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Epistles

Multiple

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“To be known and read” by all. . .

Intelligent Response

As I picked up a *Perspective Digest* (Vol. 6:3) left with us, I couldn't help but focus on the “V” shining as a beacon showing the way through darkness. Then my eyes dropped to the “human” sketch of the results of Darwin's theory. How could such a monstrosity function? If I were the result of chance, would my eyes, my coordination, my brain, work? Would I have love, joy, peace, compassion, wisdom, and understanding? Would I have a family? How could the Big Bang develop our reproductive system? Would I even know God? Not a chance!

Ariel Roth (“Intelligent Design”) gives us light on just how intricately this world is made. He states that if our gravity constant should differ by only one part out of 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (40) zeroes (oops, Ariel, I counted only 39!*), blue giant stars would turn to red dwarfs. What a Creator we have! Too bad Darwin didn't know him.

My wife, who has read a few donated issues of *PD*, called this issue the “best ever.” With that, she wrote out a check and ordered our subscription. We're sharing ours and looking forward to our next issue. We thank you and your staff for such a fine journal.

Driggs Samarza
Loma Linda, California

• In a moment of madness, the editor of *PD* removed one zero from Ariel's 40. Why? To see whether any reader read carefully enough to check zeros. And Driggs, that's a perceptive wife you have. Right up there with the “best ever”!—R.R.H.

The *PD* Link

Roy Gane's affirmation of belief in the sanctuary doctrine (“For Sale—One Sanctuary Doctrine—Cheap” (*PD* 5:2) has turned up some unexpected results. Uncharacteristically, I wrote to the editor indicating availability of a series of Bible studies designated to uphold this pivotal doctrine and provided a copy for perusal. When *PD* published my letter, it sent a vibration around the world, as my E-mail ter-

minal revealed. As the result of the following complex series of events, *The Pattern of Salvation* studies is now being translated into Spanish and Portuguese by the South American Division. By another equally remarkable, but different route, it now is available on the Internet for downloading free of charge (www.maranathamedia.com.au). I perceive the leading of Providence! And yes, I have acknowledged Roy Gane indirectly by referencing his book *The Altar Call*.

Perspective Digest is more than a vehicle for the exchange of views in a responsible, supportive fashion, it is a conduit for linking voices within Adventism promoting our fundamental beliefs. Thank you for your positive and encouraging ministry.

Warren A. Shipton
Via E-mail:
wjshipton@austamet.com.au

• If you missed Shipton's "Focus on His Star" (PD 6:4), about "Three strange messages from the stars and events of Calvary's three-day drama challenge false gods and their days," you missed copy that

should be clipped and entered in every Adventist's computer or four-drawer file (I keep it in both).—R.R.H.

End-Time Scenario?

Given current international events, would you consider a speculative scenario on how events might lead toward what *The Great Controversy* portrays as "the final scenes"? I need not tell you that in most of the Middle East and a lot of other countries also, the U.S. is unpopular and even hated, yet EGW portrays the U.S. as leading the world into an alliance enforcing religious worship. Under present conditions, how could this happen?

At present, the U.S. is taking the high moral ground, seeking the help of all countries and religions to stamp out terrorism. The coalition of "do-gooders" is being applauded and supported by nations representing every major religion of the world. If it is successful, could a next step be formation of a worldwide coalition charged with seeking world peace and authorized to take "appropriate measures" to ensure the common good? I'm not trying to speed up the time of trouble. Rather, I'm just amazed at how events of the past few weeks have

“To be known and read” by all. . . .

changed the pattern of international relationships.

A Once Over From a Friend
Down Under

Another Turn of the Key

Thank you for the article by Richard M. Davidson in *PD* 6:2, titled “The Key That Unlocks Mysteries.” I am glad that the concept of investigative judgment is scriptural, and that the very term *bachan*, which means “investigate” or “examine” or “test,” is used many times in the context of God judging humanity. As a matter of interest, in case this has not already been noticed, the letter of Jesus to the Church of Thyatira is a *rib*, or “covenant lawsuit.” It clearly shows the two phases of investigative and executive judgment. Thyatira is investigated and examined through the test involving Jezebel, and then sentence is pronounced.

The fact this is a judgment in two phases is announced by one of the opening phrases Jesus uses in describing himself: He says that he

has “eyes like flames of fire.” The metaphoric significance of eyes throughout the Bible from Genesis 3:5 onward is discernment between good and evil, and applied to God refers to his examination of humans to determine who has his approval (Gen. 6:8) and who his disapproval (1 Kings 11:33). “Flames of fire” signifies the execution of judgment, for our God is a consuming fire who will destroy the adversaries (see Deuteronomy 9:3).

Ron Lambert
Warren, Michigan

Knowledge of the Holy

I noticed your comment in *Work Station One* that you may soon preach your first sermon on holiness. I would highly recommend your reading (or rereading) the book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, by A. W. Tozer. I heard Dwight Nelson mention this book in a sermon and bought it for myself. I have read it several times. It is wonderful.

Sometime back you published some pros and cons about the verses in the Bible that said “One shall be taken, and the other left.” Do you have extras of that issue? I’ve searched everywhere but can-

not find mine.

Thank you very much for your hard work in *Perspective Digest*.

Eloise Bickley

Via E-mail: eloise@budget.net

• It's in the mail. The article "Taken by the Rapture," by Louis R. Torres, appeared in *PD* vol. 1:3. Now you and I each have one.—R.R.H.

Russian Bible Project

I've just read "ATS—Where the Action Is" (*PD* 6:1) as well as the article by Jo Ann Davidson. It states that "It Is Written" appropriated \$400,000 for translation of the Russian Bible. This may be true; however, many of us sent contributions directly to Bob Spangler when he was in the General Conference and, later, when he moved to the West Coast. Both the General Conference and "It Is Written" issued tax-deductible receipts.

As you probably know, translation of the Russian Bible is Pastor Michael Kulakov's dream. I was delighted to read that the Adventist Theological Society is undertaking to raise \$75,000 to assist in this project.

Dan Guild

Newbury Park, California

Update on Russian Bible Translation

Supported by your love and prayers, I continue work on the translation of the Old Testament. The members of my team in Russian are sending me manuscripts of the Old Testament books for revision as they translate them. Our prospects look bright: By the grace of God we have nearly finished the first five books of the Old Testament.

I was thrilled last summer when another Hebrew scholar joined our team; he serves in Israel as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We need to do our work thoroughly, yet at the same time quickly, because the Russian people are in desperate need of the knowledge of God and his Word. According to a recent survey, 30 percent of Russian citizens say that they do have a Bible (the old translation, of course); however, only half of those have attempted to read it, and most who have tried, confess that they do not understand much of what they are reading. Because of this urgency, I highly appreciate ATS's interest and support, which enables us to

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carry on our work for the benefit of millions of Russian souls.

Mikhail Kulakov

Via E-mail:

kulakovmp@russianbible.org

• ATS Treasurer Ed Zinke reports that over \$25,000 has been contributed to this project. He says, “We hope to raise an additional \$25,000 through ATS during 2002. In the next *PD* we hope to tell you of an exceptional gift that the translators are preparing for contributions of \$1,000 or more.”

Pass the Salt

In Mark 9:50, Jesus tells his disciples that “salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness how can you make it salty again?” I have checked with the Morton Salt Company and am told that salt never loses its saltiness. Why, then, does Jesus seem to express belief that it does and use that illustration to make a point?

A Concerned Reader

• First, Jesus—and in fact, the Bible as a whole—does not on every occasion challenge a fallacious belief. Rather, as in the case of the rich man and Lararus, Jesus chose to make a spiritual point

rather than to correct the montage of errors his Jewish listeners had drawn from Greek sources (see Luke 16:19-31).

Now, back to the salt. The Jews did believe that salt could lose its saltiness, and that belief was based on experience. That the chemical compound sodium chloride is very stable does make it difficult to understand what Jesus intended. Still, the facts may help. In Israel, salt was usually obtained from the saline deposits of the Dead Sea. Generally it was an impure mixture of salt and other minerals. And though pure salt—rock salt found inside mines, for example—would not lose its saltiness, impure salt indeed did so. Environmental conditions contributed to the disintegration of the impure salt, dissolving it and leaving only a tasteless mixture of the other minerals. When Jesus said, “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness . . .” he meant, “but *whenever* it loses its saltiness.” His hearers knew all too well just what he meant.—Angel Rodriguez.