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Righteousness by Faith and the Third Angel's Message — 3

Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus (Revelation 14:12, NASB).



▲ George R. Knight

Nearly all Adventist interpreters of Revelation 14:12 before 1888 saw *“the faith of Jesus”* as a body of truth that one could keep. Most often, however, Adventist didn't spend much time on that part of the verse. It was the part about obedience to the commandments that got the most attention. Thus, as we noted earlier, Uriah Smith underlined the word *“keep”* when commenting on the text in January 1888, and G. I. Butler did the same for *“keep the commandments of God”* in May 1889.

Such an emphasis followed from their view that the Sabbath truth, in the context of the mark of the beast, would be God's last message to a world ripe for the Second Coming. It is slight wonder that such an interpretation and emphasis often led traditional Adventism

into the realm of legalism. Such implications lay at the foundation of the vocabulary of their belief. Words such as *“keep,” “do,” “obey,” “law”* and *“commandments”* spelled, in their minds, the significance of the Adventist distinctive contribution to Christianity.

It was that interpretation of Revelation 14:12 that came under fire in 1888. Out of Minneapolis would flow a new understanding of the central text in Seventh-day Adventist history.

Jones hinted at the new interpretation in December 1887. *“The only way in which they can ever attain to harmony with the righteous law of God,”* he wrote, *“is through the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ. . . . In the third angel's message is embodied the supreme truth and the supreme righteousness.”*

Note what Jones had done. He had equated the *“the supreme truth”* with *“the commandments of God.”* and *“the supreme righteousness”* with *“the faith of Jesus,”* which he implied was *faith in Jesus*.

At this point, we should merely note that the Greek phrase at the end of Revelation 14:12 can be translated as either *faith of Jesus* or *faith in Jesus*, as represented in the transition of today's text from the New American Standard Bible and many other versions.

Thought question for today: What are the implications of *faith in Jesus* versus *faith of Jesus*? What difference could those implications make in your life? ■

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Song #390

I am one of the reluctant people who have not embraced newer songs or different kinds of music. I am stuck in the '70s, listening to songs that remind me of academy and college years. I decided to record songs I enjoyed on a thumb drive so I could listen to them while traveling.

I recorded two different types of songs — the best of the '70s and spiritual songs that included the Wedgewood Trio, The King's Heralds, The Heritage Singers, and many more.

It was a fall day this past October and I was driving home from an appointment with a surgeon who informed me I had cancer. I was devastated. Members of my family have died from different cancers. Thoughts were racing through my mind about all the scenarios of what could happen. I remember praying out loud to God, asking for reassurance that things would be okay.

Back to my music. The thumb drive that has the best of the '70s contains 415 recorded songs. When I turned on the power to play my music, song #390 started to play. Tears started to dampen my face as I pulled over. Song #390 was *“A Mighty Fortress”* by The King's Heralds. How it ended up on the '70s thumb drive is no longer a mystery to me. It was the song I needed at that moment, and reassurance that God was with me in my condition came over me like a warm blanket.

Recently I met with a medical team at the University of Michigan. After reviewing several tests, I was told my prognosis was good to becoming cancer-free. Regardless of the outcome, I entered surgery with a sense of peace, knowing I was in God's hands.

Part of the lyrics say, *“And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,*

We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us.” I claim these words every day.

I am reminded of Isaiah 65:24, *Even before they call, I will answer, and while they are still speaking, I will hear.* ■

Rocky is currently the superintendent of Olivet Community Schools in Michigan. He is a Grand Ledge Academy and Andrew University graduate.



▲ Rocky Aldrich

A Mighty Fortress is Our God
Hedge / Luther

1. A might-y for-tress is our God, A bul-wark nev-er fail-ing. Our
2. Aid we in our own strength can-fide, Our succ-our would he give us. More
3. And though this world, with dev-ils filled, Should threat-en to un-do us, We
4. Trust and have all pow-er, Not thanks to them, a-bid-ers. The

help-er he a-mid the flood Of mor-tal-ity pre-vail-ing. For
we the right-ful men on our side, The man of God even show-ing. Dear
will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri-umph through us. The
Sp-irit and the gifts are ever Through him who with us side-eth. Let

still our an-cient foe Death seek to work us woe; His craft and power are
weak who that may be? Christ Je-sus, to us her-ald Sa-lu-tary, his
Prince of Dark-ness grim, We trem-ble not for him, His rage we can con-
qu岸 and his-dred-ern, This mor-tal life af-fect; The bod-y they may