



## FINAL EXAMS

### A parable From Real Life by 'Temcat'

Most of us have memories of important Final Exams we have faced. They are always a very intense event; coming at the end of months or even years of study and preparation, they can be the gateway to our new life in our chosen profession, or a discouraging failure, entailing much inconvenience and expense to go back and repeat months or years of study again. Even the most 'happy-go-lucky' students usually get serious and buckle down to intense study as the date draws near. Parties and pranks are not seen and no-one is breaking curfew.

*How many of us in our daily lives remember that each one of us faces a 'Final Exam'? We know not how soon, but we know it is even at the door! Perhaps this realization taken seriously would change our values and priorities as well. There's an old spiritual that says that 'I wouldn't want to (whatever sin) because my Lord might call me, and I wouldn't be ready to die!'*

Notes scribbled in many hours of classroom lectures are perused and many hearts wish that they had been a bit more thorough and neat in their recording of pertinent facts. Text books are devoured intently even by those who didn't feel all that drawn to them before and preferred extra-curricular activities. In dorms and study areas quiet reigns instead of jocular laughter and animated chatting. The only chatting going on is in small groups or pairs drilling each other on vital knowledge.

*A letter from a friend recently got me thinking about where we are in the history of this old world, and even more important, in our personal lives. He brought out an important point—we are entering into the 'Time of Trouble' but the important time is NOW! We must get ready and be ready and stay ready! NOW is our testing time—when the Finals come—the National Sunday Law—it will only show what we already are—it will be too late then! What are we doing NOW!*

Years ago now, I faced Final Exams for the profession of Registered Nurse. As a mature student I had taken my studies quite seriously all along and had little interest in frolics and pranks as did the younger students. It had taken too much effort just to have the chance to learn and I valued it. But even so, as those all important 'RN' exams drew near—I too poured over my notes and books with an intensity greater than ever before.

How about us, dear reader? Do we take the issues of life seriously or are we flippant and careless with probation's fleeting minutes? And as the storm clouds are thickening around us—are we searching our hearts and comparing them to the 'text book' God's Word, His Holy Law?

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."  
Galatians 6:7*

Well I remember when the day came—and we arrived at our main class room. Our class skeleton (a real one—see above) stood in the hall-way with a note in its mouth telling us this is where it's at. We entered with only what was allowed—nothing! Pencils, erasers and a piece of scrap paper for figuring was passed to us—we could bring nothing in except what was in our minds.

As Advent Believers, we have our 'class skeleton' also; we have the writings of our pioneers and our special prophet which show us; 'This is where it's at!' They, being dead, yet speak, in tones of warning, of entreaty, of instruction in righteousness. We do well to take heed. We also can bring nothing to this test but our own selves—our characters; nothing material can help us get through.

The most confident of us felt nervous that morning, and wondered—have I studied the right material? Did I know my notes, have I really 'learned'. Not even our teachers knew what would be on the exams, and not all exams were the same—some would center on one area and others on another—it would do no good to try and copy your neighbor as they would have a different one!

*The testing time shall be different for each one of us, but the big question is; 'Am I hid in Christ—do I have on the 'Wedding Garment'?*

*"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:13*

As we sat silent, teachers passed through the class laying the exam papers face down on our desks—we were not allowed to touch them until a given signal. First we were instructed how to fill in our identifying information—this paper that had so much bearing on our futures was unmistakably our own. Here would be the true record of our accomplishments through the years of our training. When we all sat in classroom or worked on the wards, we looked much the same—dressed in our student uniforms, caps and insignia—but these papers would tell the tale. Is this person a qualified RN? Or a failure?

"And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Ezekiel 9:4

*"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats:" Matthew 25:31,32.*

It was a timed exam—only so many hours were allotted to us to complete the assignment. If we failed to make the deadline, an incomplete paper would go into the Provincial examiner's office—and a poor chance of a passing grade that would be! Some moved quickly through the papers and completed the task, leaving the room early, others took nearly the whole time—some wouldn't complete it.

One thing that I have realized of late and it has changed my entire outlook; it is that this world's timetable is not controlled by man or devil. In the fullness of time; when God sees the time is right—then the final test will come! And He is waving His flags of warning and sounding His trumpets to His people—Get ready! Get Ready! Get Ready! There's no time to prepare when the Exam is on the desk!

*"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psalm 76:10*  
*There was a series of exams, one each day for five days. Upon leaving on that first day, some of us were more confident than they had been on entering, some were trembling and some were totally dismayed and dejected. All of us headed for lunch and then back to the books with even more intensity. That first day was the worst because of the 'not knowing' what it would be like. We had now a taste of how the questions were asked and the subjects presented and it helped us to zero in on what was really vital. Our study took new focus. Every day of the exam, however was an intense experience.*

*"...and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation [even] to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*  
*Daniel 12:1*

Finally the last paper on the last day was turned in and the waiting began. It would take a few weeks before the results would come back. We went about our ward assignments with the question always in our hearts, was this now our life-work, our career? Or would it be back to the classroom again for us?

The National Sunday Law crisis, with its outcome the Mark of the Beast or the Seal of God, is the final one for SDAs—they have known or could have known the Sabbath issues—probation for them closes here—stand or fall, there's no more chances.

Through the years of training there had been many exams, each section of the curriculum was concluded with an exam. There had to be passing marks on these, (and the standard was high! No 'Cs or 'Ds' allowed.) or the school would not allow us to even try the RNs. Each semester was also marked by a series of exams and project papers. They were marked by our teachers, and the grades for these were posted on our common bulletin board, we could all see how one another was doing. It was the flippant ones who would be saying 'Great—I managed to pass!' but the serious among us would be seen scouring the papers; "I missed one question! I missed two questions! I must study harder!" The flippant would say, "Why are you upset—I only got 75% and I am happy—here you are with 95% and you're not satisfied."

Notice what the scripture tells us: "Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12 Notice; they ARE KEEPING the commandments—it doesn't say, "Here are they that will decide to keep the commandments when the test comes." No friends, all deciding is done before—it is being done NOW!

The final grade—the RN result was sent to each of us in an envelope. It was personal—no one else knew it unless we told them.

The heart's preparedness for this test and his standing in the test is between the individual and God. We cannot know one another's hearts—we can't know our own heart unless the Holy Spirit shows it to us!

*One of the things our teachers kindly had done for us, was to have arranged for us to take the American RN exam before our own. This was a trial run for us and although different from what our finals would be, it allowed us to get a taste of what this kind of exam is like and allowed us to see our weaknesses while there was still time to correct them.*

*"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1Peter 4:12, 13.*

*In His mercy God permits trials and temptations to fall on us- He is preparing us for the 'Big One'. As we learn how to take hold of His power to meet the trials hitting us now, we gain in faith and confidence and learn the joy of leaning our all on Him.*

*It was interesting that those who had taken their training seriously and had studied on a regular basis did well on the finals. Those who had taken heed to the teachers and followed suggestions through the years of training, were well prepared at the finals. Those who had been flippant and indolent, content to have a low standard and just 'Scrape through' did not. Some got through with a last minute intense effort, some didn't.*

Friends, there will be no 'scraping through' in God's 'Final Exam' it is either the Mark or the Seal—no third class—no going back to re-study or make up a lost class. God has warned; the storm clouds are lowering; the animals are getting on the ark; can you see it?? If not, fall on your knees and plead with God to open your eyes and see while there is still time to throw yourself into His arms. The test will show us either in His arms, or under the wrath of His hand.

The mature students who were there of their own choice and realized the value of what they were seeking did much better than those sent by their parents, who were there because it was the accepted thing to do but didn't really value the chance.

*Do we really value the opportunity for Salvation, purchased at so high a cost for us? Our minds don't grasp the value of eternity; but if we had a chance at a high paying job, or an opportunity to win a million, oh how serious we would be! Friends, eternity is worth everything to us!*

The letters arrived and were given out—shouts of joy were heard mostly from those who had scraped through, and looks of quiet contentment were seen on the serious students. It was worth the effort put forth—the coveted black band was ours. The RN achievement is only a worldly goal, but it had many lessons to teach us.

*"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11*

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ...Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

*Be ready!! Be there!!*