, will be restored to life again. It means that I will not be someone different from whom I am now. I will be exclusively myself. In short, it means that God has committed Himself to preserving my individuality, personality, and character.

Central to the Biblical promise of the resurrection of the body is God’s commitment to restore to life the very same individuals who existed previously on earth. God is not going to resurrect an indefinite group of look-a-like people, but the very same persons who lived on this earth. The Bible reassures us of the preservation of our identity through the

suggestive imagery of “books” where our “names,” thoughts, attitudes, and actions are recorded (Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12).

A name in the Bible stands for character or personality, as indicated by the various names used to portray the character of God. This suggests that God preserves an accurate picture of the character of each person who ever lived on this planet. The record of each life is all inclusive, because Jesus said: “On the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt 12:36-37).

Each believer develops his or her own unique character as a result of the temptations, struggles, defeats, disappointments, victories, and growth in grace each one experiences. This means that the possibility of “multiple replication” of people at the resurrection, all looking, acting, and thinking alike, is inconceivable. As there are no two persons with the same DNA molecular design, so there are no two Christian characters that are the same. Each one of us has a unique character or personality that God preserves and will unite to the resurrected body.

In a society where people are often regarded as cogs in a machine, numbers in a computer, it is reassuring to know that God places a transcendent significance on our personal identity. He has written the name of each believer “before the foundation of the world in the book of life” (Rev 13:8). In the sight of God what ultimately counts is not our church affiliation, our family lineage, or our racial belonging, but the values, attitudes, and decisions that characterizes our personality.

Some Practical Implications

The practical implications of the belief in the resurrection/translation of the whole person are not difficult to see. To believe in the resurrection/translation of the body means to believe that we will be able to recognize our loved ones. We shall recognize our loved ones, not necessarily because they will look exactly the same as when we last saw them, but because their unique individuality and personality is providentially preserved and resurrected with a brand-new body given by God.

When we meet elementary or high-school classmates after 20 or 30 years, most often we have difficulty in recognizing them by their external appearance. But as soon as they begin to talk, we realize who they are because their unique personalities really have not changed. They are still the Mary, the John, or the Bob we knew many years before.

The same principle applies to the recognition of our resurrected loved ones. We shall recognize them, not because they will look as young or as old as when we last saw them, but because their unique individuality and personality is providentially preserved and resurrected with a brand-new body by God.

The fact that God will restore to each of us our distinct personality and character, teaches us that our future personality is formed now. As aptly stated by Ellen G. White, “the characters formed in this life will determine the future destiny” (*Child Guidance*, p. 229). This important truth summons us to cultivate all the powers that God has given us in order to develop characters which are fit to serve God not only in this world but also in the world to come.

Summing up, then, people in the world to come will have physical bodies like the present ones, but without the liabilities of sin, sickness, and death. The purpose of the Plan of Redemption is not to remove defects from God’s original material creation by recreating the human and sub-human creation of a different non-physical, “spiritual” substance, but to restore the whole creation to its original perfection. What was “very good” at creation will be proven to be “very good” at the final restoration.

PART 2

WHAT WILL LIFE BE LIKE IN THE WORLD TO COME?

In the first part of this Bible Study we concluded that the redeemed will have a physical body like the present one, but without the liabilities of sin, sickness, and death.

The next question we wish to address is the actual environment and lifestyle of the redeemed. Will the new world be a material place like

the present one or a “spiritual” realm radically different from this world? Will the redeemed engage in the kind of activities we know today, or will they spend eternity in everlasting contemplation and meditation?

The chief Biblical passages which speak of life in the new earth (Is 65:17-25; 66:22-23; Rev 21:1 to 22:5) offer us only glimpses of what life will really be like there. Thus, any attempt to characterize the life, the conditions, and the pursuits of the world to come must be seen as very limited and imperfect efforts to describe a reality which “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived” (2 Cor 2:9).

Renewal of this Earth

To appreciate the Biblical glimpses about life in the world to come, it is important to remember first of all that in the Bible the eternal habitation of the redeemed is located down here on this earth, and not somewhere up in heaven. Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Is 65:17; Rev 21:1) as being, not a different world somewhere off in space, but the present heaven and earth renewed and transformed to their original perfection.

The Biblical vision of the world to come is inspired by the peace, harmony, material prosperity, and delight of the creation Sabbath. Adam’s First Day after his creation functions in the Old Testament as a paradigm of the Last Days, a common designation for the world to come. The peace and harmony that existed between Adam and the animals at creation will be restored in the new earth when “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them” (Is 11:6).

Similarly, the prosperity and abundance which prevailed at creation will be restored on the new earth, where “the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it” (Amos 9:13; cf. Is 4:2; 30:23-25; Joel 3:18; Zeph 3:13). These descriptions convey the picture of a real and abundant “earthly” life in the new world. “The wilderness becomes a fruitful field” (Is 32:15) and “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb” (Is 11:6).

The New Testament presents essentially the same vision of the world to come. Peter speaks of this “earth and all the works that are upon it” that will be purified by fire (2 Pet 3:10). The outcome will be “a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet 3:13). Paul declares the whole human and sub-human creation is eagerly longing to “be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:19-21). John saw in vision the “new heaven and the new earth” that God will establish after purifying this present earth (Rev 21:1-4).

Active Urban Life

Perhaps the most powerful image used in the New Testament to convey the sense of continuity between the present and the future world, is the image of the **Holy City**. Hebrews, for example, says that Abraham “looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10). The experience of Abraham is typological of all the believers, because, as the same author explains, “here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Heb 13:14).

The New Testament closes with a most impressive description of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, into which are welcomed “only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev 21:27). It is doubtful that all the details of the city such as the high wall, the twelve gates, the twelve foundations, are to be taken literally. Whatever their meaning might be the vision of the Holy City conveys the image, not of a mystical, monastic life in a heavenly retreat, but of urban life of intense activity on this renewed earth.

Life in the Holy City will not be one of isolation and loneliness, but of communion, excitement, and action. The New Jerusalem will be a complex, cosmopolitan place where all kinds of people of different races, cultures, and languages will live and work together in peace. Life will not be static and boring, but dynamic and creative.

The image of the redeemed living together in the City of God in inter-relatedness and interdependence represents the fulfillment of the divine intent for creation and redemption. At creation, God willed that human beings would find their fulfillment not by living alone, but in working

together to subdue and have dominion over the earth. Through redemption, Christ reconciles us to God and to fellow beings, so that we can live in peace with all people.

Urban Life Sanctioned by God

The Biblical vision of the Holy City in the new earth suggests that the structure of urban life is sanctioned by God. For many it is difficult to accept this view because our present cities are hardly a reflection of the City of God. On the contrary, they are the places where crime, hate, hostility, and indifference toward God and fellow beings prevail.

The present state of urban life should not cause us to reject, in principle, urbanization as a sinful social structure. The fact that urban life will continue on the new earth tells us that it will be possible for people to live together in a complex urban system of interrelatedness and interdependence without giving rise to the social, economic, ecological, political, and racial problems we experience today. Moreover, this vision of living together in the future City of God should challenge us as Christians not to abandon the cities en masse by fleeing to the country, but to work in and for the cities by offering our Christian influence and help to solve the many complex problems.

Activity and Creativity

Life in the new earth will not be spent in idleness or passive meditation, but in productive activity and creativity. Those who think that the redeemed will live in the new world as glorified guests, fed, housed, and entertained by God, are totally misled. The new earth is not a kind of Disneyland magic world where God provides endless free rides to everyone. There will be no “free-loaders” in the world to come. Isaiah writes: “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat” (Is 65:21-22).

The Biblical picture of tomorrow’s world is one in which real people engage in productive activity and creativity. There will be no lack of time or of resources to complete our projects. In the field of knowledge today,

we only can scratch the surface of any discipline we choose to specialize in. The more we learn, the more we realize there is yet much to be learned. On the new earth, there will be no limit to our growth in knowledge and grace. "Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 677).

Continuity with Present Culture

Life in the new earth will involve some continuity with what we may loosely term our present culture. This is suggested by the fact that God will purify this earth and resurrect our bodies, rather than creating a new planet with brand new inhabitants.

Another significant indication of continuity is found in Revelation 21:24, 26 which says: "The kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it [the city], . . . they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." This passage suggests, first of all, that the inhabitants of the new earth will include persons who have attained great prominence and power in this world: kings, presidents, scientists, and the like. Second, the unique contributions which individuals or nations have made to the betterment of the present life will not be lost. They will continue to enrich the life of the new earth. This gives us reason to believe that the technological breakthroughs of our time in the fields of computers, communication, and travel will not be lost but greatly enhanced, refined, and perfected.

God who affirms the goodness of the world He has made, and who values our creative accomplishments, will not simply write off all the creative work that men and women have produced, often at great personal sacrifice. It is comforting to think that the value of our creative work will extend beyond this present life to the new earth. The preservation of the unique accomplishments of mankind suggests that life in the new earth will not be dull and colorless, but exciting and fulfilling.

Absence of Evil

A most notable difference between our present life and that of the new earth will be the absence of all the things which now limit or harm our lives. The devil, who is the ultimate source of all forms of evil, will be destroyed in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). Consequently, there will be no more manifestation of evil within us or around us. It is hard to imagine what it will be like to live in the new world without the presence of hate, jealousy, fear, hostility, discrimination, deception, oppression, killing, cut-throat competition, political rivalries, arms races, economic recessions, racial tensions, starvation, disparity between the rich and the poor, or sickness and death.

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4). These bold strokes suggest far more than they actually indicate. They suggest that there will be no more incurable diseases, no more tragic accidents, no more crippled children, no more funeral services, no more permanent separations. They also suggest that we will be able to accomplish our God-inspired goals. In our present life, sickness or death often terminates the ambitious projects we are pursuing. On the new earth, everyone will have unlimited time and resources to achieve the highest goals.

Absence of Fear

The absence of evil will be evident especially in the absence of fear, insecurity, and anxiety. Our present life is constantly exposed to dangers, uncertainties, and fears. We fear the loss of our job, the break-in by a robber in our home, the break down of our car, the unfaithfulness of our marital partner, the failure of our children at school or at work, the deterioration of our health, the rejection by our peers. In a word, we fear all the uncertainties of life. Such fears fill our lives with anxiety, thus contradicting God’s purpose for us and diminishing our human potential.

Scripture uses various images to reassure us that on the new earth there will be no fear or insecurity. It speaks of a city with permanent foundations built by God Himself (Heb 11:10), and of “a kingdom that cannot be

shaken” (Heb 12:28). Perhaps the most suggestive picture of security for a first-century Christian was that of a city with “a great high wall” (Rev 21:12). Once the massive gates were closed in ancient cities, its citizens could live inside in relative security. To emphasize the complete security on the new earth, the Holy City was shown to John as having walls which are as high as their length (Rev 21:16).

Absence of Pollution

One of the most pleasant aspects of life on the new earth will be its clean environment. “Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood” (Rev 21:27). Freedom from the moral pollution of sin will be reflected in the freedom from the physical pollution of the environment. Life will no longer be threatened by irresponsible pollution and depletion of natural resources, because the citizens of the new earth will be faithful stewards of God’s new creation.

There will not be “smoking sections” on the new earth, because no one will ever wish to smoke his or her health away. What a relief it will be to be able to breathe always fresh, clean air outdoors and indoors; to be able to drink from any fountain clear, sparkling water; to be able to eat wholesome fresh food uncontaminated by pesticides or preservatives!

Reassuring also is the fact that the citizens of the new earth will be responsible stewards of God’s new creation who will not spoil it again. They presumably will produce little waste and know how to dispose of it in such a way that nature will be able to assimilate and process. A perfect ecological equilibrium will be preserved, which will guarantee the well-being of the human and subhuman creation.

The Presence of God

The most unique and rewarding aspect of life on the new earth will be an unprecedented experience of the presence of God among His people. “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them” (Rev 21:3). These familiar words are the central promise of God’s covenant of grace (cf. Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10) which will be realized fully on the new earth.

God's presence on the new earth will be so real that "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23). Believers will enjoy on the new earth the blessed fellowship that Adam and Eve experienced each Sabbath when God came to visit them. The Fall interrupted this blessed fellowship, but the Sabbath remained to remind believers of its future restoration (Heb 4:9). Our weekly celebration of the Sabbath nourishes our hope of the future fellowship with God on the new earth. That will be, as Augustine puts it, "the greatest of Sabbaths" when "we shall rest and we shall see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise; this is what will be at the end without end."

Regular and Richer Worship

Central to the life on the new earth will be the regular worship of God. Isaiah describes the regularity and stability of worship on the new earth in terms familiar to his time: "From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord" (Is 66:23). The context indicates that this regular gathering for worship refers, first of all, to the hoped-for political restoration of Jerusalem and of its religious services (v. 20), and second, to the End-time restoration of this earth, of which the former was a type. The prophets often see the ultimate divine accomplishments through the transparency of imminent historical events.

Isaiah mentions the "new moon" together with the Sabbath because the former played a vital role in determining the beginning of the new year, of each month, and also the date for celebrating key annual festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement. To them the appearance of the new moon signified worship regularity and stability.

Both personal and public worship will be regular and rich in expression and meaning. In this present life, we worship God though we do not always understand why He allows the wicked to prosper and the innocent to suffer. On the new earth, this mystery will be solved as the redeemed are given the opportunity to understand the fairness of God's judgments. "Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages! . . . for thy judgments have been revealed" (Rev 15:4). This revelation of divine justice and mercy

will inspire the redeemed to praise God, saying: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just” (Rev 19:1-2).

Worship will be richer on the new earth, not only because of the fuller appreciation of God’s mercy and justice, but also because of the opportunity to worship God visibly. “The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in [the city], and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads” (Rev 22:3-4). This text suggests that the worship of God in the new earth will enrich believers with a fuller knowledge and enjoyment of God.

Fellowship with All Believers

The fellowship we will enjoy with the Trinity will bring us into communion with believers of all ages and from all over the world. Today we can only fellowship with those who live in our time and in our immediate surroundings. On the new earth, our fellowship will extend to those who lived in every age and country: patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, missionaries, pioneers, our family ancestors, and descendants, pastors, and laity.

The symbol of this grand fellowship is the great wedding banquet of the Lamb: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). This fellowship will include “a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues” (Rev 7:9). It is impossible to imagine the inspiration and information we will gain from becoming personally acquainted with the most gifted people who ever lived.

At a time when many Christians are losing interest in the world to come because they find it too chaste, too disinfected, too unreal, and too boring, it is imperative to recover the Biblical wholistic and realistic vision of the new earth. It will be a place where every faculty will be developed, our loftiest aspirations will be realized, the grandest enterprises will be carried out, and the sweetest fellowship will be enjoyed with God and fellow beings.

This glorious Biblical vision of the world to come can fire our imagination, nourish our hope, and strengthen our faith, while we live among the uncertainties and troubles of this present life. It can inspire us “to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world” (Titus 2:13), while we are awaiting for the consummation of our Blessed Hope, the appearing of our Savior to restore this world to its original perfection.

PART III

WILL THERE BE MARITAL RELATIONS IN THE WORLD TO COME?

Will there be marital relations in the world to come? The answer of many sincere Christians is “NO!” They believe that at the resurrection the redeemed will receive some kind of “unisex” spiritual bodies which will replace our present physical and heterosexual bodies. Their belief is derived primarily from a misunderstanding of the words of Jesus found in Matthew 22:30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.”

Does this text imply that at the resurrection all sexual distinctions will be abolished and that our bodies will no longer be physical? If this interpretation were correct, it would mean that, contrary to what the Scripture says, the original creation of humanity as physical, heterosexual beings was not really “very good” (Gen 1:31). To remove the “bugs” from His original creation, God would find it necessary in the new world to create a new type of human being, presumably made up of “non-physical, unisex” bodies.

Change Implies Imperfection

To say the least, this reasoning is absurd for anyone who believes in God’s omniscience and immutability. It is normal for human beings to introduce new models and structures to eliminate existing deficiencies. For God, however, this would be abnormal and incoherent since He knows the end from the beginning.

If at the resurrection God were to change our present physical, heterosexual bodies into “non-physical, unisex” bodies, then as Anthony A. Hoekema rightly observes: “The devil would have won a great victory

since God would then have been compelled to change human beings with physical bodies such as he had created, into creatures of a different sort, without physical bodies (like the angels). Then it would indeed seem that matter had become intrinsically evil so that it had to be banished. And then, in a sense, the Greek philosophers would have been proved right. But matter is not evil; it is part of God's good creation."

Like Angels

A study of Jesus' statement in its own context provides no support to the view that at the resurrection the redeemed will receive non-physical, unisex, angelic bodies. The context is a hypothetical situation created by the Sadducees in which six brothers married in succession the widow of their brother. The purpose of such successive, levirate marriages was not relational but procreational, namely to "raise up children for his [their] brother" (Matt 22:24). The testing question posed by the Sadducees was, "In the resurrection to which of the seven will she be wife?" (Matt 22:28).

In answering this hypothetical situation, Jesus affirmed, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scripture nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Matt 22:30). In the context of the hypothetical situation of seven brothers marrying the same woman to give her an offspring, Christ's reference to not marrying or giving in marriage but being like angels, most likely means that marriage as a means of procreation will no longer exist in the world to come. It is evident that if no new children are born, there will be no possibility of marrying a son or of giving a daughter in marriage. The cessation of the procreational function of marriage will make the redeemed "like angels" who apparently do not reproduce after their own likeness.

In His answer, Jesus did not deal with the immediate question of the marital status of a woman married seven times, but with the larger question of the procreational function of marriage, which, after all, was the reason the seven brothers married the same woman. This indirect method of answering questions is not unusual in the teachings of Jesus. For example, when asked by the Pharisees, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce

his wife?" (Mark 10:2), Jesus chose to ignore the immediate question, emphasizing instead the original creational design for marriage to be a lifelong commitment, without divorce (Mark 10:5-9).

Single in Heaven?

Does the cessation of the procreational function of marriage imply the termination also of its relational function? Not necessarily so. If God created human beings at the beginning as male and female, with the capacity to experience a oneness of intimate fellowship, there is no reason to suppose that He will recreate them at the end as unisex beings, who will live as single persons without the capacity to experience the oneness of fellowship existing in a man/woman relationship.

The doctrine of the **First Things**, known as *etiology*, should illuminate the doctrine of the **Last Things**, known as *eschatology*. If God found His creation of human beings as male and female *very good* (Gen 1:31) at the *beginning*, would He discover it to be *not so good* at the end? We have reason to believe that what was "very good" for God at the beginning will also be "very good" for Him at the end.

Christians, who believe that human life originated not perfectly by divine *choice* but imperfectly by *chance* through spontaneous generation, may find it rational to believe in a radical restructuring of human beings from physical and heterosexual to non-physical and unisexual. They could explain this transformation as part of the evolutionary process used by God. But for Christians like myself who believe in an original perfect creation and who celebrate through the Sabbath the perfection of God's original creation, it is impossible to imagine that at the end God will radically change the structure and nature of the human body.

Cessation of Procreation

The cessation of the human reproductive capacity in the world to come, as implied by the statement of Jesus in Matthew 22:30, could be seen as a change in God's original design of the function of human sexuality. But this is not necessarily true. Scripture suggests that God had already contemplated such a change in His original plan, when He said: "Be fruitful and multiply, and *fill the earth*" (Gen 1:28).

The command to “*fill the earth*” presupposes that God had intended to terminate the reproductive cycle once the earth had been filled by an ideal number of persons. In a perfect world, without the presence of death, the ecological balance between land and people would have been reached in a relatively short time. At that time God would have interrupted the reproductive cycle of human and sub-human creatures, to protect the ecosystem of this planet.

It is reasonable to presume that the resurrection and translation of the saints constitute the fulfillment of God’s original plan for the “filling” of the earth. In a sense, the redeemed represent the ideal number of inhabitants which this renewed earth will be able to support adequately. This is suggested by the reference to *names* “written before the foundation of the world in the book of life” (Rev 13:8; see 17:8; 21:27; Dan 13:1; Phil 4:3). The mention of names suggests the existence of an original divine master plan for an ideal number of righteous to inhabit this earth. Had sin not arisen, God in His providence would have interrupted the reproductive cycle once the ideal number of people had been reached. But the cessation of the procreative function of marriage before or after the Fall does not necessitate the cessation of its relational function.

Continuity of Relationships

Jesus’ reference to our being “like angels” (Matt 22:30) at the resurrection does not necessarily imply the termination of the relational function of marriage. Nowhere does Scripture suggest that the angels are “unisexual” beings, unable to engage in intimate relationships similar to that of human marriage. The fact that angels are often mentioned in the Bible in pairs (Gen 19:1; Ex 25:18; 1 King 6:23) suggests that they may enjoy intimate relationships as couples.

God has revealed Himself, not as a *solitary* Being who lives in eternal aloofness, but as a *fellowship* of three Beings so intimately united that we worship Them as one God. If God Himself lives in a most intimate relationship with the other members of the Trinity, there is no reason to believe that He would abolish at the end the unitive function of marriage that He, Himself, established at creation.

Support for this conclusion is provided also by the fact that the sexual distinctions of maleness and femaleness are presented in Scripture as reflecting the “image of God” (Gen 1:27). One aspect of the “image of God” in humanity is the capacity given by God to a man and a woman to experience through marriage a oneness of fellowship similar to the one existing in the Trinity. If human maleness and femaleness reflected the image of God at creation, we have reason to believe that they will continue to reflect God’s image at the final restoration of all things. The purpose of redemption was not the destruction of God’s original creation but its restoration to its original perfection. This is why Scripture speaks of the resurrection of the body and not of the creation of new beings.

Ellen White’s Comments on the Reunification of Families

The teachings of Ellen White on marital relationships in the world to come seem to be contradictory. On the one hand she affirms that there will be no marriage in the world to come, but on the other hand she states several times that families will be reunited. The latter statements occur in letter of comfort she wrote to persons who lost a loved one.

Regarding marriages and births in the new earth, Ellen White clearly states: “There are men today who express their beliefs that there will be marriages and births in the new earth; but those who believe the Scripture cannot accept such doctrines. The doctrine that children will be born in the new earth is not part of the ‘sure word of prophecy’ (2 Peter 1:19). [On this point I fully agree with Ellen White]. The words of Christ are too plain to be misunderstood. They should forever settle the question of marriages and births in the new earth. Neither those who shall be raised from the dead, nor those who shall be translated without seeing death, will marry or be given in marriage. They will be as the angels of God, members of the royal family” (1 SM 172-173).

This categorical statement seem to contradict Ellen White’s comments about the reunification of families at Christ’s Coming. Her comments are usually found in letters of comfort she wrote to people who had lost a family member.

To a brother who lost his wife, Ellen White wrote: “We will pray for you and your precious little ones, that you may, by patient continuance in well doing, keep your face and steps always directed heavenward. We will pray that you may have influence and success in guiding your little ones, that you, with them, may gain the crown of life, and that in the home above, now being prepared for us, *you and your wife and children may be a family joyously, happily reunited, nevermore to be separated*” (2 SM 262; Emphasis supplied).

Writing to children who lost their father, Ellen White encourages them with these words: “Give your hearts to the loving Saviour, and do only those things that are pleasing in His sight. Do nothing to grieve your mother. Remember that the Lord loves you, and that each one of you can become a member of the family of God. If you are faithful here, when He shall come in the clouds of heaven, *you will meet your father, and will be a united family.*” (2 SM 265; Emphasis supplied).

In describing her visit to a family who lost their children, Ellen White wrote: “This mother’s heart has been torn by seeing her children in affliction and in death, and laid in the silent grave. It is well with the sleepers. May the mother yet seek all the truth, and lay up a treasure in heaven, that when the Life-giver shall come to bring the captives from the great prison house of death, *father, mother, and children may meet, and the broken links of the family chain be reunited, no more to be severed.* (1 T 654; Emphasis supplied).

How do we reconcile Ellen White’s comments about the reunification of families in the new earth, with her statements that there will be no marriages in the world to come? Does this mean that existing families will be reunited, but believers who are single at Christ’s Coming, will remain unmarried for all eternity? Will there be two groups of people in the new earth: families and singles, living side by side?

If the institution of marriage terminates in the world to come, then members of the same family will not be reunited, but will be separated and live a single lifestyle. I find it difficult to accept this view, because, as stated earlier, God found His creation of human beings as male and female *very good* (Gen 1:31) at the *beginning*. It is hard to believe that at

the end God would discover that His original male/female creation was *not so good* after all. We have reason to believe that what was “very good” for God at the beginning will also be “very good” for Him at the end.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that emerges from our Bible Study is that the new earth will not be an ethereal world somewhere off in space inhabited by spiritual, angelic, unisex souls, but our present earth, restored to its original perfection and inhabited by real physical persons. We have found that the Scriptures portray the new earth as a complex, cosmopolitan place where people of different races, cultures, and languages will live active and exciting lives.

Some of the most rewarding aspects of living in the new earth will be to worship God visibly, to experience more fully His presence and power in our lives, to fellowship with believers of all the ages, to achieve our loftiest aspirations, to live in a clean and happy world, without the fear of pollution, violence, accident, sickness, and death.

Regarding the institution of marriage, Scripture suggests the cessation of the procreational function of marriage in the world to come. But the relational function of marriage will continue. God created human beings at the beginning as male and female, with the capacity to experience a oneness of intimate fellowship. Thus, there is no reason to suppose that He will recreate them at the end as unisex beings, who will live as single persons without the capacity to experience the oneness of fellowship existing in a man/woman relationship.

God has revealed Himself, not as a *solitary* Being who lives in eternal aloofness, but as a *fellowship* of three Beings so intimately united that we worship Them as one God. If God Himself lives in a most intimate relationship with the other members of the Trinity, there is no reason to believe that He would abolish at the end the unitive function of marriage that He, Himself, established at creation.

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Have you enjoyed the newsletter no. 172 on “Ellen White and the Future of the Adventist Church”? The content of the newsletter was distilled from Prof. Graeme Bradford’s book *More than a Prophet*. As I explained in the newsletter, this book is urgently needed to restore confidence in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White by telling the truth about her divine revelations and her human limitations.

The newsletter was meant to offer you what we Italians call the *Antipasto*, that is, the *Appetizer*. Now you are invited to enjoy the main course by reading *More than a Prophet*. To facilitate the distribution of this timely book among your church members, we are offering you two things:

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SPECIAL OFFER ON THE BOOK *IMMORTALITY OR RESURRECTION? A BIBLICAL STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE AND DESTINY*.

The newsletter no. 171 on “The Debate Over Human Nature and Destiny” generated many orders for my book *Immortality or Resurrection? A Biblical Study on Human Nature and Destiny*. This timely book has been favorably reviewed by scholars of different persuasions. They acclaim this study as a much needed, breakthrough research that un-masks with compelling Biblical reasoning the great deception of conscious life after death.

Some Adventist scholars feel that this is the most important book I have written. You can read a sampling of comments from Adventist and non-Adventist scholars by clicking at this link <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/immortality/> At this link you will also see the picture of the book and read a description of its content.

What inspired me to write this book is the widespread belief in conscious existence after death which is taking today America by storm. This widespread deception should be of major concern to Bible believing Christians, especially Adventists, because it has fostered a host of heresies. For example, spiritualism, the communication with the spirits of the dead, the praying for the dead in purgatory, eternal hellfire, the intercession of the saints, the worship of Mary, indulgences, the mortification of the body to save the soul, the ethereal view of heaven where glorified souls spend eternity in everlasting adoration, are but a few of the many popular heresies that derive from the unbiblical belief in the immortality of the soul.

To meet the challenge of these heresies, I devote a full year of my life to a painstaking investigation of the Biblical teaching on human nature and destiny. My goal in writing *Immortality or Resurrection?* has been to challenge Christians of all persuasions to recover the Biblical wholistic view of human nature and destiny. The Bible teaches that the body and soul, the flesh and spirit, are not detachable components that come apart at death, but an indissoluble unity, created, redeemed, and ultimately restored by God.

This study will help you to understand how the Biblical wholistic view of human nature, affects our understanding of this present life and the vision of the world to come. This is a book you can give with confidence to friends interested to learn about God's plan for our present life and future destiny.

As a special bonus we are offering with *Immortality or Resurrection?* the CD album which contains all my 17 books, over 200 articles, and the slides and script of 22 powerpoint lectures. With the Acrobat search engine you can immediately locate all what I have written on any topic, including the subject of the state of the dead. The CD album regularly sells by itself for \$100.00, but you will receive it at a nominal price with the book.

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