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NEWSLETTER

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MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH



Monthly Newsletter

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ISSUE #3



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MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH

In this newsletter you can expect:

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Faith: Where do you stand?

Welcome back to the **Middletown SDA Church Newsletter**. We pray that you have been blessed by the newsletters thus far. In this issue, we will explore the topic of Faith and how our lack of faith causes us to mistrust and lose hope in God.

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we often speak about faith. We preach it, teach it, and emphasize its importance. From the pulpit each Sabbath, we remind our congregations of the necessity of relying on God for every need. We teach our children to trust Him in the practical aspects of daily life. We encourage our friends—and even those outside of our faith—to believe in Christ and to trust Him in every circumstance.

Yet, when difficult situations arise, many of us find ourselves lacking the very faith we claim keeps us connected to Christ—the same faith we uphold as central to our beliefs. This reality leads us to a deeper, more personal question: **Where do we stand?**

Only Christ truly knows the condition of our hearts, but here are a few questions to consider:

- As you reflect on your own faith journey, consider these questions:
- What is the true purpose of your faith in God?
- Is your faith in God based on what He does, or on who He is?
- Can you remain in the will of God while enduring affliction?
- When trials come, do you draw closer to God in prayer, or do you drift away from the very Source of life?

Take time to honestly reflect on these questions. Consider how you respond in moments when your faith is tested. What about situations where God has made you a promise, but instead of waiting, you choose your own path because of doubt?

To help us examine faith—and how we sometimes question God and His Word—we will look at the life of Jacob.

Faith: From Crisis to Submission

Overview

Jacob was the younger twin brother of Esau, the son of Isaac and Rebekah, and the grandson of Abraham. Though they shared the same birth, Jacob and Esau were vastly different in both appearance and character. Even before they were born, God revealed to Rebekah the future of her two sons—that each would become the head of a great nation, but that one would be greater than the other. Esau and Jacob “were taught to regard the birthright as a matter of great importance, for it included not only an inheritance of worldly wealth but spiritual preeminence” (PP, p. 177.3). The birthright represented more than material blessing—it carried with it the sacred responsibility of spiritual leadership and the continuation of God’s covenant promise.

Yet when it appeared, from a human perspective, that God’s plan was in jeopardy, deception entered where faith should have remained.

The Crisis

As Isaac grew old, he desired to bless Esau before his death. He intended to bestow upon his beloved son the blessings traditionally reserved for the firstborn. When Rebekah overheard this, she took matters into her own hands. Though she knew that the divine promise had been given to Jacob, she did not wait on God’s timing. Instead of praying and trusting in the Lord, she resorted to trickery to secure the blessing.

How often do we do the same? When situations seem to be slipping beyond our control, we feel compelled to intervene. We seek solutions in our own strength rather than turning to God in prayer first. Yet our first response should always be to seek His wisdom and trust His plan.

Rebekah’s decision, rooted in fear and impatience, brought consequences that would follow Jacob for years to come. What should have been a moment of faith became a lesson in the dangers of taking God’s promises into our own hands.

The Consequences

Because Jacob and Rebekah tricked Isaac, Jacob was forced to flee from his home to escape Esau’s anger. What was obtained through deception led to separation, hardship, and years of uncertainty. Though he had received the blessing, he did not experience the peace that should have come with it. The results of not trusting God are often unnecessary struggle and pain. As the songwriter says, “Oh what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

How true these words are. When we move ahead of God instead of waiting upon Him, we often create burdens that faith could have prevented.

Jacob’s story, however, doesn’t end here. His life reached a turning point years later, when he prepared to meet Esau again. Filled with fear and uncertainty, Jacob found himself alone one night—and it was there that he wrestled with God (Genesis 32:24–28).

This was more than a physical struggle; it was a spiritual one. Jacob came face-to-face with his past, his fears, and his need for God. No longer relying on deception or his own strength, he clung to God and declared, “I will not let You go unless You bless me.”

In that moment, Jacob’s faith shifted. It was no longer about securing blessings through his own efforts—it became about total dependence on God.

Submission to God

After this encounter, Jacob was changed. God gave him a new name—Israel—signifying transformation and victory through surrender. Jacob moved from striving in his own strength to resting in God’s will.

This is what true faith looks like. It is not the absence of struggle, but the decision to trust God in the midst of it. It is accepting God’s timing, His will, and His way—even when it is difficult.

Faith moves from crisis to submission when we stop trying to control outcomes and fully surrender to God. Each of us will face moments where our faith is tested. The question is not whether trials will come, but how we will respond when they do.

Will we act out of fear and take matters into our own hands? Or will we trust, wait, and surrender to God?

May we learn from Jacob’s journey. When crisis comes, let it lead us—not into doubt—but into deeper faith. And may we come to the place where we fully accept God’s will, trusting that His plans are always perfect.

Let go. and Let God!

THE MIDNIGHT CRY- ARE WE BEING DECEIVED AS OUR FREEDOM OF CHOICE IS UNDER ATTACK? BY CLAUDIA DOUGLAS



In the quiet hours before dawn, a sudden cry rang out to the sleeping virgins: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matthew 25:6). For generations, Seventh-day Adventists have looked to this "Midnight Cry" as the ultimate wake-up call for the return of Christ. Yet, as we look at the shifting landscapes of our legal, social, and political worlds in 2026, a different kind of slumber threatens us. While we fixate on grand, overt threats to our faith, a subtle, masterfully disguised erosion of our individual agency is taking place. We must ask ourselves the difficult question: Are we sleeping through the very events we were prophesied to watch? From massive, state-orchestrated religious gatherings like the National Jubilee of Prayer to the deeply concerning "Sunday default" policies resting quietly in the backdrop, as the boundary between church and state is being methodically dismantled, we may find that our religious liberty was legislated while we slept. We are bombarded by reports of tension between the highest seats of political and religious power, the current administration, and the Papacy. While these public "striking back" moments make for dramatic news, as students of prophecy, we must ask: Is this a genuine conflict, or is it a masterful ploy? Today, as we watch the breaking news and shifting policies, that cry is echoing once again. But this time, it is a warning call for us to wake up!

The Conflict as a Ploy?

While we see reports of a "furious Pope" and an administration demanding he "stay in his lane", we must remember that the ultimate goal is to lead the world toward a national Sunday mandate. Deceptive wiles often create a smoke screen of conflict to mask the steady march of legislation that will eventually trample the "rights of conscience".

In Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, Ellen G. White explicitly warned us of a "threefold union" where Protestants, Catholics, and the world join hands to enforce religious dogmas (White, 1889/1948, p. 451).

The Warning: We are warned of a "threefold union" where Protestants, Catholics, and worldlings join hands to trample on the "rights of conscience".

The Question: Is this public "disagreement" between leaders masking a deeper movement toward religious legislation (like the Sunday rest mandates in Project 2025)?

Satan's Masterpiece: Disguised Deception

Ellen G. White warned that Satan's final strategy would be a "masterpiece of deception". He is not a visible monster; instead, he "hides his deformity under the garb of Christianity" and assumes the attributes of Christ to sweep the world into a "fatal security". In Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, she explains that Satan works "ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies," to unsettle our confidence. One of his most effective tools is dissension among leaders to distract us from the underlying movement toward a "threefold union" of political and religious powers.

The National Jubilee of Prayer

The date of May 17 was chosen because the Continental Congress declared a national day of fasting and prayer on May 17, 1776. Critics and historians point out that utilizing these symbols aims to portray America's founding as essentially Christian—a core tenet of Christian nationalism. While many see this as a harmless exercise in patriotism, the alignment of events demands our attention: they are highly aligned in their ultimate goals:

State-Led Religious Rededication: This is one of the most explicitly religious events organized by a sitting U.S. president. From an Adventist perspective, when the highest office in the land takes the lead in religious "rededication," it signals a dangerous breach in the wall of separation between church and state.

The Merging of Cross and Flag: This "National Jubilee" may be the public, visible celebration of merging the church and the state. The playbook that is a prominent resource in the movement, Project 2025, explicitly calls for the federal government to institutionalize Christian morality in public policy. Large-scale state prayer rallies serve as the public, visible celebration of this exact concept.

The boundary between church and state is not being broken down in a single day; it is being methodically dismantled brick by brick while the church is distracted. As we navigate our complex social and political realities, we are called to be more than passive observers. We must be active defenders of the soul. On the surface, massive state-sponsored events like the National Jubilee of Prayer or recent rulings in states like Louisiana mandating the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools. We might naturally think, "Yes, this is good! We are returning to our moral roots." But as students of prophecy, we must look deeper and be intensely mindful. Are we being masterfully set up for mandates? When the state takes it upon itself to enforce or sponsor religious institutions, it breaches the sacred wall of separation between church and state. It sets a dangerous precedent: if the state has the power to post and promote the law of God today, it will eventually claim the power to dictate how we worship and which day we keep holy tomorrow. Consider the staggering deception: the fourth commandment, written in stone by the finger of God, clearly demands that we keep the seventh day holy (Exodus 20:8-11). Yet, the very same movement championing the display of that law is actively laying the legislative groundwork to enforce a day of rest that contradicts it. The Spirit of Prophecy spoke directly to this impending crisis. In *The Great Controversy*, Ellen G. White pulled back the curtain on the severe religious persecution that will come in the future: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. - Revelation 12:11.

References

- King James Bible. (2017). King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/> (Original work published 1769).
- White, E. G. (1911). *The great controversy between Christ and Satan*. Pacific Press Publishing Association. (Original work published 1888).
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Upcoming Event Family- Focused Revival Series

Theme: “Renewed”

Experience renewal in every area of life—spiritually, emotionally, and as a family. Come be refreshed, restored, and strengthened in Christ.

Speakers: Pastor Dorrage Stephens and Dr. Eric Walsh

Date: MAY 16th - 30TH

Sunday - Saturday

(No meeting on thursdays)

Location: 70 Highland Avenue, Middletown NY 10940

Time: Starts at 7PM

Join us for this Family-focused Revival series as we restore our faith in God and find renewed strength in His love.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - REOCCURRING EVENT - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Community Food Pantry Drive

Join us for our upcoming food drive and help make a difference in our community. Let's work together to fight hunger and provide support to those in need. Here are the details:

- Date: First Sunday of each month
- Time: 12pm-1pm
- Location: 70 Highland Avenue, Middletown NY 10940
- Register for gift bags using the QR Code located on the flyer.
- Donations include non-perishable food items, fruits and vegetables.
- Let's make a positive impact in our community and help those in need.

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH
COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY DRIVE
"Sharing God's Love One Meal at a Time"

1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH
12:00 PM TO 1:00 PM
We look forward to seeing you!

Scan the QR Code below to sign up

@MSDAC.ORG
70 Highland Ave, Middletown NY 10940

Donations

Practical Faith for Children

We believe in cultivating practical faith and teaching that same faith to our children. It is our prayer that as you share this with your little ones, they will gain practical understanding in building their faith in Jesus. Christ cares deeply about their concerns and desires for them to bring every need, no matter how small, to Him.

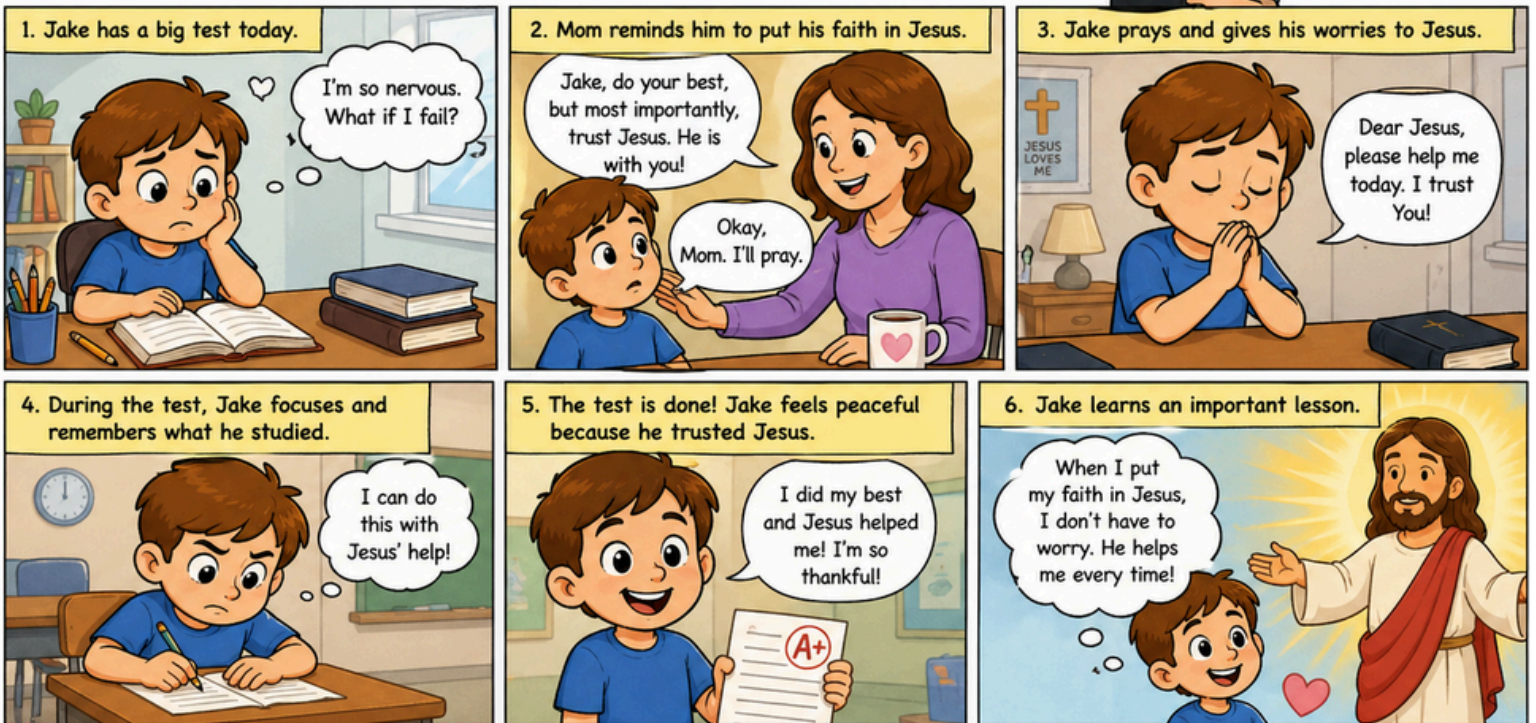
FAITH IN ACTION!

A Comic About Trusting Jesus

When we put our faith in Jesus,
He helps us every day!



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."
— Proverbs 3:5



REMEMBER:

- ♥ Talk to Jesus about everything.
- ★ Do your best and trust Him with the rest.
- ✓ Jesus is always with you!

Faith means trusting Jesus
no matter what!



MEMORY VERSE

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

— Proverbs 3:5

★ NEXT TIME: What will you trust Jesus with today? ♥

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT

DEACONS AND DEACONESSES DAY- 11 APRIL, 2026 A.Y. FEATURE



On April 11th, the deacons and deaconesses were blessed to host a meaningful AY Program highlighting the importance of **willingness to serve** and the spirit of humble ministry. Through inspiring presentations and reflections, we were reminded that true service is not about position but about a heart that is willing and ready to labor for God and His people. We want to thank our deacons and deaconesses for their dedication, faithfulness, and commitment to serving **Middletown SDA Church** with love and humility. Their example encourages us all to embrace a spirit of service in our daily walk with Christ.

Thank you for reading!

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