

# *“As He Thinks In His Heart”*

## 3

### *From Glory to Glory*



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

We are studying together, for those of you who were here last night, the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. What is that friends? What's the most important work ever entrusted to human beings? ...character building - **Education, page 225**, the first quote in your printout there: **"Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, and never before was its diligent study so important as,"** when? **"...now."** Now. Why so important now? Because the King is coming soon. {Amen} That's still not a good enough "amen" for Advent believers. Because the King is coming soon. {Amen!} I believe it, my friends. Time is short, but there's much to do; and what must we do? We must take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, and we must prepare our own lives. But as we've said before, the successful accomplishment of both of those tasks depends upon the same thing; and what is that? - the development of a Christ-like character. Why? Because we can be neither effective witnesses for the King, nor fit citizens for the kingdom, unless we have a Christ-like character. No wonder, in light of the shortness of time, no wonder... **"Character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings, and never before was its diligent study so important as now..."** Now.

The purpose of this seminar is to diligently study together, what saith the Lord on this ultimately important topic; and I want to assure you, that I have come to share with you, what God has to say. I haven't come to share with you my ideas, my theories, my concepts. I want to share with you something much more trustworthy than some poor mortal's opinion. In fact, I like to put it this way: I speak with authority on this topic precisely to the degree that I am not the author of my words, but Jesus is. {Amen} Did you see your way through that? You see, I have come to share with you, what Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy have to say on this vitally important topic; and that's authoritative. Amen? {Amen} That's the testimony of Jesus, and you can put full confidence in that; and I am just praying earnestly, that the Lord will help me be a very accurate tour-guide of what saith the Lord on this topic; and that He will keep me from misrepresenting anything that Scripture or the Spirit of Prophecy has to say on this subject.

But in order for me to be able to do that, I have to have the help of the Holy Spirit; and in order for you to be able to rightly divide, and understand, and relate to, and respond to the truth - you too have to have the Holy Spirit. Because **spiritual things are only spiritually discerned, {1 Cor 2:14}** and our goal is to have much more than just an intellectual exercise in these studies; we want to have a life-changing experience. Amen? Are you with me on that? {Amen} Is that why you're here this morning? {Amen} But if we are going to experience the liberating, sanctifying power of the truth, we must receive it under the influence of the Spirit of Truth... must, absolutely. That's why, before we proceed with our study this morning, what must we pause to do? {Pray} Pray, personally inviting God's Spirit into our hearts. I appreciate the pastor's prayer in our behalf corporately, but, my dear friends, nothing takes the place of personal prayer, of personal invitation. He is here in our midst as a congregation. How do we know that? He has promised: **"Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst."** {Mat 18:20} But my dear brother, sister, please don't be content to just have Him in our midst

as a congregation. Make sure that He is in your midst as an individual. Is there a difference? Oh, there surely is, there surely is... See, inspiration tells us that **the latter rain can be falling upon all those around us and not on us.** {LDE 195.4} Why? Because we haven't personally invited God's Spirit into our hearts. Let's do that. Let's get up from the table, around which we're gathered; we're about to partake of a spiritual feast, but let's open the door and invite the Lord in the person of His Spirit to come in, and what? ...sup with us, to give us that hungering and thirsting which is not natural, and to give us that capacity to digest and assimilate the Bread of Life, which is, as well, not natural. If we partake of this meal without the help and power of the Holy Spirit, we're just going to end up with spiritual indigestion, dear friends. God forbid; God grant that this be a nourishing meal. So, let's make sure that that can be, by inviting the Holy Spirit to come into our hearts. As you pray for yourself, would you please remember to pray for your brother as well? I'm standing in the need of prayer this morning. I'm going to invite you to kneel with me for a few moments of silent prayer, and then I will close.

*My Father in heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord our Righteousness I come... boldly into Your presence, confident of acceptance, not on the basis of what I am, but on the basis of what Jesus is: the Lord our Righteousness, our Mediator, our Intercessor. Thank you so much for choosing to see us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Him. And we come first of all, to praise You for this Sabbath day, this holy time, and this holy place. But Father, we recognize that neither time nor space can be holy, unless You make it so, with the presence of Your Holy Spirit. So please come, spend this time, fill this place with your Spirit. We ask You not only to fill this physical building with Your presence, but we pray that You would come and fill each one of our body temples with Your presence as well. We open the door of our heart and we say, "Come in, heavenly Guest. Come in and sup with us, partake of this spiritual meal with us. Give us that hungering and thirsting, and then, give us the capacity to digest and assimilate the nutrition, the spiritual nourishment of the Bread of Life." Father, mine is the undeserved privilege of breaking and distributing the Bread of Life. Please, I choose to be washed. I come to the foot of the cross to be cleansed by the blood, and by the water. Don't let me defile the Bread in the handling. Don't let me even flavor it with my humanness, please. Protect me from myself; and use me, in spite of myself, as a channel through which You may feed these precious, blood-bought brothers and sisters of mine, sons and daughters of Yours, the Bread of Life. Father, should anyone receive a blessing, we will all know that it is because of You, and in spite of the poor earthen vessel You condescended to use; and we will give You all the praise, and the honor, and the glory. Please Father, grant this prayer. I know that You will, because I've asked what is within Your will, and I ask believing in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

I invite you to turn in your syllabus, your printout of the most important material that we've come to share, what inspiration has to say on the topic. I invite you to turn to page 6, lesson 3, top of page 6. Welcome, come on in. Join us up here in the front; we'd love to have you close by. The title of our study is "**As He Thinks in His Heart.**" It's taken from **Proverbs 23:7**. Our goal, our objective, in this particular study is to define character. It is to what class? ...define character. We have already established that character building is the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. But I insist, that if we are going to successfully build a character, a Christ-like character, we must understand what character is. Doesn't that make sense? How can you possibly successfully build something if you don't know what it is? If I were to go to a building contractor and say, "Listen, I want you to build me a building," what's the first thing he's going to ask? "What's the plan? What kind of a building do you want me to build?" If you told him, "Well I don't know, but go ahead and build it;" he probably would, you know, not want the job. My friends, we are to build a Christ-like character, but I insist, that it is imperative that we understand precisely what a Christ-like character is. What is a Christ-like character? Well, let's even make it more basic: What is "character" in the first place? ...because you can have either a Christ-like or an unchrist-like character, so what is character? You know if I were to open the floor, and invite you to give definitions, I would probably get as many different definitions as I got definers.

You know, character is one of those rather nebulous, intangible, abstract terms that we frequently use; but we very seldom really have an accurate, precise, understanding, of what it is. Character, what in the world is character? You know, I remember asking this question, and someone in the back of the church raised his hand and he said, "Character, that's what we are when no one's looking." He was moving in the right direction. What was he trying to communicate by giving that definition? The fact that character is something more fundamental than how we talk and act. Something more core than the exterior behavior that we reveal to those with whom we come in contact.

My dear friends, is it possible to talk and act like something you're not? Come on now, is it? {Yes} You know that, you know that. Is it even possible to talk and act like a Christian, and not be one? {Yes} You know that, too; it's called hypocrisy. Is there any of that going on? That is such a prevalent problem in this end-time church that it happens to be our identifying characteristic. We talked about that last night. We are the Laodicean church, and what is the identifying characteristic of the Laodicean church? It's, what? {Lukewarm} It's lukewarm... and it's also terribly self-deceived. It thinks **that it's rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing; and it doesn't even know, that it's wretched, poor, blind, miserable, and naked. {Rev 3:17}** Pretty serious self-deception going on there, wouldn't you say? Why is it so self-deceived? Because **it has a form of godliness, but denies the power thereof. {2 Tim 3:5}** It has a form of godliness. What do I mean by that? Well, it talks the talk and it walks the walk even. It behaves in compliance with the letter of the law. **It is a white-washed tomb, beautiful on the outside but inside, full of dead men's bones and all corruption. {Mat 23:27}** Are you hearing what I'm saying? That's why it's lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. Remember, cold is to do the wrong things for the wrong reasons. Hot is to do the right things for the right reasons. What's lukewarm? To do the right things for the wrong reasons. Ego motivation has brought many in this beloved church of ours to put on a very good show, to keep the letter of the law - and you can do that unconverted, bless your hearts. How do I know that? On the basis of personal experience for one, on the basis of Scripture - for another.

Saul of Tarsus, B.C., before conversion, before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, what could he say of himself? **Philippians 3, "By the deeds of the law, blameless." {verse 6}** An unconverted man, as far as compliance with the letter of the law is concerned, his life was what? ...it was blameless; he had his act together. No wonder he was so fooled; he was the ultimate Laodicean, **rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing, {Rev 3:17}** when he got dressed that morning in Jerusalem. But he ran into Jesus on the way to Damascus, and there, was a radical change in his self-evaluation, wasn't there? Blinded his physical eyes, but for the first time, it opened his spiritual eyes; and what did he see regarding himself? **Chief of sinners! {1 Tim 1:15}** My dear fellow Laodiceans, we desperately need to run into Jesus. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Desperately need to run into Jesus, to bring us out of our self-righteous, self-deception. When I asked for a definition of character, and that brother said, "Well, character is what you are when no one's looking," he was trying to let us know that character is far more core, and fundamental, and inner, than what goes on out here that people see. You see, character is what we really are. Character is what we really are, not what we pretend to be. What is it that Scripture says? Well, let's give Webster a chance before we turn to Scripture. Webster can be helpful sometimes. We're working on a definition for character. Okay? Webster's not the final authority, but when you're looking for definition of terms, you know, it can be helpful. Here we go, **Webster - Character: "The peculiar qualities impressed by nature or habit on a person which distinguish him from others."** Interesting... "The peculiar qualities," does that mean weird, odd? No, that means unique. Peculiar means "unique" in this context. "The peculiar qualities impressed..." I like that word, and you'll understand why later on. "The peculiar qualities impressed by nature or habit." By what? ...nature or habit. Now, if the **Testimony of Jesus {Rev 19:10}** were communicating this concept, what terminology would we likely hear? **"Inherited or cultivated," {COL 3:30.2}** precisely, and those of you who have done much reading in the Spirit of

Prophecy, you've come across those terms numerous times. "Inherited," that's nature; "cultivated," that's what? ...habit. Are you following this? The peculiar qualities impressed by inherited or cultivated tendencies, habits that make us what we are; that make us the unique individuals, that distinguish us from others, - that's what character is.

Now, let's move towards a more authoritative and, hopefully, more understandable definition for character. Let's turn to Scripture. The wise man, clearly and concisely tells us what it is that makes us what we are, in **Proverbs 23:7**. We take the title of this study from this verse. What does he say it makes us what we are? **"...for as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."** What makes you, what makes me, what we really are? It's how we think in our what? ...our hearts. Now, I say heart and point to the mind because that's really what the term "heart" means. It's not in reference to that organ that pumps blood; you know that. We don't do our thinking there. That word in the Hebrew, by the way, is probably better and more accurately translated "soul;" and it refers to, and comprehends, get this... it comprehends, both the intellect and the affections. This term "soul," what does it comprehend? Both the intellect and the affections, both the thoughts and the feelings, in other words. You see the activity of the intellect, what's that called? - our thoughts. The activity of affections, what's that called? - our feelings; and now my dear friends, we are ready. We are ready for our working definition throughout this seminar, for character; what is it? You can put full confidence in it because it's inspired.

It's found in Testimonies, Volume 5, page 310. **Testimonies, Volume 5, page 310**. Listen: This, by the way, is worth the book's weight in gold. This little phrase right here, is worth the book's weight in gold. What does it say? **"The thoughts and feelings combined make up,"** what? **"...the moral character."** Praise the Lord for that simple, concise, accurate, understandable definition for character. What is it? **"The thoughts and feelings combined."** Now, all of a sudden, every one of us knows precisely what character is. Why? Because we all know what thoughts are, and we all know what feelings are; and what is character? The thoughts and feelings combined. Are we all together?

My dear friends, please, please know, that to become Christ-like in character, then, involves what goes on between the right and the left ear primarily. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} It involves a change in what happens in the inner man, the inner woman, where only you and God know what's happening. You see, it's remarkably possible to pretend that you're something quite different than what you are out here. You know that. You can come up to a person with a big smile on your face, and reach out and say, *"Oh, it's so good to see you,"* and be thinking, *"Oh, you wretched rascal."* You can do that; and what you really are, is not what your face is necessarily portraying with that big, phony grin. It's what's going on in your heart!

By the way, please know that **though man looks at the outward appearance, the Lord looks where? Come on, the Lord looks where? ...at the heart. {1 Sam 16:7}** He's not fooled with the white-wash. The facade that we tend to put up to fool others into thinking, we're something we're not, does not fool God; and my dear friends, what worries me, is that many of us have ourselves fooled by this facade, and this is why we think that we're what? **...rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing {Rev 3:17}** - because we're behaving so well, thank you. I'm impressed, aren't you?

By the way, this is a particularly easy trap for Seventh-day Adventist Christians to fall into. Why? Because we have so much light, we have so much truth; and because we behave relatively better than almost everyone else. On account of all this truth we have, we think that we're what? **...rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. {Rev 3:17}** God's remnant people, just ready and waiting for Jesus to come. My dear friends, please... be careful! You may not be what you think you are, but what you think, you are. **As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. {Prov 23:7}** That's which makes us what we are, is not our behavior; it's what goes on up here, where only you and God know what's really happening. Are you hearing me? {Yes, amen} **As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. {Prov 23:7} The thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. {5T 310.1}**

Look at our next statement; **Signs of the Times, June 30, 1881: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The thoughts and feelings cherished," "The thoughts and feelings,"** what? **"...cherished give direction to the conduct, and thus determine the character."** Yes, conduct is influenced by our thoughts and feelings. But my dear friends, please know that the most determinative dimension of the human activity, is not at the realm of behavior; it's at the realm of the thought life. That's what determines, really, what comes out in the realm of behavior. **Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth, what? ...speaketh. {Mat 12:34} Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the, what? ...issues of life. {Prov 4:23}**

You see, what we say and what we do, all springs forth from where? What goes on up here, what goes on up here. Again, what we say and what we do, may or may not be, a genuine, honest representation of what goes on up here. Yes. What would be involved, in light of our definition for character, **"the thoughts and feelings combined," {5T 310.1}** tell me, what would be involved in becoming Christ-like in character? That's the goal for every Christian is to become Christ-like in character, so, what would be involved in becoming Christ-like in character? It would be learning to think and feel like Jesus. Doesn't that make sense? Of course. Absolutely. Let's put it this way, and I've written in this note here. This is not from inspiration, but it is synthesized as a result of study of inspiration. **"Developing a Christ-like character means learning to think and feel towards God and His law, towards Satan and sin, towards ourselves and others, and towards all the circumstances and situations of life, like Jesus does -" Amen? {Amen} "- in other words, it involves coming to have the,"** what? **"...the mind of Christ." Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."** That my dear brother, my dear sister, is the essence of what it means to be a Christian; it's to have the mind of Christ. **For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. {Prov 23:7}**

If we are just behaving like Christians but not thinking and feeling like Christ, we aren't even Christians, we are only hypocrites. Are we all together on this? {Amen} Now, is it natural for us to think and feel like Jesus does? Is it natural? My dear friends, I'm going to make a radical statement. I will support it later, but just try to take it by faith now. It is not only not natural for us to think and feel like Jesus does, it is natural for us to think and feel like Satan does. Have I overstated that? No, I haven't, and we will establish very clearly why. You see, since the fall, human nature has been governed by the very same law, the very same spirit that governs the mind and heart of Satan. It's called selfishness. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} By nature we think and feel governed by this principle called, what? ...selfishness. And that's why the only character that we can naturally develop, is the character likeness of whom? ...Satan.

Now be careful; don't misunderstand what I'm saying. Am I suggesting that the only thing that we can do by nature, is be mean, nasty and ugly? Oh no, oh no. **Satan himself can appear as** what? Come on what? **...an angel of light! {2 Cor 11:14}** And before it's all over, Satan will personate who? ...Jesus Christ - Scripture tells us so; and when he personates Christ, will he be mean, nasty and ugly? Will he? He will be the most beautiful, the most kind, the most loving and lovable - apparently - being that anyone has ever seen at that time, on planet earth! But it'll all be motivated by what? {Selfishness} ...selfishness.

My dear friends, it is quite possible for us to disguise selfishness into something attractive, isn't it? You better believe it is. That's what a **white-washed tomb is; it's beautiful on the outside. {Mat 23:27}** It looks real good, it gets people's admiration, and even their respect; and that's what's so scary, that's why we've got ourselves so deceived. We've gotten so good at doing the right things but for the wrong reasons, that we think that **we're rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. {Rev 3:17}** God help us out of our self-righteous, self-deception! Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Now bless your hearts, I'm not accusing all of us, all of you, of being hypocrites; but I am taking seriously the verdict of the **True Witness {Rev 3:14}**, regarding the primary problem of this end-time

church. It's evidently so prevalent, that it's our identifying characteristic. Will you accept that? {Amen} There's evidently a lot of hypocrisy going on around. You may not be what you think you are, but you are what you think. You are what you think.

Since it is not natural for us to think and feel like Jesus does, since it is natural for us to think and feel like Satan does; if we are going to be Christ-like in character we must be, what? **"...transformed by the renewing of our minds."** Amen? {Amen} **Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye,"** what? **"...transformed,"** How? ...by the modification of your behavior? Is that the way we're transformed? Are we transformed through behavior modification? No, we are transformed through heart transplantation. We are transformed by having the way we think and feel radically reprogrammed. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

You see, the gospel according to computers, for you computer nerds out there: The hardware that we receive at birth has an operating system; it's called selfishness. Are you hearing me? {Yes} ...and the only kind of software that that computer that we have as a natural inheritance can handle, is that which caters to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - anything that satisfies our selfishness. Are you with me? If you try to put spiritual software, spiritual programming into such a computer - it will crash. Do you hear what I'm telling you? It can't handle it. The software that promotes faith, hope, and love, cannot be handled by our natural operating system - which is selfishness. That's why we have got to have a radical change. We have got to have a change of operating systems. Amen? We have got to get a new heart that has a new law written upon it, the operating system of love. Amen? {Amen} That new operating system can handle God's software, and it won't crash. Have you had that change? Or are you simply trying to improve your GUI? That's a computer term; that's the Graphic User Interface. That's the thing that you see on the screen. The scary thing about it, my dear friends, is that a selfish man can make a pretty fancy screen. Are you hearing me? A selfish man can put up a pretty flashy GUI, Graphic User Interface, and fool others into thinking he's something he's not.

**Ministry of Healing, page 491: "We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure,"** what? **"...thoughts. The only security for any soul is in right,"** what? **"...thinking."** Where's our focus here, my friends; is it on behavior? No, it's on what goes on up here, between the right and the left ear. **"We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is in right thinking. As a man 'thinketh in his heart, so is he.'" Take courage: "The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise. That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows easy until right thoughts and actions become,"** what? **"...habitual."** Oh, I like that; I like that.

By the way, when right actions are motivated by right thoughts, they're genuine revelations of God's love, God's character. When they're not motivated by right thoughts, then they are only hypocrisy; they're only white-wash. What is our goal in this governance of the mind... this being transformed by the renewing of our minds; this quest for the mind of Christ - what is our goal? What should we hold up before us? Please don't hold up any lower standard than the one given us in the Bible; and what is it? It's found in **2 Corinthians 10:5**, and this will scare some of you. This might upset some of you, but I've got to hold it up nevertheless. What is the standard? **"...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."** That's a high standard. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} But, bless your hearts, don't settle for a lower one, please. That's God's standard. Bringing, what? How many thoughts? **"Every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."** That's the goal.

Now, I want to be totally transparent and honest with you. **I have not attained, nor am I perfect, {Phil 3:12}** but I assure you, **I'm pressing on towards the mark. {Phil 3:14}** Are you with me? {Amen} My dear friends, please, I'm not asking you whether you've attained the standard. In fact, if anyone here claims that they have attained the standard, I would get really worried about you - more on that later. But I want you, for the love of Christ, to press on towards the mark. Amen? {Amen}

Did Christ bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of His Father, and the law of His Father? Did He? Absolutely. He never sinned, even in the privacy of His thought life. He brought every thought into captivity to the obedience of Father, and I'm here to tell you that by His grace, - for the love of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit - you and I can learn to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} The very fact that God commands it, is in itself an assurance that, by His grace; we can do it. **All His biddings are enablings.** {COL 333.1} {Amen} We don't have a God who tells us to do something, that He is not fully prepared to enable us to do. That's your standard, that's your goal; being so fully transformed by the renewing of your mind, that every thought is being brought into captivity to the Prince of Love and life, and righteousness and peace, and holiness and goodness. That's what it means to **"gird up the loins of your mind,"** {1 Pet 1:13} to wrap every thought around Jesus, and have Him become your magnificent obsession; and my friends, that can be our experience. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} That can be.

But it will only be through diligent effort combined with divine power. It won't happen, just happen automatically. This is a spiritual discipline... that will require persevering effort combined with divine power; and how we gain this experience is the subject matter of this seminar. We will be systematically, step by step, coming to study from God's word, how we can come to the place where we are bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ - every thought! Do you desire that experience? {Amen} You've got to desire it before you'll ever have it. For the love of Christ, I pray that you desire it. My dear friends, I insist, I insist that we must have it if we are going to be fully effective witnesses for the King, and fully fit citizens for the kingdom.

For those of you who were here last night, we studied Isaiah, chapter 60; and I'd like you to turn with me, there quickly. Some of you maybe weren't here, Isaiah, chapter 60. We noted from Scripture that the Biblical term for character is, what? Come on class, encourage me. The Biblical term for character is "glory," and the definition for character is **"thoughts and feelings combined."** {ST 310.1} We noted **Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the,"** what? **"...the glory of the Lord is risen upon you."** How are we to arise and shine? Well, you've got to have light to shine. Where does this light come from? It comes from the brightness of God's glory, the Sun of Righteousness - Jesus Christ. That is what is shining upon us. How are we to shine? **Verse 2: "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people, but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen,"** where? **"...upon you."**

How do we shine? - by reflecting the glory, the character, of Jesus Christ. Amen? {Amen} We are to mirror that glory, and reflect it to those with whom we associate. Remember, Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness. What's the symbol for the church? The woman, yes. But what's she standing on? **...the moon.** {Rev 12:1} How does the moon shine? - by reflecting the light of the sun. The moon has no light of its own; and when does the moon shine? - at night. What a perfect symbol for the church. The only way we can shine in this sin-benighted world, my dear friends; is by reflecting the lovely character of Jesus Christ, which itself is a perfect reflection of the character of, whom? ...God the Father. Amen?

Do you see the mirrors there? Jesus reflected God's glory to us, and we reflect God's glory to others. Now, the point that I have to reiterate is, that in order to be fully effective soul winners, witnesses for the King, we must fully reflect the character of the King. Amen? {Amen} When is it that Gentiles come? **Verse 2, Isaiah 60, "His glory will be seen upon you,"** and when His glory is seen upon you, what happens? **Verse 3: "The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."** "Gentiles," that's the code word in Scripture for unbelievers.

When is it that unbelievers are attracted and drawn, into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ? Only when they see the character of Jesus Christ reflected in Christians. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} My dear friends, if we're going to be effective soul-winners, we have to be loving and lovable Christians. We have to reflect the character of Jesus Christ. That's the only way Gentiles will come. Is

that not, what we have been raised up as people to do? It's to **take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.** {**Rev 14:6**} But my dear friends, proclaiming the gospel with convincing power, is not done so much with the mouth, as it's done with the life. Amen? {Amen} ...and by the way, you can ever so eloquently proclaim the gospel with the mouth, but if isn't ratified in the life, forget it; it's got no power! You know that. **Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels but have not love, I'm, what? ...a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, just a noise maker.** {**1 Cor 13:1**}

My dear friends, when the gospel - the everlasting gospel, which this church has been raised up to proclaim, to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, with a special end-time message, known as the--little clue--three angels' messages... When we proclaim that message with great power, we will - and indeed must - have great glory. Isn't that, what the Revelation says? Look at **Revelation 18:1: "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having,"** what? **"...great power."** The angels, by the way, are the messengers; they are graciously used by God to symbolize His people and the message that they have to proclaim. Why is it, this angel has great power? Next line: **"And the earth was lightened with His,"** what? **"...His glory."** What gives the message power? It's the character likeness of those who are proclaiming it, the character likeness of Jesus Christ. That's what gives it power. Do I hear an "amen"? Do you see that truth?

Now my dear friends, we are never going to have power to proclaim the three angels' messages, until we have the character likeness of Jesus Christ. That's why we're still here. Did you hear what I said fellow, beloved Seventh-day Adventist Christians? Please, don't misunderstand me. You know, I'm talking real straight to you about our condition as people, but I don't want anyone to think, that I don't love this church. I love this church with my whole heart. I was born and raised in this church. I am a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist on both sides of my family; my Adventist roots go deep. I love this church; I love its message; I love its people. I've given my whole life in a revival ministry to help this church arise and shine, to help it realize its destiny. But as much as I love this church, I am acutely aware that **we come short of the glory,** terribly short. {**Rom 3:23**} We are not ready to proclaim the message with convincing power.

What is the **gospel? It's the power of God unto** what? **...salvation.** {**Rom 1:16**} But my dear friends, if your life doesn't manifest the saving, transforming power of the gospel; your mouth cannot convince anybody that it's for real - you know that. If it hasn't made a difference in your life, if it hasn't made you a loving and lovable person, how do you expect them to believe it's going to make any difference in theirs? You know I'm telling you the truth; and our message will never have power, until our lives ratify that we have experienced that power. We have been made by the supernatural, transforming power of the Holy Spirit into loving and lovable people, that get along with each other, that actually love each other, that stop fighting and bickering, and fault-finding and criticizing. We've got to be that people! We've got to be one in the love of Christ before we'll ever be able to give the message with power. Do you hear me? {Amen} Lord help us, is right.

It is particularly imperative that we reveal the character of Christ, in light of the special message we're to give. What is it? **Revelation 14:6-7, "Then I saw another angel in the midst of heaven HAVING the,"** what? **"...everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue and people - saying with a loud voice,"** do what? **"...fear God, and"** what class? What? **"...give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come."** **"Give glory to Him."** What does it mean to give glory to God, now? I want you to do yourself a favor, and write, in the margin of your Bibles. Next to Revelation 14:7 write neatly 7BC 979. That stands for **Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 979.** It defines very precisely and understandably what it means to give glory to God. Listen. I quote: **"To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we,"** what? **"...we glorify God."** What does it mean to give glory to God? It means to reveal His character in our own, and to

make Him known in whatever way. Tell me, can we successfully exhort people to give glory to God, if we're not doing that ourselves? Can we? Come on now, can we? No way, no way.

Please, let me wrap this up. Not only is it essential - if we are to be effective witnesses for the King - that we have a Christ-like character, but it is also essential that we have a Christ-like character, in order to be fit citizens for the kingdom. Fit citizens for the kingdom.

Now, please know that our character development doesn't earn eternal life for us. But our character development is essential if we're going to be ready to enjoy eternal life. Did you get that? That's a distinction, a very vital distinction. It doesn't entitle us to heaven, as in earning it, but it makes us fit to live there, and gets us ready to enjoy it. We'll be developing that much more carefully in future studies. But I'm here to insist, at this point, that if we are going to be fit citizens for the kingdom, and ready to step in to that holy place we must be now, during our probationary time, by the grace of God, and for the love of Christ - holy people. **Without holiness no man shall, what? ...see God. {Heb 12:14}** It is now, during probationary time that we are to get ready to live in heaven. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

You see, **Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 970: "The seal of the living God will be placed upon those ONLY who bear a likeness to Christ in character."** You see, we must be signed, sealed, before we can be delivered. Signed, we receive the name of Christ, and what is His name? He proclaimed it on Mount Sinai: **"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth."** {Ex 34:6} That's the restoration of the character of God in us. To be sealed, is to become so settled into the truth, that **we would rather, what? ...die than knowingly transgress God's law, for the love of Jesus. {5T 53.2}** When we come to that experience, we're ready to be delivered - delivered into the kingdom. But it is now, during probationary life, that we must have the signature of the name of God, and become sealed in the character likeness of God.

We are being prepared - to change our analogy quickly in closing - we are being prepared to be a part of that living temple that the Holy Spirit will indwell in fullness, in Heaven, for eternity. But to be a part of that living temple, we must become living stones now, and be mini-temples now, in which the Holy Spirit indwells. Are you following this? **1 Peter 2:5: "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."** But please, notice something very significant here. 1 Kings 6:7. When the typical temple was being constructed, were the stones hewn and smoothed on site, on location? No, they were all hewn and polished at the quarry. Is that significant? **1 King 6:7: "And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built."**

What's the object lesson? Listen: **Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 3, page 40: "The stones were not prepared for their respective places just as they were about to be laid in the wall of the temple; all the fitting, all the fitting and planning, was done previous to their being brought to the place of building. So it is that all the hewing, fitting and polishing of character must be done during man's probation."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} **"When Christ shall come again to earth it will not be to purify and refine the characters of men, and to fit them to heaven. His work then will only be to change their corruptible bodies and fashion them like unto Christ's most glorious body. Only a symmetrical and perfect character will in that day entitle men to the finishing touch of immortality."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

You see my dear friends, in **Isaiah {60:7}**, God tells us, **"I will glorify the house of My glory."** What does that mean? Those who are candidates for glorification, are those only, who by the power of the Holy Spirit, have been changed from glory to glory, and become the house of His glory. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} We have learned, in other words, to reflect His character here and now, and thereby,

made ourselves ready for the finishing touch of immortality, - which is called "glorification." But please, don't fool yourself into thinking that your character is going to be changed **in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.** {1 Cor 15:52} If your character is going to be changed, it's going to be changed, when? {Now} ...now, and there's little now left. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

My dear friends, we have no time to waste. God help us get serious about cooperating with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, that we might be changed from glory to glory; and be effective witnesses for the King, and fit citizens for the kingdom. Let's stand for closing prayer.

*Father God, I thank You so much for the all-sufficient plan of salvation; devised in eternity past, and implemented at infinite cost to Yourself and to Your Son, but all-sufficient to change us. From the naturally selfish, ugly, nasty, rebellious people that we are by nature; into loving, and lovable, and united people that we can become by grace. Father please, help us to experience this change in our own hearts, in our own homes, in our own churches; that we might be reflectors of the lovely character of Jesus, and thereby, become effective witnesses for the King, and fit citizens for the kingdom. And then come, and take us home, and make us a part of that temple, that will glorify You through the ceaseless ages of eternity. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.*