

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.

by Herb Montgomery
Director | Speaker



This holiday season, I find that I truly resonate with the words in the verse above (Isaiah 9:6) as never before. Yet, this year, at this festive time, I'd like you to sincerely contemplate what this verse states. The very next sentence introduces a curious thought: "and the government shall be upon his shoulders." What did Isaiah mean when he placed "government" on the "shoulders"

of this divine-human infant? The answer, I believe, can be discerned from the following statement:

"Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted . . . By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union" (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 26).

Ever since Lucifer's rebellion began, Love and Selfishness have stood face to face. Questions have been raised, lies spread, and doubts conceived. Satan represented God as a being whose chief attribute was self-centeredness. Yet "to this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love" (White, p.19).

"It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God" (White, p.19).

When we truly comprehend the sacrifice of God in the gift of His only Son, we begin to perceive the truth that, truly, "God so loves" (John 3:16). Ponder what this means for you personally, dear friend. Through the gift of Christ, not only does the government of heaven stand exemplified, but, much more, this gift allows "every son and daughter of Adam [to] understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners" (White, p. 24).

Not only has God been revealed as a God of love. His love has been shown to know no bounds. For God has been revealed to be the friend, even of you and me, the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

He is your friend, dear reader. He's not against you. He loves you with a love that you will never fully comprehend, a love that you can only experience. This Christmas, will you allow the gift of Christ to awaken in you a deeper encounter with His life-changing love during this Holiday Season? It's more than lights, shopping, gingerbread,

and trees. There is nothing wrong with these traditions, but the season simply means much more, for, in the gift that this time of year celebrates, the "government of God" stands vindicated, the character of God is revealed, and His attitude toward sinners, His innermost thoughts toward you, stand unveiled. Take time this season to meditate on what the gift of God's dear Son reveals about what's in His heart and how it relates to you. In this gift is manifested a love that this world has yet to truly comprehend and believe. Dare we believe it? Will you believe it?

"The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work, only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, 'with healing in His wings'" (Mal. 4:2; White, p. 22).

May your heart truly find deeper healing as we contemplate the heart of God revealed through the gift of Jesus Christ.

Happy Holidays.



Thoughts to Ponder—

"O, may the coming Christmas be the best one you have ever enjoyed because you have brought gifts to Jesus and given yourselves and your all without reservation to Him who has given all for you."

(Ellen White, *Bible Echo*,
December 15, 1892 par. 14).



MINISTRY UPDATE

In response to much demand, we are announcing (with pictures) the birth of our new son. Crystal and I would like to express our deep gratitude to all of you who have held our family and our new addition in your prayers. On November 19, 2007,

Christian Journey Montgomery was born into our family. He was 7 pounds 5.6 ounces, and truly adorable.

We have so much to be thankful for this holiday season.

I'm sure we *all* have a lot to be thankful for. Needs met,

friends, family, both new and old, but most of all, Jesus. This

Christmas, let us take time to allow God's love to awaken in our hearts deeper streams of appreciation and gratitude for the gift of His

beloved Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, than we have heretofore

experienced. Thank you all so much for your prayers and your continued support of Renewed Heart Ministries. We have seen so many lives changed in this ministry's first year as a result of God's work through our efforts. Testimonies continue to come in daily: of hearts won, brought back, or reestablished in God's great love for them. Just today, I received this email: "These messages are changing my life. Thank you for this web site. I'm sharing with everyone I know that seems willing to listen or learn." Thank you, thank you, thank you for your support. It is my hope that, through our partnership together, the work of "lightening this earth with His glory" (Revelation 18:1), which began with that Tiny Babe in a manger in Bethlehem, will soon find its grand culmination as we not only meditate on the nature of His love for us, but we allow that same love to be revealed through us, as well.



God's richest blessings to all of you this Holiday Season.

Sincerely,



Herb Montgomery

Director | Speaker

Renewed Heart Ministries



"At the first advent of Christ, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Light and truth seemed to have departed from among men, and Satan appeared to reign in undisputed power. Rival sects existed, and among those who professed to be the servants of God were displayed love of preeminence and strife for power and position. Souls who were desirous of light were filled with perplexity and sorrow. Many were sighing, "What is truth?" Ignorance prevailed, but many were looking for something better, looking for light that would illuminate the moral darkness of the world. They were thirsting for a knowledge of the living God, for some assurance of a life beyond the tomb. There were men not of the Jewish nation who prophesied that an inspired instructor would come to teach them of the truth. There were among the Jews men who had not polluted their integrity, who read with eager anticipation the sure word of prophecy that pointed to the advent of the Redeemer. They rejoiced in the promise that God had made to his servant Moses: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Again they read how the Lord should anoint Him to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. They read how he would set judgment in the earth, how the isles should wait for his law, how the Gentiles would come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising.

Christ came just as prophecy had foretold. He was the "way, the truth, and the life," and the beams of the Sun of Righteousness dispelled the moral darkness so that the honest in heart might see the truth. The absence of outward display and worldly grandeur, called forth comments of disapprobation from the people. Doubt and criticism met him on every side. Christ himself had chosen the human conditions of his life. He had selected the lowliest place in society. He was the Majesty of heaven, and he knew that the world would bear sway

by magnificence, carrying everything before its display and grandeur; but Jesus honored those whom the world looked upon with contempt. Christ's birthplace was devoid of conveniences, not to speak of riches and luxury. And his entire life in this world was in keeping with the humble home of his early experience. The Saviour of the world proposed that no attraction of an earthly character should call men to his side. The light and beauty of celestial truth alone should be the drawing power. The outward glory, the worldly honor, which attracts the attention of men, he would not assume. He made himself accessible to all, teaching the pure, exalted principle of truth as that which was only worthy of their notice. But although so humbly born, so unpretending in life, God did not leave him without a witness. The principalities of heaven did him homage. Wonders in the heavens above and signs in the earth beneath attested his power and majesty. At his baptism a voice from heaven fell upon the ears of men, declaring, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The bright glory of God in the form of a dove of burnished gold encircled him. John declared: "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Christ came to represent the Father. We behold in him the image of the invisible God. He clothed his divinity with humanity, and came to the world that the erroneous ideas Satan had been the means of creating in the minds of men, in regard to the character of God, might be removed. We could not behold the glory of God unveiled in Christ and live; but as he came in the garb of humanity, we may draw nigh to our Redeemer. We are called upon to behold the Lord our Father in the person of his Son. Christ came in the robe of the flesh, with his glory subdued in humanity, that lost man might communicate with him and live. Through Christ we may comprehend something of him who is glorious in holiness. Jesus is the mystic ladder by which we may mount to behold the glory of the infinite God. By faith we behold Christ standing between humanity and divinity, connecting God and man, and earth and heaven.

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and

God Manifest in the Flesh

"... the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,--one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, "Show us the Father," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8, 9. . . . This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men . . . His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16."

(Ellen White, *Steps to Christ* pp.10-13)

keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature.

The Father was revealed in Christ as altogether a different being from that which Satan had represented him to be. Said Christ, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." The love of Jesus, expressed for the fallen race in his life of self-denial and sufferings, is the manifestation of the Father's love for a sinful, fallen world. Christ endured shame and

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grief and death for those who despised his love and trampled upon his mercy. He paid the debt of man's transgression upon the cross of Calvary with his own precious blood. The men of his own nation, the leaders of the people, were so ensnared by the deceptions of Satan that the plan of redemption for a fallen race seemed to their minds indistinct and unexplainable.

Man was God's workmanship, made after his image, endowed with talents, and fitted for a high destiny. But Satan has worked to obliterate the divine image, and to impress his own image instead of the image of God in man's nature. Jesus condescended to humble himself, to take human nature, and by uniting divinity with humanity, he proposed to elevate man in the scale of moral value. All heaven was poured out in the gift of God's dear Son. Through faith in him the sinner could be justified, and God could yet be just in justifying the sinner; for Christ had become a propitiation for the sins of the repentant soul. The only plan that could be devised to save the human race was that which called for the incarnation, humiliation, and crucifixion of the Son of God, the Majesty of heaven. After the plan of salvation was devised, Satan could have no ground upon which to found his suggestion that God, because so great, could care nothing for so insignificant a creature as man. The redemption of man is a wonderful theme, and the love manifested to the fallen race through the plan of salvation, can be estimated only by the cross of Calvary. The depth of this love even angels cannot sound. That God could consent to become flesh, and dwell among fallen beings, to lift them up from their helplessness and despair, is an unfathomed mystery. He whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, whose dominion endureth throughout all generations, made himself to be sin for us that he might lift up all that are bowed down, and give life to those who are ready to perish.

Oh, that men might open their minds to know God as he is revealed in his Son! Truth came forth from the lips of Jesus, uncorrupted with human philosophy. His words were from heaven, such as mortal lips had never spoken nor mortal ears ever heard. His

heart was an altar on which burned the flames of infinite love. Goodness, mercy, and love were enthroned in the breast of the Son of God. He set up his tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment, pitched his tent by the side of the tents of men, that he might dwell among them and make them familiar with his divine character and love. No one could love Christ and pay homage to him without serving and honoring the infinite God. Those who had an appreciation of the character and mission of Christ, were filled with reverence and awe, as they looked upon him and felt that they were looking upon the temple of the living God. Officers were sent to take the Son of God, that the temple in which God was enshrined might be destroyed. But as they drew near and heard the words of divine wisdom that fell from his lips, they were charmed, and the power and excellence of his instruction so filled their hearts and minds that they forgot the purpose for which they had been sent. Christ revealed himself to their souls. Divinity flashed through humanity, and they returned so filled with this one thought, so charmed with the ideas he had presented, that when the leaders of Israel inquired, "Why have ye not brought him?" they replied, "Never man spake like this man." They had seen that which priests and rulers would not see,--humanity flooded with the light and glory of divinity. Those who would behold this glory would be drawn to love Jesus and to love the Father whom he represented. Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,--to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." When the object of his mission was attained,--the revelation of God to the world,--the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.

(Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890 par. 9)

CALENDAR

January 11-12, 2008

Pullman Community Worship Center
Pullman, WA
509.332.8782

January 18-19, 2008

Charleston SDA Church
Charleston, WV
479.754.0675

January 25-26, 2008

Penn Valley SDA Church
Penn Valley, CA
530.432.2479

February 8-9, 2008

Campion SDA Church
Loveland, CO
970.667.7403

February 15-24, 2008

Penn Valley SDA Church
Penn Valley, CA
530.432.2479

February 29-March 1, 2008

Westchester Korean SDA Church
Yonkers, NY
347.683.0157

March 7-8, 2008

Sunset Oaks SDA Church
Rocklin, CA
916.771.3869

March 14-23, 2008

Woodside SDA Church
Sacramento, CA
916.549.5656

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