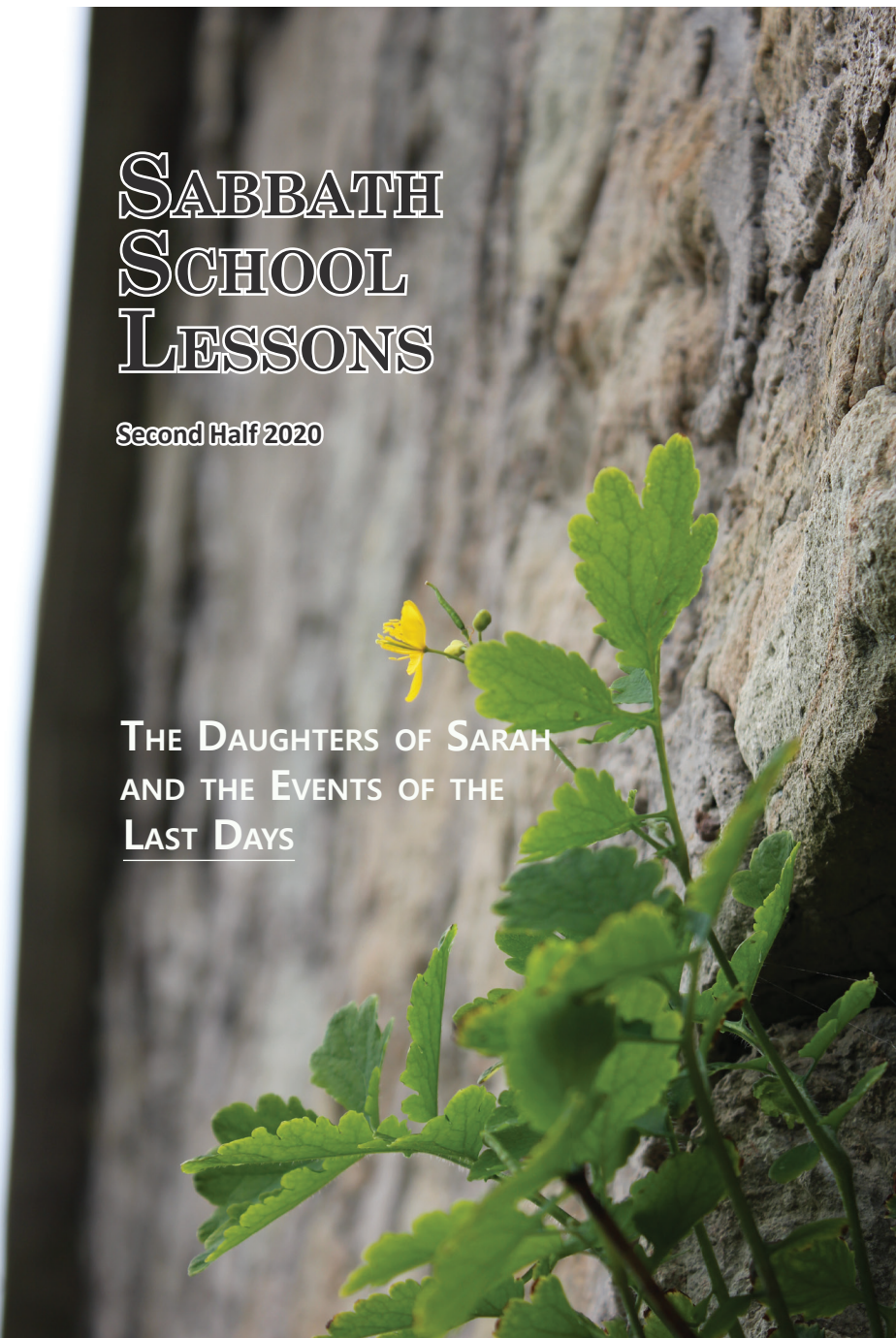


SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

Second Half 2020

THE DAUGHTERS OF SARAH
AND THE EVENTS OF THE
LAST DAYS



SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

Second Half 2020

The Daughters of Sarah and the Events of the Last Days

General Conference
International Missionary Society,
Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement

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Introduction

By the grace of God, the 26 lessons for this two quarter's Sabbath school will study the lives of 26 different women mentioned in the Holy Scriptures compared with events to transpire in the days ahead. Just as Abraham is the father of faith, so Sarah, like Jerusalem, is considered by the apostle Paul as "the mother of us all"—the mother of the children of promise. Galatians 4:26. Sarah is also the first woman whose name appears in the faith chapter—Hebrews 11.

We will examine a few examples of the struggles, failures, and triumphs of these women, called "daughters of Sarah" here. Each one serves as an allegory to examine some events in the last days. It is important to prepare in spirit and mind for what is going to come upon God's people as they triumph over evil for the glory of God.

"A study of women's work in connection with the cause of God in Old Testament times will teach us lessons that will enable us to meet emergencies in the work today....

"In ancient times the Lord worked in a wonderful way through consecrated women who united in His work with men whom He had chosen to stand as His representatives. He used women to gain great and decisive victories. More than once, in times of emergency, He brought them to the front and worked through them for the salvation of many lives." —*Daughters of God*, pp. 21, 45.

The testimonies also explain that the Sabbath school is not just for members and visitors who attend the church but also for those who are still outside the citizenship of Israel and God's family.

"What is the character of the religious experience of those who take part in the Sabbath school work? The light of truth has been shining in the minds and hearts of teachers and scholars, that they may diffuse it to those who are out of Christ. The saving message is to be given to those who have not yet opened their hearts to receive the heavenly gift. The truth must be urged upon the attention of those who seem indifferent." —*Counsels on Sabbath School*, p. 67.

We recommend that your study not be postponed to Friday evening but that each lesson be studied daily—generally one question per day. And in this digital, Internet era, every student and teacher in the Sabbath school has the opportunity to watch the videos created by the Ministerial Research Institute and placed online weekly in English and in Spanish.

These Sabbath School Lessons were developed by studying various works under prayer. It is our great desire that they will further the spiritual growth of each student—the chosen of God. Let everyone be motivated to prepare as a bride adorned to meet her Husband, whose coming is at the door. Revelation 19:7. We long for the day when we will leave behind the great tribulation of the last days, see Jesus face to face, and begin our reign with Him for eternity.

—Ministers and members of the Ministerial Research Institute
and the brethren of the General Conference

SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING

FOR PORTUGAL

GOD BLESS EVERY SACRIFICIAL GIFT!

1

Sabbath, July 4, 2020

Sarah and the Children of the Free

Sarah means “princess.”

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.” Galatians 4:22.

“Sarai’s name became Sarah, ‘princess;’ for, said the divine Voice, ‘She shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.’...

“Abraham’s marriage with Hagar resulted in evil, not only to his own household, but to future generations.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 137, 145.

SUNDAY

1. **What relationships did Sarah and Hagar have with Abraham? Why was Isaac considered the son of promise and Abraham’s only son, even though Ishmael was Abraham’s first son?**

Genesis 12:16, 18, 19; 20:12 *And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels....¹⁸And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? ¹⁹Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way....^{20:12}And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.*

Galatians 4:22, 23 *For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. ²³But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.*

“Sarah was fair to look upon, and he doubted not that the dusky Egyptians would covet the beautiful stranger, and that in order to secure her, they would not scruple to slay her husband. He reasoned that he was not guilty of falsehood in representing Sarah as his sister, for she was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. But this concealment of the real relation between them was deception. No deviation from strict integrity can meet God’s approval.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 26.

"Hagar was proud and boastful, and carried herself haughtily before Sarah. She flattered herself that she was to be the mother of a great nation God had promised to make of Abraham. And Abraham was compelled to listen to complaints from Sarah in regard to the conduct of Hagar, charging Abraham with wrong in the matter. Abraham is grieved and tells Sarah that Hagar is her servant, and that she can have the control of her, but refuses to send her away, for she is to be the mother of his child, through whom he thinks the promise is to be fulfilled. He informs Sarah that he should not have taken Hagar for his wife if it had not been her special request.

"Abraham was also compelled to listen to Hagar's complaints of abuse from Sarah. Abraham is in perplexity. If he seeks to redress the wrongs of Hagar he increases the jealousy and unhappiness of Sarah, his first and much-loved wife."
—*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 77, 78.

MONDAY

2. After lying to God, what lesson did Sarah have to learn to become the spiritual mother of Israel and of those who are saved?

Isaiah 57:11 *And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?*

Genesis 21:6, 7 *And Sarah said, God has made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. ⁷And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.*

Romans 4:20-22 *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ²¹And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. ²²And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

"Both Abraham and Sarah distrusted the power of God, and it was this error that led to the marriage with Hagar. God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. But his faith had not been perfect. He had shown distrust of God in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar."
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.

TUESDAY

3. To what places and covenants do the Scriptures compare Sarah and Hagar? Why are these two places considered to be in bondage?

Galatians 4:24-26 *Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engendereth to bondage, which is Agar. ²⁵For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. ²⁶But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

Romans 6:16, 19 *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?... ¹⁹I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

4. As spiritual children of Sarah, from what slavery are God's people freed? Of what do they become servants?

Romans 6:17, 18 *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

John 8:34-36 *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. ³⁵And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. ³⁶If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

"Even the most irreligious have their hours of conviction, when there comes to them a longing for something they have not. In every town and city there are large numbers who do not attend any place of worship. Many of these are attracted to the camp meeting. Many come who are slaves of sin, the helpless victims of evil habits. Many are convicted and converted. As they by faith grasp the promise of God for the forgiveness of their sins, the bondage of habit is broken. Forsaking their sinful indulgences, they become freemen in Christ Jesus, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 71.

THURSDAY

5. After a while, a conflict arose between Sarah and Hagar. What caused this? What did Sarah tell Abraham to do, which was confirmed by God?

Genesis 21:8-12 *And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. ¹¹And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. ¹²And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said to you, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*

"After the birth of Isaac the great joy manifested by Abraham and Sarah caused Hagar to be very jealous. Ishmael had been instructed by his mother that he was to be especially blessed of God, as the son of Abraham, and to be heir to that which was promised to him. Ishmael partook of his mother's feelings and was angry because of the joy manifested at the birth of Isaac. He despised Isaac, because he thought he was preferred before him. Sarah saw the disposition manifested by Ishmael against her son Isaac, and she was greatly moved. She related to Abraham the disrespectful conduct of Ishmael to her and to her son Isaac, and said to him, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.'" —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 79.

FRIDAY

6. Who are spiritual sons and daughters of Sarah? How should husbands treat their wives so as not to jeopardize their own prayers?

1 Peter 3:6, 7 *Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. ⁷Likewise, ye*

husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Ephesians 5:28, 29 *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.*

"The instruction given to Abraham touching the sacredness of the marriage relation was to be a lesson for all ages. It declares that the rights and happiness of this relation are to be carefully guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Sarah was the only true wife of Abraham. Her rights as a wife and mother no other person was entitled to share. She revered her husband, and in this she is presented in the New Testament as a worthy example. But she was unwilling that Abraham's affections should be given to another, and the Lord did not reprove her for requiring the banishment of her rival." —*Daughters of God*, p. 28.

SABBATH

7. In addition to the statement about her long life, where else in Scripture is Sarah the first woman to be mentioned? What was her main virtue as the spiritual mother of the sons and daughters of promise?

Genesis 23:1, 19 *And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old:... ¹⁹And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.*

Hebrews 11:1, 11 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... ¹¹Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*

"Jacob repeated the charge concerning his burial place: 'I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers ... in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah.' 'There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.' Thus the last act of his life was to manifest his faith in God's promise." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 237.

"Hebron was twenty miles north from Beersheba, and about midway between that city and the future site of Jerusalem. It was originally called Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba, the father of Anak. Later it was called Mamre, and here was the burial place of the patriarchs, 'the cave of Machpelah.' Hebron had been the possession of Caleb and was now the chief city of Judah. It lies in a valley surrounded by fertile hill country and fruitful lands. The most beautiful vineyards of Palestine were on its borders, together with numerous plantations of olive and other fruit trees." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 697.

* * *

Lot's Wife and Departure from the Big Cities

"Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:32.

"The wife of Lot was a selfish, irreligious woman, and her influence was exerted to separate her husband from Abraham. But for her, Lot would not have remained in Sodom, deprived of the counsel of the wise, God-fearing patriarch. The influence of his wife and the associations of that wicked city would have led him to apostatize from God had it not been for the faithful instruction he had early received from Abraham. The marriage of Lot and his choice of Sodom for a home were the first links in a chain of events fraught with evil to the world for many generations." —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 17.

SUNDAY

1. What did Jesus say about Lot's wife and her priorities? Why?

Luke 17:32, 33 *Remember Lot's wife. ³³Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*

1 John 2:15-17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

MONDAY

2. Where did Lot and his wife choose to live and raise their family? What advantages and perversions did that city offer, just like today's cities?

Genesis 13:10-12, last part *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as you come to Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. ¹²... And Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

Ezekiel 16:49, 50 *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. ⁵⁰And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.*

Jude 7 *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

"Lot chose Sodom as a place of residence because he looked more to the temporal advantages he would gain than to the moral influences that would

surround himself and his family. What did he gain so far as the things of this world are concerned? His possessions were destroyed, part of his children perished in the destruction of that wicked city, his wife was turned to a pillar of salt by the way, and he himself was saved 'so as by fire.' Nor did the evil results of his selfish choice end here; but the moral corruption of the place was so interwoven with the character of his children that they could not distinguish between good and evil, sin and righteousness." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 419.

TUESDAY

3. Describe the two times that God freed Lot, his wife, and their family from harm. In this adulterous time, God sends His people to whom to deliver them from harm?

Genesis 14:11, 12, 14-16; 19:1 *And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. ¹²And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.... ¹⁴And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. ¹⁵And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. ¹⁶And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.... ^{19:1}And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.*

Revelation 14:6-11 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. ⁸And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. ⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

WEDNESDAY

4. What message did the heavenly messengers have to give to Lot, his wife, and their family? But what was in their hearts because of living in Sodom?

Genesis 19:13, 15 *For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.... ¹⁵And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

Proverbs 20:9 *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*

Romans 7:5 *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit to death.*

"No longer will we love the society of the vile and contaminated and contaminating. We will be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then rich clusters of fruit are borne. The graces of the Spirit are borne in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. We have new affections, new appetites, new tastes. Old things have passed away, and lo, all things have become new." —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 135.

THURSDAY

5. How did Lot, his wife, and their daughters react to the command to flee the great Sodom? How do many believers feel today when they hear of the coming fall of great cities like Sodom and Babylon?

Genesis 19:16 *And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful to him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

Jeremiah 51:6 *Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*

Joel 3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.*

Hebrews 3:10 *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

"But Lot delayed. Though daily distressed at beholding deeds of violence, he had no true conception of the debasing and abominable iniquity practiced in that vile city. He did not realize the terrible necessity for God's judgments to put a check on sin. Some of his children clung to Sodom, and his wife refused to depart without them. The thought of leaving those whom he held dearest on earth seemed more than he could bear. It was hard to forsake his luxurious home and all the wealth acquired by the labors of his whole life, to go forth a destitute wanderer. Stupefied with sorrow, he lingered, loath to depart. But for the angels of God, they would all have perished in the ruin of Sodom. The heavenly messengers took him and his wife and daughters by the hand and led them out of the city." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 160.

"The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate,... and touch not the unclean.' Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next." —*Country Living*, p. 6.

6. What additional command did the angels give to Lot and his family? Sadly, what dominated the thoughts of Lot's wife during the flight, and with what result?

Genesis 19:17, 26 *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed....²⁶ But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

"Lot trod the plain with unwilling and tardy steps. He had so long associated with evil workers that he could not see his peril until his wife stood on the plain a pillar of salt forever." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 354.

"Again the solemn command was given to hasten, for the fiery storm would be delayed but little longer. But one of the fugitives ventured to cast a look backward to the doomed city, and she became a monument of God's judgment. If Lot himself had manifested no hesitancy to obey the angels' warning, but had earnestly fled toward the mountains, without one word of pleading or remonstrance, his wife also would have made her escape. The influence of his example would have saved her from the sin that sealed her doom. But his hesitancy and delay caused her to lightly regard the divine warning. While her body was upon the plain, her heart clung to Sodom, and she perished with it. She rebelled against God because His judgments involved her possessions and her children in the ruin. Although so greatly favored in being called out from the wicked city, she felt that she was severely dealt with, because the wealth that it had taken years to accumulate must be left to destruction. Instead of thankfully accepting deliverance, she presumptuously looked back to desire the life of those who had rejected the divine warning. Her sin showed her to be unworthy of life, for the preservation of which she felt so little gratitude." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 161.

SABBATH

7. According to Jesus, what should His people do when they see the cities becoming like Sodom? What do such signs proclaim?

Matthew 24:15, 16, 20 *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:...²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.*

Luke 17:28-30 *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.³⁰ Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

"In harmony with the light given me, I am urging people to come out from the great centers of population. Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it is becoming more and more evident that those who remain in them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their soul's salvation.

"The time is fast coming when the controlling power of the labor unions will be very oppressive. Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. We should now begin to heed the instruction given us over

and over again: Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies.” —*Country Living*, p. 9.

* * *

3

Sabbath, July 18, 2020

Rebekah and the Election

Rebekah means “kind.”

“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac. For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.” Romans 9:10, 11.

“After all had been arranged, the consent of the father and brother had been obtained, then Rebekah was consulted, whether she would go with the servant of Abraham a great distance from her father’s family, to become the wife of Isaac. She believed from the circumstances that had taken place that God’s hand had selected her to be Isaac’s wife, ‘and she said, I will go.’” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 85.

SUNDAY

1. **In what context does the apostle Paul quote Rebekah? Of what were the children in Rebekah’s womb not yet guilty, but whom had God already chosen?**

Romans 9:10-12 *And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; ¹¹(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) ¹²It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.*

MONDAY

2. **Why do the Scriptures say that God loved Jacob, Rebekah’s favorite, and hated Esau? Was God speaking just of the twin brothers, or of the nations that descended from them? Cite examples for your answer.**

Romans 9:13, 14 *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. ¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

Malachi 1:2-4 *I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, ³And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. ⁴Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.*

1 Kings 11:16 *(For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom.)*₁

2 Kings 14:7 *He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel to this day.*

TUESDAY

CONDITIONAL ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

3. On what are God's election and predestination based? Are they conditional or unconditional?

Romans 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

2 Peter 1:10 *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.*

Revelation 17:14, last part ... *And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

"Wonderful possibilities are provided for every one who has faith in Christ. No walls are built to keep any living soul from salvation. The predestination, or election, of which God speaks, includes all who will accept Christ as a personal Saviour, who will return to their loyalty, to perfect obedience to all God's commandments. This is the effectual salvation of a peculiar people, chosen by God from among men. All who are willing to be saved by Christ are the elect of God. It is the obedient who are predestinated from the foundation of the world. 'To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on Him.'" —*The Gospel Herald*, June 11, 1902.

"Here is the condition of the only saving election in the Word of God. We are to become partakers of the divine nature.... We are to add grace to grace.... There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election, once in grace, always in grace." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

WEDNESDAY

4. Why did God choose Rebekah and then her son Jacob? For what purpose has God chosen us?

Romans 9:23, 24 *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, ²⁴Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

Ephesians 1:4, 5 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*

"The Father sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith He hath loved them." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

5. To how many camels of Abraham's servant did Rebekah give water with her jug? What virtues did she, as God's chosen one for Isaac, reveal that we should imitate?

Genesis 24:10, 16-20, 25 *And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor....¹⁶And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.¹⁷And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray you, drink a little water of thy pitcher.¹⁸And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.¹⁹And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.²⁰And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels....²⁵She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.*

"He rested by a well which was a place of the greatest gathering. Here he particularly noticed the engaging manners and courteous conduct of Rebekah, and all the evidence he has asked of God he receives that Rebekah is the one whom God has been pleased to select to become Isaac's wife. She invites the servant to her father's house. He then relates to Rebekah's father, and her brother, the evidences he has received from the Lord, that Rebekah should become the wife of his master's son, Isaac." —*Daughters of God*, p. 29.

FRIDAY

THE CHOICE OF A SPOUSE

6. What concern did Rebekah have for her son Jacob? Likewise, what should be the concern of mothers for their children?

Genesis 27:46; 28:1 *And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?...^{28:1}And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.*

Deuteronomy 7:3, 4 *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

"In these days of peril and corruption, the young are exposed to many trials and temptations. Many are sailing in a dangerous harbor. They need a pilot; but they scorn to accept the much-needed help, feeling that they are competent to guide their own bark, and not realizing that it is about to strike a hidden rock that may cause them to make shipwreck of faith and happiness. They are infatuated with the subject of courtship and marriage, and their principal burden is to have their own way. In this, the most important period of their lives, they need an unerring counselor, an infallible guide. This they will find in the word of God. Unless they are diligent students of that word, they will make grave mistakes,

which will mar their happiness and that of others, both for the present and the future life.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 443.

“Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction.” —*Letters to Young Lovers*, p. 87.

SABBATH

7. What curse did Rebekah bring upon herself by influencing Jacob to deceive his father? Therefore, of what should one be very careful so that our divine election may be sure?

Genesis 27:12, 13 *My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse on me, and not a blessing. ¹³And his mother said to him, On me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.*

Matthew 12:36, 37 *But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

“Instead of trusting in God, the Disposer of events, she manifested her lack of faith by persuading Jacob to deceive his father. Jacob’s course in this was not approbated by God. Rebekah and Jacob should have waited for God to bring about His own purposes in His own way, and in His own time, instead of trying to bring about the foretold events by the aid of deception.

“Rebekah repented in bitterness for the wrong counsel which she gave to Jacob, for it was the means of separating him from her forever. He was compelled to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau, and his mother never saw his face again. Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced, by the course of Esau and Jacob, that the blessing rightly belonged to Jacob.” —*The Story of Redemption*, pp. 88, 89.

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4

Sabbath, July 25, 2020

Rachel and the Martyrs

Rachel means “lamb.”

“In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” Matthew 2:18.

“As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were martyrs that had been slain for Him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they also had a hem of red on their garments. Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and

about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly, to the top of the mountains and pluck the never-fading flowers.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 35.

SUNDAY

1. Describe Rachel, Jacob’s chosen, favorite wife. Of what two terrible sins was she guilty?

Genesis 29:9-12, 17; 31:19 *And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep; for she kept them. ¹⁰And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. ¹¹And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. ¹²And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s brother, and that he was Rebekah’s son: and she ran and told her father.... ¹⁷Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.... ^{31:19}And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father’s.*

“The second commandment forbids the worship of the true God by images or similitudes. Many heathen nations claimed that their images were mere figures or symbols by which the Deity was worshiped, but God has declared such worship to be sin. The attempt to represent the Eternal One by material objects would lower man’s conception of God. The mind, turned away from the infinite perfection of Jehovah, would be attracted to the creature rather than to the Creator. And as his conceptions of God were lowered, so would man become degraded....

“Both public and private sins are included in this prohibition. The eighth commandment condemns manstealing and slave dealing, and forbids wars of conquest. It condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 306, 309.

MONDAY

2. What curse did Jacob pronounce that fell upon Rachel? What lies was she guilty of?

Genesis 31:32-35; 35:16, 19, 20 *With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. ³³And Laban went into Jacob’s tent, and into Leah’s tent, and into the two maidservants’ tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah’s tent, and entered into Rachel’s tent. ³⁴Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel’s furniture, and sat on them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. ³⁵And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before you; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.... ^{35:16}And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.... ¹⁹And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. ²⁰And Jacob set a pillar on her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day.*

TESTIMONIES OF MARTYRS FOR THE FAITH

3. According to Matthew the evangelist, what was the meaning of Rachel crying for her children in Bethlehem? Just as Esau persecuted Rachel, Jacob, and their family, what descendant of Esau plotted the massacre of Rachel's seed in Bethlehem?

Matthew 2:16-18 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, ¹⁸In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

"Soldiers were at once sent to Bethlehem, with orders to put to death all the children of two years and under. The quiet homes of the city of David witnessed those scenes of horror that, six hundred years before, had been opened to the prophet." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 65.

"Remember the prophecy,... 'Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted.... Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to thine own border.'

"This promise is yours. You may be comforted and trust in the Lord. The Lord has often instructed me that many little ones are to be laid away before the time of trouble. We shall see our children again. We shall meet them and know them in the heavenly courts. Put your trust in the Lord, and be not afraid." —*Child Guidance*, pp. 565, 566.

WEDNESDAY

4. What other spiritual children of Rachel faced martyrdom for their faith? At the end of time, who else will be martyrs?

Hebrews 11:37, 38 *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4 *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ¹⁰And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ¹¹And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brothers, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.... ^{20:4}And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

"The catacombs afforded shelter for thousands. Beneath the hills outside the city of Rome, long galleries had been tunneled through earth and rock; the dark and intricate network of passages extended for miles beyond the city walls. In these underground retreats the followers of Christ buried their dead; and here also, when suspected and proscribed, they found a home. When the Life-giver shall awaken those who have fought the good fight, many a martyr for Christ's sake will come forth from those gloomy caverns...."

"In the great final conflict, Satan will employ the same policy, manifest the same spirit, and work for the same end as in all preceding ages. That which has been, will be, except that the coming struggle will be marked with a terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan's deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 40, xi.

THURSDAY

THE SPIRITUAL OAK—THE CROSS

- 5. What other weaknesses did Rachel and her family overcome? Where did they bury their pagan customs and sins? Tell about the symbolism of that place in your answer.**

Genesis 30:1, 14; 35:2-4 *And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister;... ¹⁴And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.... ^{35:2}Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: ³And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. ⁴And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.*

Galatians 6:14 *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

FRIDAY

- 6. What is the hope of Rachel's spiritual children today? But what are the stipulated conditions?**

Jeremiah 31:15-17 *Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. ¹⁶Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. ¹⁷And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.*

Mark 8:34, 35 *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.*

John 12:24, 25 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. ²⁵He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

7. Who experienced the anguish of the first and second deaths? Why is He called the first begotten of the dead and the fulfillment of the wave sheaf if others died and rose before Him?

Revelation 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*

Romans 5:14 *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept....²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

Hebrews 2:9, 14 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man....¹⁴ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

"Christ was the first fruits of them that slept. It was to the glory of God that the Prince of life should be the first fruits, the antitype of the wave sheaf. 'For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.' Romans 8:29. This very scene, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, had been celebrated in type by the Jews. When the first heads of grain ripened in the field, they were carefully gathered; and when the people went up to Jerusalem, these were presented to the Lord as a thank offering. The people waved the ripened sheaf before God, acknowledging Him as the Lord of the harvest. After this ceremony the sickle could be put to the wheat, and the harvest gathered." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 305.

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5

Sabbath, August 1, 2020

Leah and the Weary

Leah means "tired."

"And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender [tired] eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured." Genesis 29:16, 17.

"The road may be rough and the ascent steep; there may be pitfalls upon the right hand and upon the left; we may have to endure toil in our journey; when weary, when longing for rest, we may have to toil on; when faint, we may have to fight; when discouraged, we must still hope; but with Christ as our guide we shall not fail of reaching the desired haven at last. Christ Himself has trodden the rough way before us and has smoothed the path for our feet." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 140.

1. According to Jewish tradition, how did Leah come to be considered? However, how did she feel in her family, as shown in the names she gave to her children?

Ruth 4:11 *And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.*

Genesis 29:32-34; 30:20 *And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. ³³And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. ³⁴And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.... ^{30:20}And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.*

MONDAY

THE TIRED ONE SEEKS DRUGS

2. In what terrible deception did Leah participate with her father? What aphrodisiac did she later use?

Genesis 29:23, 25; 30:14 *And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.... ²⁵And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with you for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?... ^{30:14}And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.*

“When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love Leah. Laban wished to retain the faithful services of Jacob a greater length of time, therefore deceived him by giving him Leah, instead of Rachel. Jacob reproved Laban for thus trifling with his affections, in giving him Leah, whom he had not loved. Laban entreated Jacob not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family. Jacob was placed in a most trying position, but he decided to still retain Leah, and also marry her sister. Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel.” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 89.

TUESDAY

3. How does the Bible consider the use of narcotics and illicit drugs? What was Jesus' example in this?

Deuteronomy 29:18-20 *Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood. ¹⁹And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: ²⁰The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.*

Matthew 27:34 *They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*

If those who take these drugs were alone the sufferers, then the evil would not be as great. But parents not only sin against themselves in swallowing drug poisons, but they sin against their children. The vitiated state of their blood, the poison distributed throughout the system, the broken constitution, and various drug diseases, as the result of drug poisons, are transmitted to their offspring, and left them as a wretched inheritance, which is another great cause of the degeneracy of the race.” —*Temperance*, p. 84.

WEDNESDAY

OTHER EVILS TO OVERCOME

4. What had Laban stolen from his daughter Leah? Whom do people sometimes steal from and cause to be wearied?

Genesis 31:14-16 *And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? ¹⁵Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. ¹⁶For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children’s: now then, whatever God hath said unto thee, do.*

Malachi 2:17; 3:8 *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?... ^{3:8}Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*

“Are you, brethren, preaching that part of the truth that pleases the people, while other parts of the work are left incomplete? Will it be necessary for some one to follow after you, and urge upon the people the duty of faithfully bringing all the tithes and offerings into the Lord’s treasury? This is the work of the minister, but it has been sadly neglected. The people have robbed God, and the wrong has been suffered because the minister did not want to displease his brethren. God calls these men unfaithful stewards.” —*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 29.

THURSDAY

5. Did polygamy bring happiness to the home of Leah and Jacob?

Genesis 29:30; 37:3-5 *And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah,... ^{37:3}Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. ⁴And when*

his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. ⁵And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

“Jacob was not happy in his marriage relation, although his wives were sisters. He formed the marriage contract with Laban for his daughter Rachel, whom he loved.” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 89.

“Rachel was ever the one best loved; but his preference for her excited envy and jealousy, and his life was embittered by the rivalry between the sister-wives.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 189.

FRIDAY

VIRTUES AND THE SOLUTION FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEARY

6. What virtues did Leah have that we should imitate?

Genesis 29:35; 31:16; 35:4 *And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah....* ^{31:16}*Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do....* ^{35:4}*And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.*

Luke 18:43 *And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

1 Peter 3:3 *Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.*

“Music forms a part of God’s worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. The proper training of the voice is an important feature in education and should not be neglected. Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer. The heart must feel the spirit of the song to give it right expression.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 172.

“Without delay, renounce the cause of your backsliding, because it is sin against your own soul and against God. Be not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to separate our people from God. I have been shown that our church rules are very deficient. All exhibitions of pride in dress, which is forbidden in the word of God, should be sufficient reason for church discipline.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 647.

SABBATH

7. Where was Leah buried with great honor? Like her, many are afflicted, forgotten, and tired of contempt, but in whom can they find refuge?

Genesis 49:30, 31 *In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. ³¹There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.*

Isaiah 40:29, 31 *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength....* ³¹*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

“Jesus invites the weary and care-laden sons and daughters of Adam to come to Him, and lay on Him their heavy burdens. But many who hear this invitation, while sighing for rest, yet press on the rugged path, hugging their burdens close to their heart. Jesus loves them, and longs to bear their burdens and themselves also in His strong arms. He would remove the fears and uncertainties that rob them of peace and rest; but they must first come to Him, and tell Him the secret woes of their heart. He invites the confidence of His people as the proof of their love for Him. The gift of the humble, trusting heart is more precious to Him than all the wealth that riches can bestow. If they would only come to Him in the simplicity and confidence with which a child would come to His parents, the divine touch of His hands would relieve them of their burdens.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 277.

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6

Sabbath, August 8, 2020

Dinah and Fornication in the Last Days

Dinah means “judged” or “judgment.”

“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.” Genesis 34:1.

“Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with. Fornication is in our ranks. I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. There is much we will never know, but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it.” –*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 237.

SUNDAY

1. Who were Dinah’s parents? How was she tempted?

Genesis 30:21; 46:15; 34:1 *And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah....* ^{46:15}*These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah:...* ^{34:1}*And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.*

“The standard of piety is low among professed Christians generally, and it is hard for the young to resist the worldly influences that are encouraged by many church members. The majority of nominal Christians, while they profess to be living for Christ, are really living for the world. They do not discern the excellence

of heavenly things, and therefore cannot truly love them. Many profess to be Christians because Christianity is considered honorable. They do not discern that genuine Christianity means cross-bearing, and their religion has little influence to restrain them from taking part in worldly pleasures.

“Some can enter the ballroom and unite in all the amusements which it affords. Others cannot go to such lengths as this, yet they can attend parties of pleasure, picnics, shows and other places of worldly amusement; and the most discerning eye would fail to detect any difference between their appearance and that of unbelievers.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 326.

MONDAY

BE CAREFUL OF FRIENDSHIPS

2. What counsel does the Bible give concerning associates, friendship, business, and marriage? What instruction is very important for all who live in this adulterous age?

2 Corinthians 6:14, 15 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

James 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

1 Corinthians 6:18 *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

“Upon fathers and mothers devolves the responsibility of giving a Christian education to the children intrusted to them. In no case are they to let any line of business so absorb mind and time and talents that their children are allowed to drift until they are separated far from God. They are not to allow their children to slip out of their grasp into the hands of unbelievers. They are to do all in their power to keep them from imbibing the spirit of the world. They are to train them to become workers together with God. They are to be God’s human hand, fitting themselves and their children for an endless life.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 545.

“Some of our brethren engaged in business have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment. Some have been in partnership with unbelievers, and the influence of these Sabbathbreaking associates has had its effect upon them. Some have been so blinded that they could not discern the danger in such connections, but it is only the greater because unperceived. While one partner is professedly observing the Sabbath, the other, with the laborers employed, is carrying on the business of the firm. The Sabbathkeeper, though not outwardly engaged in labor, cannot keep his thoughts from business matters. While he may endeavor to keep the Sabbath, he does not keep it. The Lord looks upon him as a transgressor.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 180.

TUESDAY

3. What tragedy did Dinah suffer? Was she guilty for losing her honor?

Genesis 34:2, 3 *And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. ³And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.*

Deuteronomy 22:26, 27 *But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter: ²⁷For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.*

“The tarry of Jacob and his sons at Shechem ended in violence and bloodshed. The one daughter of the household had been brought to shame and sorrow, two brothers were involved in the guilt of murder, a whole city had been given to ruin and slaughter, in retaliation for the lawless deed of one rash youth. The beginning that led to results so terrible was the act of Jacob’s daughter, who ‘went out to see the daughters of the land,’ thus venturing into association with the ungodly. He who seeks pleasure among those that fear not God is placing himself on Satan’s ground and inviting his temptations.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

WEDNESDAY

4. Who wanted Dinah for his wife? How did Jacob’s sons feel when they heard about Dinah being dishonored?

Genesis 34:4-7 *And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. ⁵And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. ⁶And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. ⁷And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had worked folly in Israel in lying with Jacob’s daughter: which thing ought not to be done.*

THURSDAY

5. What dowry did Shechem offer to pay to Jacob to obtain Dinah for his son? But what were the real motives of Shechem and Hamor?

Genesis 34:11, 12, 22, 23 *And Shechem said unto her father and to her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. ¹²Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as you shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.... ²²Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. ²³Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.*

“Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed. Because of this, many men and women are without hope and without God in the world. Their noble aspirations are dead; by a chain of circumstances they are held in Satan’s net.” —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 17.

FORNICATION LEADS TO DEATH**6. After the men of the town of Shechem were circumcised, what sins did Dinah's brothers commit? Was such vengeance justified in relation to God and His law?**

Genesis 34:24-29; 49:5-7 *And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. ²⁵And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. ²⁶And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. ²⁷The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. ²⁸They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, ²⁹And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.... ^{49:5}Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. ⁶O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. ⁷Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*

"The treacherous cruelty of Simeon and Levi was not unprovoked; yet in their course toward the Shechemites they committed a grievous sin. They had carefully concealed from Jacob their intentions, and the tidings of their revenge filled him with horror. Heartsick at the deceit and violence of his sons, he only said, 'Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land:... and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.' But the grief and abhorrence with which he regarded their bloody deed is shown by the words in which, nearly fifty years later, he referred to it, as he lay upon his deathbed in Egypt: 'Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united.... Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.' Genesis 49:5-7." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

SABBATH

7. As the end of time approaches, what terrible sin will be repeated among God's people? What is spiritual fornication?

Ezekiel 23:14; 8:12, 13 *And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion.... ^{8:12}Then said he to me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth. ¹³He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.*

Hosea 1:2, last part; 5:4 ... *For the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord....^{5:4}They will not frame their doings to turn to their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the middle of them, and they have not known the Lord.*

“Near the close of this earth’s history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before their entering the Land of Promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls and to take God’s professed people upon their weakest points. Those who have not brought the lower passions into subjection to the higher powers of their being, those who have allowed their minds to flow in a channel of carnal indulgence of the baser passions, Satan is determined to destroy with his temptations.... Men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God’s law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid, over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character, knowing that he who offends on one point is guilty of all, thus obtaining complete mastery over the entire man. Mind, soul, body, and conscience are involved in the ruin. If he be a messenger of righteousness and has had great light, or if the Lord has used him as His special worker in the cause of truth, then how great is the triumph of Satan! How he exults! How God is dishonored!” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 327.

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7

Sabbath, August 15, 2020

Shiphrah and Puah (the Midwives) and the Death Decree

Shiphrah means “to decorate,” and Puah means “shine.”

“And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.” Exodus 1:15, 16.

“It is not in harmony with the instructions given at Sinai that gentlemen physicians should do the work of midwives. The Bible speaks of women at childbirth being attended by women, and thus it ought always to be. Women should be educated and trained to act skillfully as midwives and physicians to their sex. It is just as important that a line of study be given to educate women to deal with women’s diseases,... The wages of the woman should be proportionate to her services. She should be as much appreciated in her work as the gentleman physician is appreciated in his work.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 365.

1. Under what circumstances did the people of Israel suffer in the days of the two midwives? Will be slavery at the end of time?

Exodus 1:13, 14 *And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: ¹⁴And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.*

Revelation 13:16; 19:17, 18 *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.... ^{19:17}And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God. ¹⁸That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

"The beast with two horns is also to say 'to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast;' and, furthermore, it is to command all, 'both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,' to receive the mark of the beast. Revelation 13:11-16. It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy. But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 578.

MONDAY

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

2. What did the names of the Hebrew midwives in Egypt mean? What did Pharaoh order them to do?

Exodus 1:15, 16 *And the king of Egypt to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: ¹⁶And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.*

"Orders were issued to the women whose employment gave them opportunity for executing the command, to destroy the Hebrew male children at their birth. Satan was the mover in this matter. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he hoped to defeat the divine purpose. But the women feared God, and dared not execute the cruel mandate. The Lord approved their course, and prospered them. The king, angry at the failure of his design, made the command more urgent and extensive. The whole nation was called upon to hunt out and slaughter his helpless victims. 'And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.'" —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 242.

3. How did the midwives Shiprah and Puah respond to Pharaoh's infanticide order? What principle did these women adhere to in their civil disobedience?

Exodus 1:17 *But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.*

Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

"We may disguise poison by mingling it with wholesome food, but we do not change its nature. On the contrary, it is rendered more dangerous, as it is more likely to be taken unawares. It is one of Satan's devices to combine with falsehood just enough truth to give it plausibility. The leaders of the Sunday movement may advocate reforms which the people need, principles which are in harmony with the Bible; yet while there is with these a requirement which is contrary to God's law, His servants cannot unite with them. Nothing can justify them in setting aside the commandments of God for the precepts of men." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 587.

4. In the response demanded from the midwives Shiprah and Puah at the court of Pharaoh, what future events were foreshadowed? In contrast to the order made by Pharaoh, what was the mission of the Messiah?

Exodus 1:18 *And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?*

Matthew 10:17, 18, 21, 22 *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.... ²¹And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. ²²And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

"The time of trouble is about to come upon the people of God. Then it is that the decree will go forth forbidding those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord to buy or sell, and threatening them with punishment, and even death, if they do not observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath.

"The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death.

"Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death." —*Last Day Events*, pp. 257, 258.

5. What did the midwives Shiphrah and Puah reply to the Pharaoh? How did God reward them?

Exodus 1:19-21 *And the midwives said to Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. ²⁰Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. ²¹And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.*

Matthew 10:16 *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the middle of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

“In the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right.... In the midst of the time of trouble, trouble such as has not been since there was a nation, His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a ‘God of gods,’ able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.” —*Maranatha*, p. 270.

FRIDAY

THE DEATH DECREE

6. In his anger, what was the Pharaoh’s final cruel command? What future edicts, not only in the time of Christ but also in the end, did the Pharaoh’s command foreshadow?

Exodus 1:22 *And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.*

Matthew 2:16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.*

John 16:2-4 *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. ⁴But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

Revelation 13:15 *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

“But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

7. What Biblical evidence do we have of the death decree that will be issued in the last days? How will God's people overcome in the time of danger?

Revelation 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;...*

Matthew 24:9, 20; 10:23 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake....²⁰But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:....^{10:23}But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.*

"As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for 'the munitions of rocks.' Isaiah 33:16." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

"During the night a very impressive scene passed before me. There seemed to be great confusion and the conflict of armies. A messenger from the Lord stood before me, and said, 'Call your household. I will lead you; follow me.' He led me down a dark passage, through a forest, then through the clefts of mountains, and said, 'Here you are safe.' There were others who had been led to this retreat. The heavenly messenger said, 'The time of trouble has come as a thief in the night, as the Lord warned you it would come.'" —*Maranatha*, p. 270.

ADDITIONAL STUDY – A TYPE OF CHRIST

"He well knew that Moses, in breaking the yoke of bondage from off the children of Israel, prefigured Christ, who was to break the reign of sin over the human family. He knew that when Christ should appear, mighty miracles would be wrought as an evidence to the world that God had sent Him. Satan trembled for his power. By counterfeiting the work of God through Moses, he hoped not only to prevent the deliverance of Israel, but to exert an influence through future ages to destroy faith in the miracles of Christ. Satan is constantly seeking to counterfeit the work of Christ and to establish his own power and claims. He leads men to account for the miracles of Christ by making them appear to be the result of human skill and power. In many minds he thus destroys faith in Christ as the Son of God, and leads them to reject the gracious offers of mercy through the plan of redemption....

"At the court of Pharaoh, Moses received the highest civil and military training. The monarch had determined to make his adopted grandson his successor on the throne, and the youth was educated for his high station. 'And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.' Acts 7:22. His ability as a military leader made him a favorite with the armies of Egypt, and he was generally regarded as a remarkable character. Satan had been defeated

in his purpose. The very decree condemning the Hebrew children to death had been overruled by God for the training and education of the future leader of His people.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 264, 245.

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8

Sabbath, August 22, 2020

Miriam and the Song of the Redeemed

Maria or Miriam means “strong, robust, and rebellious.”

“For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.” Micah 6:4.

“Miriam had led the women of Israel in song and dance on the shore of the Red Sea. In the affections of the people and the honor of Heaven she stood second only to Moses and Aaron.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 33.

SUNDAY

1. Who was Miriam? What gift of the Spirit did she receive?

Numbers 26:59 *And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bore unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.*

Exodus 15:20 *And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

“Aaron and Miriam had occupied a position of high honor and leadership in Israel. Both were endowed with the prophetic gift, and both had been divinely associated with Moses in the deliverance of the Hebrews. ‘I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam’ (Micah 6:4) are the words of the Lord by the prophet Micah....

“Miriam watched over Moses as their mother hid him in the bulrushes. Later she was associated with Moses and Aaron in the deliverance of God’s people from Egypt. She was talented and gifted in many ways, but jealousy of her position with Moses led her to make serious mistakes.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 32.

MONDAY

2. Who bore the name Mary in the New Testament? Like her, what are God’s people called to do in the last days?

Luke 1:27 *To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*

Matthew 1:16; 27:56, 61 *And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ....^{27:56}Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children....*

⁶¹*And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.*

Revelation 10:11 *And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

"The third angel's message, the great testing truth for this time, is to be taught in all our institutions. God designs that through them this special warning shall be given, and bright beams of light shall shine to the world. Time is short. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and pray, and study and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and the Revelation." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 128.

"Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" —*Evangelism*, p. 196.

TUESDAY

POET AND SINGER

3. As a child, what virtues were noted in Jochebed's firstborn child? How should God's children today imitate Miriam?

Exodus 2:3, 4, 7, 8 *And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. ⁴And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.... ⁷Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? ⁸And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.*

Matthew 10:18 *And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

"Miriam's force of character had been early displayed when as a child she watched beside the Nile the little basket in which was hidden the infant Moses. Her self-control and tact God had made instrumental in preserving the deliverer of His people." —*Daughters of God*, p. 33.

WEDNESDAY

4. What were the words of the song that Miriam composed near the Red Sea? What other gift of the spirit did she possess that God's people need to imitate?

Exodus 15:21 *And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

Ephesians 5:19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*

James 5:13 *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

THE DANGER OF MURMURING**5. What sin of his sister Miriam did Moses refer to that serves as a warning for the church today? What did she suffer because of her impious behavior?**

Deuteronomy 24:9 *Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.*

Numbers 12:1, 2, 10 *And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. ²And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.... ¹⁰And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.*

“God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God Himself. The seditious whisperers were summoned to the tabernacle, and brought face to face with Moses. ‘And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam.’” —*Daughters of God*, p. 33.

“Yielding to the spirit of dissatisfaction, Miriam found cause of complaint in events that God had especially overruled. The marriage of Moses had been displeasing to her. That he should choose a woman of another nation, instead of taking a wife from among the Hebrews, was an offense to her family and national pride. Zipporah was treated with ill-disguised contempt. Though called a ‘Cushite woman’ (Numbers 12:1, Revised Version), the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham. In personal appearance she differed from the Hebrews in being of a somewhat darker complexion. Though not an Israelite, Zipporah was a worshiper of the true God. She was of a timid, retiring disposition, gentle and affectionate, and greatly distressed at the sight of suffering....

“The cloud disappeared from the tabernacle in token of God’s displeasure, and Miriam was smitten. She ‘became leprous, white as snow.’ Aaron was spared, but he was severely rebuked in Miriam’s punishment. Now, their pride humbled in the dust, Aaron confessed their sin, and entreated that his sister might not be left to perish by that loathsome and deadly scourge. In answer to the prayers of Moses the leprosy was cleansed. Miriam was, however, shut out of the camp for seven days. Not until she was banished from the encampment did the symbol of God’s favor again rest upon the tabernacle. In respect for her high position, and in grief at the blow that had fallen upon her, the whole company abode in Hazeroth, awaiting her return.” —*Daughters of God*, pp. 34, 33.

FRIDAY

6. What object was placed in the ark of the covenant as a token against murmuring and rebellion? What admonition and counsel does Paul give as we consider Miriam’s actions?

Numbers 17:10 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.*

1 Corinthians 10:10-12 *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. ¹¹Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. ¹²Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah's ruin? Pride and ambition are widespread; and when these are cherished, they open the door to envy, and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan. Like Korah and his companions, many, even of the professed followers of Christ, are thinking, planning, and working so eagerly for self-exaltation that in order to gain the sympathy and support of the people they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord's servants, and even charging them with the base and selfish motives that inspire their own hearts. By persistently reiterating falsehood, and that against all evidence, they at last come to believe it to be truth. While endeavoring to destroy the confidence of the people in the men of God's appointment, they really believe that they are engaged in a good work, verily doing God service." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 403.

SABBATH

PRAISING GOD

7. Being aware of the great conflict against the beast and its image, what will the behavior be of the faithful and chosen? Who will the redeemed praise for endless ages?

Revelation 15:2-4; 19:6, 7 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. ³And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. ⁴Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.... ^{19:6}And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

"The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified.... As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous song: 'Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood!'" —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 374.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

"We must come nearer to the cross of Christ. Penitence at the foot of the cross is the first lesson of peace we have to learn. The love of Jesus, who can

comprehend it? Infinitely more tender and self-denying than a mother's love! If we would know the value of a human soul, we must look in living faith upon the cross, and thus begin the study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. The value of our time and our talents can be estimated only by the greatness of the ransom paid for our redemption." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 100.

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Please read the Missionary Report from Jamaica on page 44.

9

Sabbath, August 29, 2020

Zipporah and the Blood Covenant

Zipporah means "small bird."

"So He [God] let him [Moses] go: then she [Zipporah] said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision." Exodus 4:26.

"Though not an Israelite, Zipporah was a worshiper of the true God. She was of a timid, retiring disposition, gentle and affectionate, and greatly distressed at the sight of suffering; and it was for this reason that Moses, when on the way to Egypt, had consented to her return to Midian. He desired to spare her the pain of witnessing the judgments that were to fall on the Egyptians." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 383.

SUNDAY

1. Who was Zipporah, and where did she live? Why did the Israelites discriminate her?

Exodus 2:16, 21 *Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock....²¹ And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.*

Numbers 12:1 *And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.*

Song of Solomon 1:5, 6 *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. ⁶Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*

"Though called a 'Cushite woman' (Numbers 12:1, Revised Version), the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham." —*Daughters of God*, p. 34.

"When Zipporah rejoined her husband in the wilderness, she saw that his burdens were wearing away his strength, and she made known her fears to Jethro, who suggested measures for his relief. Here was the chief reason for Miriam's antipathy to Zipporah. Smarting under the supposed neglect shown to herself and Aaron, she regarded the wife of Moses as the cause, concluding that her influence had prevented him from taking them into his counsels as formerly. Had Aaron stood up firmly for the right, he might have checked the evil; but instead of showing Miriam the sinfulness of her conduct, he sympathized with her, listened to her words of complaint, and thus came to share her jealousy." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 384.

WORKERS FOR GOD

2. What were the literal and spiritual meanings of the names of Zipporah's two sons? What is especially significant for God's people today in the firstborn's name?

Exodus 2:22 *And she bare him [Moses] a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.*

1 Peter 2:11 *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*

"We are pilgrims and strangers in this earth, seeking a better country, even a heavenly. When the Lord tells us to move, we are to obey, however inconvenient and inconsistent such a command may seem to us to be." —*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 182.

"We are travelers, pilgrims and strangers, on earth. Let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress. Let us rather set a right example before our associates. Let us fitly represent our faith by restricting our wants. Let the churches arise as one, and work earnestly as those who are walking in the full light of truth for these last days. Let your influence impress souls with the sacredness of God's requirements." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 452.

TUESDAY

3. Who were the grandsons and descendants of Zipporah, and what responsibilities did they carry in Israel? Similarly, with what responsibilities will the redeemed be entrusted when Jesus returns in glory?

1 Chronicles 23:14-17; 26:24-27 *Now concerning Moses the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi. ¹⁵The sons of Moses were, Gershom, and Eliezer. ¹⁶Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel was the chief. ¹⁷And the sons of Eliezer were, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many.... ^{26:24}And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures. ²⁵And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. ²⁶Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. ²⁷Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

"At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: 'I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.' 'They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.' Revelation 20:4, 6. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, 'the saints shall judge the world.' 1 Corinthians 6:2. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every

case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.

"Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people. Says Paul: 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' Verse 3. And Jude declares that 'the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.' Jude 6." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.

WEDNESDAY

CIRCUMCISION AND ITS SYMBOLISM

4. What does the fact that Zipporah accompanied her husband to Egypt show about her character?

Exodus 4:20 *And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.*

"Though called a 'Cushite woman' (Numbers 12:1, Revised Version), the wife of Moses was a Midianite, and thus a descendant of Abraham. In personal appearance she differed from the Hebrews in being of a somewhat darker complexion. Though not an Israelite, Zipporah was a worshiper of the true God." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 383.

THURSDAY

5. How did Zipporah actually save her husband's life? Where is the noble act of Zipporah implied in the New Testament?

Exodus 4:24-26 *And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. ²⁵Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. ²⁶So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.*

Hebrews 11:34 *Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

"On the way from Midian, Moses received a startling and terrible warning of the Lord's displeasure. An angel appeared to him in a threatening manner, as if he would immediately destroy him. No explanation was given; but Moses remembered that he had disregarded one of God's requirements; yielding to the persuasion of his wife, he had neglected to perform the rite of circumcision upon their youngest son. He had failed to comply with the condition by which his child could be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with Israel; and such a neglect on the part of their chosen leader could not but lessen the force of the divine precepts upon the people. Zipporah, fearing that her husband would be slain, performed the rite herself, and the angel then permitted Moses to pursue his journey. In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 255.

FRIDAY

6. What does circumcision symbolize in the Christian era? What is the substitute for circumcision in the New Testament?

Romans 2:29 *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

Colossians 2:11, 12 *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

"It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

"The old sinful life is dead; the new life entered into with Christ by the pledge of baptism." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 300.

SABBATH

BIRDS, LEPROSY, AND THE GOSPEL

7. What rite illustrates Zipporah's name? In the gospels, what did Jesus say about this sacred rite, and what do the little birds represent?

Leviticus 14:2-7 *This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: ³And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper. ⁴Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: ⁵And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: ⁶As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: ⁷And he shall sprinkle on him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.*

Matthew 8:3, 4 *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

"Immediately a change passes over the leper. His blood becomes healthy, the nerves sensitive, the muscles firm. The unnaturally white, scaly surface peculiar to leprosy disappears; and his flesh becomes as the flesh of a little child." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 69.

"Had the priests known the facts concerning the healing of the leper, their hatred of Christ might have led them to render a dishonest sentence. Jesus desired the man to present himself at the temple before any rumors concerning the miracle had reached them. Thus an impartial decision could be secured, and the restored leper would be permitted to unite once more with his family and friends." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 264.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

"If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 364.

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MISSIONARY REPORT from Jamaica

To be read on Sabbath, August 29, 2020

The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered on Sabbath, September 5, 2020

"Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord and declare His praise in the islands." Isaiah 42:10-12.

Jamaica is a country that is well known for its tropical climate and landscapes. Millions of visitors flock to this island every year to enjoy its sun, white sandy beaches, and abundant entertainment. A beautiful island of trees and water, it is part of the Greater Antilles, approximately 145 miles (234 kilometers) long and up to 50 miles (80 kilometers) wide. Located in the Caribbean Sea, it is 90 miles (145 km) south of Cuba and 119 miles (191 km) west of the island of Hispaniola.

There are 2,970,340 inhabitants. According to the 2011 census, the population is 92.1 percent black, 6.1 percent mixed, 0.8 percent East Indian, 0.4 percent other, and 0.7 percent unspecified. The main languages are English and English Patois. There are a number of religious groups in the country: Protestant, 64.8 percent; Roman Catholic, 2.2 percent; Jehovah's Witnesses, 1.9 percent; Rastafarian, 1.1 percent; other, 6.5 percent; none, 21.3 percent; and unspecified, 2.3 percent. There are over 100 denominations, and the country has the most churches per square mile in the whole world. The leading organization is the nominal Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The third angel's message entered Jamaica in the 1890s, and the International Missionary Society began its work here in the 1980s with the help of the Canadian Field, particularly Brother Timo Martin. There are fourteen parishes, and the IMS is represented in four of them with a membership of 53.

In the western section of the island, particularly in the city of Montego Bay, there is a great need for a memorial to stand as a witness of the truth. "When an interest is aroused in any town or city, that interest should be followed up. The place should be thoroughly worked until a humble house of worship stands as a sign, a memorial of God's Sabbath, a light amid the moral darkness. These memorials are to stand in many places as witnesses to the truth. God in His mercy has provided that the messengers of the gospel shall go to all countries, tongues,

and peoples until the standard of truth shall be established in all parts of the inhabited world.

"Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. Let not the workers leave the place without accomplishing this.

"In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to the work. Often this renders it difficult to extend the work. As persons become interested in the truth, they are told by the ministers of other churches—and these words are echoed by the church members: 'These people have no church, and you have no place of worship. You are a small company, poor and unlearned. In a short time the ministers will go away, and then the interest will die down. Then you will give up all these new ideas which you have received.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 100.

The believers in Montego Bay have been holding worship services in a community center for many years. However, it is not possible to hold meetings there at night, because there is no electricity at the facility, so the church meets only on the Sabbath. The gospel work is hindered by not being able to carry out other activities, such as prayer meetings, missionary services, seminars, and youth services. As a result, many visitors and young people have decided to worship elsewhere.

It has been very difficult to purchase bare land or a building, since the cost for most plots is over 6 million Jamaican Dollars (US \$43,742), and those with buildings are even more expensive, costing 15 million Jamaican Dollars (US \$109,354) and above.

Dear brothers and sisters around the world, the believers in Jamaica are appealing to you for your help. We need your generous gifts to be given next Sabbath to support the work and evangelize this island nation for the Lord, while remembering His promise, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

We look forward to receiving your support. May our loving God recompense your generous efforts a hundredfold.

—Elder George Gowie
Jamaican Field President

SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING
FOR JAMAICA

YOUR GENEROUS GIFT WILL IMPACT THE LIVES OF PRECIOUS SOULS!

10

Sabbath, September 5, 2020

The Daughters of Zelophehad and the Eternal Inheritance

The root word of Zelophehad means “united.”

“And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.” Numbers 26:33.

“In God’s plan for Israel every family had a home on the land, with sufficient ground for tilling. Thus were provided both the means and the incentive for a useful, industrious, and self-supporting life. And no devising of men has ever improved upon that plan. To the world’s departure from it is owing, to a large degree, the poverty and wretchedness that exist today.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 183.

SUNDAY

1. What was one of the royal cities in Israel? For whom was this beautiful place named?

1 Kings 15:33 *In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.*

Song of Solomon 6:4 *Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

Numbers 27:1 *Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.*

MONDAY

APPEALING TO GOD

2. What request did the daughters of Zelophehad bring to Moses and Eleazar the high priest? When there is an ecclesiastical matter to resolve, to whom is one not to turn?

Numbers 27:2-4 *And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of*

the congregation, saying, ³*Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. ⁴Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give to us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.*

1 Corinthians 6:1, 2, 6 *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? ²Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?... ⁶But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.*

“Those church members who appeal to the courts of the world show that they have chosen the world as their judge, and their names are registered in heaven as one with unbelievers. How eagerly the world seizes the statements of those who betray sacred trusts!...

“The saints are to judge the world. Then are they to depend upon the world, and upon the world’s lawyers to settle their difficulties? God does not want them to take their troubles to the subjects of the enemy for decision. Let us have confidence in one another.” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 302, 303.

TUESDAY

3. Who decided the matter concerning the daughters of Zelphehad, and what did He say? Therefore, on the new earth and among the 144,000, who will also have an eternal inheritance?

Numbers 27:5-8 *And Moses brought their cause before the Lord. ⁶And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, ⁷The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father’s brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. ⁸And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter.*

Galatians 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Revelation 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

“Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God’s commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of His requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character, will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end. If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a co-laborer with God. You are elected to wear the yoke of Christ—to bear His burden, to lift His cross. You are to be diligent ‘to make your calling and election sure.’ Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God’s law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 125.

4. However, who disagreed with the inheritance granted to the daughters of Zelophehad? What was the reasoning behind this?

Numbers 36:1-3 *And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel: ²And they said, The Lord commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters. ³And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.*

“The whole land, both the parts already conquered and that which was yet unsubdued, was to be apportioned among the tribes. And it was the duty of each tribe to fully subdue its own inheritance. If the people should prove faithful to God, He would drive out their enemies from before them; and He promised to give them still greater possessions if they would but be true to His covenant. To Joshua, with Eleazar the high priest, and the heads of the tribes, the distribution of the land was committed, the location of each tribe being determined by lot. Moses himself had fixed the bounds of the country as it was to be divided among the tribes when they should come in possession of Canaan, and had appointed a prince from each tribe to attend to the distribution. The tribe of Levi, being devoted to the sanctuary service, was not counted in this allotment; but forty-eight cities in different parts of the country were assigned the Levites as their inheritance.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 511.

“Naboth valued his vineyard highly because it had belonged to his fathers, and he refused to part with it. ‘The Lord forbid it me,’ he said to Ahab, ‘that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.’ According to the Levitical code no land could be transferred permanently by sale or exchange; every one of the children of Israel must ‘keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.’ Numbers 36:7.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 205.

THURSDAY

5. To what period of time did those who protested against the daughters of Zelophehad receiving an inheritance specifically refer? When will the final spiritual jubilee take place?

Numbers 36:4 *And when the jubile of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.*

Daniel 7:27 *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

“And although one might for a time dispose of his possession, he could not permanently barter away the inheritance of his children. When able to redeem his land, he was at liberty at any time to do so. Debts were remitted every seventh

year, and in the fiftieth, or year of jubilee, all landed property reverted to the original owner.

"Thus every family was secured in its possession, and a safeguard was afforded against the extremes of either wealth or want." —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 184, 185.

"But that which especially distinguished the year of jubilee was the reversion of all landed property to the family of the original possessor. By the special direction of God the land had been divided by lot. After the division was made no one was at liberty to trade his estate. Neither was he to sell his land unless poverty compelled him to do so, and then, whenever he or any of his kindred might desire to redeem it, the purchaser must not refuse to sell it; and if unredeemed, it would revert to its first possessor or his heirs in the year of jubilee....

"The regulations that God established were designed to promote social equality. The provisions of the sabbatical year and the jubilee would, in a great measure, set right that which during the interval had gone wrong in the social and political economy of the nation." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 533, 534.

FRIDAY

6. What solution and command did the Most High give so that the daughters of Zelophehad could retain their rights of inheritance? In the same manner, whom should single and widowed women marry so as not to lose their heavenly inheritance?

Numbers 36:5-8 *And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. ⁶This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. ⁷So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. ⁸And every daughter, that possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.*

1 Corinthians 7:39 *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.*

"The apostle Paul declares that it is impossible for the children of God to unite with worldlings: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' This does not refer to marriage alone; any intimate relation of confidence and co-partnership with those who have no love for God or the truth is a snare." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 13.

"One of the greatest dangers that besets the people of God today, is that of association with the ungodly; especially in uniting themselves in marriage with unbelievers. With many, the love for the human eclipses the love for the divine. They take the first step in backsliding by venturing to disregard the Lord's express command; and complete apostasy is too often the result. It has ever proved a dangerous thing for men to carry out their own will in opposition to the requirements of God. Yet it is a hard lesson for men to learn that God means what He says. As a rule, those who choose for their friends and companions, persons who reject Christ and trample upon God's law, eventually become of the same mind and spirit." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 165.

THE ETERNAL, CELESTIAL INHERITANCE

7. Whom did the daughters of Zelophehad marry, thus retaining their inheritance in Israel? Likewise, whose relative did Jesus become so that they would not lose their inheritance in the new earth?

Numbers 36:10-12 *Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: ¹¹For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to their father's brothers' sons. ¹²And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.*

Hebrews 2:11, 14 *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.... ¹⁴Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

"Our Saviour declares that He brought from heaven as a donation eternal life. He was to be lifted up upon the cross of Calvary to draw all men unto Him. How then shall we treat the purchased inheritance of Christ? Tenderness, appreciation, kindness, sympathy, and love should be shown to them. Then we may work to help and bless one another." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 229.

ADDITIONAL STUDY – THE JUBILEE

"In every sacrifice Christ's death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 211.

"Then commenced the jubilee, when the land should rest. I saw the pious slave rise in victory and triumph, and shake off the chains that bound him, while his wicked master was in confusion and knew not what to do, for the wicked could not understand the words of the voice of God." —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 410.

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11

Sabbath, September 12, 2020

Rahab and the Falls of Jericho and Babylon

Rahab means "spacious, extensive, and vain."

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." Hebrews 11:31.

"A few miles beyond the [Jordan] river, just opposite the place where the Israelites were encamped, was the large and strongly fortified city of Jericho. This city was virtually the key to the whole country, and it would present a formidable obstacle to the success of Israel. Joshua therefore sent two young men as spies to visit this city and ascertain something as to its population, its resources, and the strength of its fortifications. The inhabitants of the city, terrified and suspicious,

were constantly on the alert, and the messengers were in great danger. They were, however, preserved by Rahab, a woman of Jericho, at the peril of her own life. In return for her kindness they gave her a promise of protection when the city should be taken.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 35.

SUNDAY

THE STORIES OF TWO HARLOTS—RAHAB AND BABYLON

1. Where does Rahab appear prominently in the New Testament? What was her past lifestyle?

Matthew 1:1, 5 *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham....⁵And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse.*

Hebrews 11:31 *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

James 2:25 *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*

“In wicked Jericho the testimony of a heathen woman was, ‘The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.’ Joshua 2:11. The knowledge of Jehovah that had thus come to her, proved her salvation. By faith ‘Rahab perished not with them that believed not.’ Hebrews 11:31. And her conversion was not an isolated case of God’s mercy toward idolaters who acknowledged His divine authority. In the midst of the land a numerous people, the Gibeonites renounced their heathenism and united with Israel, sharing in the blessings of the covenant.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 369.

MONDAY

2. Where did Rahab live? What did she declare concerning her belief?

Joshua 2:1, 10, 11 *And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot’s house, named Rahab, and lodged there....^{2:10}For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.¹¹And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

“Jericho was a city devoted to the most extravagant idolatry. The inhabitants were very wealthy. All the riches that God had given them they accredited to the gifts of their gods. Gold and silver were in abundance. Like the people before the Flood, they were corrupt and blasphemous. They insulted and provoked the God of heaven by their wicked works. God’s judgments awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord’s host came Himself from heaven to lead the armies of heaven in the attack upon the city. Angels of God laid hold of the massive walls and brought them to the ground. God had said that the city of Jericho should be accursed, and that all should perish except Rahab and her household. They should be saved because of the favor that Rahab showed the messengers of the Lord.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 36.

“The utter destruction of the people of Jericho was but a fulfillment of the commands previously given through Moses concerning the inhabitants of Canaan:

‘Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them.’ Deuteronomy 7:2. ‘Of the cities of these people,... thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.’ Deuteronomy 20:16. To many these commands seem to be contrary to the spirit of love and mercy enjoined in other portions of the Bible, but they were in truth the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness.... The Canaanites had abandoned themselves to the foulest and most debasing heathenism, and it was necessary that the land should be cleared of what would so surely prevent the fulfillment of God’s gracious purposes.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 492.

TUESDAY

3. For whom did Rahab risk her own life? What is symbolized by the linen under which she hid the two messengers?

Joshua 2:4, first part, 6 *And the woman took the two men, and hid them,... ⁶But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.*

Revelation 19:8 *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

“By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ’s true followers will possess. To the church it is given ‘that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,’ ‘not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.’ Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, ‘is the righteousness of saints.’ Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 310.

WEDNESDAY

4. Compare the fall of Jericho with that of the spiritual fall that will occur at the time of the end. What is the command of heaven to those who live in the corrupt city?

Revelation 14:8; 18:2, 4 *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.... ^{18:2}And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.... ⁴And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

“All the inhabitants of the city [Jericho], with every living thing that it contained, ‘both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass,’ were put to the sword. Only faithful Rahab, with her household, was spared, in fulfillment of the promise of the spies. The city itself was burned.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 36.

“The term ‘Babylon’ is derived from ‘Babel,’ and signifies confusion. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate religion. In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman—a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

SYMBOLISMS OF CHRIST**5. What did Rahab need to do to save her life and the lives of her loved ones? What did the scarlet cord in her window symbolize?**

Joshua 2:17-21 *And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. ¹⁸Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. ¹⁹And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be on his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. ²⁰And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. ²¹And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.*

Isaiah 63:1-3 *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. ²Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? ³I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled on my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*

Revelation 19:13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.*

"I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were martyrs that had been slain for Him." —*Early Writings*, p. 18.

FRIDAY**6. What plan did Rahab devise to save the two messengers? Who carried out a similar escape plan centuries later in Damascus?**

Joshua 2:15; 6:25 *Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was on the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. ^{6:25}And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even to this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

Acts 9:23-25 *And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: ²⁴But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. ²⁵Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.*

"Paul now returned to Damascus and preached boldly in the name of Jesus. The Jews could not withstand the wisdom of his arguments, and they therefore counseled together to silence his voice by force, the only argument left to a sinking cause. They decided to assassinate him. The apostle was made acquainted with their purpose. The gates of the city were vigilantly guarded, day and night, to cut

off his escape. The anxiety of the disciples drew them to God in prayer; there was little sleeping among them, as they were busy in devising ways and means for the escape of the chosen apostle. Finally they conceived a plan by which he was let down from a window and lowered over the wall in a basket at night. In this humiliating manner Paul made his escape from Damascus.” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 276.

SABBATH

7. Whom did Rahab symbolize when she interceded for her family and protected the Hebrew spies? What great mission has God given to His people today, similar to that of Rahab?

Hebrews 7:24, 25 *But this man, because he continueth ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Joshua 6:23, 25 *And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.... ²⁵And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

Mark 5:19 *Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for you, and hath had compassion on thee.*

“Parents, give your children, line upon line, precept upon precept, the instruction contained in God’s Holy Word. This is the work you pledged yourself to do when you were baptized. Let nothing of a worldly character keep you from doing this work. Do all in your power to save the souls of your children, whether they are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, or whether they have been received into your family by adoption.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 510.

“Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next.” —*Country Living*, p. 6.

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12

Sabbath, September 19, 2020

Deborah and Armageddon

Deborah means “bee or tidy.”

“The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.” Judges 5:7.

“Deborah the prophet governed Israel during the reign of Jabin, a Canaanite king who was very cruel to the children of Israel. Life in the villages was harsh. The people were plundered and fled to the fortified cities for protection. Then the Lord raised up Deborah, who was like a loving mother to Israel. God sent a message through her to Barak that he should prepare to meet Sisera, Jabin’s general, in

battle. Barak refused to go unless Deborah went with him. She agreed, but warned him that because of his lack of faith in the words of the Lord, the honor of killing Sisera would go to a woman, not to Barak.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 36.

SUNDAY

1. Who was Deborah? Who was her collaborator?

Judges 4:4, 6 *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.... ⁶And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?*

“For twenty years, the Israelites groaned under the yoke of the oppressor; then they turned from their idolatry, and with humiliation and repentance cried unto the Lord for deliverance. They did not cry in vain. There was dwelling in Israel a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver His people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice.

“The Lord communicated to Deborah His purpose to destroy the enemies of Israel, and bade her send for a man named Barak, of the tribe of Naphtali, and make known to him the instructions which she had received. She accordingly sent for Barak, and directed him to assemble ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and make war upon the armies of King Jabin.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 37.

MONDAY

2. What tree could be compared to the palm tree of Deborah? What will happen before the battle of Armageddon?

Galatians 6:14 *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Judges 4:5 *And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.*

Revelation 14:7 *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

“The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out ‘when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.’ Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 485.

“The principalities and powers of earth are in bitter revolt against the God of heaven. They are filled with hatred against all who serve Him, and soon, very soon, is to be fought the last great battle between good and evil. The earth is to be the battlefield: the scene of the final contest and the final victory. Here, where for so long Satan has led people against God, rebellion is to be forever suppressed.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 369.

3. Against whom did Deborah and the Israelites fight? Whom did Israel's enemies represent?

Judges 4:2, 7 *And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.... ⁷And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.*

Revelation 19:19, 20 *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. ²⁰And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

"A terrible contest is before us. We are nearing the battle of the great day of God Almighty. That which has been held in control is to be let loose. The angel of mercy is folding its wings, preparing to step down from the golden throne and leave the world to the control of Satan, the king they have chosen, a murderer and a destroyer from the beginning." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 369.

SIMILARITY OF TWO WARS

4. Where did the battle take place in the days of Deborah? Where will the last war take place before the coming of Christ?

Judges 4:12-14; 5:19 *And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. ¹³And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles to the river of Kishon. ¹⁴And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.... ^{5:19}The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.*

Revelation 16:16 *And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*

Joel 3:12 *Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.*

"Barak now marshaled an army of ten thousand men, and marched to Mount Tabor, as the Lord had directed. Sisera immediately assembled an immense and well-equipped force, expecting to surround the Hebrews and make them an easy prey. The Israelites ... looked with terror upon the vast armies spread out in the plain beneath them equipped with all the implements of warfare.... Large, scythelike knives were fastened to the axles, so that the chariots, being driven through ranks of the enemy, would cut them down like wheat before the sickle." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 329.

"Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The nations of the world are eager for conflict, but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels with their living cargo will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies, but they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon." —*Last Day Events*, p. 238.

THURSDAY

5. What were God's weapons in the war against Sisera? What will be one of God's armaments in the last world war?

Judges 5:20, 21 *They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. ²¹The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.*

Revelation 16:21 *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

Job 38:22, 23 *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, ²³Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*

"The Israelites had established themselves in a strong position in the mountains, to await a favorable opportunity for an attack. Encouraged by Deborah's assurance that the very day had come for signal victory, Barak led his army down into the open plain, and boldly made a charge upon the enemy. The God of battle fought for Israel, and neither skill in warfare, nor superiority of numbers and equipment, could withstand them. The hosts of Sisera were panic-stricken; in their terror they sought only how they might escape. Vast numbers were slain, and the strength of the invading army was utterly destroyed. The Israelites acted with courage and promptness; but God alone could have discomfited the enemy, and the victory could be ascribed to Him alone." —*Daughters of God*, p. 38.

FRIDAY

6. Since Armageddon is a physical as well as a spiritual war, what is necessary today? As in the days of old, where are the multitudes?

Judges 5:12, 15 *Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.... ¹⁵And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.*

Joel 3:14 *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.*

"All the world will be on one side or the other of the question. The battle of Armageddon will be fought. And that day must find none of us sleeping. Wide awake we must be, as wise virgins having oil in our vessels with our lamps. The power of the Holy Ghost must be upon us and the Captain of the Lord's host will stand at the head of the angels of heaven to direct the battle." —*Last Day Events*, p. 250.

TWO SIMILAR SONGS

7. In her song, whom did Deborah and the general of the army curse, and why? What similar hymn will the blessed of Jehovah sing at the end of time?

Judges 5:23 *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

Revelation 15:3, 4 *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*

“Deborah celebrated the triumph of Israel in a most sublime and impassioned song. She ascribed to God all the glory of their deliverance, and bade the people praise Him for His wonderful works. She called upon the kings and princes of surrounding nations to hear what God had wrought for Israel, and to take warning not to do them harm. She showed that honor and power belong to God, and not to men, or to their idols. She portrayed the awful exhibitions of divine power and majesty displayed at Sinai. She set before Israel their helpless and distressed condition, under the oppression of their enemies, and related in glowing language the history of their deliverance.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 38.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The following lines portray the Christian warfare: I thought that the course of the Christian to heaven Would be bright as the summer and glad as the morn. Thou show’dst me the path; it was dark and rough, All rugged with rocks, all tangled with thorn; I dreamed of celestial rewards and renown; I asked for the palm branch, the robe, and the crown; I asked, and Thou show’dst me a cross and a grave.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 212.

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13

Sabbath, September 26, 2020

The Wise Woman and the Death of the Old Man

“This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless

the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard." Ecclesiastes 9:13-16.

"'He that is slow to anger, says the wise man, 'is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.' The man or woman who preserves the balance of the mind when tempted to indulge passion stands higher in the sight of God and heavenly angels than the most renowned general that ever led an army to battle and to victory. Said a celebrated emperor when on his dying bed, 'Among all my conquests there is but one which affords me any consolation now, and that is the conquest I have gained over my own turbulent temper.' Alexander and Caesar found it easier to subdue a world than to subdue themselves. After conquering nation after nation, they fell, one of them 'the victim of intemperance, the other of mad ambition.'" —*Child Guidance*, p. 95.

SUNDAY

WISDOM SEEKS PEACE

1. Who lived in Abel of Beth-maachah? With whom did she wish to speak?

2 Samuel 20:16, 17 *Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. ¹⁷And when he was come near to her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.*

"You are just entering upon womanhood, and if you seek the grace of Christ, if you follow the path where Jesus leads the way, you will become more and more a true woman. You will grow in grace, become wiser by experience, and as you advance from light to a greater light you will become happier. Remember your life belongs to Jesus, and that you are not to live for yourself alone.

"Shun those who are irreverent. Shun one who is a lover of idleness; shun the one who is a scoffer of hallowed things. Avoid the society of one who uses profane language or is addicted to the use of even one glass of liquor. Listen not to the proposals of a man who has no realization of his responsibility to God. The pure truth which sanctifies the soul will give you courage to cut yourself loose from the most pleasing acquaintance whom you know does not love and fear God, and knows nothing of the principles of true righteousness. We may always bear with a friend's infirmities and with his ignorance, but never with his vices." —*Letters to Young Lovers*, p. 26.

MONDAY

2. What was the saying in ancient times in Israel when someone had doubts or questions? Likewise, where should we search for answers to our questions?

2 Samuel 20:18 *Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.*

Romans 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*

Isaiah 34:16 *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it has commanded, and his spirit it has gathered them.*

"Adam and Eve received knowledge through direct communion with God, and they learned of Him through His works. All created things, in their original perfection, were an expression of the thought of God. To Adam and Eve nature was teeming with divine wisdom." —*Education*, p. 16.

"If the mind is set to the task of studying the Bible for information, the reasoning faculties will be improved. Under study of the Scriptures the mind expands, and becomes more evenly balanced than if occupied in obtaining general information from the books that are used which have no connection with the Bible. No knowledge is so firm, so consistent and far-reaching, as that obtained from a study of the word of God. It is the foundation of all true knowledge. The Bible is like a fountain. The more you look into it, the deeper it appears. The grand truths of sacred history possess amazing strength and beauty, and are as far-reaching as eternity. No science is equal to the science that reveals the character of God." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 393.

TUESDAY

3. Although David and Joab were warriors and sometimes unfaithful, what did the wise woman say about herself? Who is like her?

2 Samuel 20:19 *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?*

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

"All who engage in the acquisition of knowledge should aim to reach the highest round of progress. Let them advance as fast and as far as they can; let their field of study be as broad as their powers can compass, making God their wisdom, clinging to Him who is infinite in knowledge, who can reveal the secrets hidden for ages, who can solve the most difficult problems for minds that believe in Him who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto. The living witness for Christ, following on to know the Lord, shall know that His goings forth are prepared as the morning. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Galatians 6:7. By honesty and industry, with a proper care of the body, applying every power of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom in spiritual things, every soul may be complete in Christ, who is the perfect pattern of a complete man." —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 193.

WEDNESDAY

THE REBEL AND OLD MAN

4. What agreement did the wise woman and Joab reach? Whom did the rebel Sheba, the son of Bichri, symbolize?

2 Samuel 20:20, 21 *And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. ²¹The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said to Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.*

Romans 6:6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Ephesians 4:22-24 *That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

"You should settle into God. You move without due consideration, from impulse rather than from principle. You have not felt the positive necessity of training your mind, nor of crucifying in yourself the old man with the affections and lusts. You need to be balanced by the weight of God's Spirit, and all your movements regulated by it. You are now uncertain in all you undertake. You do and undo; you build up and then tear down; you kindle an interest and then from lack of consecration and divine wisdom you quench it. You have not been strengthened, established, and settled. You have had but little faith; you have not lived a life of prayer. You need so much to link your life with God, and then you will not sow to the flesh and reap corruption in the end." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 240.

THURSDAY

5. In the last days, who will try to sneak into the church of God as did the rebel Sheba, the son of Bichri? What day did he want to introduce as the day of rest?

Ezekiel 8:15, 16; 22:26 *Then said he to me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. ¹⁶And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.... ^{22:26}Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.*

Revelation 13:16 *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.*

"The first triumphs of the Reformation past....

"Under various disguises the Jesuits worked their way into offices of state, climbing up to be the counselors of kings, and shaping the policy of nations. They became servants to act as spies upon their masters. They established colleges for the sons of princes and nobles, and schools for the common people; and the children of Protestant parents were drawn into an observance of popish rites. All the outward pomp and display of the Romish worship was brought to bear to confuse the mind and dazzle and captivate the imagination, and thus the liberty for which the fathers had toiled and bled was betrayed by the sons." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 234, 235.

FRIDAY

6. Did the wise woman keep her promise? How is the intruder—the old man—to be destroyed spiritually?

2 Samuel 20:22 *Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Ephesians 6:17 *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

“In educational pursuits as in all others, selfish, earthly aims are dangerous to the soul. In educational lines many ideas are advanced which proceed not from the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity, but from those who make scholastic studies an idol and worship a science that divorces God from the education. Yet because these errors are clothed in an attractive garb, they are widely received.”
—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 23.

SABBATH

7. Who is personified as wisdom in the holy Scriptures?

1 Corinthians 1:24 *But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

“My brother, you should consider the wisdom of God as all in all. Religion must go hand in hand with science, in order to make your education a sanctified means of doing good and turning others to the truth. The more we learn in the school of Christ, the more eager we are to advance in that knowledge. All our acquirements are of little value unless the character is ennobled by religion. God has special duties for every individual to perform, and a decision will be passed upon every case as to the faithfulness with which these duties have been accomplished.

“The Lord frequently places us in difficult positions to stimulate us to greater exertion. In His providence special annoyances sometimes occur to test our patience and faith. God gives us lessons of trust. He would teach us where to look for help and strength in time of need. Thus we obtain practical knowledge of His divine will, which we so much need in our life experience. Faith grows strong in earnest conflict with doubt and fear. Brother, you may be a conqueror if you take careful heed to your ways. You should devote your young life to the cause of God and pray for success. You should not close your eyes to your danger, but should resolutely prepare for every difficulty in your Christian advancement. Take time for reflection and for humble, earnest prayer. Your talents are marked, and you are hopeful in regard to your future success; but unless you comprehend the weakness of your natural heart you will be disappointed.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 116.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Cain and Abel are given us in Bible history to represent the two orders in humanity. Abel was faithful and loyal to God, and he was preferred by the Lord. Cain was disloyal; he wished his own ideas to prevail. Abel protested against these principles as disloyal. But as the eldest, Cain thought that his methods and plans should have the supremacy. It made him very angry that Abel would not concede to his views, and his anger burned so hotly that he killed his brother. Here the two principles of right and wrong are developed.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 37.

* * *

The Queen of Sheba and the Judgment

Sheba means “expedition.”²

“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” Psalm 72:10, 11.

“In the early part of his reign, Solomon was visited by the queen of Sheba. She came to see and hear his wisdom, and after she had heard him she said that the half had not been told her.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 159.

SUNDAY

AN INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

1. What special role did Jesus say the queen of the south would play in last day events? Similarly, what will those who are saved in the heavenly kingdom do?

Luke 11:31 *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

Revelation 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

1 Corinthians 6:2, 3 *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

“In the day of final judgment, every lost soul will understand the nature of his own rejection of truth. The cross will be presented, and its real bearing will be seen by every mind that has been blinded by transgression. Before the vision of Calvary with its mysterious Victim, sinners will stand condemned. Every lying excuse will be swept away. Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy will then have been made plain. In the judgment of the universe, God will stand clear of blame for the existence or continuance of evil. It will be demonstrated that the divine decrees are not accessory to sin. There was no defect in God’s government, no cause for disaffection. When the thoughts of all hearts shall be revealed, both the loyal and the rebellious will unite in declaring, ‘Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?... for Thy judgments are made manifest.’ Revelation 15:3, 4.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 58.

2. What kinds of questions did the Queen of Sheba ask King Solomon? Just as he answered the Queen's questions, about what will those who are preparing for heaven need to provide answers to their interrogators?

2 Chronicles 9:1, 2 *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. ²And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.*

Matthew 12:36, 37 *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

1 Peter 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*

"Thus it was when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon. Hearing of his wisdom and of the magnificent temple he had built, she determined 'to prove him with hard questions' and to see for herself his famous works. Attended by a retinue of servants, and with camels bearing 'spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones,' she made the long journey to Jerusalem. 'And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.' She talked with him of the mysteries of nature; and Solomon taught her of the God of nature, the great Creator, who dwells in the highest heaven and rules over all. 'Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.' 1 Kings 10:1-3; 2 Chronicles 9:1, 2." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 66.

3. By what law will everyone be judged in the investigative judgement? Just as the Queen of Sheba was impressed by the clothing worn in Solomon's court, what will characterize our clothing and characters?

James 2:12 *So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Matthew 22:11, 12 *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹²And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.*

Galatians 3:27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

"In the parable of Matthew 22 the same figure of the marriage is introduced, and the investigative judgment is clearly represented as taking place before the marriage. Previous to the wedding the king comes in to see the guests, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Matthew 22:11; Revelation 7:14. He who is found wanting is cast out, but all who upon examination are seen to have the wedding garment on are accepted of God and accounted worthy of a share in His

kingdom and a seat upon His throne. This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing of work in the sanctuary above.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 428.

WEDNESDAY

4. What was the testimony of the Queen of Sheba regarding Solomon? To whom did the Queen attribute his glory and wisdom?

1 Kings 10:6-9 *And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. ⁷Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. ⁸Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. ⁹Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.*

“By the time of the close of her visit the queen had been so fully taught by Solomon as to the source of his wisdom and prosperity that she was constrained, not to extol the human agent, but to exclaim, ‘Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee king, to do judgment and justice.’ 1 Kings 10:9. This is the impression that God designed should be made upon all peoples. And when ‘all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart’ (2 Chronicles 9:23), Solomon for a time honored God by reverently pointing them to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Ruler of the universe, the All-wise.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 67.

THURSDAY

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

5. What rich gifts did the Queen of Sheba give King Solomon? Spiritually, what do these gifts symbolize?

1 Kings 10:2, first part, 10 *And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones:... ¹⁰And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.*

Psalms 141:2 *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

Revelation 8:4 *And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.*

1 Peter 1:7 *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

“They will feel the necessity of buying gold, which is pure faith and love; white raiment, which is a spotless character made pure in the blood of their dear Redeemer; and eyesalve, which is the grace of God and which will give clear discernment of spiritual things and detect sin. These attainments are more precious than the gold of Ophir.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 254.

6. What did Solomon give to the Queen of Sheba? What will God give to those who are found righteous in the investigative judgment?

2 Chronicles 9:12 *And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked, beside that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.*

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

"Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, but after a time his wisdom became mingled with chaff. Whence came the chaff? After a manhood of such glorious promise, a change came in Solomon's history. He did not continue true to his purity and allegiance to God. He broke through the barriers that God had erected to preserve His people from idolatry. The Lord had singled out Israel as a nation, making them the depositories of sacred truth to be given to the world. But Solomon cherished pride of political powers. He encouraged alliances with pagan kingdoms." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 159.

SABBATH

7. Who, like the Queen of Sheba, gave gifts to One much greater than Solomon? Therefore, what spiritual merchandise does the Great Merchant offer to those in Laodicea?

Matthew 2:1, 10, 11 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem....¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. ¹¹And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented to him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.*

Isaiah 60:6 *The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.*

Revelation 3:18 *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

"Intellect and earthly riches were powerless to remove the defects of the Laodicean church, or to remedy their deplorable condition. They were blind, yet felt that they were well off. The Spirit of God did not illumine their minds, and they did not perceive their sinfulness; therefore they did not feel the necessity of help.

"The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His church eyes which He requires them to anoint with wisdom, that they may see clearly; but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could; for they would not have their deeds come to the light, lest they should be reproved. The divine eyesalve will impart clearness to the understanding. Christ is the depository of all graces. He says: 'Buy of Me.' —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 477, 478.

“Professed Christians, worldly Christians, are unacquainted with heavenly things. They will never be brought to the gates of the New Jerusalem to engage in exercises which have not hitherto specially interested them. They have not trained their minds to delight in devotion and in meditation upon things of God and heaven. How, then, can they engage in the services of heaven? how delight in the spiritual, the pure, the holy in heaven, when it was not a special delight to them upon earth? The very atmosphere there will be purity itself. But they are unacquainted with it all. When in the world, pursuing their worldly vocations, they knew just where to take hold and just what to do. The lower order of faculties being in so constant exercise, grew, while the higher, nobler powers of the mind, not being strengthened by use, are incapable of awaking at once to spiritual exercises. Spiritual things are not discerned, because they are viewed with world-loving eyes, which cannot estimate the value and glory of the divine above the temporal.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 265.

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Sabbath, October 10, 2020

Huldah and the Gift of Prophecy

Huldah means “weasel.”³

“Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.” 2 Chronicles 20:20, last part.

“Josiah sent as messengers to the prophetess, the highest and most honored of the people.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1133.

SUNDAY

A PROPHET AND EDUCATOR

1. What was the name of Shallum’s wife, and what responsibilities did she carry? Why was an embassy sent to her to ask about Judah’s future?

2 Kings 22:13, 14 *Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us.* ¹⁴*So Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.*

“At that time the prophetess Huldah was living in Jerusalem, near the temple. The mind of the king, filled with anxious foreboding, reverted to her, and he determined to inquire of the Lord through this chosen messenger to learn, if possible, whether by any means within his power he might save erring Judah, now on the verge of ruin.

"The gravity of the situation and the respect in which he held the prophethess led him to choose as his messengers to her the first men of the kingdom." — *Daughters of God*, p. 44.

MONDAY,

2. What other profession was probably practiced by the prophethess, as was the case with Elisha? What position in the church did Huldah occupy?

2 Chronicles 34:22 *Huldah the prophethess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spoke to her to that effect.*

2 Kings 4:38 *And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said to his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.*

Ephesians 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*

"Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the 'school of the prophets.' If a youth was eager to obtain a better knowledge of the Scriptures, to search deeper into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, this school was open to him." — *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 96.

TUESDAY

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

3. What did God promise concerning His people throughout the Christian era? What happens to the church without this spiritual gift?

Joel 2:28 *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*

Revelation 12:17; 19:10, last part *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ....* ^{19:10}... *Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

Proverbs 29:18 *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

"Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come, Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. Time and trial have not made void the instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days. Those who are indifferent to this light and instruction must not expect to escape the snares which we have been plainly told will cause the rejecters of light to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and be taken. If we study carefully the second chapter of Hebrews, we shall learn how important it is that we hold steadfastly to every principle of truth that has been given." — *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 41.

4. What prophetic books did the Lord Jesus encourage His children to study and teach in detail? What blessings await the investigator?

Matthew 24:15 *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whosoever readeth, let him understand:).*

Revelation 1:1, first part, 3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ,... ³Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Matthew 10:41 *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.*

"The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.' Revelation 1:1. None should become discouraged in the study of the Revelation because of its apparently mystical symbols. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.' James 1:5." —*Education*, p. 191.

"The book of Revelation opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains. 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,' God declares, 'and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.' When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Bible Workers*, p. 113.

THE ANSWER FOR KING JOSIAH

5. What terrible prophecy did Huldah give from the Lord concerning Judah? Why?

2 Kings 22:15-17 *And she said unto them, Thus said the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, ¹⁶Thus said the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil on this place, and on the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read: ¹⁷Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.*

2 Chronicles 34:25 *Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out on this place, and shall not be quenched.*

"Through Huldah the Lord sent Josiah word that Jerusalem's ruin could not be averted. Even should the people now humble themselves before God, they could not escape their punishment. So long had their senses been deadened by wrongdoing that, if judgment should not come upon them, they would soon return to the same sinful course." —*Daughters of God*, p. 44.

6. What promise did God make to King Josiah through His prophetess Hulda? Similarly, what do God's people need to do today?

2 Chronicles 34:26-28 *And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard; ²⁷Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. ²⁸Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.*

Micah 6:8 *He has shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

SABBATH

TEACHING THE PROPHECIES

7. Like Huldah, who was considered a Prophet? As followers of the Prophet of Galilee, what work awaits God's church today?

Luke 7:16 *And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.*

Matthew 21:11 *And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*

Revelation 10:11 *And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

1 Corinthians 14:24, 25 *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: ²⁵And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

“Many educated and influential men had come to hear the Prophet of Galilee. Some of these looked with curious interest upon the multitude that had gathered about Christ as He taught by the sea. In this great throng all classes of society were represented. There were the poor, the illiterate, the ragged beggar, the robber with the seal of guilt upon his face, the maimed, the dissipated, the merchant and the man of leisure, high and low, rich and poor, all crowding upon one another for a place to stand and hear the words of Christ.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 95.

ADDITIONAL STUDY

“In consideration of the shortness of time we as a people should watch and pray, and in no case allow ourselves to be diverted from the solemn work of preparation for the great event before us. Because the time is apparently extended, many have become careless and indifferent in regard to their words and actions. They do not realize their danger and do not see and understand the mercy of our God in lengthening their probation, that they may have time to form characters for the future, immortal life. Every moment is of the highest value. Time is granted them, not to be employed in studying their own ease and becoming dwellers on the earth, but to be used in the work of overcoming every defect in their own characters and in helping others, by example and personal effort, to see

the beauty of holiness. God has a people upon the earth who in faith and holy hope are tracing down the roll of fast-fulfilling prophecy and are seeking to purify their souls by obeying the truth, that they may not be found without the wedding garment when Christ shall appear.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 306.

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16

Sabbath, October 17, 2020

Esther and the Sunday Law

Esther means “star.”

“And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women’s house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.” Esther 2:11.

“To every household and every school, to every parent, teacher, and child upon whom has shone the light of the gospel, comes at this crisis the question put to Esther the queen at that momentous crisis in Israel’s history, ‘Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’ Esther 4:14.” – *Education*, p. 262.

SUNDAY

ADOPTED AS A DAUGHTER AND THEN BECAME QUEEN

1. What was the relationship between Esther and Mordecai? In a similar manner, what did God do in accepting Christ as man’s Saviour and Substitute?

Esther 2:5-7 *Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; ⁶Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.*

Romans 8:15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

Galatians 4:4, 5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, ⁵To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

“Mordecai was a near relative of hers.” –*Daughters of God*, p. 46.

“Many of these converts from heathenism would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites and accompany them on the return journey to Judea. None of these were to say, ‘The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people’ (Isaiah 56:3), for the word of God through His prophet to those who should yield themselves to Him and observe His law was that they should thenceforth be numbered among spiritual Israel—His church on earth.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 371.

MONDAY

2. What preparations did Esther complete before the beauty contest? In like manner, what do we need to do before the wedding of the Lamb?

Esther 2:12, 13 *Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)¹³ Then thus came every maiden to the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.*

Revelation 19:7, 8 *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

"The events that followed in rapid succession—the appearance of Esther before the king, the marked favor shown her, the banquets of the king ...—all these are parts of a familiar story. In a marvelous manner God wrought in behalf of His penitent people." —*Daughters of God*, p. 47.

TUESDAY

3. After King Xerxes⁴ became acquainted with Esther, what position in the Persian Empire did he confer on her? Likewise, what position will be granted to all who are saved in the heavenly kingdom of grace and glory?

Esther 2:17 *And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.*

2 Corinthians 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

"The Lord foresaw the troublous times that were to follow during the reign of Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 598.

WEDNESDAY

A DEATH SENTENCE BECAUSE OF THE TRUTH

4. Who was the wicked Persian official who came to threaten the lives of Esther and all of the Jews in the Persian Empire? What was his proposal to King Xerxes?

Esther 3:1, 2, 8, 9 *After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.² And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence....⁸ And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.⁹ If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasures.*

"Through Haman the Agagite, an unscrupulous man high in authority in Medo-Persia, Satan worked at this time to counterwork the purposes of God. Haman cherished bitter malice against Mordecai, a Jew. Mordecai had done Haman no harm, but had simply refused to show him worshipful reverence....

"Misled by the false statements of Haman, Xerxes was induced to issue a decree providing for the massacre of all the Jews 'scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces' of the Medo-Persian kingdom." —*Daughters of God*, p. 46.

THURSDAY

5. What law do God's people today obey that makes them a distinct, peculiar people? What did the Jews, Mordecai, and Esther do in the face of imminent danger?

Hebrews 4:9, American Standard Version *There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.*

Ezekiel 20:12 *Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.*

Esther 4:14-16 *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? ¹⁵Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, ¹⁶Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*

"The crisis that Esther faced demanded quick, earnest action; but both she and Mordecai realized that unless God should work mightily in their behalf, their own efforts would be unavailing. So Esther took time for communion with God, the source of her strength....

"Through Esther the queen, the Lord accomplished a mighty deliverance for His people. At a time when it seemed that no power could save them, Esther and the women associated with her, by fasting and prayer and prompt action, met the issue, and brought salvation to their people." —*Daughters of God*, pp. 46, 45.

FRIDAY

6. When the new law was sealed by King Xerxes, where was it sent? How far will the Sunday law extend?

Esther 3:12-15 *Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded to the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. ¹³And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. ¹⁴The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published to all people, that they should be ready against that day. ¹⁵The posts*

went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

Revelation 13:12, 16 *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed....¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.*

"The decree which is to go forth against the people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews in the time of Esther.... The Protestant world today see in the little company keeping the Sabbath a Mordecai in the gate. His character and conduct, expressing reverence for the law of God, are a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling upon His Sabbath; the unwelcome intruder must by some means be put out of the way.

"The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. Satan will excite indignation against the humble minority who conscientiously refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education, will combine to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals they will stir up the passions of the people. Not having a 'Thus saith the Scriptures' to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for a Sunday law. Those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield comes the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Now, as in the days of Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 450.

SABBATH

7. Despite the edict of death, what was the result among many Gentiles? Likewise, what will happen during the Sunday law when many people learn about the present truth?

Esther 8:17 *And in every province, and in every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.*

Revelation 7:14; 14:12 *And I said to 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....^{14:12} Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

"The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone. The revelator, looking down the ages to the close of time, has declared, 'The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 12:17. Some who today are living on the earth will see these words fulfilled. The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God. Even now preparations are being made for this last great conflict." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 605.

"In a marvelous manner God wrought in behalf of His penitent people; and a counter-decree issued by the king, allowing them to fight for their lives, was rapidly communicated to every part of the realm by mounted couriers who were 'hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment.' 'And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.' Esther 8:14, 17." —*Daughters of God*, p. 47.

ADDITIONAL STUDY ON SALVATION

"I was much encouraged while listening to a discourse from the words, 'I will go in unto the king,... and if I perish, I perish.' Esther 4:16. In his remarks the speaker referred to those who were wavering between hope and fear, longing to be saved from their sins and receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt and bondage by timidity and fear of failure. He counseled such ones to surrender themselves to God, and venture upon His mercy without delay. They would find a gracious Saviour ready to present to them the scepter of mercy, even as Ahasuerus offered to Esther the signal of his favor. All that was required of the sinner, trembling in the presence of his Lord, was to put forth the hand of faith and touch the scepter of His grace. The touch insured pardon and peace.

"Those who were waiting to make themselves more worthy of divine favor before they ventured to claim the promises of God, were making a fatal mistake. Jesus alone cleanses from sin; He only can forgive our transgressions. He has pledged Himself to listen to the petition and grant the prayer of those who come to Him in faith. Many have a vague idea that they must make some wonderful effort in order to gain the favor of God. But all self-dependence is vain. It is only by connecting with Jesus through faith that the sinner becomes a hopeful, believing child of God.

"These words comforted me, and gave me a view of what I must do to be saved." —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 23.

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17

Sabbath, October 24, 2020

The Virgin Mary and Pentecost

Mary means "strong and robust."

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." Luke 1:38.

"Mary believed in her heart that the holy child born of her was the long-promised Messiah, yet she dared not express her faith. Throughout His life on earth she was a partaker in His sufferings. She witnessed with sorrow the trials brought upon Him in His childhood and youth. By her vindication of what she knew to be right in His conduct, she herself was brought into trying positions. She looked upon the associations of the home, and the mother's tender watchcare over her children, as of vital importance in the formation of character. The sons and daughters of Joseph knew this, and by appealing to her anxiety, they tried to correct the practices of Jesus according to their standard." —*Daughters of God*, p. 53.

THE BLESSED ARE FALSELY ACCUSED**1. How was the virgin Mary described by the prophet Isaiah? How would Mary be considered by Christians and Muslims in the Christian era?**₅

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Luke 1:48 *For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from now on all generations shall call me blessed.*

“Before His [Jesus’] birth the angel had said to Mary, ‘He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.’ Luke 1:32, 33. These words Mary had pondered in her heart; yet while she believed that her child was to be Israel’s Messiah, she did not comprehend His mission.” —*The Truth about Angels*, p. 157.

“The advancing centuries witnessed a constant increase of error in the doctrines put forth from Rome. Even before the establishment of the papacy the teachings of heathen philosophers had received attention and exerted an influence in the church. Many who professed conversion still clung to the tenets of their pagan philosophy, and not only continued its study themselves, but urged it upon others as a means of extending their influence among the heathen. Serious errors were thus introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man’s natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the Virgin Mary.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 58.

MONDAY**2. Mary was a teenager, betrothed, and pregnant. What did Joseph think he had to do to spare her from dishonor and death? Years later, what did Jesus say about such a situation?**

Deuteronomy 22:23, 24 *If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed to an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; ²⁴Then ye shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and thou shalt stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour’s wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*

Matthew 1:18, 19; 19:9 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.... ^{19:9}And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*₆

“His birth was supernatural, but by His own nation, those who had blinded their eyes to spiritual things, it was regarded as a blot and a stain. There was not a drop of our bitter woe which He did not taste, not a part of our curse which He did not endure, that He might bring many sons and daughters to God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 253.

TUESDAY**3. According to tradition and genealogy, of whom was Mary a descendant?, Therefore, to what was she subject as a human being?**

Luke 3:23, 32, 34 *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli....³²Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson....³⁴Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor.*

Romans 7:5 *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

"The life of Christ was marked with respect, devotion, and love for His mother. She often remonstrated with Him, and sought to have Him concede to the wishes of His brethren. His brethren could not persuade Him to change His habits of life in contemplating the works of God, in manifesting sympathy and tenderness toward the poor, the suffering, and the unfortunate, and in seeking to alleviate the sufferings of both men and dumb animals. When the priests and rulers came to Mary to persuade her to force Jesus to give allegiance to their ceremonies and traditions, she felt much troubled. But peace and confidence came to her troubled heart as her Son presented the clear statements of the Scriptures in upholding His practices." —*Daughters of God*, p. 53.

WEDNESDAY

SON OF MARY AND SON OF GOD

4. Who was Mary's child? Where was her Son educated?

Luke 1:35; 2:51, 52 *And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God....^{2:51}And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

"The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor." —*Daughters of God*, p. 50.

"All wondered at His knowledge of the law and the prophecies; and the question passed from one to another, 'How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?' No one was regarded as qualified to be a religious teacher unless he had studied in the rabbinical schools, and both Jesus and John the Baptist had been represented as ignorant because they had not received this training. Those who heard them were astonished at their knowledge of the Scriptures, 'having never learned.' Of men they had not, truly; but the God of heaven was their teacher, and from Him they had received the highest kind of wisdom." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 453.

THURSDAY

5. What did Mary say about her only begotten Son? According to her example, what commandment should we all obey?

John 2:5 *His mother said to the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

Luke 1:46; 23:55, 56 *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,...^{23:55}And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.⁵⁶And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

"As the guests assemble, many seem to be preoccupied with some topic of absorbing interest. A suppressed excitement pervades the company. Little groups converse together in eager but quiet tones, and wondering glances are turned upon the Son of Mary. As Mary had heard the disciples' testimony in regard to Jesus, she had been gladdened with the assurance that her long-cherished hopes were not in vain. Yet she would have been more than human if there had not mingled with this holy joy a trace of the fond mother's natural pride. As she saw the many glances bent upon Jesus, she longed to have Him prove to the company that He was really the Honored of God. She hoped there might be opportunity for Him to work a miracle before them." —*Daughters of God*, p. 54.

"It was the custom of the times for marriage festivities to continue several days. On this occasion, before the feast ended it was found that the supply of wine had failed. This discovery caused much perplexity and regret. It was unusual to dispense with wine on festive occasions, and its absence would seem to indicate a want of hospitality. As a relative of the parties, Mary had assisted in the arrangements for the feast, and she now spoke to Jesus, saying, 'They have no wine.' These words were a suggestion that He might supply their need. But Jesus answered, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

"In nowise disconcerted by the words of Jesus, Mary said to those serving at table, 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.' Thus she did what she could to prepare the way for the work of Christ." —*Daughters of God*, p. 55.

FRIDAY

THE EARLY AND LATTER RAINS

6. What great event prophesied by Simeon changed Mary's life, and who took care of her in her last years? On the day of Pentecost, where was Mary?

Luke 2:34, 35 *And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; ³⁵(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*

John 19:25-27 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! ²⁷Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

Acts 1:13, 14 *And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. ¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

"[From the first] Mary looked forward to the Messiah's reign on David's throne, but she saw not the baptism of suffering by which it must be won. Through Simeon [at Christ's dedication as a baby in the temple] it is revealed that the Messiah is to have no unobstructed passage through the world. In the words to Mary, 'A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,' God in His tender mercy gives to the mother of Jesus an intimation of the anguish that already for His sake she had begun to bear." —*Daughters of God*, p. 50.

"Upon Calvary He sought to lighten His mother's grief. He was thinking of her now. Mary was to witness His last agony, and Jesus desired her to understand His mission, that she might be strengthened to endure, when the sword should pierce

through her soul. As Jesus had been separated from her, and she had sought Him sorrowing three days, so when He should be offered up for the sins of the world, He would again be lost to her for three days. And as He should come forth from the tomb, her sorrow would again be turned to joy. But how much better she could have borne the anguish of His death if she had understood the Scriptures to which He was now trying to turn her thoughts!" —*Daughters of God*, p. 52.

SABBATH

7. What did Mary receive along with the 120 others gathered in the upper room at Pentecost? What do we need to do to be like Mary and receive the second outpouring of the Holy Spirit—the latter rain?

Acts 1:8; 2:4 *But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come on you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth....* ^{2:4}*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Luke 8:20, 21 *And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see you.* ²¹*And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.*

"The disciples assembled in the upper chamber, uniting in supplications with the believing women, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. These brethren, who had been unbelieving, were now fully established in their faith by the scenes attending the crucifixion and by the resurrection and ascension of the Lord. The number assembled was about one hundred and twenty." —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 241.

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Please read the Missionary Report from Rwanda on page 83.

18

Sabbath, October 31, 2020

Herodias and Spiritual Babylon

Herodias is derived from the root word Herod, which means "arises from a hero."⁸

"Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him [John the Baptist], and would have killed him; but she could not." Mark 6:19.

"The head of John the Baptist was carried to Herodias, who received it with fiendish satisfaction. She exulted in her revenge, and flattered herself that Herod's conscience would no longer be troubled. But no happiness resulted to her from her sin. Her name became notorious and abhorred, while Herod was more tormented by remorse than he had been by the warnings of the prophet. The influence of John's teachings was not silenced; it was to extend to every generation till the close of time." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 222.

AN EVIL, ADULTEROUS, MURDEROUS WOMAN**1. Who was Herodias? Whom did she influence?**

Matthew 14:3 *For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.*

Mark 6:17 *For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.*

"Several years before this, Herod had listened to the teaching of John the Baptist. He had been deeply impressed, but he had not forsaken his life of intemperance and sin. So his heart grew harder, and at last in a drunken revel he had commanded that John should be slain to please the wicked Herodias." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 130.

MONDAY

2. Just as the people persecuted Elijah, whom did Herodias hate and persecute? Of what sins was she guilty along with her daughter?

Mark 6:18, 19, 22, 24, 28 *For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. ¹⁹Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not.... ²²And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said to the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.... ²⁴And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.... ²⁸And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.*

"John the Baptist had been first in heralding Christ's kingdom, and he was first also in suffering. From the free air of the wilderness and the vast throngs that had hung upon his words, he was now shut in by the walls of a dungeon cell. He had become a prisoner in the fortress of Herod Antipas. In the territory east of Jordan, which was under the dominion of Antipas, much of John's ministry had been spent. Herod himself had listened to the preaching of the Baptist. The dissolute king had trembled under the call to repentance. 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.' John dealt with him faithfully, denouncing his iniquitous alliance with Herodias, his brother's wife. For a time Herod feebly sought to break the chain of lust that bound him; but Herodias fastened him the more firmly in her toils, and found revenge upon the Baptist by inducing Herod to cast him into prison." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 214.

"The cheap, common talk, the words of flattery, the foolish witticism, spoken to create a laugh, are the merchandise of Satan, and all who indulge in this talk are trading in his goods. Impressions are made upon those who hear these things, similar to that made upon Herod when the daughter of Herodias danced before him. All these transactions are recorded in the books of heaven, and at the last great day they will appear in their true light before the guilty ones. Then all will discern in them the alluring, deceptive workings of the devil, to lead them into the broad road and the wide gate that opens to their ruin." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 340.

TUESDAY

3. To what woman in the Old Testament could Herodias be compared? Explain how those two ungodly women were similar to spiritual Babylon.

Revelation 2:20; 17:4, 6 *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach*

and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.... 1^{7:4}And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:... 6And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

“We must as a people arouse and cleanse the camp of Israel. Licentiousness, unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree; and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect. They are coveting their neighbors’ wives, and the seventh commandment is broken. We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil?” —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 188.

“Young men and women who have tried to be Bible Christians are persuaded to join the party, and they are drawn into the ring. They do not prayerfully consult the divine standard, to learn what Christ has said in regard to the fruit to be borne on the Christian tree. They do not discern that these entertainments are really Satan’s banquet, prepared to keep souls from accepting the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb and preventing them from receiving the white robe of character, which is the righteousness of Christ. They become confused as to what it is right for them as Christians to do.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 340.

WEDNESDAY

AN ADULTEROUS, MURDEROUS CITY

4. Just as Herodias influenced King Herod Antipas, over whom will Babylon exercise spiritual influence? What are the crimes and false doctrines of spiritual Babylon at the end of time?

Revelation 17:2; 18:3 *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.... 18:3For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

“We must as a people arouse and cleanse the camp of Israel. Licentiousness, unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree; and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect. They are coveting their neighbors’ wives, and the seventh commandment is broken. We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil?” —*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 188.

THURSDAY

5. What horrible threats will Babylon make against the reformers in the last days?

2 Chronicles 33:11 *Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.*

Revelation 18:13, last part, 24; 12:17 ... *Slaves, and souls of men.... 24And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on the*

earth....^{12:17} And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

"The vision that Christ presented to John, presenting the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is to be definitely proclaimed to all nations, people, and tongues. The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. To John this persecuting power is represented as having horns like a lamb, but as speaking like a dragon." —*Evangelism*, p. 197.

FRIDAY

6. What did Jesus do when He was told about John the Baptist's death? What should God's people do when they are threatened by spiritual Babylon?

Matthew 14:12, 13, first part; 10:23 *And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*¹³ *When Jesus heard of it, he departed there by ship into a desert place apart:...*^{10:23} *But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.*

Revelation 18:4 *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

"As the captive exiles heeded the message, 'Flee out of the midst of Babylon' (Jeremiah 51:6), and were restored to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the heavenly Canaan." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 715.

"Of Babylon, at the time brought to view in this prophecy, it is declared: 'Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.' Revelation 18:5. She has filled up the measure of her guilt, and destruction is about to fall upon her. But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and 'receive not of her plagues.' Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: 'Come out of her, My people.' These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

SABBATH

7. What can neither Herodias nor Babylon destroy? What will be the reward of those who triumph over spiritual Babylon?

Matthew 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

"The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls! 'I was a sinner,' it will be said, 'without God and without hope in the world, and you came to me, and drew my attention to the precious Saviour as my only hope.'

"Others will express their gratitude to those who fed the hungry and clothed the naked. 'When despair bound my soul in unbelief, the Lord sent you to me,' they say, 'to speak words of hope and comfort. You brought me food for my physical necessities, and you opened to me the Word of God, awakening me to my spiritual needs. You treated me as a brother. You sympathized with me in my sorrows and restored my bruised and wounded soul so that I could grasp the hand of Christ that was reached out to save me. In my ignorance you taught me patiently that I had a Father in heaven who cared for me.'" —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 317.

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MISSIONARY REPORT from Rwanda

To be read on Sabbath, October 31, 2020

The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered on Sabbath, November 7, 2020

"The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." Exodus 35:29.

Dear brothers and sisters around the world:

Receive cordial greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died so that we might inherit eternal life.

The Republic of Rwanda is called a country of a thousand hills. Although it is located in central Africa, it is numbered with East African countries. Bordering the Republic of Burundi on the south, the Republic of Uganda on the north, the United States of Tanzania on the east, and the Democratic Republic of Congo on the west, Rwanda covers 26,338 square kilometers (10,169 square miles) and has a population of about 12 million, which is growing rapidly.

The country has wonderful tourism attractions, including Volcanoes National Park in the northern part of the country, where mountain gorillas are found, Akagera National Park, and Nyungwe Forest National Park. As for the economy, many Rwandans are farmers with very small pieces of land, where both traditional and modern agricultural methods are used. The country is land locked, so most of the goods coming from abroad are expensive.

As for education, the number of people who cannot read is being decreased by free primary and secondary education in government schools, and loans are given to those who are able to enter the University of Rwanda.

The country has four official languages—Kinyarwanda, English, French, and Swahili; but Kinyarwanda is the Rwandans' mother language.

According to Wikipedia, Christianity is the largest religion in Rwanda. The most recent national census shows the following categories: Roman Catholic, 43.7 percent; Protestant, 37.7 percent; Seventh-day Adventist, 11.8 percent; Muslim (mainly Sunni), 2 percent; no religious affiliation, 2.5 percent; and Jehovah's Witnesses, 0.7 percent. There is also a small number of Baha'is and some who hold traditional indigenous beliefs.

The message of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, entered Rwanda in early 1993, when missionaries from Tanzania, including Elders Parmenas Shirima, Bright Dickson Fue, and Mwanjaboke, visited Rwanda and continued to support the work, despite discouraging circumstances. The work of the Lord was greatly hindered by the genocide in 1994.

By the end of December 1996, the number of believers increased significantly as more than 200 Rwandan believers who had received the message of Reformation in refugee camps in Tanzania came back to join the believers, especially in Kigali City. The missionary activities increased, supported by the above ministers and the General Conference as the organization of the Rwandan Field was strengthened.

There are now forty local churches and seven branches throughout the country. The membership is 760, and there are many interested souls. The field is divided into three missionary zones—Northwest, South-Central, and East, with six ministers and one ordained elder.

For the church's registration according to the laws of the country, we received The Permit for Preaching [AQUIT DE DROIT] on January 23, 1998; the Certificate for Temporary Registration on October 29, 2002; and the Full Registration as an Organized Church on September 9, 2008. But now we are in the process of updating our church registration according to the new law regarding faith-based organizations in Rwanda, even though obtaining that is difficult for us because we struggle with bringing our physical structures up to the government's standards. To carry out God's work in the areas of the country where the message of reformation has not reached, we have a plan for the Rwandan Field to become a Union, even though there are obstacles to this.

We have severe financial problems, and even though our members have little income, they have been squeezing themselves economically to remodel the church buildings that have been closed because of standards recently imposed by the government. Some buildings are far enough along in the remodeling process to be used, but only temporally, because we have not yet completed the necessary work; other church buildings are still closed.

We also have projects that will benefit the Lord's cause, such as the Murambi School Project, which the authorities have accepted and authorized. We have a large plot of land in Murambi in Kigali City. However, because of financial limitations, that project was delayed but not completely abandoned. We planned to build a primary school and a secondary school on that plot, but we only managed to build the fence.

In addition, we have plans to start nursery schools, since education is the highest priority of the Rwandan government; for example, we have started educating small children in the Nyamata local church, in a town that is near Kigali City. The work is growing rapidly; we opened the school with 20 children, and now we have more than 180. School buildings are needed, especially because right now we are using the church building to work with the young children. In the eastern part of the country, we have another large bare plot of land in the Kigonge area, where we propose to start a school or sanitarium.

The Spirit of prophecy tells us: "There are schools to be established in foreign countries and in our own country. We must learn from God how to manage these schools. They are not to be conducted as many of them have been conducted. Our institutions are to be regarded as God's instrumentalities for the furtherance of His work in the earth.... We need to stand as a united company who shall see eye to eye. Then we shall see the salvation of God revealed on the right hand and on the left. If we work in harmony, we give God a chance to work for us." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 531. The possibility is within our reach to help the cause of God in this field.

We plead with our brethren worldwide to pray for us and unite their efforts with ours to help to advance the message of reformation in Rwanda through these projects. May the meek and lowly Jesus Christ influence and benefit every member and friend of the reformation message to ponder deeply how to help to support these plans.

—Elder Ngoboka Steven
Rwandan Field President

SPECIAL SABBATH SCHOOL OFFERING
FOR RWANDA

GIVE WITH JOY, REFLECTING THE BLESSINGS THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED!

19

Sabbath, November 7, 2020

The Samaritan Woman of Sychar and the Loud Cry

Sychar comes from the Hebrew language and means “intoxicating substance, or liquor.”⁹

“The [Samaritan] woman [from Sychar] saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water?” John 4:11.

“The woman had not comprehended the words of Christ, but she felt their solemn import. Her light, bantering manner began to change. Supposing that Jesus spoke of the well before them, she said, ‘Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself?’ She saw before her only a thirsty traveler, wayworn and dusty. In her mind she compared Him with the honored patriarch Jacob. She cherished the feeling, which is so natural, that no other well could be equal to that provided by the fathers. She was looking backward to the fathers, forward to the Messiah’s coming, while the Hope of the fathers, the Messiah Himself, was beside her, and she knew Him not. How many thirsting souls are today close by the living fountain, yet looking far away for the wellsprings of life! –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 184.

SUNDAY

A PERSONAL CONVERSATION WITH JESUS

- 1. Where did Jesus and the Samaritan woman of Sychar meet? Why was Christ tired and thirsty?**

John 4:4-7; 19:28 *And he must needs go through Samaria. 5Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.... 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*

Hebrews 2:17 *Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

“As Jesus sat by the well side, He was faint from hunger and thirst. The journey since morning had been long, and now the sun of noontide beat upon Him. His thirst was increased by the thought of the cool, refreshing water so near, yet inaccessible to Him; for He had no rope nor water jar, and the well was deep. The lot of humanity was His, and He waited for someone to come to draw.

“A woman of Samaria approached, and seeming unconscious of His presence, filled her pitcher with water. As she turned to go away, Jesus asked her for a drink. Such a favor no Oriental would withhold. In the East, water was called ‘the gift of God.’ To offer a drink to the thirsty traveler was held to be a duty so sacred that the Arabs of the desert would go out of their way in order to perform it. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust. The King of heaven came to this outcast soul, asking a service at her hands. He who made the ocean, who controls the waters of the great deep, who opened the springs and channels of the earth, rested from His weariness at Jacob’s well, and was dependent upon a stranger’s kindness for even the gift of a drink of water.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 183.

MONDAY

2. What puzzled the woman about Jesus? What did He offer not only to her but also to everyone?

John 4:9, 10, 13, 14; 7:37-39 *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.... ¹³Jesus answered and said to her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: ¹⁴But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.... ^{7:37}In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

“It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits. Such effort often results in more harm than good. In His talk with the Samaritan woman, instead of disparaging Jacob’s well, Christ presented something better. ‘If thou knewest the gift of God,’ He said, ‘and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.’ He turned the conversation to the treasure He had to bestow, offering the woman something better than she possessed, even living water, the joy and hope of the gospel.

“This is an illustration of the way in which we are to work. We must offer men something better than that which they possess, even the peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding. We must tell them of God’s holy law the transcript of His character, and an expression of that which He wishes them to become....” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 459.

3. For what did the Samaritan woman ask Jesus? What do we also need to ask Him for today?

John 4:15 *The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

Zechariah 13:1 *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.*

"Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing—a well of water springing up into everlasting life. From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs.

"As Jesus spoke of the living water, the woman looked upon Him with wondering attention. He had aroused her interest, and awakened a desire for the gift of which He spoke. She perceived that it was not the water of Jacob's well to which He referred; for of this she used continually, drinking, and thirsting again. 'Sir,' she said, 'give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

WEDNESDAY

4. What was the Samaritan woman's main sin? How should the elect live in their spiritual marriage to Christ?

John 4:16-18 *Jesus saith to her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. ¹⁷The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: ¹⁸For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

Romans 7:3, 4 *So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

"This woman had broken God's commandments, and Christ showed her that He knew the sins of her life. But He showed, too, that He was her friend, that He loved and pitied her, and that if she was willing to forsake her sins, God would receive her as His child." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 55.

THURSDAY

5. In the course of the conversation, what requirements did Jesus give for one to worship God? How did the Samaritan woman's opinion of Him change?

John 4:21-24, 12, 19, 25, 26 *Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.... ¹²Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?... ¹⁹The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.... ²⁵The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. ²⁶Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto you am he.*

"Our institutions for any land are not to be crowded together in one locality. God never designed that the light of truth should be thus restricted. For a time the Jewish nation was required to worship at Jerusalem. But Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: 'Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.'... Truth is to be planted in every place to which we can possibly gain access. It is to be carried to regions that are barren of the knowledge of God. Men will be blessed in receiving the One in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered. The acceptance of the truth as it is in Jesus will fill their hearts with melody to God.

"To absorb a large amount of means in a few places is contrary to Christian principles. Every building is to be erected with reference to the need for similar buildings in other places. God calls upon men in positions of trust in His work not to block the way of advance by selfishly using in a few favored places, or in one or two lines of work, all the means that can be secured." —*Counsels on Health*, pp. 216, 217.

FRIDAY

THE LOUD CRY

6. What was the woman's reaction to Jesus' words? What powerful message did her words express?

John 4:28-30 *The woman then left her water pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? ³⁰Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.*

Matthew 25:6 *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*

"The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world..." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 362.

SABBATH

7. After the latter rain falls, what message will the elect give with a loud cry? Where will those who hear and accept the message come from, like the Samaritans of Sychar, and what will be the result?

Revelation 18:1, 4 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.... ⁴And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

John 4:39-42 *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of his own word; ⁴²And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of your saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

"I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them." —*Last Day Events*, p. 158.

"I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed." —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 101.

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20

Sabbath, November 14, 2020

Joanna and Benevolence

Joanna means "favored by Jehovah."¹⁰

"And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered to Him of their substance." Luke 8:3.

"The record declares, 'He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.' Not only Christ, but His disciples also, labored in the cities and villages; and those who had been in the truth longer than the new converts, ministered unto Him of their substance." —*Daughters of God*, p. 70.

SUNDAY

A FINANCIER AMONG THE WOMEN OF GALILEE

1. Who was Joanna's husband, and by which Herod was he employed? What did Joanna do with her wealth?

Luke 8:3 *And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered to him of their substance.*

Mark 6:14 *And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.*

"The most wealthy should also show an interest and bestow their gifts and offerings proportionate to the means with which God has entrusted them. Let there be recorded in the heavenly books such a Christmas as has never yet been seen because of the donations which shall be given for the sustaining of the work of God and the upbuilding of His kingdom." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 483.

"The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrowing selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character." —*Education*, p. 44.

MONDAY

2. With whom did she travel? What was proclaimed in the cities and towns?

Luke 8:1-3, first part; 9:2 *And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, ²And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, ³And Joanna.... ^{9:2}And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*

"It is the divine plan that we shall work as the disciples worked. Physical healing is bound up with the gospel commission. In the work of the gospel, teaching and healing are never to be separated." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 140.

TUESDAY

3. Following Joanna's example, what should the believers do? Who are benefited by the saints' offerings?

Acts 20:35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

2 Corinthians 9:11-13 *Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. ¹²For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; ¹³Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.*

"The majority of professed Christians part with their means with great reluctance. Many of them do not give one twentieth of their income to God, and many give far less than that; while there is a large class who rob God of the little tithe, and others who will give only the tithe. If all the tithes of our people flowed into the treasury of the Lord as they should, such blessings would be received that gifts and offerings for sacred purposes would be multiplied tenfold, and thus the channel between God and man would be kept open. The followers of Christ should not wait for thrilling missionary appeals to arouse them to action. If spiritually

awake, they would hear in the income of every week, whether much or little, the voice of God and of conscience with authority demanding the tithes and offerings due the Lord.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 474.

WEDNESDAY

4. To what ministry composed of only women did Joanna belong? What holy day did they observe?

Luke 23:55; 24:10; 23:54, 56 *And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid....^{24:10} It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles....^{23:54} And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on....⁵⁶ And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

“The women who had been Christ’s humble followers while He lived would not leave Him until they saw Him laid in the tomb and a stone of great weight placed before the door, lest His enemies should seek to obtain His body. But they need not have feared; for I saw that the angelic host watched with untold interest in the resting place of Jesus, earnestly waiting for the command to act their part in liberating the King of glory from His prison house.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 71.

THURSDAY

TAKING CARE OF THE SAVIOUR’S BODY

5. Using her own money, what did Joanna purchase and prepare for Christ’s body? What does the body of Christ represent spiritually?

Luke 24:1 *Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.*

Colossians 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

“By its necessities a ruined world is drawing forth from us talents of means and of influence, to present to men and women the truth, of which they are in perishing need.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 13.

FRIDAY

6. According to Jesus, what are included in our responsibilities to support the final work? As with Joanna, what other gifts are essential to contribute?

Matthew 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you.² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

Proverbs 3:9; 28:27 *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase....^{28:27} He that giveth to the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.*

"Not only does the Lord claim the tithe as His own, but He tells us how it should be reserved for Him. He says, 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.' This does not teach that we are to spend our means on ourselves and bring to the Lord the remnant, even though it should be otherwise an honest tithe. Let God's portion be first set apart. The directions given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in regard to gifts present a principle that applies also to tithing. 'Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.' Parents and children are here included." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 389.

SABBATH

7. What special experience did Joanna make on the resurrection day? What forgotten message did the women proclaim?

Luke 24:4-9 *And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: ⁵And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said to them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, ⁷Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. ⁸And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.*

"Mary then hastened with all speed to the disciples, and informed them that Jesus was not in the sepulcher where they had laid Him. While she was upon this errand, the other women, who waited for her at the sepulcher, made a more thorough examination of the interior, to satisfy themselves that their Lord was indeed gone. Suddenly they beheld a beautiful young man, clothed in shining garments, sitting by the sepulcher. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone, and who now assumed a character that would not terrify the women who had been the friends of Christ, and assisted Him in His public ministry. But notwithstanding the veiling of the brightness of the angel, the women were greatly amazed and terrified at the glory of the Lord which encircled him. They turned to flee from the sepulcher, but the heavenly messenger addressed them with soothing and comforting words." —*Daughters of God*, p. 71.

"The women had not all come to the tomb from the same direction.... They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps. 'Fear not ye,' he said; 'for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.' Again they look into the tomb, and again they hear the wonderful news. Another angel in human form is there, and he says, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'" —*Daughters of God*, p. 69.

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21

Sabbath, November 21, 2020

The Syrophenician Woman and the Faith of the Saints

Phoenicia means "palm."¹¹

"And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet." Mark 7:24, 25.

"But although Jesus did not reply, the woman did not lose faith. As He passed on, as if not hearing her, she followed Him, continuing her supplications. Annoyed by her importunities, the disciples asked Jesus to send her away. They saw that their Master treated her with indifference, and they therefore supposed that the prejudice of the Jews against the Canaanites was pleasing to Him. But it was a pitying Saviour to whom the woman made her plea, and in answer to the request of the disciples, Jesus said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Although this answer appeared to be in accordance with the prejudice of the Jews, it was an implied rebuke to the disciples, which they afterward understood as reminding them of what He had often told them, that He came to the world to save all who would accept Him." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 400.

SUNDAY

THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

1. What nationality was the Syrophenician woman? What did Paul write about the Gentiles and women?

Matthew 15:22, first part *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts....*

Mark 7:26, first part *The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation....*

Colossians 3:11 *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

Galatians 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

"The people of this district were of the old Canaanite race. They were idolaters, and were despised and hated by the Jews. To this class belonged the woman who now came to Jesus. She was a heathen, and was therefore excluded from the advantages which the Jews daily enjoyed. There were many Jews living among the Phenicians, and the tidings of Christ's work had penetrated to this region. Some of the people had listened to His words and had witnessed His wonderful works. This woman had heard of the prophet, who, it was reported, healed all manner of diseases." —*Daughters of God*, pp. 64, 65.

MONDAY

2. What serious family problem did the Syrophenician woman have? To whom did she appeal, and what was her request?

Mark 7:25, 26 *For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: ²⁶The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.*

Matthew 15:22, last part *... And cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

"The daughter of the Syrophenician woman was grievously vexed with a devil, whom Jesus cast out by His word.... In nearly every instance, Christ addressed the demon as an intelligent entity, commanding him to come out of his victim and to torment him no more." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 515.

"As she heard of His power, hope sprang up in her heart. Inspired by a mother's love, she determined to present her daughter's case to Him. It was her resolute purpose to bring her affliction to Jesus. He must heal her child. She had sought help from the heathen gods, but had obtained no relief. And at times she was tempted to think, What can this Jewish teacher do for me? But the word had come, He heals all manner of diseases, whether those who come to Him for help are rich or poor. She determined not to lose her only hope." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 399.

3. What incorrect attitude did the disciples' have toward the Gentiles, women, and children? Who broke down every barrier of separation?

Matthew 15:23 *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and sought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

Luke 18:15, 16 *And they brought to him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Ephesians 2:13, 14 *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*

"The Saviour longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the 'middle wall of partition' between Israel and the other nations: the truth that 'the Gentiles should be fellow heirs' with the Jews and 'partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.' Ephesians 2:14; 3:6. This truth ... [was] more plainly ... revealed on the occasion of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 19.

4. Testing her, what did Jesus say to the Syrophoenician woman? Who are the lost sheep of the house of Israel and children of God?

Matthew 15:24 *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

John 1:12, 13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Luke 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

"Christ knew this woman's situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected, shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers were to be broken down." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 400.

"When He said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' He stated the truth, and in His work for the Canaanite woman He was fulfilling His commission. This woman was one of the lost sheep that Israel should have rescued. It was their appointed work, the work which they had neglected, that Christ was doing. This act opened the minds of the disciples more fully to the labor that lay before them among the Gentiles." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 402.

5. Why did the woman of Syrophenicia bow before Jesus? What did she request of Him again?

Matthew 15:25 *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

Colossians 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

Philippians 2:6, 10, 11 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:... ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

"She begs for the crumbs that fall from the Master's table. If she may have the privilege of a dog, she is willing to be regarded as a dog. She has no national or religious prejudice or pride to influence her course, and she immediately acknowledges Jesus as the Redeemer, and as being able to do all that she asks of Him." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 401.

FRIDAY

6. With what words did Jesus again test His disciples and the woman? After what wise, persevering, meek answer did she receive the blessing for which she so longed?

Matthew 15:26 *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

Mark 7:27-29 *But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. ²⁸And she answered and said to him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. ²⁹And he said to her, For this saying go your way; the devil is gone out of your daughter.*

"The Saviour is satisfied. He has tested her faith in Him. By His dealings with her, He has shown that she who has been regarded as an outcast from Israel is no longer an alien, but a child in God's household. As a child it is her privilege to share in the Father's gifts. Christ now grants her request, and finishes the lesson to the disciples." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 401.

SABBATH

FAITH GIVEN TO THE SAINTS IN THE LAST DAYS

7. How did Jesus bless this woman for her perseverance and humble response? Whom does the Syrophenician woman represent in the last days?

Matthew 15:28 *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

Mark 7:30 *And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.*

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

1 John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

“Turning to her with a look of pity and love, He says, ‘O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ From that hour her daughter became whole. The demon troubled her no more. The woman departed, acknowledging her Saviour, and happy in the granting of her prayer.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 401.

ADDITIONAL STUDY – HE REMEMBERS MOTHERS

“Jesus knows the burden of every mother’s heart. He who had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation sympathizes with every mother in her labors. He who made a long journey in order to relieve the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman will do as much for the mothers of today. He who gave back to the widow of Nain her only son, and who in His agony upon the cross remembered His own mother, is touched today by the mother’s sorrow. In every grief and every need He will give comfort and help.

“Let mothers come to Jesus with their perplexities. They will find grace sufficient to aid them in the management of their children. The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burdens at the Saviour’s feet. He who said, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not,’ still invites the mothers to lead up their little ones to be blessed by Him. Even the babe in its mother’s arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we will live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mold our little ones, even from their earliest moments.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 512.

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22

Sabbath, November 28, 2020

Salome and the Salvation of Our Children

Salome means “happy” or “peace.”¹²

“Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him.” Matthew 20:20.

“Their mother was a follower of Christ, and had ministered to Him freely of her substance. With a mother’s love and ambition for her sons, she coveted for them the most honored place in the new kingdom. For this she encouraged them to make request.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 548.

SUNDAY

- 1. Based on what Bible texts does tradition reveal that Zebedee’s wife’s name was Salome? Who were her children, and what was their family business?**

Matthew 27:56 *Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.*

Mark 15:40 *There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome.*

Matthew 4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

MONDAY

REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL FAVOR

2. As any mother who wants the very best for her children, what did Salome request from Jesus for her children? What was His prophetic answer?

Matthew 20:20, 21 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. ²¹And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

Mark 10:37-39 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. ³⁸But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? ³⁹And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized with shall ye be baptized.

"On another occasion James and John presented through their mother a petition requesting that they might be permitted to occupy the highest positions of honor in Christ's kingdom. Notwithstanding Christ's repeated instruction concerning the nature of His kingdom, these young disciples still cherished the hope for a Messiah who would take His throne and kingly power in accordance with the desires of men. The mother, coveting with them the place of honor in this kingdom for her sons, asked, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.'" —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 541.

"Christ did not reprove John and James and their mother for offering this request to sit upon His right hand and upon His left hand in the kingdom. In presenting the principles of love that should actuate them in their dealings one with another, He presents to the indignant disciples the instruction that He would have them practice in their daily lives. They were to take His life as an example, and follow in His steps." —*Daughters of God*, p. 66.

TUESDAY

3. What cup of affliction did Jesus drink? What baptism of affliction did Salome's sons endure?

Matthew 26:36, 39 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.... ³⁹And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Acts 12:1, 2 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. ²And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

"'Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,' Christ declared, before Him a cross instead of a throne, two

malefactors His companions at His right hand and at His left. James and John were to be sharers with their Master in suffering, the one, destined to swift-coming death by the sword; the other, longest of all the disciples to follow his Master in labor and reproach and persecution." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 542.

WEDNESDAY

THE MISSIONARY EFFORT OF SALOME

- 4. To what group of missionary women close to Jesus did Salome belong? Where is she seen on the day of the resurrection?**

Mark 15:41; 16:1, 5 (*Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem....*^{16:1}*And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him....*⁵*And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.*

"The disciple John with the women from Galilee had remained at the cross." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 772.

"All our actions are affected by our religious experience, and if this experience is founded on God and we understand the mysteries of godliness, if we are daily receiving of the power of the world to come, and hold communion with God, and have the fellowship of the Spirit." —*This Day with God*, p. 94.

THURSDAY

- 5. Although the sons of Salome were called "Boanerges"—sons of thunder—where do their names appear because of God's work in their lives to change their characters? What place do the children of Salome occupy today in God's church?**

Revelation 21:14 *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Ephesians 2:19-21 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord.*

"These women who are doing with ready willingness what their hands find to do, with cheerfulness of spirit aiding their husbands to bear their burdens, and training their children for God, are missionaries in the highest sense. They are engaged in an important branch of the great work to be done on earth to prepare mortals for a higher life, and they will receive their reward." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 465.

FRIDAY

- 6. What words can we imagine Salome repeating to her sons? What is God's promise to all parents who educate their children in God's ways, as did this woman?**

2 Timothy 2:1 *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

Proverbs 6:20-22; 22:6 *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ²¹Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. ²²When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall*

keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.... ^{22:6}*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

"Go forward, my son, and if you make God your trust, your strength and counselor, you will be triumphant at last. Walk with lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than yourself, and may God give you wisdom that you may conduct yourself with so much prudence that you can be an instrument in His hands of doing great good in His cause in forwarding the important work for these last days. Do not think your mother is critical and severe. She feels the most intense interest for you that you should make a success of this life and gain the future, immortal life." —*This Day with God*, p. 230.

SABBATH

7. What was Salome and Zebedee's greatest joy? In what way did she represent Jesus?

Proverbs 23:22-25 *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.* ²³*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.* ²⁴*The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.* ²⁵*Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.*

Isaiah 49:15, 16 *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* ¹⁶*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

"How much stronger than death is the love that binds the mother's heart to her afflicted child; yet God declares that even a mother may forget her child, 'yet will I not forget thee.' No; not a single soul who puts his trust in Him will be forgotten. God thinks of His children with the tenderest solicitude and keeps a book of remembrance before Him, that He may never forget the children of His care.

Every human tie may perish,
Friend to friend unfaithful prove,
Mothers cease their own to cherish,
Heaven and earth at last remove;
But no changes

Can attend Jehovah's love." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 329, 330.

ADDITIONAL STUDY – A TOUCHING STORY

"God loves you. He inquires, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child?' Isaiah 49:15. You have probably heard of the sad story of the mother who, with her husband and child, attempted to cross the Green Mountains in midwinter. Their progress was arrested by night and a storm. The husband went for help and lost his way in the darkness and the drifted snow, and was long in returning. The mother felt the chill of death coming upon her, and she bared her bosom to the freezing blast and the falling snow, that she might give all that remained of her own life to save that of her child. When the morning came, the living babe was found wrapped in the mother's shawl, vainly striving with smiles and with a babe's pretty art to arrest the attention of the mother's fixed and frozen eye, and wondering why she did not awaken from her sleep.

"Here is seen love stronger than death, that binds the mother's heart to her child. And yet God says that the mother will sooner forget her child than that He will forget a soul that trusts in Him. That the Lord loves us is enough to call forth deepest gratitude, every hour of our lives. God's love is speaking to you. Give attention or you will not apply His words to yourself. Only trust the love of Jesus, and you will realize the deepest joy." —*This Day with God*, p. 230.

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Mary Magdalene and the Resurrection

Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany are the same person. Mary means “strong and robust.”

“And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.” Matthew 27:61.

“But the Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were the beginning of a new life. Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, was the last at the Saviour’s tomb and the first whom He greeted in the morning of His resurrection.” *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 129.

SUNDAY

A SINNER IS CONVERTED

1. Whom did Jesus love in Bethany? What did Mary Magdalene delight to do when Jesus visited in Lazarus, Martha, and her home? What example was this for us today?

John 11:1, 5 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.... ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Luke 10:39, 42 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.... ⁴²But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

“So pained was Christ by the misapprehension in His own home that it was a relief to Him to go where it did not exist. There was one home that He loved to visit, the home of Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha; for in the atmosphere of faith and love His spirit had rest.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 326.

MONDAY

2. From what was Mary Magdalene healed? How was she considered in her youth?

Luke 8:2; 7:37 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.... ^{7:37}And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

“When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION**3. What terrible test did the sisters Mary and Martha face? What did Mary do when she heard that Jesus had arrived in their village?**

John 11:11-14, 28, 29 *These things said he: and after that he saith to them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹²Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then said Jesus to them plainly, Lazarus is dead.... ²⁸And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. ²⁹As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.*

"Did the Saviour by His own choice avoid the home of His suffering friends? Apparently Mary and Martha and the dying Lazarus were left alone. But they were not alone. Christ beheld the whole scene, and after the death of Lazarus the bereaved sisters were upheld by His grace. Jesus witnessed the sorrow of their rent hearts, as their brother wrestled with his strong foe, death. He felt every pang of anguish, as He said to His disciples, 'Lazarus is dead.' But Christ had not only the loved ones at Bethany to think of; He had the training of His disciples to consider. They were to be His representatives to the world, that the Father's blessing might embrace all. For their sake He permitted Lazarus to die. Had He restored him from illness to health, the miracle that is the most positive evidence of His divine character, would not have been performed." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 528.

WEDNESDAY**4. What did Mary say when she saw Jesus? Nevertheless, what great miracle did He perform in Bethany before many eyewitnesses?**

John 11:32, 33, 39, 43-45 *Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ³³When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.... ³⁹Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.... ⁴³And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. ⁴⁴And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. ⁴⁵Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

"On hearing the message, Mary rose hastily, and with an eager look on her face left the room. Thinking that she had gone to the grave to weep, the mourners followed her. When she reached the place where Jesus was waiting, she knelt at His feet, and said with quivering lips, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' The cries of the mourners were painful to her; for she longed for a few quiet words alone with Jesus. But she knew of the envy and jealousy cherished in the hearts of some present against Christ, and she was restrained from fully expressing her grief....

"And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.' His voice, clear and penetrating, pierces the ear of the dead. As He speaks, divinity flashes through humanity. In His face, which is lighted up by the glory of God, the people see the assurance of His power. Every eye is fastened on the entrance to the cave. Every ear is bent to catch the slightest sound. With intense and painful interest all wait for the test of Christ's divinity, the evidence that is to substantiate His claim to be the Son of God, or to extinguish the hope forever.

“There is a stir in the silent tomb, and he who was dead stands at the door of the sepulcher. His movements are impeded by the graveclothes in which he was laid away, and Christ says to the astonished spectators, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’ Again they are shown that the human worker is to cooperate with God. Humanity is to work for humanity. Lazarus is set free, and stands before the company, not as one emaciated from disease, and with feeble, tottering limbs, but as a man in the prime of life, and in the vigor of a noble manhood. His eyes beam with intelligence and with love for his Saviour. He casts himself in adoration at the feet of Jesus.”
—The Desire of Ages, pp. 533, 536.

THURSDAY

5. What great service did Mary Magdalene perform for Jesus in gratitude for the restoration of her brother and her own forgiveness? Who spiritually represented the precious ointment of spikenard that filled the house with a beautiful fragrance?

John 12:3 *Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

Ephesians 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling smell.*

2 Corinthians 2:14, 15 *Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. ¹⁵For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.*

“No other anointing would Jesus receive, for the Sabbath was nigh at hand, and they kept the Sabbath according to the commandment.... The desire that Mary had to do this service for her Lord was of more value to Christ than all the spikenard and precious ointment in the world, because it expressed her appreciation of the world’s Redeemer. It was the love of Christ that constrained her.” *—Christ Triumphant, p. 252.*

FRIDAY

6. When she did not recognize Jesus in the garden after His resurrection, whom did Mary think the second Adam was? What message did He give to her, the first evangelist?

John 20:15-18 *Jesus said to her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶Jesus saith to her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith to him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. ¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

“Mary turns away even from the words of the angels. As she does so, another voice addresses her: ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’ Through her tear-dimmed eyes, Mary sees one whom she supposes to be the gardener. ‘Sir,’ she says, ‘if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary.’ At the familiar voice, she turns to Him. She knows now that it is no stranger who speaks. Before her she sees the living Saviour. She springs toward Him, as if to embrace His feet, saying, ‘Rabboni.’ But the Saviour raises His hand and says, ‘Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to

My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." —*Daughters of God*, p. 69.

"When Mary Magdalene told them she had seen the Lord, she repeated the call to the meeting in Galilee. And a third time the message was sent to them. After He had ascended to the Father, Jesus appeared to the other women, saying, 'All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 793.

SABBATH

THE GREAT RESURRECTIONS

7. List the three resurrections that will occur at the end of time. What differences exist between them? How is Jesus Christ connected to these resurrections?

Daniel 12:2 *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Revelation 20:6 *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

John 5:28, 29; 11:25 *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.... ^{11:25}Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

"One of the most solemn and yet most glorious truths revealed in the Bible is that of Christ's second coming, to complete the great work of redemption. To God's pilgrim people, so long left to sojourn in 'the region and shadow of death,' a precious, joy-inspiring hope is given in the promise of His appearing, who is 'the resurrection and the life,' to 'bring home again His banished.' The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures....

"During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent.... In union with Christ they [the redeemed] judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death." —*Maranatha*, pp. 13, 335.

* * *

Sapphira and the Shaking

Sapphira means “sapphire” or “lapiz lazuli precious stone.”¹³

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” Acts 5:1, 2.

“The number of those who commit the sin of Ananias and Sapphira is increasing. Men do not lie to man, but to God in their disregard of the pledges which His Spirit moved upon them to make. Because sentence against an evil work is not, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, executed speedily, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil, to strive against the Spirit of God. How will these men stand in the judgment? Dare you abide the final issue of this question? How will you stand in the scenes described in the Revelation?”
—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 314.

SUNDAY

A SHAKING IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. **What did the early Christians do during Pentecost and the great conversion of souls? In the same manner, what did Sapphira and her husband do before Barnabas and the other brethren?**

Acts 4:34-37; 5:1 *Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,³⁵ And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.³⁶ And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,³⁷ Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet....^{5:1} But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.*

“As the disciples proclaimed the truths of the gospel in Jerusalem, God bore witness to their word, and a multitude believed. Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter.

“The record declares, ‘Neither was there any among them that lacked,’ and it tells how the need was filled. Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency. Selling their houses or their lands, they brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet, ‘and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.’

“This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were ‘of one heart and of one soul.’ One common interest controlled them--the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused, was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 70.

MONDAY

2. **But what enormous mistake did Sapphira and Ananias make? To whom did they lie?**

Acts 5:2-4 *And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ⁴Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*

Ephesians 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

"Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. Shall our course of conduct balance the evidence against us? The case of Ananias and Sapphira was of the most aggravated character. In keeping back part of the price, they lied to the Holy Ghost. Guilt likewise rests upon every individual in proportion to like offenses." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 315.

TUESDAY

3. What happened to Sapphira's husband? What was the reaction to these things in the Christian community?

Acts 5:5, 6 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. ⁶And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.*

Luke 22:31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.*

"But God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 72.

"Not to the early church only, but to all future generations, this example of God's hatred of covetousness, fraud, and hypocrisy, was given as a danger signal. It was covetousness that Ananias and Sapphira had first cherished. The desire to retain for themselves a part of that which they had promised to the Lord, led them into fraud and hypocrisy." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74.

WEDNESDAY

4. Three hours later, when Sapphira came before the apostle Peter, what conversation did they have? What happened to her?

Acts 5:7-10 *And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. ⁸And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. ⁹Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. ¹⁰Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

THURSDAY

5. How rapidly will the final work and the shaking of God's people be completed?

Romans 9:28 *For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.*

Isaiah 5:26 *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly.*

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming." —*Our Father Cares*, p. 328.

FRIDAY

THE SHAKING AT THE TIME OF THE END

6. In the last days, what event is prophesied as occurring during the Sunday law? Who will remain faithful during the end-time shaking?

Amos 9:9, 10 *For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. ¹⁰All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.*

Matthew 3:12 *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Romans 9:27 *Esaías also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*

"The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81.

"The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing." —*Our Father Cares*, p. 328.

SABBATH

7. How did the congregation of believers react when they heard that the shaking had taken Sapphira out of the church and from life itself? What do God's people need to do so they are not removed from the remnant?

Acts 5:11 *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

Matthew 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

Psalms 37:27, 28 *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for ever more. 28For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

"I saw that we are now in the shaking time. Satan is working with all his power to wrest souls from the hand of Christ and cause them to trample underfoot the Son of God. An angel slowly and emphatically repeated these words: 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath

trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' Character is being developed. Angels of God are weighing moral worth. God is testing and proving His people. These words were presented to me by the angel: 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' God is displeased that any of His people who have known the power of His grace should talk their doubts, and by thus doing make themselves a channel for Satan to transmit his suggestions to other minds. A seed of unbelief and evil sown is not readily rooted up. Satan nourishes it every hour, and it flourishes and becomes strong. A good seed sown needs to be nourished, watered, and tenderly cared for; because every poisonous influence is thrown about it to hinder its growth and cause it to die." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 429.

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25

Sabbath, December 19, 2020

Lydia and Sabbath Observance

Lydia means "kind."¹⁴

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts 16:14.

"True meekness softens and subdues the heart and gives the mind a fitness for the engrafted Word. It brings the thoughts into obedience to Jesus Christ. It opens the heart to the Word of God, as Lydia's was opened." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 264.

"Lydia received the truth gladly. She and her household were converted and baptized, and she entreated the apostles to make her house their home." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 212.

SUNDAY

THE DAY OF WORSHIP AND REST FOR JESUS, THE APOSTLES, AND THE BELIEVERS

1. Where did the apostle Paul and Silas go on their missionary journey through Macedonia? What did they do when the holy Sabbath came?

Acts 16:12, 13 *And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. ¹³And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

"The time had come for the gospel to be proclaimed beyond the confines of Asia Minor.... The call was imperative, admitting of no delay.... [Said Luke,] 'We came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony.'" —*Daughters of God*, p. 73.

2. What was the customary day of worship for Jesus and the apostles? Give Biblical evidence that identifies the holy day.

Luke 4:16 *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

Acts 17:2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.*

Mark 2:28 *Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*

Genesis 2:1-3 *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

“Many times the Jews charged Christ with breaking the Sabbath. Often they tried to kill Him because He did not keep it according to their traditions. But this made no difference with Him. He kept the Sabbath as God wanted it to be kept.”
—*The Story of Jesus*, p. 71.

3. With whom did the apostle Paul meet on the Sabbath after attending services in the synagogue? What city was Lydia from, and what was her profession?

Acts 16:14 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

“God’s Spirit can only enlighten the understanding of those who are willing to be enlightened. We read that God opened the ears of Lydia, so that she attended to the message spoken by Paul. To declare the whole counsel of God and all that was essential for Lydia to receive—this was the part Paul was to act in her conversion; and then the God of all grace exercised His power, leading the soul in the right way. God and the human agent cooperated, and the work was wholly successful.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 73.

4. Besides being a day of worship, why does God’s command His people to rest on the Sabbath day, just as Lydia did? Why is the Sabbath commandment considered the seal of His divine law?

Exodus 20:8-11 *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Ezekiel 20:12 *Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.*

“The Lord commands by the same prophet: ‘Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.’ Isaiah 8:16. The seal of God’s law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title

of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator's memorial and the sign of His authority.

"To the law and to the testimony.' While conflicting doctrines and theories abound, the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all opinions, doctrines, and theories are to be tested. Says the prophet: 'If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Verse 20." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

THURSDAY

THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA

5. What wonderful event occurred in the lives of Lydia and her family? What was a virtue that she possessed as a descendant of Sarah?

Acts 16:15 *And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

Hebrews 13:2 *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

"True meekness softens and subdues the heart and gives the mind a fitness for the engrafted Word. It brings the thoughts into obedience to Jesus Christ. It opens the heart to the Word of God, as Lydia's was opened....

"The apostles would not urge their presence where it was not desired. They complied with the request of the magistrates, but did not hasten their departure.... They went rejoicing from the prison to the house of Lydia, where they met the new converts to the faith of Christ, and related all the wonderful dealings of God with them. They related their night's experience, and the conversion of the keeper of the prison, and of the prisoners." —*Reflecting Christ*, pp. 264, 343.

FRIDAY

THE LAST GREAT ACCUSATION OF ROME AGAINST THE ELECT

6. What custom that both Lydia and the apostles observed was considered a crime by the Romans? Likewise, what did Jesus instruct the Christians to do in the last days when accusation will be brought against them for breaking a Roman law?

Acts 16:20, 21 *And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.*

Matthew 24:20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.*

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the

beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

"Heretofore those who presented the truths of the third angel's message have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and state would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been—the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

SABBATH

7. According to prophecy, referring to the believers in Thyatira, the city of Lydia, what would they not adopt? What were they and those living at the end of time instructed to hold fast?

Revelation 2:24, 25; 14:12 *But unto you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. ²⁵But that which you have already hold fast till I come.... ^{14:12}Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

Hebrews 4:4, 9 *For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.... ⁹There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

"The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power—all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

ADDITIONAL STUDY – WHAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE ON THE SABBATH

"I say to those who claim to be Seventh-day Adventists, Can you claim the seal of the living God? Can you claim that you are sanctified by the truth? We have not, as a people, given the law of God the preeminence as we should. We are in danger of doing our own pleasure on the Sabbath day.

"Every working of Christ in miracles was essential, and was to reveal to the world that there was a great work to be done on the Sabbath day for the relief of suffering humanity, but the common work was not to be done. Pleasure seeking, ball playing, swimming, was not a necessity, but a sinful neglect of the sacred day sanctified by Jehovah. Christ did not perform miracles merely to display His power, but always to meet Satan in afflicting suffering humanity. Christ came to our world to meet the needs of the suffering, whom Satan was torturing.

"We would charge all not to wash their dishes on the Sabbath if this can possibly be avoided. God is dishonored by any unnecessary work done on His holy day. It is not inconsistent, but proper, that the dishes should be left unwashed till the close of the Sabbath, if this can be managed....

"The house of God is desecrated and the Sabbath violated by Sabbath believers' children. They run about the house, play, talk, and manifest their evil tempers in the very meetings where the saints have met together to glorify God and to worship Him in the beauty of holiness. The place that should be holy, where a holy stillness should reign, and where there should be perfect order, neatness,

and humility, is made to be a perfect Babylon and a place where confusion, disorder, and untidiness reign. This is enough to shut out God from our assemblies and cause His wrath to be kindled, that He will not be pleased to go out with the armies of Israel to battle against our enemies.” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 258, 257.

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Please read the Missionary Report from the
General Conference Disaster Management Fund on page 115.

26

Sabbath, December 26, 2020

Priscilla and the Remnant

Priscilla means “ancient or venerable”

“Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.” 2 Timothy 4:19.

“During the long period of his ministry in Ephesus, where for three years he carried forward an aggressive evangelistic effort throughout that region, Paul again worked at his trade. In Ephesus, as in Corinth, the apostle was cheered by the presence of Aquila and Priscilla, who had accompanied him on his return to Asia at the close of his second missionary journey.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 235.

SUNDAY

A VOLUNTEER, WORKING MISSIONARY COUPLE

1. Who was a volunteer Bible worker in the early Christian church? Where did the believers meet for religious services?

Romans 16:3-5 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: ⁴Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

“Aquila and Priscilla were not called to give their whole time to the ministry of the gospel, yet these humble laborers were used by God to show Apollos the way of truth more perfectly. The Lord employs various instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose, and while some with special talents are chosen to devote all their energies to the work of teaching and preaching the gospel, many others, upon whom human hands have never been laid in ordination, are called to act an important part in soulsaving.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 355.

“As he [Paul] worked with Aquila, he kept in touch with the great Teacher. He gave Aquila needed instruction in spiritual things, and he also educated the believers in unity. While working at his trade he gave an example in diligence and thoroughness. He was diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He and Aquila and Priscilla had more than one prayer-and-praise meeting with those associated with them in tent-making. This was a testimony to the value of the truth they were presenting.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 74.

2. Since Priscilla literally means “ancient or venerable woman,” who does her name remind us of? What should be the role of every elderly woman in God’s church?

Daniel 7:9 *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

Revelation 4:4 *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

Titus 2:3, 4 *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.*

“The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the psalmist: ‘Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.’ Psalm 90:2. It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number ‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,’ attend this great tribunal.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

3. In what profession were Priscilla and her husband Aquila employed? Like the apostle Paul, what day did they observe as holy?

Acts 18:3, 4 *And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.*

“The apostle Paul was an able minister of the gospel, and yet he labored with his hands, doing the humble work of a tentmaker. By working with his hands he did not lessen his work of communicating to Aquila and Priscilla the great truth of the gospel of Christ. These two men and Priscilla labored with their hands, and Paul’s designs in tent-making were ingenious. He brought fresh methods into his work also as he labored for the people, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many were brought to a knowledge of the truth by witnessing the faithful toiler making tents to support himself, that he might not be dependent upon anyone for food and raiment. While thus at work, he showed himself skillful, ‘not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.’ And in preaching the Word, he was no less fervent and able in speech because of his business tact.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 74.

“In Corinth he [Paul] had lived and labored with Aquila and Priscilla, instructing them more perfectly in the truth. The great apostle was not ashamed or afraid of work, and he did not treat this subject as in any way lowering to his work in the ministry....

“The custom of supporting men and women in idleness by private gifts or church money encourages them in sinful habits, and this course should be conscientiously avoided. Every man, woman, and child should be educated to do practical, useful work. All should learn some trade. It may be tentmaking, or it may be business in other lines; but all should be educated to use the members of their body to some purpose, and God is ready and willing to increase the adaptability of all who will educate themselves to industrious habits.” —*This Day with God*, p. 203.

SUFFERING PERSECUTION AND SEPARATION**4. Why did Priscilla and Aquila have to leave Rome? Similarly, during what period in the future will many Christians face exile, prison, and even death at the mandate of American Rome?**

Acts 18:1, 2 *After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; ²And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.*

Revelation 13:15; 20:4 *And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.... ^{20:4}And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

“The envy and rage of the Jews against the Christians [in Rome] knew no bounds, and the unbelieving residents were constantly stirred up. They made complaints that the Christian Jews were disorderly, and dangerous to the public good. Constantly they were setting in motion something that would stir up strife. This caused the Christians to be banished from Rome.

“Banished by the decree of Claudius, which commanded all Jews to leave Rome, Aquila and Priscilla had come to Corinth, where they established a business as manufacturers of tents. Paul made inquiry concerning them, and learning that they feared God and were seeking to avoid the contaminating influences with which they were surrounded, ‘he abode with them, and wrought.... And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.’ Acts 18:2-4.” —*Daughters of God*, pp. 73, 74.

THURSDAY**5. When they heard the testimony of Paul and those who were faithful, such as Priscilla, what happened among the nominal Jews? How has this been repeated between nominal Adventists and the remnant?**

Acts 18:6-8 *And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. ⁷And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. ⁸And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*

Isaiah 66:5 *Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

“I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 158.

"I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed." —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 101.

FRIDAY

- 6. Could either ancient or modern Israel continue as God's people after expelling and rejecting the reformers? However, what did Priscilla do when visiting the synagogue and meeting individuals who were interested in receiving more light, as was the case with Apollos?**

Amos 5:2, 3 *The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up. ³For thus saith the Lord God; The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.*

Acts 18:24-26 *And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. ²⁶And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

"While in Ephesus, Apollos 'began to speak boldly in the synagogue.' Among his hearers were Aquila and Priscilla, who, perceiving that he had not yet received the full light of the gospel, 'took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.' Through their teaching he obtained a clearer understanding of the Scriptures and became one of the ablest advocates of the Christian faith." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 270.

SABBATH

- 7. At the end of time, what did Jesus prophesy about the elect who still worship in apostate churches? Like Priscilla, what faith and position will the remnant hold fast?**

John 10:16 *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*

Revelation 18:4; 12:17 *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.... ^{12:17}And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

"In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the

fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.

"Through trial and persecution the glory—the character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones.... They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but thus they learn the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they can look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' Romans 8:18." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 360.

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MISSIONARY REPORT **from the General Conference Disaster Management Fund**

To be read on Sabbath, December 26, 2020

The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered on Sabbath, January 2, 2021

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10.

Very recently and in the past, we have heard news reports of natural disasters almost every week. Such reports remind us of the end-time prophecies of the Bible. For example, there are floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, epidemics such as cholera, Ebola, diphtheria, yellow fever, and dengue, wars, civil wars, and ethnic uprisings. Such disasters cause severe damage to and even complete loss of property, inflict suffering on individuals, families, and communities, and affect human life on a large scale.

Weather-related disasters and epidemics have affected some of our church members and their families. Desperate appeals have been received by the General Conference directly and from our representatives in many areas. Even though the Good Samaritan Department has to the best of its ability supplied much-needed assistance to those who are in need, more help is needed in the worldwide church family.

In 2017, severe floods and mudslides in Peru, Bangladesh, and parts of Africa left many believers homeless. In 2017 and 2018, Mexico experienced earthquakes causing damage to homes and church properties. In early 2018, southern Peru experienced a gigantic earthquake that severely damaged churches and the houses and personal property of many church members. Powerful hurricanes wiped out whole areas of infrastructure in Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico in the USA, as well as in Cuba and the Caribbean islands. Storms threatened the lives of believers and caused damage to church buildings. In these regions, the people experienced shortages of food and drinking water and faced sanitation issues and much more. These situations keep happening year after year, and the impact has been getting increasingly greater. In addition to natural calamities, some of our members in different parts of the world have experienced catastrophic losses due to civil wars.

In addition to personal injury and great loss, everyone in such affected areas suffers emotional distress and anxiety. Our hearts go out to those who have been

injured, suffered the loss of family members and friends, and been left destitute, with no place to live, work, or support their families.

Considering all these things, we believe that we have an obligation as believers in Christ to meet the needs of our fellow brethren in the faith. Therefore, the General Conference has established a “Disaster Management Fund” to make it possible to give help to the brethren quickly when they most need it. Next Sabbath’s Special Sabbath School Offering is for this fund. We urgently request your generous contributions to it. Eventually, the distribution of such funds and situation reports will appear in General Conference publications and websites.

“And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” Acts 11:28-30.

May the good Lord bless you bountifully as you extend your helping hand to our brothers and sisters in need.

—Elder Douglas Francis
General Conference Secretary

End Notes

- ¹ The descendants of Esau were the Edomites and the Idumeans.
- ² The New Brown, Driver, Biggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, 1970 ed., s.v. “Sheba,” no. 7614.
- ³ Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. “Huldah,” no. 2468.
- ⁴ Xerxes is the name in Greek, and Ahasuerus is his name in Hebrew, derived from the Persian language.
- ⁵ Even the Muslim Quran says that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. Sura 3:45-47.
- ⁶ According to Me Am Lo Ez, vol. 18, pp. 36-37, an ancient commentary of the Jews, a marriage had two steps. The first was erusin or kiddushin—the bride and groom were “handcuffed” to each other for a while and could not live together, but a divorce letter was needed for them to separate. Then nisuin followed—the spouses were “married,” the marriage ceremony was completed, and they could live together. Therefore, Joseph, although handcuffed and not married to Mary, needed to give her a letter of divorce if he no longer wanted to marry her.
- ⁷ According to Numbers 36:5-8, the Jews were to marry within their same tribe.
- ⁸ Strong’s No. 2266; Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 280.
- ⁹ Strong’s No. 4965 in Greek and No. 7941 in Hebrew. It refers to an intensely alcoholic liquor.
- ¹⁰ Strong’s No. 3076 in Hebrew that is the feminine form of Yejokjanan.
- ¹¹ Strong’s No. 5403 in Greek.
- ¹² Strong’s No. 7965 in Hebrew.
- ¹³ Strong’s No. 4551 and 4552 in Greek.
- ¹⁴ Strong’s No. 3070; www.babynamewizard.com › baby-name › girl › lydia.



Missionary Report from Jamaica

Special Sabbath School Offerings



Missionary Report from Rwanda



Missionary Report from the GC Disaster Management Fund