

# **1888— Diagnosis**

**Starting with the Basics**

# The Cause

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*—Ministry of Healing, 235*

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—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 93



# The Treatment

**“Some of our brethren have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting this doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. If there had not been a remissness in the past to properly instruct the people of God, there would not now be a necessity of calling especial attention to it....**

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“Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, **‘It is the third angel’s message in verity.’”**

—*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890

# The Treatment

**“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”**

**—Revelation 14:9-11**





# **The First Angel**

**“Fear God and give glory to Him”**

**—Revelation 14:7**



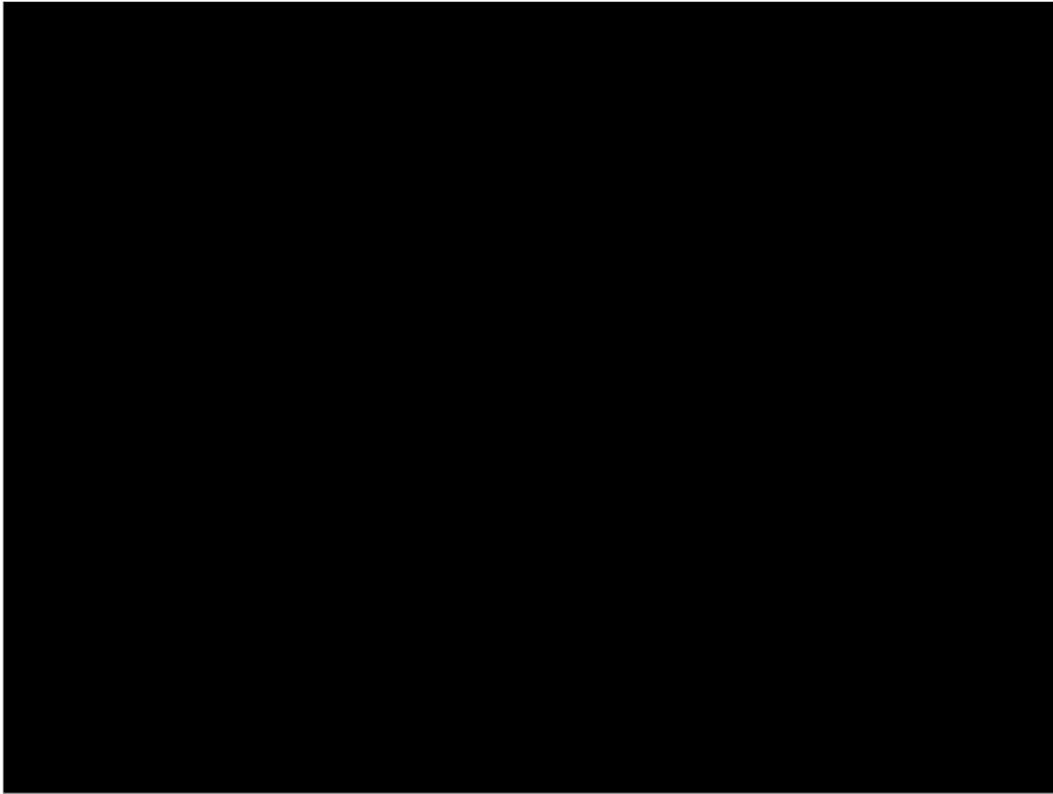












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My book on Adventist History, *Hindsight*, should also be available through that address if you want to plug the book for me. (\$5 +s/h; free s/h on 5 or more copies)

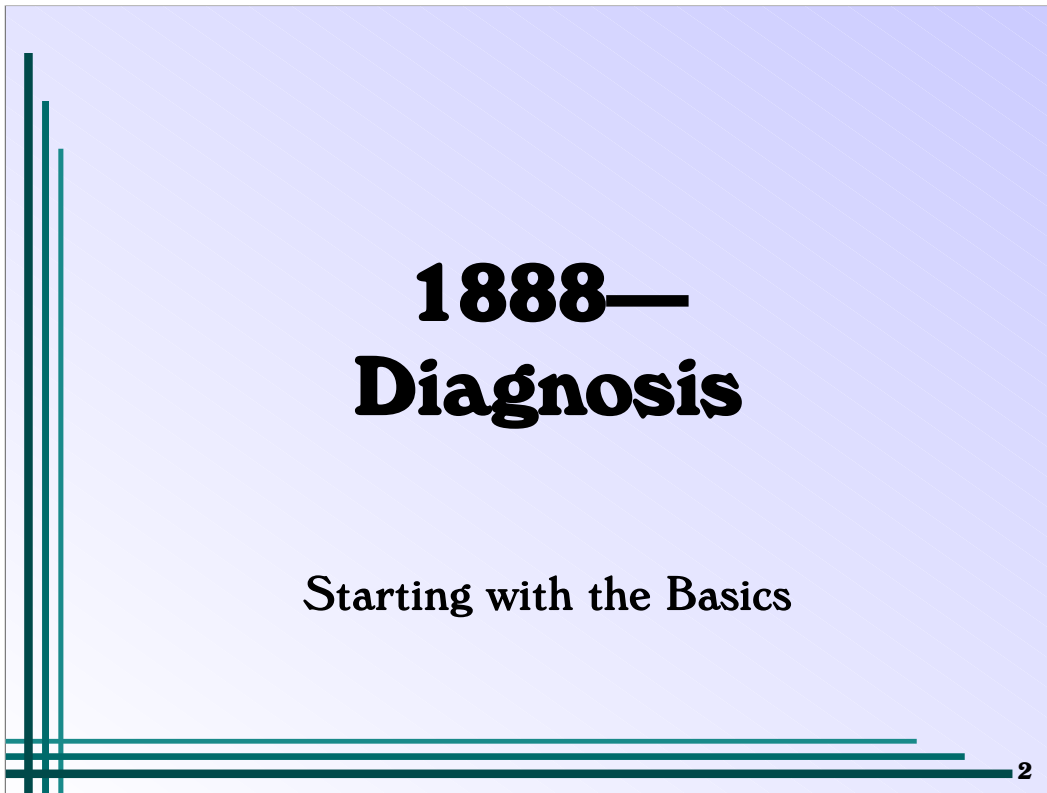
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Blessings,  
Dave

This first page is intentionally blacked out to provide a “blank screen” to be shown before a presentation starts.

The notes for this file are typed out in some length so that readers can more or less re-create the full message of the presentation.

Sometimes there are notes intended to be read **before** the text on the slide, though usually the notes come **after** the text. How can you know? Just look for **CLICK** in the notes. If you see the bright red word, it means that you should read the notes down that far **before** clicking to display the additional content of the slide. In such cases, when you move on from the previous slide you'll see just the heading of the new slide. That's when you read the notes. When you get to the **CLICK**, you hit the button to display the body text of the slide. Any slide with no **CLICK** in it means that you read the slide first, then read the notes, and move on.



**CLICK** for sub-title

1888, Minneapolis, Jones, Waggoner... it's a big topic. It's such a big topic that you could write a book on it. In fact, sometimes it seems like everybody who's anybody anywhere in Adventism has done just that. We'll have to settle for rather more modest accomplishments today, for sake of time if nothing else. So let's start at the beginning. When someone is sick, the Spirit of Prophecy tells us that—

## The Cause

**“The first thing to be done is to ascertain the true character of the sickness and then go to work intelligently to remove the cause.”**

*—Ministry of Healing, 235*

That seems like a sensible approach, so let's adapt it to our topic today.

Fortunately, Ellen White simplifies the whole diagnosis issue by telling us exactly what the illness was that God was treating when He brought Jones and Waggoner on the scene.



## The Cause

**“Now, it has been Satan’s determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man.**

This is a serious problem, and it’s not that hard to figure out why. Simply put, people are going to let you down. If you are—notice the word—“*educated* to expect expect help from man,” you’re going to be disappointed when you find out how completely incapable people are when it comes to the help you really need most.

Hopefully, you’ll also be disappointed in the education you got in that area, and you’ll go looking for a better approach to life.

But there was more to the problem than just this, so let’s read on:

## The Cause

“Now, it has been Satan’s determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered.

It turns out that “looking to man” is not only a bad idea because it doesn’t work well, but also because it displaces the only good method of getting the help you need.

At one level or another, this ought to be obvious to everyone, right? But some of you are thinking, “What has this got to do with 1888 and Righteousness by Faith and all that Jones and Waggoner stuff?”

That’s what the next sentence is for:

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This is huge. Really, folks, this is so basic to the history of the last one hundred and twenty-three years that if you miss this one you’re just going to be utterly and hopelessly confused.

Note the details: the word “therefore” means “because of the above.” This is a classic diagnosis and plan of treatment. It’s like this: “The patient was dying of malnutrition, therefore the doctor recommended a change in diet.” Pretty simple, really.

So let me suggest that any explanation of the “1888 Message” that doesn’t recognize the basic illness being treated is probably not going to be very helpful.

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The problem is that the church members were “looking to man,” and trusting man, and expecting help from man. Consequently, they weren’t looking to Jesus, in whom their hopes of eternal life were centered.

So that was the problem, and note the plan of treatment that God chose: He sent two ministers with a “testimony” about Jesus. That makes sense to me. If you want people to focus on Jesus, you tell them something about Jesus that will get their attention.

But there’s one more point to catch—notice that this message of Jones’ and Waggoner’s was...

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... “the third angel’s message.”

That’s quite an endorsement, isn’t it? But what does it mean?

Before we try to figure that out, let’s read another similar quotation which is even more emphatic:

## The Treatment

**“Some of our brethren have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting this doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. If there had not been a remissness in the past to properly instruct the people of God, there would not now be a necessity of calling especial attention to it....**

In this passage Ellen White calls Jones' and Waggoner's teaching "justification by faith"

Just note that for now, and we'll read a bit more.

## The Treatment

Satan “has cast his own dark shadow between us and our God, that we may not see the true character of God. The Lord has proclaimed himself to be ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.’

“...it has been Satan’s determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man...”

Now, remember what the quotation from *Testimonies to Ministers* said:

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Anybody know what causes a solar eclipse?

Sure, the moon gets in the way and blocks the light. Ellen White is using the same illustration in both of these quotations, but that means she’s equating “man” and Satan’s “dark shadow.”

This is pretty serious stuff here. But let’s go on.

## The Treatment

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**“Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered...”**

Well, it looks like the idea that the “1888 Message” was the same as the “third angel’s message” wasn’t just a one-off idea that somehow came from Ellen White’s pen in a moment of literary excess.

This was enough of an issue that people were writing her to ask about it. Apparently the idea was spreading around some. And Ellen White didn’t back down. She said...



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—*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890

So my question for you, is, “Does that make sense?”

Justification by Faith is kind of a pleasant topic; little Bobby realizes he shouldn’t have taken the grapes from the grocery store without paying for them, so he takes his handful of change, pays up, apologizes, and goes to sleep with a clear conscience. That all sounds like a good thing.

But... have you read through the third angel’s message lately? It seems to have a little different tone.

## The Treatment

**“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”**

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Maybe I'm focusing too much on minor details that seem a bit negative, but this just doesn't sound as pleasant as justification by faith. And yet, they are the same—in verity!

Let me try to help. Imagine, for a moment that you are a raw recruit in the Army. A private. The lowest guy on the totem pole.

One day your friendly Sergeant asks to have a word with you, and it goes something like this:

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“Soldier! Take this shovel; dig a ditch; five feet wide; four feet deep; twenty feet long. NOW!”

So... what are you doing? You're digging a ditch, of course. Why? Because it suddenly became clear to you why the world would be a much better place if you personally relocated 400 cubic feet of dirt? Probably not. So why are you digging a ditch?

You might be able to come up with a number of reasons, but there's one that stands out from all the rest: that Sergeant has the ability to make your life absolutely miserable if you get him mad at you. And that's probably reason enough.

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Truth is, your afraid of that Sergeant and what he can do to you. With good reason, I might add. Ever hear these words?



Yes, I know that “fear” can also mean “respect,” but you’re going to have to ignore a great deal of Scripture if you want to dismiss the idea of being afraid of having God against you.

But, on with our story. While you’re enthusiastically digging away on what—for all you know—could end up being your own grave, a Major walks up.

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In the Major's hand is a little piece of paper. It doesn't look like much, but it must be important because the Major is already talking to you:

“Soldier! Take this note to Colonel Smith,  
Headquarters, 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment; on the double; GO!”

So... what are you doing now? You're running, of course. Why? Because a Major is even scarier than a Sergeant. But about the time your legs are really feeling the effects of trying to sprint in a pair of ten-pound army boots, there is a sudden screech of brakes and the sound of skidding tires. What's more, there's a gentleman in the jeep with four shiny stars on his chest, and he says:

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“Soldier! Get in the jeep! NOW!”

That probably seems like a pretty good idea, but something tells you there may be a down side to this. Still, it’s not a good idea to argue with the General—why not? Because he has the power to make your life seem a lot like purgatory. And Adventists don’t believe in purgatory.

So now you’re in the jeep. But suddenly you remember the ditch! And the message for Colonel Smith. Oh no! You’ve got things to do! You can’t go for a joyride with some general. You’re going to get killed when the Sergeant and the Major find out you didn’t obey! Or will you? No? Why not?

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Truth is, you'll be fine. Because the one authority who can hurt you the most, is also the one who can defend you from all lesser authorities.

And that's why the test over the mark of the beast is the perfect test of faith. The world says, "Worship on Sunday or we'll kill you." And God says, "Don't do that or you'll be tormented with fire and brimstone!"

And then everyone on earth will show who they trust most, who they believe can protect them from the other authority.

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And right then, during the time of Jacob's trouble, Satan's most devastating weapon will be the claim that *you* are too guilty to be saved.

Only the faith that has been strengthened through life and death conflict over the Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast will be strong enough then to believe that Jesus has forgiven His people.

That's why a message encouraging us to trust Jesus fully, in every detail of life, is the needed antidote for looking to man, and trusting man, and expecting help from man.

And that's how justification by faith is the third angel's message in verity.

