

## ***Without Fault***

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

*Scripture reading: Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].*

You and I who are professing historic Adventism, we embrace this with great zeal, that we are historic Adventists; we are destined to be part of a company that is recorded in Revelation 14.

**Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty [and] four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred [and] forty [and] four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, [being] the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**

You and I are destined to be among that company by the very profession of being historic Adventists.

**Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand. {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 4}**

This it is ours to strive for. We are to strive with all our power that God has given us, to be among the 144,000. What are we to strive for? What is the objective in striving to be among the 144,000? What was it, what is it, that these people clearly lay out before the universe?

**Revelation 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.**

How do you feel about that? You and I are called upon to be faultless to be among the 144,000 – without sin.

**Revelation 7:13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are**

**they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”**

You and I, according to our faith, are called upon to be pure and white in character. We are called upon to be without fault to be among that people, those 144,000. As you absorb this in reality, is this not daunting? As we look at ourselves as we are now, so close to the coming of Jesus, how do you feel about that?

Let's have an expansion on this concept of being among them without fault. What does it really mean?

**Leviticus 11:45 For I [am] the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy.**

The 144,000 in Revelation 7:4 are 12,000 out of every tribe of Israel. Israel is here being addressed. “I have brought you out of captivity, I have brought you out of Egypt,” which is the symbol of sin, sinful captivity. We have been brought out of captivity, out of Satan's thralldom, and we are to be holy. These very words were taken by the apostle Peter in 1 Peter chapter 1 and reading there from verses 15-19. 1 Peter 1:15-19:

**1 Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy...**

Yes? We have been called, and here we are, we have responded;

**1 Peter 1:15 ...so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;**

What sort of conversation? Is there anything missing here? In *all* manner of conversation be ye holy;

**1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”**

We can see very clearly that the apostle Peter has embraced the words of Leviticus 11:45 and he applies it to the Christians who have been redeemed from the captivity and thralldom of Satan. Be ye holy, as God is holy. And all who understand the purity and the majesty of God's character stand in awe of this calling, as it says,

**1 Peter 1:17 ...if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear:**

In awe. What? What a calling! To be holy as God is holy. This is what the 144,000 are when they stand there. In the following scripture Jesus is speaking, and look at what He is saying:

**Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

What I'm sharing with you here from God's holy word, just as we read it, needs no interpretation. It's just what it says. This is today being brought to naught in the minds of general Christianity and general Adventism. They tell you, You will never be perfect, until you are translated when Jesus comes. This is being taught. We know it is being taught. To reach this calibre is to all human contemplation an impossibility. But, as you read it there in Revelation 7:14, what is it that made them so pure? They washed their robes of character in what? *In the blood of the Lamb.*

I want to summarise this washing, this process of the blood of the Lamb that produces a people that are as holy as God is holy, by reading the following scripture in Colossians. There we see in a nutshell the process from a desperate sinner, an enemy of God, to someone who is as perfect as God. The apostle is here speaking of Jesus:

**Colossians 1:19 For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled**

Where?

**Colossians 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:**

In whose sight? In the Father's sight. Through Jesus Christ there would be a people who will be presented holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight. But notice now how it continues. There is this big little word: *If.*

**Colossians 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; ... 27 To whom God would make known...**

To you,

**Colossians 1:27 ...God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."**

Let's take a little time to absorb this process that leads a people to finally stand as holy as God is holy. You will have noticed there that in verse 21, we who were *sometime alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works*: that is how it started; and then we become reconciled in the body of his flesh through the death of Jesus Christ. Here is the beginning of the process. We who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are reconciled. What does that mean? Very simple. You are justified; you are just as if you had never sinned. Jesus stands in the place of yourself.

So simple. But that is not all of the process. Many people want to stop there. They want to stay on that place alone, “I am justified and I have nothing more to fear, everything is fine. But I’m still living a life that is not in perfect harmony with God. But Jesus has taken my place and God looks at me as though I had never sinned, and I’m not sinning anymore, even though I am.” That’s the mentality that is being taught. But this is error, because I go on reading that, in the body of Christ’s flesh through death we are to be presented holy, unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight. So yes, that still stands on reconciliation and justification. We are holy, unblamable, unreprouvable in His sight; that’s true. Even in reconciliation. But notice the next word, that big little word: *If* we continue in the faith

**Colossians 1:23 ...grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;**

That word *if*, what does it raise in your mind? There is an ongoing faithfulness that must continue after I have been declared unblamable through Jesus Christ. This first portion is the justification, or the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. But if I don’t remain faithful and grounded in the truth, can I lose that? Absolutely. This is a mystery:

**Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles...**

What is that mystery?

**Colossians 1:27 ...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**

We’ve been justified, but now God’s people are to stand, not only justified-perfect before God, but also to be presented in the person of our own selves with Christ living inside of us, until we are what? Ephesians chapter 4: “*Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*” What was He? He was a perfect man, without sin, without any blamableness. Nothing at all was in Him that was corrupt in His character.

So Apostle Paul concludes:

**Colossians 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.**

I don’t know how people can misinterpret this, that they would teach such fallacy that you cannot be perfect, without sin, on this planet. Was Jesus? Absolutely. And so Apostle Paul labored, striving according to the working of God in him, which worked in him mightily. And he makes other descriptions of this throughout his letters, that we can be the product of God working within us, which is a life of purity and holiness. *God* working in us! We know this very well because we have this faith of original Adventism. This is what Adventists have always taught from the time of their inception. But all true believers, according to the word of the gospel, throughout all ages, have launched out on this process; and as they moved along,

some got halfway in their path of sanctification, and then died. Some didn't even get halfway. The thief on the cross; did he get halfway? He only just barely came out of the enmity that was in him, through his faith in Jesus Christ, and he died in perfect hope. He was blameless before the Lord, because Jesus had justified him. He had no way of correcting his life. He was hanging on the cross because he was a thief. Then others lived all their lifetime to a particular point where, like Apostle Paul, they could speak the words of 2 Timothy chapter 4. He was a man that could speak like this. If anybody spoke like this, if I was to tell you in my words, like Apostle Paul told them there, people would say, Who do you think you are? You know it's very easy to quote other people's words, but to have someone who is there at this present time telling you this, you would go, Oh, come on. Think about it.

**2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**

Were there other men like that? What about Job? God declared him absolutely righteous. And if He says he was righteous, he was righteous. There are many others. Joseph is a good example. There is Daniel. They lived up to all the expectations and light that was given them, and came to a point in their life when they were not breaking any of that. Tell me, were they eating flesh? Were they up to what the 144,000 are to be? When you examine the details of the 144,000, they have an accumulated development of truths throughout the millennia, in which they have to live up to a higher standard than anyone who lived before them; and that, in the days of corruption that are the very end, where the cup of iniquity around them has been filled up and God has to make an end. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many grows cold. But these 144,000 do not grow cold. They are being taken through extreme processes to live up to the highest standards that heaven lives by – a perfection that is God's holiness.

The scripture of Malachi identifies exactly their experience:

**Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he [is] like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.**

You can see that this is speaking precisely of our time. And the question, to you and me, is, Will you stand when He appeareth? Who will be able to abide in such a time as this? Because to stand means to go through the experience of a refiner's fire, so that we can stand before God as holy as He is.

**Everything in our character that cannot enter the city of God will be reprov'd; if we submit to the Lord's refining, all the dross and the tin will be consumed. {4BC 1181.4}**

Notice, “everything in our character that cannot enter the city of God,” so you just read what can’t enter into the city of God. And you know, when I read this, what cannot enter into the city of God, I look at myself and I think, Oh, what? You know, when I have I studied the subject of the 144,000 with Adventists who had a different idea of the 144,000, they have said to me, “Well, then I’m never going to be saved. I’m lost. I’m hopeless.” I know how they feel, because that’s what went through my mind as well. But at this moment I want to share with you the compassion of God for the 144,000.

Are these people going to be met by compassion as they go through this particular experience? An experience where they will actually be thrown into an internal temptation to think that, “This is impossible, I can’t see myself ever getting there, never! Look at them, these 144,000! They are without sin; they are holy as God is holy. That leaves me out!”

**As the Lord's chosen ones will receive the light appropriate for this time, they will not be led to exalt themselves. {Ibid.}**

In order words, to be among the 144,000 you will not be led to exalt yourself.

**They will not manufacture a standard whereby to measure their own character; for the Lord has given one standard, by which every character is to be tested. There is not one standard for the poor, and another for the rich; for all will be tested by that law which bids us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. {Ibid.}**

So here it is. That law is the test. In reference to the words of Malachi, it says:

**In this scripture is portrayed a refining, purifying process, to be carried on in the hearts of men by the Lord of hosts. The process is most trying to the soul, but it is only by this means that the dross can be removed. Of necessity we must endure trials; for through these we are brought close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may render to Him an offering in righteousness. . . . {4BC 1181.6}**

**The Master sees wherein we need to be purified for His heavenly kingdom. {4BC 1182.1}**

He sees it!

**He will not leave us in the furnace until we are wholly consumed. As a refiner and purifier of silver, He is beholding His children, watching the process of purification, until He shall discern His image reflected in us. Although we often feel affliction's flame kindling about us, and at times fear that we shall be utterly consumed, {Ibid.}**

Right? That’s what overwhelms these people.

**...yet the loving-kindness of God is just as great toward us at these times as when we are free in spirit and triumphing in Him. {Ibid.}**

So I don’t feel as if I’m triumphing, I don’t feel as if I’m really getting there, and the fire is so severe it burns into my very, very inwards, and I cannot see that I am going to survive. But God is just as great toward me when I feel like that as when I had a perfect joy of victory.

**God in His providence would try us, to purify us as the sons of Levi, that we may offer to Him an offering in righteousness. {Ibid.}**

**Here is the process, the refining, purifying process, to be carried on by the Lord of hosts. The work is most trying to the soul, but it is only through this process that the rubbish and defiling impurities can be removed. Our trials are all necessary to bring us close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. {4BC 1182.2}**

This is a relationship factor. Close to our Father, as Jesus was. This is profound. So we go through this process, as we read it there in Colossians, from a condition of unworthiness, unholiness, imperfect in character, but declared to be righteous because we believe in Jesus; but we feel that I need to labour on, as Apostle Paul described. And as I labour on, there are many, many a situation in which we feel totally unworthy, totally bereft of hope, because I look at my condition and as I go through my experiences in this purifying process, I see so many imperfections, because God is showing them to me. I say, What?? Another one? I thought I had reached my height already, and now I've got to discover another dimension that is imperfect. And I reach the next point, and then there's another one; and it goes on and on and on... and I think, Where is the end going to take place, that I can come to the situation where I will feel accepted with God by looking for the product? Well, let me just pause here for a moment and say to you, If you're looking for that product in your life, you're never going to find it, if you want to find it. But that doesn't mean it's not there.

**God is leading out a people to stand in perfect unity upon the platform of eternal truth. {4T 17.1}**

Praise the Lord. Don't we profess to stand on that?

**Christ gave Himself to the world that He might "purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This refining process is designed to purge the church from all unrighteousness and the spirit of discord and contention, that they may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate their energies on the great work before them. {Ibid.}**

A refining process designed to purge the church. If I am part of that company, if I am part of that church that believes in historic Adventism, then the Lord is refining us from all unrighteousness, from the spirit of discord and contention, that we may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate our energies on the great work before us. You know, when you get caught up into debate and contention, you actually get sidetracked from the work before you. Don't fall for Satan's traps. "We are defending the pure truth! We are upholding original Adventism!" and then we enter into debate, and we're losing. Believe me, we are losing.

**God designs that His people should all come into the unity of the faith. The prayer of Christ just prior to His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one, even as He was one with the Father, {Ibid.}**

Beautiful, beautiful words.

**Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. {COL 69.1}**

The following statement is profound. This is what we need to be a perfect reflection of Jesus Christ for Him to come and take us home.

**Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. {GC 623.1}**

Nothing in us that would respond to Satan's temptations, that is what Jesus is looking for so that He can come. Is this a perfect person? Is this an unblameable, sinless person? Absolutely. So I look at myself and I think, Don't I feel response here? Don't I feel response there? When I'm being tempted, don't I have a sensation of being responsive to that? And many people say, "Well then, if that's the case, I'm lost. Jesus is ahead of me, I can never reach Him!" But it says, *They are without fault before the throne of God*. And in verse 1 we are told they have their Father's name written in their foreheads. When God declared to Moses His name, what was it? Merciful, gracious, without iniquity – everything is absolutely perfect. "Be ye holy, as I am holy." That's the name.

So, as we accept this truth, many will still carry a heavy burden of conscious unworthiness. What is the expression of the 144,000 when they see Jesus coming in the clouds and looking upon them? What is their expression? Here it is, He has come and now He is very close to the earth, and He is looking upon His people:

**His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, {EW 15.2}**

What? Just imagine yourself there. Just place yourself there for a moment – being looked through and through by those fiery eyes, and then the cry of overwhelming sense of unworthiness, and the question, "Am I saved, or am I not??" "Who is able to stand?? Nobody can stand before this!" All faces gather paleness. The emotion that is here revealed is overwhelming. And there is an awful silence – the angels aren't even singing. Oh no... What's the answer? Jesus says:

**"Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth. {Ibid.}**

Here is Jesus arrival! And how do the 144,000 feel? Their faces gather paleness. What do you feel like when you go pale without seeing a ghost? You are occupied with something about yourself that is a dreadful sense of your unworthiness. This is the awareness of those who are without sin.

So when somebody comes to you and says, “You believe in perfection? Are you perfect?” This is what they keep throwing at you. What can you say? “Well, by the grace of God I am justified.” That’s all you can answer. “Well then, why do you teach perfection?” I am speaking to you how people speak to me. So what can you say? Are you going to say that you are without sin? Never. Never. I will be too conscious of my sinful state. But am I sinning? And I don’t have to say anything about that.

Every step along this process to perfection, we are to embrace a beautiful appreciation, which is written of here:

**The life of Christ's disciples is to be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, {6T 307.2}**

If I was to stop there, you’d go, “Pooh! Well, I’m sorry, that’s not me.” But it continues:

**...not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter. {Ibid.}**

So I don’t see a series of uninterrupted victories in my life. In fact, all I see is a dreadful failure, because the Lord is showing me my sins, and I go, Oh! And I feel absolutely bereft because I have failed my Lord! I have failed Him here, I have failed Him there, and I see my condition – there is something in my flesh that actually craves for sin. My spirit is recoiling from this, but it’s within my flesh, and I’m feeling absolutely hopeless, because something tempts me, something tempts me to become irritable. Okay, parents? You know what it’s like? Your children keep on making you get up out of the seat; you can’t even listen to the divine service properly. And there is something inside of you that feels like going, Child! Is that right? But there is something else inside of you, You poor thing, let me try to comfort you. There are these two factors going on inside of us, and when we feel according to the flesh, we think we have sinned. When there comes a thought to us that is from the flesh – it says in the Spirit of Prophecy that, “*There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men.*” Who is the best of men? Jesus Himself. Do you think He was annoyed by that? Take courage, brethren! No matter what you feel, no matter what thoughts come up in your mind, you can conquer them like Christ, because inside of Christ and inside of you, what was the mystery? *Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Christ in you will recoil from that thought and that feeling.

And so God’s people need a comfort that comes from God’s word that is not merely somebody trying to make you feel better like I am trying to do in this divine service. On my journey across to here, when I was worshipping, I came across the following statement; and here is a comfort to my soul, with the knowledge and purity of truth that I proclaim, that thrilled my soul.

**The rainbow about the throne is an assurance that God is true. . . . We have sinned against Him and are undeserving of His favor; yet He Himself has put into our lips that most wonderful of pleas: "Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us." Jeremiah 14:21. He has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry when we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin. The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His Word to us. {FLB 42.6}**

Say, what does that do to you? Consider this carefully. I am in my unworthy state, I feel so short of the mark, and it is He Himself that puts into my lips the cry, "Do not abhor me, Lord, have mercy on me! I want to be among the 144,000, and look at me! Do not break your covenant with me!" He has put those words there. He has made us feel so unworthy that we cry to Him like that. *He* has put those words there, and then *He* has pledged Himself to give heed to our cry. So He has put the cry there, and then He pledges Himself to give heed to that, *when we come to Him confessing our unworthiness and sin.*

This is the hallmark of true baptism. And I want to lay it to the heart of those who will be baptised tomorrow. Your baptism will be null and void if you have not cleared your past mistakes and sins. To confess to God the things that you have done and to confess to anyone whom you have hurt, to say to them, I'm sorry – this is part of the justification experience. And as we do this continually, confessing everything we discover that we hadn't discovered before, and we cry to the Lord, "Lord, do not abhor me. O Lord, you see me, I'm in such a plight, save me;" these words He places into our lips; and as we do that, God Himself has pledged, and you will no doubt hear the words of your baptism, that God pledges Himself to take and lead you from there onwards. "*The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His Word to us.*"

Can you have hope to be among the 144,000 with that reality? The process of our purification is not a magical exercise. It is a mystery, but it is not magic. It is engaged in intelligently, according to Revelation 7:14. What does it say? "They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." What is this in all intelligent process? What is it in reality? Not just in theory. It's good to argue the doctrine, it's good to prove that the Bible says we can perfect. All that is good, and we can argue it and win the battle, but have we won the battle in ourselves? That's another question. This is what we need to understand in our walk with God in these perilous times in which we live. The love of many grows cold, can mine? and I am threatened with a hopeless state?

We are told that we must "*strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand.*" To be among them we are to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. What is meant with that?

**We are to have an intense interest in Christ Jesus; {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 4}**

What does this mean?

**...for he is our Saviour. He came to this world to be tempted in all points as we are, to prove to the universe that in this world of sin human beings can live lives that God will approve. {Ibid.}**

When we look at Jesus, laden with my sins, laden with my sinful flesh, He went through every aspect of our experience, and then He died with my sins pressing the very life out of Him, as though it was His own. And there He remained faithful and loyal, even with the sins that He was dying for and with. Can you be aware of your sins that are pressing the lifeblood out of your being, and still have hope? Only in the blood of Jesus Christ; because Jesus is your intense interest, and you are watching every step of His experience on earth; and wherever you are, you can find Jesus! You can find Him in your experience of Gethsemane. You can find Him there. That is where I had to find Him in my own experience. He came to this world to be tempted in all points as we are, to prove to the universe that in this world of sin human beings can live lives that God will approve.

**Think of how much it cost Christ to leave the heavenly courts, and take his position at the head of humanity. Why did he do this?--Because he was the only one who could redeem the fallen race. There was not a human being in the world who was without sin. The Son of God stepped down from his heavenly throne, laid off his royal robe and kingly crown, and clothed his divinity with humanity. He came to die for us, to lie in the tomb as human beings must, and to be raised for our justification. He came to become acquainted with all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He rose from the grave, and proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection and the life." One equal with God passed through death in our behalf. He tasted death for every man, that through him every man might be a partaker of eternal life. {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 5}**

*Through Him* – when it says “through Him”, what does that logically mean? When you have to go through a sluiceway to get onto the other side, what does that mean? You have to go through that very experience. And Jesus went through an experience that I must go through so that I can be as perfect as He. He came to make this possible.

**Our Saviour bore all that we are called upon to bear, so that no human being could say, "He does not know my suffering and my trials." {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 7}**

Nobody could say that.

**In all our afflictions he was afflicted, {Ibid.}**

How many? In *all*. Bear this in mind, brethren and sisters. In all our afflictions He was afflicted,

**...and because of this, the Father has committed to him all judgment. Satan declared that human beings could not live without sin. {Ibid.}**

Who declared that? And who preaches that today? Stop to consider everything we read, from experience.

**Satan declared that human beings could not live without sin. Christ passed over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell, and by a sinless life placed the human race on vantage-ground, that every one might stand before the Father accepted in the Beloved. {RH, March 9, 1905 par. 8}**

Jesus is there in heaven right now, pleading our cases. We are to wash our robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is also beautifully delineated in Colossians, “*in the body of His flesh.*” I have an intense interest in Jesus Christ – this is what we need to be among the 144,000. If people do not have that intense interest in Jesus Christ, they cannot be among the 144,000. That’s what it boils down to.

Here is the reason why in reaching for perfection we actually may rejoice. We actually may rejoice in tribulation. So when tribulation happens, and you’re going through this horrifying discovery pattern and you’re discovering all the remnants of your life and you feel so unworthy, and you are going through affliction, you can rejoice. You can release yourself from stress. It’s the most weird sensation. I tell you, it’s the weirdest sensation that I ever have met. I can see my gross, horrible sinfulness, and yet rejoice when I’m supposed to be feeling stressed out.

Guilt makes you feel stressed out, doesn’t it? But if I come to God and I cry to Him, as we read in *The Faith I Live By*, with the words that He places into my heart, and I trust Him that He has made everything available to me, and I reach out for that in every situation of my life, then I can rejoice in tribulation. The harder it gets, the more rejoicing I get. “Here comes the next one! Thank you, Lord! Oh... Thank you. It’s beautiful, it’s wonderful. Thank you, Lord, for giving me hope in this hopeless sensation.”

Brethren and sisters, we want to be among the 144,000, don’t we? We want to be perfect. This has been a dreadful mind exercise in my mind for years! That the 144,000 were without sin, and I didn’t feel without sin at all. How can I ever be among them? Then He reminded me of the twelve tribes. Where do these 144,000 come from? What was their background? Oh, look at the details of those twelve sons. That is where we come from. We can identify our own sins among them.

So I don’t have to stress out with this beautiful message, or this fearful message, of the sealing of the 144,000. I can take hold of the compassion that God has for these people, and trust that He will continue to purify them as fuller’s soap, and through the fiery furnace that they have to go through. And they will not feel a series of uninterrupted victories. They will not see this! They will not feel it! We are saved without a feeling of perfect confidence, apart from the confidence of hope.

**Romans 8:24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it].**

What is the description of the 144,000 under the third angel’s message? “*Here is the patience of the saints.*” May God give us joy and confidence. As it says in Isaiah, *In quietness and in*

*confidence shall be your strength.* So, you don't feel that you can make it to be among the 144,000, but you hope. You can't see it, you won't see it until Jesus says, *My grace is sufficient for you;* when you cry, Who is able to stand? So you will hope, and you will hope, and you will keep on hoping because you can't see it. You cannot see on this side of eternity the uninterrupted series of victories, but you hope, and you lay your hands onto that hope. You will continue to cry to God with the words that He fits into your lips, "Don't abhor me! Be gracious to me, help me, I trust you!" And with that hope we will patiently wait for this fruition that I will see when Jesus comes. But don't think that you will not be perfect when He comes.

May God help us to keep our eyes focused on the true principles and standards that we are to be tested by. Don't make them of none effect. They are just as important for our perfection as they always have been. But as they show us our true condition, at the same time we may open our hearts to the great compassion that is revealed in Jesus Christ for us. God grant us a focus and an intense interest that will bring us through as the 144,000. This is my prayer.

Amen.

[June 23, 2012]