

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the First Half Year 2014

Revelation of the Great Final Scenes

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INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of Bible prophecy, on one hand are people, including believers, who would like to know what the future holds and how their lives might be affected. This is why the disciples, having heard Jesus state certain prophecies, had questions about the future. Therefore, one day they asked Him: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3.

On the other hand is the Lord Himself, who informs His servants about what is going to happen to this world and its inhabitants. God’s prophet says: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7. This is not to satisfy curiosity but to help man, to give him a light for his path through the darkness. The Lord has given wonderful prophecies in His word.

What are we to do, then, with the great prophetic revelations concerning the final scenes before Jesus’ second coming? The apostle Peter states that we should take them seriously for our own good and for the good of all who want to heed God’s word: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:19.

To have such light is not something common; it is a sacred privilege and blessing. “As we have followed down the chain of prophecy, revealed truth for our time has been clearly seen and explained. We are accountable for the privileges that we enjoy and for the light that shines upon our pathway. Those who lived in past generations were accountable for the light which was permitted to shine upon them. Their minds were exercised in regard to different points of Scripture which tested them. But they did not understand the truths which we do. They were not responsible for the light which they did not have. They had the Bible, as we have; but the time for the unfolding of special truth in relation to the closing scenes of this earth’s history is during the last generations that shall live upon the earth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 692, 693.

Major catastrophic events are happening rapidly around the world. Almost every week there is a report of an earthquake here, a flood there, and difficulties and grief facing individuals and governments. Brothers and sisters, these things tell us that we need to prepare and be ready to meet the Saviour with joy, just as children wait eagerly to see family members who have been gone for a long time.

Our Saviour urges us: "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Luke 21:31; 12:40.

"Brethren, to whom the truths of God's word have been opened, what part will you act in the closing scenes of this world's history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and on earth? Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to those things that are written therein; 'for the time is at hand.' Let none now tamper with sin, the source of every misery in our world. No longer remain in lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know that you are fully on the Lord's side. Let the inquiry go forth from sincere hearts and trembling lips, 'Who shall be able to stand?' Have you, in these last precious hours of probation, been putting the very best material into your character building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain? Have you followed the light? Have you works corresponding to your profession of faith?" —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 342.

The Sabbath School Lessons for this half year, "Revelation of the Great Final Scenes," have been prepared to arouse and encourage every brother and sister to consider his and her own preparation and mission. We desire every member, everyone who is interested in the truth of salvation, and every reader to consider these themes earnestly and pray to receive the great blessing and preparation necessary to pass through the final scenes and joyfully greet Jesus in His glory.

—*The brethren of the General Conference Ministerial Department*

Special Sabbath School Offering for ENGLAND

Let the blessings Heaven has given you be reflected in your offerings!

1

Sabbath, January 4, 2014

Christ's Righteousness

"Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and 'God is love.' 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for 'all Thy commandments are righteousness' (Psalm 119:172), and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' Romans 13:10. Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S LAW

1. What are some of the most essential characteristics of God's law? How deeply do its principles reach?

PSALM 19:7, 8 *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

ROMANS 7:12 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

MATTHEW 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

ROMANS 7:7 LAST PART ... *I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

"The law of God, as presented in the Scriptures, is broad in its requirements. Every principle is holy, just, and good. The law lays men under obligation to God; it reaches to the thoughts and feelings; and it will produce conviction of sin in every one who is sensible of having transgressed its requirements. If the law extended to the outward conduct only, men would not be guilty in their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 212.

2. What other significant elements characterize the law?

PSALM 111:7, 8 *The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*

LUKE 16:17 *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.*

“The Lord requires at this time just what He required of Adam in Eden—perfect obedience to the law of God. We must have righteousness without a flaw, without a blemish. God gave His Son to die for the world, but He did not die to repeal the law which was holy and just and good. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is an unanswerable argument showing the immutability of the law. Its penalty was felt by the Son of God in behalf of guilty man, that through His merits the sinner might obtain the virtue of His spotless character by faith in His name.” —*Faith and Works*, pp. 89, 90.

“That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ’s righteousness into daily practice.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 380, 381.

JESUS CHRIST OBEYS THE LAW FULLY

3. Who fulfilled the righteousness of the law perfectly, being obedient unto death?

MATTHEW 5:17 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:8 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

“The law requires righteousness—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can ‘be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ Romans 3:26.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762

FAITH AND THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

4. What gives one faith in Christ’s perfect obedience, as demonstrated in His humanity?

MATTHEW 5:6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

ROMANS 3:21, 22 *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

“Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat,... without money and without price.’ ‘Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord,’ and, ‘This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.’ Isaiah 55:1; 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6.

“No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But Jesus says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.’ ‘I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.’ Revelation 3:20; John 6:35.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 18, 19.

5. When does one receive the gift of His righteousness?

REVELATION 3:19, 20 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

1 JOHN 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

“Christ died a shameful death that He might bring us unto God. When the soul is persuaded that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him, when it resigns itself entirely to Him as an all-sufficient Saviour, when it clings to the promises made and believes fully in Jesus, it is pronounced by God [as] one with Christ. A soul that depends on Christ with the simplicity that a child depends upon its mother is justified, for it becomes one with the Substitute, who was Justification and Redemption. Herein is love, that the heart and will are knit together in Christ Jesus.” —*Daughters of God*, p. 185 (1999).

6. Therefore, who is our only security?

1 PETER 1:18, 19 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

HEBREWS 4:14-16 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

HEBREWS 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

“The only safety for the Israelites was blood upon the doorposts. God said, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you.’ Exodus 12:13. All other devices for safety would be without avail. Nothing but the blood on the doorposts would bar the way that the angel of death should not enter. There is salvation for the sinner in the blood of Jesus Christ alone, which cleanseth us from all sin. The man with a cultivated intellect may have vast stores of knowledge, he may engage in theological speculations, he may be great and honored of men and be considered the repository of knowledge, but unless he has a saving knowledge of Christ crucified for him, and by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he is lost. Christ ‘was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.’ Isaiah 53:5. ‘Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ,’ will be our only hope for time and our song throughout eternity.”
—*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 172, 173.

GOD’S DESIRES FOR HIS PEOPLE

7. Being saved in Christ, what is the Lord’s desire for His children?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:20 *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*

JOHN 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

1 PETER 1:15, 16 *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

“Before the world, God is developing us as living witnesses to what men and women may become through the grace of Christ. We are enjoined to strive for perfection of character. The divine Teacher says, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’

Matthew 5:48. Would Christ tantalize us by requiring of us an impossibility? Never, never! What an honor He confers upon us in urging us to be holy in our sphere, as the Father is holy in His sphere! He can enable us to do this, for He declares, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.' Matthew 28:18. This unlimited power it is our privilege to claim."—*That I May Know Him*, p. 131.

"While we are to be in harmony with God's law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will He save us in disobedience to law."—*Faith and Works*, pp. 95, 96.

FOR MEDITATION

Genesis 15:5, 6; 36:10; Psalms 85:10, 11, 13; 119:142, 172.

"The character of Christ is the one perfect pattern which we are to copy. Repentance and faith, the surrender of the will, and the consecration of the affections to God are the means appointed for the accomplishment of this work."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 49.

"As the weary traveler seeks the spring in the desert and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst, so will the Christian thirst for and obtain the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain."—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 19.

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2

Sabbath, January 11, 2014

Justification and Sanctification by Faith

"Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. 'He will guide you into all truth' (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52, 53.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE LAW

- 1. What important function does the law play in man's sensing his need of the Saviour? In his desperation, where can the sinner find help?**

ROMANS 7:7 *What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

GALATIANS 3:24 *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

ROMANS 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

“The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.’ Galatians 3:24. In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 234.

“The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy. While it promises life to the obedient, it declares that death is the portion of the transgressor. The gospel of Christ alone can free him from the condemnation or the defilement of sin. He must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed; and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Thus he obtains ‘remission of sins that are past’ and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is a child of God, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries: ‘Abba, Father!’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 467, 468.

RECEIVING JUSTIFICATION

2. What precedes the sinner’s justification? John 1:9. What does true repentance mean?

2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

1 JOHN 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

LUKE 15:17-22 *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.*

LUKE 18:13, 14 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house*

justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

“Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 23.

“True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 557.

“... You must fall helpless on the Rock, Christ Jesus. You must feel your need of a physician and of the only remedy for sin, the blood of Christ. This remedy can be secured only by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.... The blood of Christ will avail for none but those who feel their need of its cleansing power.” —*Maranatha*, p. 73.

3. Why is it impossible to have salvation without repentance and faith?

ACTS 20:20, 21 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 CORINTHIANS 7:10, 11 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

“Repentance is associated with faith and is urged in the gospel as essential to salvation. Paul preached repentance. He said, ‘I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Acts 20:20, 21. There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness. Repentance is described by Paul as a godly sorrow for sin that ‘worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.’ 2 Corinthians 7:10. This repentance has in it nothing of the nature of merit, but it prepares the heart for the acceptance of Christ as the only Saviour, the only hope of the lost sinner.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 99.

4. Through whom alone is it possible for one to receive sincere repentance, faith, and forgiveness of sin? Acts 5:30, 31. In this instance, what is the task of the third Person of the Godhead?

ACTS 5:30, 31 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

GALATIANS 5:22, 23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

“Now, how is it that a man will repent? Is it anything of himself? No; because the natural heart is at enmity with God. Then how can the natural heart stir itself up to repentance when it has no power to do so? What is it that brings man to repentance? It is Jesus Christ. How does He bring man to repentance? There are a thousand ways that He may do this.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 64.

“When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son....

“Who but the Holy Spirit presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convinces of sin, and produces godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and inspires the exercise of faith in Him who alone can save from all sin?” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 191, 137, 138.

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ITS RESULTS

5. What follows when the repentant sinner is justified?

ROMANS 5:1, 2 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

JOHN 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

ROMANS 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

“When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ’s righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God’s dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 389.

“To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer’s love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 49.

6. What transforming power becomes active in the true believer?

TITUS 3:5-7 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

JOHN 16:13-15 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

“Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit.... Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 509, 510.

“The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52.

7. What does the Comforter do in the great work for man’s transformation?

JOHN 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 384.

“Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

8. Of what is one a partaker when he repents and accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour? As the Master, what does he do?

2 PETER 1:3, 4 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

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

“Truth comes from Heaven to purify and cleanse the human agent from every moral defilement. It leads to benevolent action, to kind, tender, thoughtful love toward the needy, the distressed, the suffering. This is practical obedience to the words of Christ.” —(Manuscript 34, 1894)....

“Jesus came to suffer in our behalf, that He might impart to us His righteousness. There is but one way of escape for us, and that is found only in becoming partakers of the divine nature.” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 199, 197.

FOR MEDITATION

Romans 6:18; Ephesians 2:5-10; Titus 3:5-7.

“The law is an expression of God’s idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin. ‘Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them’ (Psalm 119:165)—cause them to stumble.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 235.

“The faith that justifies always produces first true repentance, and then good works, which are the fruit of that faith. There is no saving faith that does not produce good fruit. God gave Christ to our world to become the sinner’s substitute. The moment true faith in the merits of the costly atoning sacrifice is exercised, claiming Christ as a personal Saviour, that moment the sinner is justified before God, because he is pardoned.” —(Manuscript 46, 1891) *Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 235, 195.

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The High Priest's Entrance into the Most Holy Place

“In the typical service, when the high priest entered the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 430, 431.

PROPHETIC PRONOUNCEMENTS

1. **According to the prophecy of Malachi, at a certain moment, who would come to His temple? Who is the Angel or Messenger of the covenant, according to the Spirit of prophecy?**

MALACHI 3:1 *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

“Pray, yes, pray with unshaken faith and trust. The Angel of the covenant, even our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Mediator who secures the acceptance of the prayers of His believing ones.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 179.

“Through nature, through types and symbols, through patriarchs and prophets, God had spoken to the world. Lessons must be given to humanity in the language of humanity. The Messenger of the covenant must speak. His voice must be heard in His own temple.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 34.

“To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 22.

2. **What other inspired evidence presents the coming of Christ to the most holy place of the sanctuary to intercede for man?**

DANIEL 7:13 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

HEBREWS 9:11 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.*

HEBREWS 9:24, 25 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others.*

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 427.

THE COMING OF THE BRIDEGROOM

- 3. In accordance with the parable of the ten virgins, what proclamation was sounded in the fall of 1844? What difference was revealed among the virgins waiting for the Bridegroom?**

MATTHEW 25:6-8 *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*

“In the summer and autumn of 1844 the proclamation, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,’ was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were then developed—one class who looked with joy to the Lord’s appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet Him; another class that, influenced by fear and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, ‘they that were ready went in with him to the marriage.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 427.

WHO WENT INTO THE WEDDING?

- 4. What happened to the virgins who were prepared for the wedding? In what sense have Christ’s disciples entered the wedding with Him since 1844?**

MATTHEW 25:10 *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.*

“The proclamation, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,’ in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people

expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the reception of His kingdom. 'They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut.' They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to 'wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding.' Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 427.

5. What did Jesus promise those who seek to obtain and search for more light? In what way do believers in the seventh church period enter the wedding as invited guests?

LUKE 11:9 *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

LUKE 9:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

"In the parable it was those that had oil in their vessels with their lamps that went in to the marriage. Those who, with a knowledge of the truth from the Scriptures, had also the Spirit and grace of God, and who, in the night of their bitter trial, had patiently waited, searching the Bible for clearer light—these saw the truth concerning the sanctuary in heaven and the Saviour's change in ministration, and by faith they followed Him in His work in the sanctuary above. And all who through the testimony of the Scriptures accept the same truths, following Christ by faith as He enters in before God to perform the last work of mediation, and at its close to receive His kingdom—all these are represented as going in to the marriage." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 427, 428.

"The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord. They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith. By the lamps is represented the word of God. The psalmist says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Psalm 119:105. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Spirit is represented in the prophecy of Zechariah." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 406, 407.

RECEIVING A PURE WEDDING GARMENT

6. According to Jesus' parable, what must one have to participate in the wedding feast? How does he receive this?

MATTHEW 22:11-13 *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

REVELATION 7:14 *And I said unto 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.*

“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.

7. When will the virgins who are prepared participate in person at the wedding supper of the Lamb?

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

REVELATION 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. 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.*

“When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, ‘They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut,’ we are carried down through the Saviour’s final ministration, to the time when the great work for man’s salvation shall be completed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 428.

“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.”—*Maranatha*, p. 78.

FOR MEDITATION

Hebrews 2:9; 4:14-16; 6:19, 20; 9:22-24; 11:1, 2, 6.

“It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby. The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ’s first

advent, and refused to believe on Him as the Saviour of the world, could not receive pardon through Him. When Jesus at His ascension entered by His own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon His disciples the blessings of His mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased. That door by which men had formerly found access to God was no longer open. The Jews had refused to seek Him in the only way whereby He could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in heaven. Therefore they found no communion with God. To them the door was shut. They had no knowledge of Christ as the true sacrifice and the only Mediator before God; hence they could not receive the benefits of His mediation.” — *The Great Controversy*, p. 430.

“This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. ‘All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’ Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God ‘was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.’ Sin is defined to be ‘the transgression of the law.’ 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8.” — *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 311, 312.

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Sabbath, January 25, 2014

The Work of Investigation in the Judgment

“Every man’s work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.” — *The Great Controversy*, p. 482.

BEFORE THE HEAVENLY TRIBUNAL

1. When did the investigative judgment begin? Who is the great Judge in the judgment?

DANIEL 8:14 *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

DANIEL 7:9, 10 *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. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

“In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of the investigative judgment.” —*Maranatha*, p. 93.

“Thus was presented to the prophet’s vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered ‘according to his works.’ 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.

2. What cases are considered in this judgment? What is the role of the angels at God’s tribunal?

1 PETER 4:17, 18 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

DANIEL 7:10 *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

“In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. ‘Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?’ 1 Peter 4:17....

“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*, pp. 480, 479.

STANDARD AND DEFENDER IN THE JUDGMENT

3. What is the standard by which man’s deeds are judged? Who acts as the defense attorney for the believers?

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

DANIEL 7:13, 14 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

1 JOHN 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

“The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment....

“Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits....

“Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 1 John 2:1. ‘For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’ ‘Wherefore 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.’ Hebrews 9:24; 7:25.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 482, 480.

BOOKS OF EVIDENCE OPENED

4. Where are men’s deeds recorded, to be investigated during the judgment? What will then be revealed in the judgment hour for each person?

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. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

DANIEL 7:10, LAST PART ... *The judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

REVELATION 20:12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

“The books of record in heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the judgment. Says the prophet Daniel: ‘The judgment was set, and the books were opened.’ The revelator, describing the same scene, adds: ‘Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of

those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Revelation 20:12." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

5. As for the heavenly books, what is a real cause for rejoicing? Whose name will not be written in this book?

LUKE 10:20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

DANIEL 12:1 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

REVELATION 13:3 *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.*

REVELATION 13:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

"The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples: 'Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.' Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, 'whose names are in the book of life.' Philippians 4:3. Daniel, looking down to 'a time of trouble, such as never was,' declares that God's people shall be delivered, 'everyone that shall be found written in the book.' And the revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names 'are written in the Lamb's book of life.' Daniel 12:1; Revelation 21:27." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 480, 481.

6. What is written in the book of remembrance? In addition, what other record is in God's tribunal?

MALACHI 3:16 *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

NEHEMIAH 13:14 *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.*

ISAIAH 65:6, 7 *Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.*

1 CORINTHIANS 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

“‘A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.’ Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says: ‘Remember me, O my God,... and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.’ Nehemiah 13:14. In the book of God’s remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake, is recorded....

“There is a record also of the sins of men. ‘For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ ‘Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.’ Says the Saviour: ‘By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’ Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37. The secret purposes and motives appear in the unerring register; for God ‘will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ 1 Corinthians 4:5.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 482.

CONCLUSION OF THE MEDIATORIAL SERVICE

7. What will Jesus receive at the conclusion of His great work of mediation in the sanctuary?

DANIEL 7:13, 14 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

LUKE 1:32, 33 *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 for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

“Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, ‘dominion, and glory, and a kingdom.’ He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, ‘prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.’ Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to ‘sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,’ at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb....

“He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 427, 479.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 14:6, 7; Malachi 3:2-4; Psalm 56:8.

“Those who in the judgment are ‘accounted worthy’ will have a part in the resurrection of the just. Jesus said: ‘They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead,... are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.’ Luke 20:35, 36. And again He declares that ‘they that have done good’ shall come forth ‘unto the resurrection of life.’ John 5:29. The righteous dead will not be raised until after the judgment at which they are accounted worthy of ‘the resurrection of life.’ Hence they will not be present in person at the tribunal when their records are examined and their cases decided....

“The announcement, ‘The hour of His judgment is come,’ points to the closing work of Christ’s ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour’s intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 482, 435, 436.

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Sabbath, February 1, 2014

Jesus’ Ministry of Intercession in the Heavenly Sanctuary

“Christ represented His Father to the world, and He represents before God the chosen ones in whom He has restored the moral image of God. They are His heritage.... No priest, no religionist, can reveal the Father to any son or daughter of Adam. Men have only one Advocate, one Intercessor, who is able to pardon transgression.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 73.

JESUS, THE ADVOCATE

- 1. As the books are opened and each case is examined, as what does Jesus appear before God? With whom does this mediation begin and end?**

1 JOHN 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

HEBREWS 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

1 PETER 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

“Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 1 John 2:1. ‘For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’ ‘Wherefore 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.’ Hebrews 9:24; 7:25.

“As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 482, 483.

SOME ACCEPTED, OTHERS REJECTED

2. Why are some names rejected and blotted out of the book of life?

EZEKIEL 18:24 *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.*

EXODUS 32:33 *And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

“Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: ‘Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.’ Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: ‘When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,... all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.’ Ezekiel 18:24.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

3. What is essential to receive eternal life?

ACTS 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

ROMANS 3:24-26 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

“All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the

righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Isaiah 43:25. Said Jesus: 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.' 'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.' Revelation 3:5; Matthew 10:32, 33." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

A JUST TRIAL

4. What characterizes God's work in investigating every action? For whom does the divine Intercessor plead?

PSALM 50:6 *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.*

ISAIAH 5:16 *But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.*

PSALM 50:5 *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

ROMANS 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

"The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to 'the first dominion.' Micah 4:8. Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man's creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 483, 484.

WORK OF THE ACCUSER

5. Even as the judgment is being conducted in heaven, what does Satan continue doing on earth?

ZECHARIAH 3:1 *And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*

REVELATION 12:12, LAST PART ... *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

“While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law. Now he points to the record of their lives, to the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

“As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favor of God. He is ‘the accuser of our brethren,... which accused them before our God day and night.’ Revelation 12:10. Over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil, and whose name is registered in the Lamb’s book of life, the controversy is repeated. Never is one received into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the enemy.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 586.

DEFENSE OF THE BELIEVERS

6. How does Jesus defend His people in the heavenly court?

PSALM 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

ZECHARIAH 3:2 *And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

“Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. ‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.’ Psalm 51:17. And to the accuser of His people He declares: ‘The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’ Zechariah 3:2. Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness, that He may present them to His Father ‘a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.’ Ephesians 5:27. Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: ‘They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.’ Revelation 3:4.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

SEEKING PARDON THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

7. Who alone can give a person sincere repentance, forgiveness, and good works?

ACTS 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

ACTS 5:31 *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*

ISAIAH 26:12 *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.*

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition: ‘Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.’ Mark 13:33. ‘If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.’ Revelation 3:3.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

FOR MEDITATION

Proverbs 28:13; Matthew 11:29, 30; Mark 13:33, 35, 36.

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God. He may have committed his evil deeds in the light of day or in the darkness of night; but they were open and manifest before Him with whom we have to do. Angels of God witnessed each sin and registered it in the unerring records. Sin may be concealed, denied, covered up from father, mother, wife, children, and associates; no one but the guilty actors may cherish the least suspicion of the wrong; but it is laid bare before the intelligences of heaven. The darkness of the darkest night, the secrecy of all deceptive arts, is not sufficient to veil one thought from the knowledge of the Eternal. God has an exact record of every unjust account and every unfair dealing. He is not deceived by appearances of piety. He makes no mistakes in His estimation of character. Men may be deceived by those who are corrupt in heart, but God pierces all disguises and reads the inner life.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 486.

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6

Sabbath, February 8, 2014

The Beast Rising out of the Sea

“In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BEAST

- 1. In one of his visions, what did the prophet John see rise from the sea? What characteristics did this beast have?**

REVELATION 13:1, 2, FIRST PART *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.*

DANIEL 7:4-6 *The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.*

“There is doubtless an allusion here to the symbolism of Daniel 7. Of the beasts seen by Daniel the first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard. The beast seen by John had physical characteristics drawn from all three. This doubtless denotes that the power represented by the beast of Revelation possessed characteristics prominent in the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, and Greece.” —[By *Commentary* writers] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 817.

CLARIFYING SOME SYMBOLS

2. What was represented by the “sea” from which the beast rose and by the crowns on his horns?

REVELATION 13:1 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*

REVELATION 17:15 *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

“The sea is a symbol of ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ Revelation 17:15. A beast is the Bible symbol of a nation or power. It sometimes represents the civil power alone, and sometimes the ecclesiastical in connection with the civil. Whenever a beast is seen to come up out of the sea, it denotes that the power arises in a thickly populated territory. If the winds are represented as blowing upon the sea, as in Daniel 7:2, 3, political commotion, civil strife, and revolution are indicated.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 561.

“Gr. *diadēmata*, ‘kingly crowns’ (see on ch. 12:3). These crowns on the horns confirm the identification of the horns as political powers.” —[By *Commentary* writers] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 817.

THE BEAST RECEIVES POWER AND AUTHORITY

3. Who gave power, a seat, and great authority to the beast? What power is represented by this symbol?

REVELATION 13:2, LAST PART ... *And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

REVELATION 13:5 *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

“In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire. Of the leopardlike beast it is declared: ‘There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.’ This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

“By what power was pagan Rome succeeded? We all know that it was by papal Rome. It matters not to our present purpose when or by what means this change was effected. The great fact is apparent, and is acknowledged by all, that the next great phase of the Roman Empire after its pagan form was its papal.” —Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 564.

RECOVERING FROM THE DEADLY WOUND

4. What happened to one of its heads? When did the papacy receive the deadly wound? What happened when the wound was healed?

REVELATION 13:3 *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.*

REVELATION 13:5, LAST PART ... *And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

“The forty and two months are the same as the ‘time and times and the dividing of time,’ three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 439.

“In response to these instructions and at the command of Napoleon, Berthier, with a French army, entered Rome, proclaimed the political rule of the papacy at an end and took the pope prisoner, carrying him off to France, where he died in exile.” —[By *Commentary* writers] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 834.

5. To what do the references to blasphemies spoken by this beast refer?

REVELATION 13:5, 6 *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

DANIEL 7:25 *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3, 4 *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

“... The word ‘blasphemy’ is added, and this evidently points to the fact that the great words will be blasphemous enunciations against the God of heaven:...

“For man to assume the prerogatives of God and to take the titles of deity—this is blasphemy.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 569.

“Ecclesiastical literature is replete with exhibits of the arrogant, blasphemous claims of the papacy. Typical examples are the following extracts from a large encyclopedic work written by a Roman Catholic divine of the 18th century:

“The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.’...

“The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions.’...

“The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws.....

“The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing his sheep.” —([By Commentary writers] Translated from Lucius Ferraris, “Papa II,” *Prompta Bibliotheca*, vol. VI, pp. 25-29) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 831.

PERSECUTION AGAINST THE FAITHFUL

6. Who was able to change this evil power? Against whom did it wage war? How long did this persecution last?

DANIEL 7:25, LAST PART ... *And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

REVELATION 13:7 *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*

REVELATION 13:5 *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

REVELATION 12:6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

“And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus: ‘Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake.’ Luke 21:16, 17. Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: ‘The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.’ Revelation 12:6.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 54, 55.

7. Is it possible to number the believers who died during the Middle Ages? Until what time were the martyrs who received white robes to rest?

REVELATION 17:6 *And 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.*

REVELATION 6:9-11 *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: And 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? And 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 fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

“In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy—the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils Satan and his angels controlled the minds of evil men, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. ‘Babylon the great’ was ‘drunken with the blood of the saints.’ The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 59, 60.

8. Are we prepared to suffer for Christ’s cause, as did our brethren of the past? What is the secret of victory?

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

LUKE 21:12 *But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.*

JOHN 15:4 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

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.*

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.” John 15:20.

“If He who was pure, holy, and undefiled, who did good and only good in our world, was treated as a base criminal, and condemned to death without a vestige of evidence against Him, what can His disciples expect but similar treatment, however faultless may be their life and blameless their character? Human enactments, laws manufactured by satanic agencies under a plea of goodness and restriction of evil, will be exalted, while God’s holy enactments are despised and trampled underfoot.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 285.

FOR MEDITATION

Daniel 7:21, 22; Hebrews 11:13-16, 24-27, 32-40; John 15:20.

“The law of God, which is perfect holiness, is the only true standard of character. Love is expressed in obedience, and perfect love casteth out all fear. Those who love God, have the seal of God in their foreheads, and work the works of God. Would that all who profess Christianity knew what it means to love God practically.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 52.

“Before the days of Huss there were men in Bohemia who rose up to condemn openly the corruption in the church and the profligacy of the people. Their labors excited widespread interest. The fears of the hierarchy were roused, and persecution was opened against the disciples of the gospel.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 97.

“Those who love God need not be surprised if those who claim to be Christians are filled with hatred because they cannot force the consciences of God’s people. Not long hence they will stand before the Judge of all the earth, to render an account for the pain they have caused to the bodies and souls of God’s heritage.” —(*Review and Herald*, December 28, 1897) *This Day with God*, p. 371.

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The Beast Rising out of the Earth

“Let not the commandment-keeping people of God be silent at this time, as though we gracefully accepted the situation. There is the prospect before us of waging a continuous war, at the risk of imprisonment, of losing property and even life itself, to defend the law of God, which is being made void by the laws of men.” —(*Review and Herald*, January 1, 1889) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 975.

THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY

1. How is the United States introduced on the prophetic scene?

REVELATION 13:11, FIRST PART *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth;...*

“... The beast with lamblike horns was seen ‘coming up out of the earth.’ Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 440.

In 1776, the united colonies of North America declared themselves to be free and independent states, and thus a refuge was opened for the oppressed of all nations. “And the earth helped the woman.” Revelation 12:16.

“What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America. Again and again the thought, almost the exact words, of the sacred writer has been unconsciously employed by the orator and the historian in describing the rise and growth of this nation. The beast was seen ‘coming up out of the earth;’ and, according to the translators, the word here rendered ‘coming up’ literally signifies ‘to grow or spring up as a plant.’ And, as we have seen, the nation must arise in territory previously unoccupied.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 440.

2. What is the significance of the horns on this beast?

REVELATION 13:11, MIDDLE PART ... *And he had two horns like a lamb....*

“‘And he had two horns like a lamb.’ The lamblike horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as ‘coming up’ in 1798.

Among the Christian exiles who first fled to America and sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance were many who determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 441.

“The United States is a land that has been under the special shield of the Omnipotent One. God has done great things for this country, but in the transgression of His law, men have been doing a work originated by the man of sin. Satan is working out his designs to involve the human family in disloyalty.” —(Manuscript 17, 1906) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 975.

3. What did those who were persecuted in the Old World long for? What principles governed this new nation?

JOHN 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

1 CORINTHIANS 7:21, LAST PART ... *But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

“The fundamental principle of Roger Williams’s colony was ‘that every man should have liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience.’ —*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 354. His little state, Rhode Island, became the asylum of the oppressed, and it increased and prospered until its foundation principles—civil and religious liberty—became the cornerstones of the American Republic....

“And the Constitution guarantees to the people the right of self-government, providing that representatives elected by the popular vote shall enact and administer the laws. Freedom of religious faith was also granted, every man being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 295, 441.

A CHANGING NATION

4. What changes did the prophet John see in this nation with the passage of time? To help the first beast, what does the United States have to overturn?

REVELATION 13:11, LAST PART, 12 ... *And he spake as a dragon. 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.*

“The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The ‘speaking’ of the nation is the action of its legisla-

tive and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak 'as a dragon' and exercise 'all the power of the first beast' plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns 'causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast' indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy.

"Such action would be directly contrary to the principles of this government, to the genius of its free institutions, to the direct and solemn avowals of the Declaration of Independence, and to the Constitution. The founders of the nation wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result—intolerance and persecution." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 442.

5. What miracles will be performed by this beast under the supervision of Satan?

REVELATION 13:13 *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.*

MATTHEW 7:21-23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Making reference to people who have a theoretical religion, the Spirit of prophecy writes: "These may profess to be followers of Christ, but they have lost sight of their Leader. They may say, 'Lord, Lord'; they may point to the sick who are healed through them, and to other marvelous works, and claim that they have more of the Spirit and power of God than is manifested by those who keep His law. But their works are done under the supervision of the enemy of righteousness, whose aim it is to deceive souls, and are designed to lead away from obedience, truth, and duty. In the near future there will be still more marked manifestations of this miracle-working power; for it is said of him, 'And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.'" —(*Signs of the Times*, February 26, 1885) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 975, 976.

HOW THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST WILL BE FORMED

6. What is the image of the beast? How will it be formed?

REVELATION 13:14 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

“But what is the ‘image to the beast’? and how is it to be formed? The image is made by the two-horned beast, and is an image to the beast. It is also called an image of the beast. Then to learn what the image is like and how it is to be formed we must study the characteristics of the beast itself—the papacy.

“When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of ‘heresy.’ In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 443.

7. What phenomenon among the various churches will precede the formation of the image of the beast? How will the mixture of religious influence with civil power be managed?

PSALM 2:1-4 *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*

“But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon common points of doctrine. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed—however important they might be from a Bible standpoint—must necessarily be waived....

“When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 444, 445.

8. What will happen to God’s people in the not-too-distant future, and what may they expect?

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.*

REVELATION 14:12, 13 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

“The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided.... [Revelation 13:11-17 quoted.]...

“This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who proved their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.” —(Letter 11, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7. p. 976.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 14:6-13; James 1:3, 12; Hebrews 11:6.

“By the first angel, men are called upon to ‘fear God, and give glory to Him’ and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: ‘Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’ Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’ ‘He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.’ 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from Asia Missionary School on page 45.***

8

Sabbath, February 22, 2014

The Image of the Beast

“The time is coming when God’s people will feel the hand of persecution because they keep holy the seventh day. Satan has caused the change of the Sabbath in the hope of carrying out his purpose for the defeat of God’s plans. He seeks to make the commands of God of less force in the world than human laws. The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who has always oppressed the people of God, will cause laws to be made enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. But God’s people are to stand firm for Him. And the Lord will work in their behalf, showing plainly that He is the God of gods.” —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 317.

POWER OF THE BEAST THAT SPEAKS LIKE A DRAGON

- 1. Who gives power to the image of the beast to speak and act with such violence?**

REVELATION 13:11 *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

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.*

“The prediction that it will speak ‘as a dragon’ and exercise ‘all the power of the first beast’ plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopardlike beast.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 442.

2. How will the two-horned beast act in this case? What powers will unite in this destructive undertaking?

REVELATION 13:16 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“The beast with two horns ‘causeth [commands] all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.’ Revelation 13:16, 17. The third angel’s warning is: ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.’ ‘The beast’ mentioned in this message, whose worship is enforced by the two-horned beast, is the first, or leopardlike beast of Revelation 13—the papacy. The ‘image to the beast’ represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas. The ‘mark of the beast’ still remains to be defined.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 445.

ATTACK BY THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

3. What frontal attack will the image make against God’s children? What will His people then do with the goods the Lord has entrusted to them?

REVELATION 13:17 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“There is a time coming when commandment-keepers can neither buy nor sell. Make haste to dig out your buried talents. If God has intrusted you with money, show yourselves faithful to your trust; unwrap your napkin, and send your talents to the exchangers, that when Christ shall come, He may receive His own with interest. In the last extremity, before this work shall close, thousands will be cheerfully laid upon the altar. Men and women will feel it a blessed privilege to share in the work of preparing souls to stand in the great day of God, and they will give hundreds as readily as dollars are given now. If the love of Christ were burning in the hearts of His professed people, we would see the same spirit manifested today. Did they but realize how near is the end of all

work for the salvation of souls, they would sacrifice their possessions as freely as did the members of the early church. They would work for the advancement of God's cause as earnestly as worldly men labor to acquire riches. Tact and skill would be exercised, and earnest and unselfish labor put forth to acquire means, not to hoard, but to pour into the treasury of the Lord." —*Maranatha*, p. 183.

IDENTITY OF THE BEAST WHICH ROSE FROM THE SEA

4. What is the number of the beast, and how is this calculated?

REVELATION 13:18 *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

"An interpretation that gained currency in the period following the Reformation was that 666 stood for *Vicarius Filii Dei*, meaning 'vicar of the Son of God,' one of the titles for the pope of Rome. The numerical value of the component letters of this title totals 666 as follows:

V I C A R I U S F I L I I D E I

"5 1 100 0 0 1 5 0 0 1 50 1 1 500 0 1 = 666"

—[By *Commentary* writers] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 823.

"The pope claims to be the vicar of Christ; but how does his character bear comparison with that of our Saviour? Was Christ ever known to consign men to the prison or the rack because they did not pay Him homage as the King of heaven? Was His voice heard condemning to death those who did not accept Him?" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 570.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND GOD'S SEAL

5. What have various institutions done with God's law? Habakkuk 1:4, first part. Are God's children indifferent to this change?

HABAKKUK 1:4, JUBILEE BIBLE 2000, FIRST PART *Therefore the law is weakened, and the judgment does not go forth true....*

PSALM 119:126 *It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

"As noted above, God's sign of power is His holy Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The Papal interpretation of that law does not vary from the Word, save only in respect to this command. The law of the Lord declares that 'the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.' The Roman Catholic Church declares that to keep holy that command is 'to spend Sunday [the first day] in prayer and other religious duties.' —*Butler's Catechism*. In proving that that 'church has power to institute festivals of precept,' the 'Doctrinal Catechism' says: 'Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern reli-

gionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.” —*The Desire of Ages*, Appendix to 1898 Edition, Note 1 to p. 122.

6. While the beast and its image intend to impose their dogmas, what does the message of the third angel proclaim?

REVELATION 14:9-11 *And 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, The 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: And 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.*

“The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 449, 450.

TRIUMPH OVER THE BEAST AND ITS IMAGE

7. Despite the terrible conflict, what will happen to those who do not accept the mark and number of human powers? What is the secret of victory?

REVELATION 15:2, 3 *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. And 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.*

REVELATION 12:11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

1 JOHN 5:3, 4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

“In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although church and state will unite their power to compel ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond’ (Revelation 13:16), to receive ‘the mark of the beast,’ yet the people of God will not receive it. The prophet of Patmos beholds ‘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’ and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3....

“Faith is essential in order to the keeping of the law of God; for ‘without faith it is impossible to please Him.’ And ‘whatsoever is not of faith is sin.’ Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 450, 435.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 7:2, 3, 14-17; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4.

“... This is not a time to haul down our colors, to be ashamed of our faith. This distinctive banner, described in the words, ‘Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus’ (Revelation 14:12), is to be borne through the world to the close of probation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 144.

“God has placed in our hands a banner upon which is inscribed: ‘Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:12. This is a distinct, separating message, a message that is to give no uncertain sound. It is to lead the people away from the broken cisterns that contain no water, to the unfailing Fountain of the water of life.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 150.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM ASIA MISSIONARY SCHOOL

To be read on Sabbath, February 22, 2014

***The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, March 1, 2014***

Dear brothers and sisters in the faith around the world, I would like to greet you with the word of God found in Philippians 2:4, 5: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

With God’s help, the work here in Philippines is blessed and progressing. Every department is trying to do something to advance the work of God entrusted to His church.

Some years ago, we planned to help our people, Bible workers, and ministers gain more knowledge of how to help the work of God, not only in Philippines but also in other countries. To this end, we decided to start a small Missionary School; but many things were lacking, and there were many hindrances.

Then in 2005, I was elected the Education Leader and, along with the newly elected president, tried to start a missionary school in Davao despite many problems and empty pockets. The first year, thirteen students graduated from this Missionary School, and some of them are now working in the fields as part-time Bible workers. After that, thirteen students enrolled for a longer course, but the school was not able to continue because of the lack of funds to pay the teachers and erect a suitable facility.

In 2007, plans were made to construct a building for the Asia Missionary School. Land was acquired in Migkawayan, Davao, Philippines, a perfect place for such a project. We now own five hectares of land in a peaceful area suitable for missionary students. It is on the top of a mountain in the countryside surrounded by the beauty of nature, and in the evening one can see the lights of the city of Davao below. Of all the cities in Mindanao, this is the largest, and the people are well disciplined under a good mayor. This offers a wonderful place for students to do practical missionary training.

With great hope and faith, we started construction of a two-story building, but it is still not finished—not even the first floor—because of lack of funds. That’s why I am knocking on the doors of your hearts to ask for your support of the Asia Missionary School so we

can again take up the task of training young people for service in the Lord's vineyard, including in countries where, until now, there is little knowledge of the present truth.

On behalf of the Education Department here in the Philippines and the General Conference Missionary Department, I appeal to our brothers and sisters around the world to share your blessings so we can finish the Missionary School building in Philippines and continue conducting seminars and training sessions. It is our burning desire to invite young people from many countries especially in Asia to come here to be trained and equipped as Christian soldiers so the commission Jesus gave in Matthew 24:14—to preach the gospel in the whole world so the end will come—may soon be fulfilled.

I hope and pray that God will open your hearts to give generously and thus share the message with others through willing and well-trained men and women. Please also consider the needs of the other departments, such as the Education Department here in Asia. This is my wish and prayer in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

—Arnolfo Cortez
Asian Division Secretary

Special Sabbath School Offering for ASIA MISSIONARY SCHOOL

Your gift will help speed the spread of the gospel!

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Sabbath, March 1, 2014

Liberty of Conscience Threatened

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12.

“These records of the past clearly reveal the enmity of Rome toward the true Sabbath and its defenders, and the means which she employs to honor the institution of her creating. The word of God teaches that these scenes are to be repeated as Roman Catholics and Protestants shall unite for the exaltation of the Sunday.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 578.

BABYLON’S GUILT

- 1. What are the grave faults for which Babylon is responsible to God? Does only one church have these problems, or are there many such organizations?**

REVELATION 14:8 *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.*

REVELATION 17:1, 2 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 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.*

REVELATION 18:1-3 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 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. For 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.*

“God denounces Babylon ‘because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ This means that she has disregarded the only commandment which points out the true God, and has torn down the Sabbath, God’s memorial of creation....

“God has a controversy with the churches of today. They are fulfilling the prophecy of John. ‘All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ They have divorced themselves from God by refusing to receive His sign. They have not the spirit of God’s true commandment-keeping people. And the people of the world, in giving their sanction to a false sabbath, and in trampling under their feet the Sabbath of the Lord, have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”
—(Letter 98, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

THE MAIN POINT OF DISCUSSION

2. At the end of time, what will be the main point of the controversy?

PSALM 119:126 *It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

1 JOHN 2:3, 4 *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

“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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

3. What is the mission of the angel who ascends from the east?

REVELATION 7:1-3 *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

“The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God’s property. So the children of God in this age will bear the signature God has appointed. They will place themselves in

harmony with God's holy law. A mark is placed upon every one of God's people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin. God declares, '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.'" —(*Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 968, 969.

FULLY AWARE OF THEIR ACTIONS

4. Are the Protestant churches which uphold Sunday observance aware of the danger they are in?

MATTHEW 15:7-9 *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

COLOSSIANS 2:8 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

"The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending.... They are working in blindness. They do not see that if a Protestant government sacrifices the principles that have made them a free, independent nation, and through legislation brings into the Constitution principles that will propagate papal falsehood and papal delusion, they are plunging into the Roman horrors of the Dark Ages." —(*Review and Herald*, Extra, December 11, 1888) *Last Day Events*, pp. 125, 126.

"We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. There is soon to open before us a period of overwhelming interest to all living. The controversies of the past are to be revived; new controversies will arise. The scenes to be enacted in our world are not yet even dreamed of. Satan is at work through human agencies. Those who are making an effort to change the Constitution and secure a law enforcing Sunday observance little realize what will be the result. A crisis is just upon us." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 753.

OVERCOMING INACTIVITY

5. What is the responsibility of God's children?

EZEKIEL 33:7-9 *So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

"It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavor to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience. We should search the Scriptures and be able to give the reason for our faith. Says the prophet: 'The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.'..."

"We are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that this calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected. Let there be most earnest prayer, and then let us work in harmony with our prayers." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 452, 714.

THE SUNDAY LAW WILL SOON BE ENFORCED

6. When will Protestantism join hands with the papal power?

REVELATION 13:15-17 *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. 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: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

"When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery;..." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 712.

"Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false sabbath, they will give life and vigor to the corrupt faith of Rome, reviving her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of His truth." —*Maranatha*, p. 179.

"Soon the Sunday laws will be enforced, and men in positions of trust will be embittered against the little handful of God's commandment-keeping people." —(*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 278 [1909]) *Last Day Events*, p. 129.

SUPPORTING ARGUMENT

7. What will be the main argument in support of Sunday law enforcement?

ESTHER 3:8-10 *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. 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 treasuries. And*

the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

"Yet this very class put forth the claim that the fast-spreading corruption is largely attributable to the desecration of the so-called 'Christian sabbath,' and that the enforcement of Sunday observance would greatly improve the morals of society. This claim is especially urged in America, where the doctrine of the true Sabbath has been most widely preached. Here the temperance work, one of the most prominent and important of moral reforms, is often combined with the Sunday movement, and the advocates of the latter represent themselves as laboring to promote the highest interest of society; and those who refuse to unite with them are denounced as the enemies of temperance and reform." — *The Great Controversy*, p. 587.

8. What will God's people do under these circumstances? What will happen in such a difficult situation?

ESTHER 4:15-17 *Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, 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 unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.*

ESTHER 9:1, 2 *Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.*

"The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone.... 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.... The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God's people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath." — *Conflict and Courage*, p. 245; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 605.

FOR MEDITATION

Matthew 5:17-19; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10, 15-17; Revelation 17:3-6.

"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. 451.

“Conscientious obedience to the Word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited, and driven from home.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 607.

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10

Sabbath, March 8, 2014

Oppression and National Apostasy

“When our nation, in its legislative councils, shall enact laws to bind the consciences of men in regard to their religious privileges, enforcing Sunday observance, and bringing oppressive power to bear against those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God will, to all intents and purposes, be made void in our land, and national apostasy will be followed by national ruin.” —(*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 977 [1888]) *Last Day Events*, pp. 133, 134.

UNITING IN EVIL

1. What powers will unite to fight against God and His church?

REVELATION 16:13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

“By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 451.

2. What steps are being taken by them to limit freedom of worship?

REVELATION 13:17 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan’s constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God....

“In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance—a custom which originated with Rome, and which she claims as the sign of her authority.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 591, 573.

APOSTASY LEADS TO NATIONAL RUIN

3. In restricting religious freedom, what will be the result for the United States?

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

“As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God’s forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation’s iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 452.

“The people of the United States have been a favored people; but when they restrict religious liberty, surrender Protestantism, and give countenance to popery, the measure of their guilt will be full, and ‘national apostasy’ will be registered in the books of heaven. The result of this apostasy will be national ruin.” —*Maranatha*, p. 216.

WORLDWIDE SUNDAY LEGISLATION

4. Ultimately, how many nations will participate in enforcing the restrictive law?

JEREMIAH 25:32 *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.*

“... While the powers of darkness are stirring up the elements from beneath, the Lord God of heaven is sending power from above to meet the emergency by arousing His living agencies to exalt the law of heaven. Now, just now, is our time to work in foreign countries. As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false sabbath, the people of

every country on the globe will be led to follow her example.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 18.

“Men will devise and counsel and plan what they will do. The whole world keeps Sunday, they say, and why should not this people, who are so few in number, do according to the laws of the land?” —(Manuscript 163, 1897) *Last Day Events*, p. 136.

5. How far will Satan’s deceptions go in the attempts to deceive God’s people? What will the Lord say in that day?

MARK 13:22 *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*

2 CORINTHIANS 11:13-15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

MATTHEW 7:21-23 *And 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. And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. 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.*

“They [the wicked] declared that they had the truth, that miracles were among them; that angels from heaven talked with them and walked with them, that great power and signs and wonders were performed among them, and that this was the temporal millennium they had been expecting so long. The whole world was converted and in harmony with the Sunday law, and this little feeble people stood out in defiance of the laws of the land and the law of God, and claimed to be the only ones right on the earth....

“Go to God for yourselves; pray for divine enlightenment, that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness.” — *Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 428, 389 (1888).

GIVING POWER TO THE TRUTH

6. What will be the position of God’s sincere children when the Sunday law is issued? Only whom will they follow?

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

ACTS 5:30-32 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

“We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God’s word must be recognized as above all human legislation. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is not to be set aside for a ‘Thus saith the church’ or a ‘Thus saith the state.’” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 68.

“If we accept Christ as a Redeemer, we must accept Him as a Ruler. We cannot have the assurance and perfect confiding trust in Christ as our Saviour until we acknowledge Him as our King and are obedient to His commandments. Thus we evidence our allegiance to God. We have then the genuine ring in our faith, for it is a working faith. It works by love.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 16.

7. What will happen to some of the faithful witnesses and to the truth in the time of greatest opposition?

ACTS 7:55, 56 *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

ACTS 7:59, 60 *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

“The zeal of those who obey the Lord will be increased as the world and the church unite in making void the law. Every objection raised against the commandments of God will make way for the advancement of truth and enable its advocates to present its value before men. There is a beauty and force in the truth that nothing can make so apparent as opposition and persecution.” —(*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pp. 71, 72 [1896]) *Last Day Events*, pp. 140, 141.

“When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ’s sake in standing in defense of the truth.” —(*Manuscript 6*, 1889) *Maranatha*, p. 199.

8. Through what means will the beast and its image be faced and defeated?

HABAKKUK 2:4, LAST PART ... *But the just shall live by his faith.*

HEBREWS 10:38, 39 *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

“We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way. The sure word of prophecy will meet its final fulfillment in the glorious advent of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords. The time of waiting may seem long, the soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, 'The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.' Habakkuk 2:20. Let us ever hold in remembrance the cheering message, 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.... The just shall live by his faith.' Verses 3, 4." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 387, 388.

FOR MEDITATION

Psalms 111:7, 8; 119:89; Revelation 15:2, 3.

"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." —*Early Writings*, p. 33.

"The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in those days of deep trial was the same faith that sustains God's people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian believer may keep his soul stayed upon the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed. 'The just shall live by his faith.'" —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 386, 387; *Conflict and Courage*, p. 242.

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The Shaking Among God's People

"The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out, and left by the way. [See Revelation 3:15-17.] The careless and indifferent, who did not join with those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness, but their numbers were immediately made up by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks. Still the evil angels pressed around them, but they could have no power over them. [See Ephesians 6:12-18.]" —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 339.

REJECTION OF THE MESSAGE AND THE SHAKING

1. **What admonition does the Faithful Witness give the Laodicean church? Why will His testimony cause a shaking among God's people?**

REVELATION 3:14-16 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people." —*Early Writings*, p. 270.

2. **In what condition are some souls who profess to believe the truth? Is it enough to be enrolled as a member in the church books?**

MATTHEW 25:1, 2 *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

MATTHEW 25:10-12 *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

“It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined;...” —*Christian Service*, p. 41.

3. Who will be shaken out and leave the church? Revelation 3:16. Who will endure in the faith to the very end?

REVELATION 3:16 *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

REVELATION 3:5 *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.*

MATTHEW 10:32, 33 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

“As I have of late looked around to find the humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, my mind has been much exercised. Many who profess to be looking for the speedy coming of Christ are becoming conformed to this world and seek more earnestly the applause of those around them than the approbation of God. They are cold and formal, like the nominal churches from which they but a short time since separated. The words addressed to the Laodicean church describe their present condition perfectly. See Revelation 3:14-20. They are ‘neither cold nor hot,’ but ‘lukewarm.’ And unless they heed the counsel of the ‘Faithful and true Witness,’ and zealously repent and obtain ‘gold tried in the fire,’ ‘white raiment,’ and ‘eyesalve,’ He will spew them out of His mouth.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 107, 108.

“God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 128.

OTHER CAUSES OF THE SHAKING

4. What other causes lead to a shaking and the loss of souls?

MATTHEW 7:26, 27 *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

1 JOHN 2:19 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

"I was pointed to the providence of God among His people and was shown that every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. As a class, their spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, many are offended." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 89.

THE FINAL SHAKING

5. What will God's people face in the near future? What will then happen to those who do not have a true foundation?

JAMES 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

MATTHEW 13:20, 21 *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

"When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the falsehearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the halfhearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 602.

PREPARATION TO REMAIN FIRM IN THE TRUTH

6. In what help can we trust even in the most difficult situation? What is required today to be confirmed in the truth?

JOHN 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*

MATTHEW 7:24 *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.*

MATTHEW 24:13 *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

"The Holy Spirit was promised to be with those who were wrestling for victory, in demonstration of all mightiness, endowing the human

agent with supernatural powers, and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. That the Holy Spirit is to be the grand helper, is a wonderful promise.”—*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 137.

“How do you stand before God today? The question is not, How will you stand in the day of trouble, or at some future time? but how is it with your soul today? Will you go to work today? We want a personal, individual experience today. Today, we want Christ abiding with us.”—(*Review and Herald*, April 9, 1889) *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 129.

7. What is the secret of not being left out of God’s kingdom but being with the victors?

2 CHRONICLES 20:20 *And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

JOHN 12:35 *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

“The most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clad in white, know the conflict of overcoming, for they have come up through great tribulation. Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul, when, though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could save neither son nor daughter, for everyone must deliver his soul by his own righteousness.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 215.

“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. 51.

8. In the end, what will be the result of the battle between truth and error?

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. 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. For 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. 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.*

“In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world’s insignia; the other was led by the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust, as company after company from the Lord’s army joined the foe, and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God.” —*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 228.

FOR MEDITATION

Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:35-39; 12:28.

“I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. Firmness and great earnestness was expressed in their countenances; large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads. Now and then their faces would light up with the marks of God’s approbation, and again the same solemn, earnest, anxious look would settle upon them.

“Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 269, 270.

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God's Seal and the Mark of the Beast

"The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. 'The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' Exodus 31:12, 13. Here the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people.

"The mark of the beast is the opposite of this—the observance of the first day of the week. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 117.

SEALING BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. What function does the Holy Spirit perform in the sealing work?

EPHESIANS 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

EPHESIANS 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

"The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done....

"When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished.'" —(*Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1117, 1118.

2. What does it mean to be sealed by God? Is it an outward, visible seal or mark?

EZEKIEL 9:3, 4 *And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to*

the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

HEBREWS 8:10 *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

HEBREWS 10:16 *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.*

“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.” —(*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161 [1902]) *Last Day Events*, pp. 219, 220.

“What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. The intelligent mind has seen the sign of the cross of Calvary in the Lord’s adopted sons and daughters. The sin of the transgression of the law of God is taken away. They have on the wedding garment, and are obedient and faithful to all God’s commands.” —(Letter 126, 1898) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 968.

THE SEAL IN GOD’S LAW

3. What day is respected as sacred by those who receive God’s seal in their foreheads?

EXODUS 31:13 *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.*

EXODUS 31:16, 17 *Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.*

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.*

EXODUS 20:20 *And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.*

“A mark is placed upon every one of God’s people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin.” —(*Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

“... The seal of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord.” —(*Review and Herald*, July 13, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

“The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Those who obey this commandment take upon themselves His name, and all the blessings it involves are theirs.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 351.

“The observance of the Lord’s memorial, the Sabbath instituted in Eden, the seventh-day Sabbath, is the test of our loyalty to God.” —(Letter 94, 1900) *Last Day Events*, p. 220.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

4. What characteristics will make it possible for one to receive God’s seal, and how will he conduct himself today?

PSALM 51:7 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

PSALM 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

1 PETER 1:14, 15 *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*

“... Many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.” —*Maranatha*, p. 41.

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 445; *Last Day Events*, p. 221.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.

RECEIVING THE MARK OF THE BEAST

5. Who dared to change God’s law? What institution is identified in the Spirit of prophecy as the source of the mark of the beast?

DANIEL 7:25 *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

REVELATION 13:5 *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*

“The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord’s memorial of creation....

“The mark of the beast is the opposite of this—the observance of the first day of the week. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 117.

“When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday. Those who, after having heard the truth, continue to regard this day as holy bear the signature of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws.” —(Letter 12, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

6. What will be the most fearful test to come upon God’s people?

REVELATION 13:15-17 *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. 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: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“If men will not agree to trample under foot the commandments of God, the spirit of the dragon is revealed. They are imprisoned, brought before councils, and fined....

“There is a marked contrast between those who bear the seal of God and those who worship the beast and his image. The Lord’s faithful servants will receive the bitterest persecution from false teachers, who will not hear the word of God, and who prepare stumbling blocks to put in the way of those who would hear. But God’s people are not to fear. Satan cannot go beyond his limit. The Lord will be the defense of His people.” —*Maranatha*, p. 191.

THE BEGIN OF PERSECUTION

7. What will those who submit to human commandments accept? When will the mark of the beast be received?

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.*

“As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—the mark of the beast.’ And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that

those who continue in transgression will receive ‘the mark of the beast.’”
—*The Great Controversy*, p. 449.

“No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 234, 235.

8. Where will one be able to take refuge so as to stand firm in the great battle that is coming?

PROVERBS 18:10 *The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

1 PETER 2:6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*

“Jesus gained the victory through submission and faith in God, and by the apostle He says to us, ‘submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.’ James 4:7, 8. We cannot save ourselves from the tempter’s power; he has conquered humanity, and when we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to his devices; but ‘the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’ Proverbs 18:10.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 130, 131.

“But the saints of God do not receive this mark. The prophet of Patmos beheld those who had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 366.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 3:18.

“The change of the Sabbath is the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish church. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false sabbath in the place of the true, are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. The mark of the beast is the papal sabbath, which has been accepted by the world in the place of the day of God’s appointment.” —*Evangelism*, p. 234.

“Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God’s chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them.” —(Letter 119, 1904) *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 55.

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Beginning of the Loud Cry

“We are to bear the third angel’s message to the world, warning men against the worship of the beast and his image, and directing them to take their places in the ranks of those who ‘keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:12. God has not revealed to us the time when this message will close, or when probation will have an end.... It is our duty to watch and work and wait, to labor every moment for the souls of men that are ready to perish.” —*Maranatha*, p. 107.

THE LOUD CRY BEGINS

1. What does prophecy affirm concerning the manner in which the message of the third angel will be proclaimed? When did the first phase of the loud cry begin?

REVELATION 14:9-13 *And 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, The 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: And 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. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

REVELATION 18:1, 2 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 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.*

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 members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble.

Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 353.

"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."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 363.

2. In 1888, through whom did the Lord manifest Himself to initiate the work of the angel whose glory will fill the whole earth? According to the holy Scriptures, what does He expect of His people?

ISAIAH 60:1, 2 *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.*

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

"The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet."—*Early Writings*, p. 277; *The Story of Redemption*, p. 399.

3. What happened with the message of justification by faith in 1888 at the General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota? Did the spirit that was demonstrated in those meetings resemble the attitude of ancient Israel?

EZEKIEL 20:13, FIRST PART *But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them;...*

1 SAMUEL 8:7 *And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*

"An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth

with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234, 235.

“The reactions to the emphasis on this vital truth were mixed. At the 1893 General Conference Session, A.T. Jones, speaking of the reception of the truths set forth at Minneapolis, reported: ‘I know that some there accepted it; others rejected it entirely. You know the same thing. Others tried to stand half way between, and get it that way.’” —(*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 185) *Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 158, 159.

A PURIFIED PEOPLE

4. What deep experience is necessary for us to become God’s instruments?

JAMES 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

1 PETER 5:6 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

“We are to strive to enter in at the strait gate. But this gate does not swing loosely on its hinges. It will not admit doubtful characters. We must now strive for eternal life with an intensity that is proportionate to the value of the prize before us. It is not money or lands or position, but the possession of a Christlike character, that will open to us the gates of Paradise. It is not dignity, it is not intellectual attainments, that will win for us the crown of immortality. Only the meek and lowly ones, who have made God their efficiency, will receive this gift.” —(*Southern Watchman*, April 16, 1903) *Christian Service*, p. 247.

5. What will happen to our faults and weaknesses after we experience a true conversion?

ISAIAH 43:25 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

MICAH 7:18, 19 *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

ACTS 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

“All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of Heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

6. In nature, what does the Lord give regularly for the seed to sprout? What does this mean in spiritual life?

JOEL 2:23 *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

JEREMIAH 5:24 *Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.*

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection....

“There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience....

“Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 333; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 506.

“The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.” —*Maranatha*, p. 61.

7. What wonderful promise has been given concerning the completion of the gospel work? Zechariah 10:1; James 5:7. Who will receive this special grace?

ZECHARIAH 10:1 *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*

JAMES 5:7 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

“But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ ‘He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.’ Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 56.

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Wit-

ness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 188.

8. What will distinguish God’s true children in the battle against the beast and its image?

ISAIAH 8:16 *Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.*

ISAIAH 8:20 *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

REVELATION 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.*

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

“‘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.’ Isaiah 8:20.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

FOR MEDITATION

Acts 2:17-21.

“... The conscience should not be compelled even for the observance of the genuine Sabbath, for God will accept only willing service.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 15, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 977.

“So it may be now. Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was ‘the former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant.” —*Counsels for the Church*, pp. 98, 99.

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The Loud Cry and the Opposition

“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.

THE FINAL FALL OF BABYLON

1. What will be the condition of the religious world in the time of the third angel’s message and that of the angel of Revelation 18?

REVELATION 14:8 *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.*

REVELATION 18:2, 3 *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. For 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.*

“A terrible condition of the religious world is here described. With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings which God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the Decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at nought in the contempt placed upon His word and His people. As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the churches, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 604, 605.

2. What are the reasons for this message to the people who claim to be Christians and to the world in general? Isaiah 24:5; Romans 1:21, 25. What did the inspired pen write more than a century ago?

ISAIAH 24:5 *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.*

ROMANS 1:21, 25 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

ROMANS 1:25 *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*

“The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God....

“The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.

“The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 11.

CALL TO SINCERE SOULS IN THE CHURCHES

3. What is the urgent call that God makes to His sincere children who are still in the fallen churches?

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.*

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, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

“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.

TWO POWERS IN CONFLICT

4. What is the beast and its image planning throughout the world? On the other hand, what earnest warning is God sending to earth's inhabitants?

REVELATION 13:15-17 *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. 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: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

REVELATION 14:9-11 *And 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, The 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: And 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.*

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. 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. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

5. What intense work will done by false ministers to deceive the people?

2 CORINTHIANS 11:13-15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

1 KINGS 22:23-25 *Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.*

“Many who hear the message—by far the greatest number—will not credit the solemn warning. Many will be found disloyal to the commandments of God, which are a test of character. The Lord’s servants will be called enthusiasts. Ministers will warn the people not to listen to them. Noah received the same treatment while the Spirit of God was urging him to give the message, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear.

“Come when it may, the advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers who are saying, ‘Peace and safety;’ ‘all things continue as they were from the beginning.’ Thus saith the word of Inspiration, ‘Sudden destruction cometh upon them.’ The day of God shall come as a snare upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 233.

GOD’S LAW AND THE GOSPEL

6. In His great mercy, what will God do? Will He leave the people in darkness?

REVELATION 18:1 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

“But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

7. In the final warning, what will still be the heart of the message?

ROMANS 3:24-26 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

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

“The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 19.

“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." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

FOR MEDITATION

Psalms 126:5, 6; Revelation 3:21; Song of Solomon 6:10.

"The church must and will shine forth 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' God's servants must, by laboring together with Christ, roll away the curse that has made the church so lukewarm. [Revelation 3:15-19 quoted.] The chastening reveals a hope of reform [Revelation 3:20, 21 quoted]." —(Letter 130, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 966.

"Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. 'Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners' (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

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Sabbath, April 12, 2014

Results of the Loud Cry

"Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law.... The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 188, 189.

CONFRONTING THE OPPOSITION

- 1. Instigated by Satan, what will Catholicism, apostate Protestantism, and civil powers do? What position will God's children take?**

REVELATION 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.*

1 PETER 5:9 *Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

LUKE 10:19, 20 *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

“The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: ‘Show us from the word of God our error’—the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances. Those who are arraigned before the courts make a strong vindication of the truth, and some who hear them are led to take their stand to keep all the commandments of God. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 607.

2. What will happen in families that have not embraced the faith of Jesus?

MATTHEW 10:21, 22 *And 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. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

“Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. The words of Paul will be literally fulfilled: ‘All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ 2 Timothy 3:12. As the defenders of truth refuse to honor the Sunday sabbath, some of them will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, some will be treated as slaves. To human wisdom all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God’s fear and love are removed.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

3. For the truth's sake, before whom will God's people have to stand in the final days of divine grace?

MATTHEW 10:16-20 *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

“You know not to what responsibility you may be called. You know not where you may be called upon to give your witness of truth. Many will have to stand in the legislative courts; some will have to stand before kings and before the learned of the earth, to answer for their faith.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 186.

“It does not seem possible to us now that any should have to stand alone, but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate.” —(*Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888) *Last Day Events*, p. 209.

INSTRUMENTS GOD WILL USE

4. What will be the qualifications of the workers whom God uses as His instruments under the latter rain?

ROMANS 8:35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the

words which God gives them. 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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

5. In addition to the workers in God’s vineyard, who else will be called to be standard bearers under the latter rain? What other people will join the Lord’s ranks to preach the message?

1 KINGS 19:18 *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*

MATTHEW 20:6, 7 *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*

MARK 10:13-16 *And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

“Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man’s machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit’s power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.” —(*Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895) *Evangelism*, p. 700.

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

A DECISIVE WORLDWIDE MESSAGE

6. How far will the loud cry of the third angel extend?

REVELATION 18:1 *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*

“The angel who unites in the proclamation of the third angel’s message is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of worldwide

extent and unwonted power is here foretold. The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but these are to be exceeded by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

"Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lightened with his glory."—*Early Writings*, p. 277.

7. What will be the results of the loud cry?

JOHN 15:8 *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

REVELATION 7:3 *Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

ISAIAH 53:11, FIRST PART *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied....*

"The light that was shed upon the waiting ones penetrated everywhere, and those in the churches who had any light, who had not heard and rejected the three messages, obeyed the call and left the fallen churches.... All were to be tested upon it, and the precious ones were to be called out from the religious bodies. A compelling power moved the honest, while the manifestation of the power of God brought a fear and restraint upon their unbelieving relatives and friends so that they dared not, neither had they the power to, hinder those who felt the work of the Spirit of God upon them. The last call was carried even to the poor slaves, and the pious among them poured forth their songs of rapturous joy at the prospect of their happy deliverance.... God was in the work, and every saint, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message."—*Early Writings*, p. 278.

FOR MEDITATION

Habakkuk 2:3; Matthew 5:14-16; Isaiah 41:18; Matthew 16:18.

"Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.

"In this time of persecution the faith of the Lord's servants will be tried. They have faithfully given the warning, looking to God and to His word alone. God's Spirit, moving upon their hearts, has constrained them to speak. Stimulated with holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon

them, they entered upon the performance of their duties without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord had given them.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 608, 609.

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16

Sabbath, April 19, 2014

The Close of Probation

“When Jesus rises up in the most holy place, and lays off His mediatorial garments, and clothes Himself with the garments of vengeance in place of the priestly attire, the work for sinners will be done. The period of time will then have come when the mandate will go forth: He that is unjust, let him be unjust still:... and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me....’ Revelation 22:11, 12.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 691.

THE SEALING OF GOD’S SERVANTS COMPLETED

1. What will happen when the sealing angel completes his mission? What will Jesus then pronounce?

EZEKIEL 9:11 *And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.*

REVELATION 21:6 *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

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

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer’s inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed. Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the ten commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, ‘It is done.’ And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’” —*Early Writings*, pp. 279, 280.

2. What will be given to Jesus Christ when the time of grace ends?

DANIEL 7:14 *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

LUKE 1:32, 33 *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 for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

REVELATION 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

“Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.” —*Early Writings*, p. 280.

“He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

SINS PLACED ON SATAN

3. In the ancient service, what happened once the sanctuary was cleansed? Upon whom will the sins of the righteous be placed when the Saviour finishes His work of intercession?

LEVITICUS 16:10 *But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.*

LEVITICUS 16:20-22 *And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.*

“When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration,

He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 422.

“In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus’ mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered.”—*Early Writings*, p. 280.

THE SITUATION OF THE WICKED

4. At the end of probation, what will the wicked experience?

REVELATION 16:1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

“As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof.”—*Early Writings*, p. 280.

5. In this terrible situation, what will the impenitent seek and long for?

AMOS 8:11, 12 *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.*

“Those who had not prized God’s Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, ‘They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.’”—*Early Writings*, pp. 281, 282.

6. What will then be heard among those who reject God’s grace?

LUKE 6:25 *Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

“Many of the wicked were greatly enraged as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of fearful agony. Parents were bitterly reproaching their children, and children their parents, brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. Loud, wailing cries were heard in every direction, ‘It was you who kept me from receiving the truth which would have saved me from this awful hour.’ The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, ‘You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us.’ But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people.” —*Early Writings*, p. 282.

THE CALL TO LIFE

7. In His great love, what is our Lord’s desire? Therefore, what call does He extend to all to enjoy eternal life with Him?

2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

REVELATION 3:20, 21 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

MATTHEW 11:28-30 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

“But today mercy pleads with the sinner. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?’ Ezekiel 33:11. The voice that speaks to the impenitent today is the voice of Him who in heart anguish exclaimed as He beheld the city of His love: ‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.’ Luke 13:34, 35, R.V. In Jerusalem, Jesus beheld a symbol of the world that had rejected and despised His grace. He was weeping, O stubborn heart, for you! Even when Jesus’ tears were shed upon the mount, Jerusalem might yet have repented, and escaped her doom. For a little space the Gift of heaven still waited her acceptance. So, O heart, to you Christ is still speaking in accents of love:...” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 151.

FOR MEDITATION

Matthew 13:24-30, 47-50; 25:31-46.

“Both the parable of the tares and that of the net plainly teach that there is no time when all the wicked will turn to God. The wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest. The good and the bad fish are together drawn ashore for a final separation.

“Again, these parables teach that there is to be no probation after the judgment. When the work of the gospel is completed, there immediately follows the separation between the good and the evil, and the destiny of each class is forever fixed.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 123.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from the General Conference
Missionary Ministry on page 90.***

17

Sabbath, April 26, 2014

Outpouring of the First Plagues

“The world is soon to be left by the angel of mercy, and the seven last plagues are to be poured out.... God’s patience and mercy will not always wait.... The bolts of God’s wrath are soon to fall, and when He shall begin to punish the transgressors, there will be no period of respite until the end.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 182.

THE FOUR WINDS LET LOOSE

1. What will come upon the earth when the time of probation closes?

REVELATION 15:8 *And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

REVELATION 16:1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*

“Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the

Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other, also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out.” —*Early Writings*, p. 36.

2. What will the four angels at the four corners of the earth then release?

REVELATION 7:1-3 *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

“Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.” —*Education*, pp. 179, 180.

“Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

THE FIRST TWO PLAGUES

3. In the first plague, what will come upon those who accepted the mark of the beast and worshiped his image? What will happen to the sea in the second plague?

REVELATION 16:2, 3 *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.*

“When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God’s people. Says the revelator, in describing those terrific scourges: ‘There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.’ The sea ‘became as

the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.' Revelation 16:2, 3." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 627, 628.

THE THIRD PLAGUE

4. What is affected by the third plague? Revelation 16:4. Lacking pure water, what do the wicked drink to quench their thirst? Why?

REVELATION 16:4-7 *And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

“And ‘the rivers and fountains of waters ... became blood.’ Terrible as these inflictions are, God’s justice stands fully vindicated. The angel of God declares: ‘Thou art righteous, O Lord,... because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.’ Revelation 16:2-6. By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands. In like manner Christ declared the Jews of His time guilty of all the blood of holy men which had been shed since the days of Abel; for they possessed the same spirit and were seeking to do the same work with these murderers of the prophets.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 628.

THE FOURTH PLAGUE

5. How do people suffer from the consequences of the fourth plague? How will nature be affected?

REVELATION 16:8, 9 *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*

JOEL 1:10-12 *The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.*

JOEL 1:17-20 *The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto*

thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

“In the plague that follows, power is given to the sun ‘to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat.’ Verses 8, 9. The prophets thus describe the condition of the earth at this fearful time: ‘The land mourneth;... because the harvest of the field is perished.... All the trees of the field are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.’ ‘The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate.... How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture.... The rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.’ ‘The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.’ Joel 1:10-12, 17-20; Amos 8:3.

“These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 628, 629.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE

6. Upon what group of people will the terrible fifth plague specifically fall?

REVELATION 16:10, 11 *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

“An important fact is established by this testimony. The plagues do not at once destroy all their victims, for some who were at first smitten with sores, are still living under the fifth vial, and gnawing their tongues for pain. An illustration of this vial will be found in Exodus 10:21-23. It is poured upon the seat of the beast, the papacy. The seat of the beast is wherever the papal see is located, which has been thus far, and without doubt will continue to be, the city of Rome. ‘His kingdom’ probably embraces all those who are ecclesiastical subjects of the pope wherever they may be.” —Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, 1944, pp. 690, 691.

GOD’S DEEP LOVE AND DESIRE

7. In studying what will come upon impenitent sinners, what do you understand that God wants and feels?

ROMANS 1:16, 17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

1 JOHN 4:9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1, 2 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

“To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.’ Ezekiel 33:11.... Yet He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’ Exodus 34:6, 7. While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. And the very fact of His reluctance to execute justice testifies to the enormity of the sins that call forth His judgments and to the severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 628.

FOR MEDITATION

Ezekiel 3:16-21; 33:11-14; Luke 23:28-31.

“All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. The pleading blood of Christ has shielded the sinner from receiving the full measure of his guilt; but in the final judgment, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy....

“Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict unprepared will, in their despair, confess their sins in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress. These confessions are of the same character as was that of Esau or of Judas. Those who make them, lament the result of transgression, but not its guilt. They feel no true contrition, no abhorrence of evil. They acknowledge their sin, through fear of punishment; but, like Pharaoh of old, they would return to their defiance of Heaven should the judgments be removed.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 629, 620, 621.

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MISSIONARY REPORT
FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MISSIONARY MINISTRY

To be read on Sabbath, April 26, 2014

*The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, May 3, 2014*

Take care of them...

According to at least two early church fathers, Papias and Irenaeus, “Matthew recorded the oracles [or ‘prophetic discourses’] in the Hebrew tongue.” To date, about thirty Hebrew manuscripts of Matthew’s gospel (in whole or in part) are known to exist. These manuscripts give evidence that the Greek version is indeed a translation of an original Hebrew text.

The last three verses of the Hebrew Matthew are variously translated; one such version simply reads:

18. *Jesus came to them and said: “All power in heaven and earth has been given to Me,*
19. *you go to them*
20. *and take care of them so that they fulfill all the things I have commissioned you. [I am] with you forever.”*

Here Christ is speaking to His disciples, the leaders and evangelists of the new movement, when He commissions these ordained men to “take care of them.” Not only were they to “bring them into the fold of believers,” but they were then to take care of them. The “them” in the verses are the new believers or disciples of Christ.

A parent hearing these words, “Take care of them,” may think of taking care of a newborn baby or a growing child. A nurse or doctor may think of taking care of a sick or injured person. A church leader or teacher may understand the meaning in a slightly different way. Ultimately the object of taking care of a child, an injured or sick person, or even a student is not to keep them children, or forever sick and in bed, or students, but to help them come to the point in their lives where they can contribute to the health and well being of others—to work for the time when they themselves become parents, health professionals, and/or evangelists.

And that is exactly what the rest of the last phrase in the book of Matthew says. The last words—the most important words—are: “Take care of them so that they fulfill all the things I have commissioned you [to accomplish].”

There has never been a time when more information was available to the common man or woman than now. Yet the vast majority of all that information leads away from Christ, not to the fulfilling of the things He commissioned His followers to do. While the church is working to fulfill this commission of equipping members for evangelism and medical ministry, much needs to be done, and additional materials need to be prepared.

Starting with our children and youth, as well as parents and teachers, we would like to prepare the best possible materials, books, CDs, DVDs, and seminars on how to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; how to conduct a successful community outreach; what to do and not to do in dealing with sickness and distress; how to equip those contemplating marriage for family responsibilities; how to share tracts and publications; and how to increase our own and others' skill in defending and serving the Lord in the most perilous of all days.

This coming Sabbath, a Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered for the purpose of preparing more materials for equipping willing church members in their outreach to young and old, thus inspiring more church lay ministry activities.

As you consider the contribution that you will give next week, think also of the gifts of time, talent, and influence with which God has blessed you. Ask Him where He would like you to use them for Him and how they can be used to glorify Him. As we use our ideas, time, and talents to share spiritual gifts with others, we ourselves grow in the joy of the Lord. Thank you for your support of this important work. May Jesus be with you forever!

*—Larry Watts, General Conference
Missionary Ministry Director*

**Special Sabbath School Offering for the
GENERAL CONFERENCE MISSIONARY MINISTRY**

Your gifts will have a direct effect on many mission fields

18

Sabbath, May 3, 2014

God's Church During the Plagues

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death." Psalm 9:9, 10, 13.

THE SAINTS PROTECTED BY THE ANGELS

1. What will the saints do when probation closes? What will sustain them in this difficult time?

ISAIAH 26:20 *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.*

ISAIAH 33:15, 16 *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*

"I saw the saints leaving the cities and villages, and associating together in companies, and living in the most solitary places. Angels provided them food and water, while the wicked were suffering from hunger and thirst." —*Early Writings*, p. 282.

"In the day of fierce trial He [Christ] will say, 'Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' What are the chambers in which they are to hide? They are the protection of Christ and holy angels. The people of God are not at this time all in one place. They are in different companies, and in all parts of the earth." —*Maranatha*, p. 270.

2. What was Haman's plan when he asked for an edict against the Jews? Similarly, who will be the target of the wicked in their rage?

ESTHER 3:8-15 *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. 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 treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. 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 unto 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. And 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 upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. The 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 13:15 *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.*

“Then I saw the leading men of the earth consulting together, and Satan and his angels busy around them. I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land, giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty after a certain time to put them to death. But in this hour of trial the saints were calm and composed, trusting in God and leaning upon His promise that a way of escape would be made for them. In some places, before the time for the decree to be executed, the wicked rushed upon the saints to slay them; but angels in the form of men of war fought for them.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 282, 283

3. What argument will the wicked use to go against the saints? What powers will be prominent in the actions against God's people, particularly in North America?

JOHN 11:49, 50 *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider*

that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

REVELATION 13:1, 2 *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

REVELATION 13:11 *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.*

REVELATION 13:14-17 *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 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. 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: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

“It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the ‘rulers of the people.’ ‘It is expedient for us,’ said the wily Caiaphas, ‘that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.’ John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 616.

TESTED AS WAS JACOB

4. What test will God’s children face at that time? Why is it necessary for them to pass through this?

JEREMIAH 30:5-7 *For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.*

JAMES 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

“Soon I saw the saints suffering great mental anguish. They seemed to be surrounded by the wicked inhabitants of the earth. Every appearance was against them. Some began to fear that God had at last left them to perish by the hand of the wicked. But if their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen themselves surrounded by angels of God. Next came the multitude of the angry wicked, and next a mass of evil angels, hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But before they could approach God’s people, the wicked must first pass this company of mighty, holy angels. This was impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them to fall back.” —*Early Writings*, p. 283.

5. What means will the Lord use to purify His children?

REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

MALACHI 3:2-4 *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*

“It was an hour of fearful, terrible agony to the saints. Day and night they cried unto God for deliverance. To outward appearance, there was no possibility of their escape. The wicked had already begun to triumph, crying out, ‘Why doesn’t your God deliver you out of our hands? Why don’t you go up and save your lives?’ But the saints heeded them not. Like Jacob, they were wrestling with God. The angels longed to deliver them, but they must wait a little longer; the people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism. The angels, faithful to their trust, continued their watch. God would not suffer His name to be reproached among the heathen. The time had nearly come when He was to manifest His mighty power and gloriously deliver His saints. For His name’s glory He would deliver every one of those who had patiently waited for Him and whose names were written in the book.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 283, 284.

STRUGGLING FOR THE VICTORY

6. If one struggles with God in prayer as did Jacob, what will be the outcome today and in the time of trouble?

HOSEA 12:4 *Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us.*

ISAIAH 63:9 *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

“Suddenly a hand is laid upon his shoulder. He thinks that an enemy is seeking his life, and with all the energy of despair he wrestles with his assailant. As the day begins to break, the stranger puts forth his superhuman power; at his touch the strong man seems paralyzed, and he falls, a helpless, weeping suppliant, upon the neck of his mysterious antagonist. Jacob knows now that it is the Angel of the covenant with whom he has been in conflict.... Long has he endured perplexity, remorse, and trouble for his sin; now he must have the assurance that it is pardoned. The divine visitant seems about to depart; but Jacob clings to Him, pleading for a blessing. The Angel urges, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaketh;’ but the patriarch exclaims, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ What confidence, what firmness and perseverance, are here displayed!...

“Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 617, 616.

CHANGE OF NAME

7. What resulted from Jacob’s struggle and victory? What will happen to God’s people, and what name will they be given if they are victorious as he was?

GENESIS 32:27, 28 *And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*

REVELATION 3:12 *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

“As an evidence of his triumph and an encouragement to others to imitate his example, his name was changed from one which was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 617.

“The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. At the end of every sentence the saints shouted, ‘Glory! Hallelujah!’ Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God, and they shone with glory as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look upon them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 285, 286.

FOR MEDITATION

Psalm 37:39; Hebrews 11:1, 2, 6; Psalm 91:3-10.

“If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner.” —(*Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892) *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 363.

“In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of heavenly angels; but there will be no security for the transgressor of God’s law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256; *Maranatha*, p. 270.

“We must now be learning the lessons of faith if we would stand in that time of trouble which is coming upon all the world to try them who dwell upon the face of the earth. We must have the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs.” —(Letter 14, January 18, 1884) *The Upward Look*, p. 32.

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Sabbath, May 10, 2014

The Scene of the Sixth Plague

“Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

INITIAL EFFECTS OF THE SIXTH PLAGUE

1. What will happen when the sixth angel empties his cup? What power is represented by the Euphrates River?

REVELATION 16:12 *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*

“What is the River Euphrates, upon which this vial is poured out? One view is that it is the literal River Euphrates in Asia. Another is that it is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows [Turkey]. The latter opinion is preferable for many reasons....

“In this latter text [Revelation 16:12], all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 691, 693.

2. In this context, is the Euphrates to be considered as the literal river or as figurative? What do “waters” represent when the word is used symbolically?

REVELATION 17:15 *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

“With these objections existing against considering the Euphrates a literal river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the territory watered by that river when it is observed as beginning to dry up. All agree that that power was Turkey. Hence we may look for the fulfillment of the specifications of this prophecy to affect definitely the Turkish nation....

“The Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power;...

“The drying up of the river in this sense would be the diminution of the Turkish nation, the gradual shrinking of its borders. This is what has actually happened....

“For centuries the territories of Palestine and the Euphrates valley have been under the control of Mohammedan rulers, who were amenable to the Turkish nation. Logically, then, the Turk will come to his end before the kings of the earth debouch their armies in that territory. The end of the Turk opens the way for the battle of Armageddon.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 692, 693, 698.

EVIL SPIRITS IN ACTION

3. What other entities are in action on the world stage during the sixth plague?

REVELATION 16:13 *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

“John in the Revelation writes of the unity of those living on the earth to make void the law of God. ‘These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.’ Revelation 17:13, 14. ‘And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet’ (chap. 16:13).” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 423.

4. For what deceptive purpose and terrible persecution do they go out to the kings of the whole earth?

REVELATION 16:14 *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

“The sources from which these spirits issue, denote that they will work among three great religious divisions of mankind, represented by

the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or paganism, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism.” —*The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 700.

“The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived. Persons will arise pretending to be Christ Himself, and claiming the title and worship which belong to the world’s Redeemer. They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the Scriptures.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 624.

GOD’S INTERVENTION FOR HIS PEOPLE

5. Where will the forces of evil meet to complete their destructive work?

REVELATION 16:16 *For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

JOEL 3:2 *I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*

JOEL 3:9-12 *Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. 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.*

“The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle. But Providence has a part to act in the battle of Armageddon. When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of Revelation eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake from slumber, and the armies of the living God will take the field.” —*Maranatha*, p. 257.

“John also was a witness of the terrible scenes that will take place as signs of Christ’s coming. He saw armies mustering for battle, and people’s hearts failing them for fear.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 316.

6. Will the Lord permit the wicked to carry out their destructive plans to oppose and destroy the truth and His people? What is prophesied concerning this terrible moment?

JOEL 3:12, LAST PART ... *There will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.*

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

REVELATION 16:15, FIRST PART *Behold, I come as a thief.*

“God’s judgments will be visited upon those who are seeking to oppress and destroy His people. His long forbearance with the wicked emboldens men in transgression, but their punishment is nonetheless certain and terrible because it is long delayed. ‘The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.’ Isaiah 28:21. To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. ‘As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.’ Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is ‘merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,... forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’ Yet He will ‘by no means clear the guilty.’ ‘The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.’ Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord’s reluctance to execute justice.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

7. Despite the complex situation, what blessing will God’s children experience at that time?

REVELATION 16:15, SECOND PART *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

“After John’s description in Revelation 16 of that miracle-working power which was to gather the world to the last great conflict, the symbols are dropped and the trumpet voice once more gives a certain sound: ‘Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.’ Revelation 16:15.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 249; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, pp. 96, 97.

FOR MEDITATION

Habakkuk 3:17-19; Psalm 121:1-8; Isaiah 33:14-16.

“Did He [the Lord] forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did He forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did He forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison house? Did He forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions?...

“Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 626, 625.

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The Seventh Plague and the Wicked

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” Luke 21:26, 27.

“Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 634.

THE SEVENTH ANGEL POURS OUT HIS CUP

1. **What great voice sounds from the temple in heaven when the seventh angel empties his cup? While this voice is heard in heaven, what will happen on earth?**

REVELATION 16:17 *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.*

“We need to study the pouring out of the seventh vial. The powers of evil will not yield up the conflict without a struggle.” —*Maranatha*, p. 257.

“It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up, and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying, ‘It is done.’ Revelation 16:17.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 182.

EVENTS IN NATURE

2. **What will happen on the earth during the seventh plague?**

REVELATION 16:18 *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*

“Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns.

Ragged rocks, thrown out by the sea, or torn out of the earth itself, were scattered all over its surface. Large trees had been uprooted and were strewn over the land. “—*Early Writings*, p. 290.

3. Centuries ago, who spoke of these events occurring in both the heavens and the earth?

HAGGAI 2:6 *For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.*

ISAIAH 24:20 *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.*

JOEL 3:16 *The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

“That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. There is a mighty earthquake, ‘such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.’ Revelation 16:17, 18. The firmament appears to open and shut.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636, 637.

“He whose voice then shook the earth has declared, ‘Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.’ Hebrews 12:26. Says the Scripture, ‘The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation;’ ‘and the heavens and the earth shall shake.’ Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:16. In that great coming day, the heaven itself shall depart ‘as a scroll when it is rolled together.’ Revelation 6:14. And every mountain and island shall be moved out of its place. ‘The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.’ Isaiah 24:20.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 340.

BABYLON RECEIVES THE CUP OF GOD’S WRATH

4. On whom will God’s wrath fall without mercy?

REVELATION 16:19 *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*

“The glory from the throne of God seems flashing through. The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of a hurricane like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the great has come in remembrance before God, ‘to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

HAIL FALLS

5. With what destructive force will the seven plagues end?

REVELATION 16:20, 21 *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 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.*

“The revelator describes the destruction that is to take place when the ‘great voice out of the temple of heaven’ announces, ‘It is done.’ He says, ‘There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.’ Revelation 16:17, 21.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.

“Great hailstones, every one ‘about the weight of a talent,’ are doing their work of destruction. Verses 19, 21. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low. The lordly palaces, upon which the world’s great men have lavished their wealth in order to glorify themselves, are crumbling to ruin before their eyes. Prison walls are rent asunder, and God’s people, who have been held in bondage for their faith, are set free.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 636.

FEAR AND ANTICIPATION

6. What state of mind will then come upon earth’s inhabitants?

HAGGAI 2:7, FIRST PART *And I will shake all nations,...*

LUKE 21:26 *Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

“John also had been a witness of this most startling revelation. He saw the sea and the waves roaring, and men’s hearts failing them for fear. He beheld the earth moved, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea (which is literally taking place), the water thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He was shown plagues, pestilence, famine, and death performing their terrible mission.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 445, 446.

7. What will God the Father declare to the wicked?

PSALM 50:6 *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.*

PSALM 119:142 *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.*

“While these words of holy trust ascend to God, the clouds sweep back, and the starry heavens are seen, unspeakably glorious in contrast with the black and angry firmament on either side.... Then there appears against the sky a hand holding two tables of stone folded together. Says the prophet: ‘The heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God

is judge Himself.' Psalm 50:6. That holy law, God's righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God's ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 639.

FOR MEDITATION

Psalm 7:11; Isaiah 33:14; Job 40:11, 12; Psalms 94:2; 119:21.

"The transgression of God's law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin. And the non-execution of the penalty of that sin would be a crime in the divine administration. God is a judge, the avenger of justice, which is the habitation and foundation of His throne. He cannot dispense with His law, He cannot do away with its smallest item in order to meet and pardon sin. The rectitude and justice and moral excellence of the law must be maintained and vindicated before the heavenly universe and the worlds unfallen." —(Manuscript 145, December 30, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 951; *The Upward Look*, p. 378.

"But amid the tempest of divine judgment the children of God will have no cause for fear. 'The Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.' Joel 3:16. The day that brings terror and destruction to the transgressors of God's law will bring to the obedient 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'" —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 341.

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Sabbath, May 24, 2014

From Struggle to Triumph

"The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen. Saith the Lord: 'Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth ... to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.' Isaiah 30:29, 30." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 635.

1. In addition to delivering His tested children, what does God's voice bring about during the seventh plague?

DANIEL 12:1, 2 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 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.*

ISAIAH 49:24, 25 *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.*

“Signs and wonders followed in quick succession. Everything seemed turned out of its natural course. The streams ceased to flow. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. But there was one clear place of settled glory, whence came the voice of God like many waters, shaking the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. The graves were opened, and those who had died in faith under the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, came forth from their dusty beds, glorified, to hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law.” —*Early Writings*, p. 285.

2. What will the Father declare to His people? When will He do this?

MARK 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

“The sky opened and shut and was in commotion. The mountains shook like a reed in the wind and cast out ragged rocks all around. The sea boiled like a pot and cast out stones upon the land. And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth. The Israel of God stood with their eyes fixed upward, listening to the words as they came from the mouth of Jehovah and rolled through the earth like peals of loudest thunder. It was awfully solemn. At the end of every sentence the saints shouted, ‘Glory! Hallelujah!’ Their countenances were lighted up with the glory of God, and they shone with glory as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked could not look upon them for the glory. And when the never-ending blessing was pronounced on those who had honored God in keeping His Sabbath holy, there was a mighty shout of victory over the beast and over his image.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 285, 286.

3. What greatest event of all time will then take place in an amazing, glorious manner?

REVELATION 19:11-16 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

LUKE 21:27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

“Soon appeared the great white cloud, upon which sat the Son of man. When it first appeared in the distance, this cloud looked very small. The angel said that it was the sign of the Son of man. As it drew nearer the earth, we could behold the excellent glory and majesty of Jesus as He rode forth to conquer. A retinue of holy angels, with bright, glittering crowns upon their heads, escorted Him on His way. No language can describe the glory of the scene. The living cloud of majesty and unsurpassed glory came still nearer, and we could clearly behold the lovely person of Jesus. He did not wear a crown of thorns, but a crown of glory rested upon His holy brow. Upon His vesture and thigh was a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. His countenance was as bright as the noonday sun, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet had the appearance of fine brass. His voice sounded like many musical instruments. The earth trembled before Him, the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 286, 287.

4. Whom will God's Son receive at His second coming?

REVELATION 14:1 *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

ISAIAH 25:9 *And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

“‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.... We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’ Isaiah 25:9.

“‘Jesus is coming! But not to listen to the woes of mankind, and to hear the guilty sinner confess his sins, and to speak pardon to Him; for everyone's case will then be decided for life or death. Those who have lived in sin will remain sinners forever. Those who have confessed their

sins to Jesus in the sanctuary, have made Him their friend, and have loved His appearing will have pardon written for all their sins, and they, having purified their souls 'in obeying the truth,' will remain pure and holy forever." –*Lift Him Up*, p. 379.

PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

5. What will happen to the wicked at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

REVELATION 6:15-17 *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

2 THESSALONIANS 1:8, 9 *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

"Those who a short time before would have destroyed God's faithful children from the earth, now witnessed the glory of God which rested upon them. And amid all their terror they heard the voices of the saints in joyful strains, saying, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.'" –*Early Writings*, p. 286.

"The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place. 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.' Psalm 50:3,4." –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 641, 642.

RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

6. What other extraordinary event will then take place? Where will the redeemed join their Saviour, and where will they go?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16, 17 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

JOHN 17:24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

"Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He

looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 644.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

- 7. Once they are redeemed, what is the privilege of the 144,000? Do you desire with all your heart to be there? What are you doing so others will desire to be part of that group?**

REVELATION 15:2, 3 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. And 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.

"Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire—so resplendent is it with the glory of God—are gathered the company that have 'gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.' With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, 'having the harps of God,' they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men; and there is heard, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a great thunder, 'the voice of harpers harping with their harps.' And they sing 'a new song' before the throne, a song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had. 'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.' These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.' Revelation 15:2, 3; 14:1-5." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.

THE JOYFUL, TRIUMPHANT GREAT MULTITUDE

- 8. In addition to the 144,000, what do we know about the rest of the redeemed who will rejoice in everlasting life and God's glory?**

REVELATION 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and

tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

“Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Saviour with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the ‘great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,... before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.’ Revelation 7:9. Their warfare is ended, their victory won. They have run the race and reached the prize. The palm branch in their hands is a symbol of their triumph, the white robe an emblem of the spotless righteousness of Christ which now is theirs.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 665.

FOR MEDITATION

1 Corinthians 1:18, 24; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; Revelation 1:5, 6.

“It will be seen that He who is infinite in wisdom could devise no plan for our salvation except the sacrifice of His Son. The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Saviour’s conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 653.

“By faith let us look upon the rainbow round about the throne,... an assurance to every humble, contrite, believing soul, that his life is one with Christ,... The wrath of God will not fall upon one soul that seeks refuge in Him. God Himself has declared, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you.’ Exodus 12:13.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 70.

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Punishment of Babylon and the Earth's Condition

“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” “The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.” “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.” Isaiah 24:1, 3, 5, 6.

GOD’S JUDGMENT UPON BABYLON

1. What will happen to Babylon when God ends the captivity of His people?

REVELATION 18:5-10 *For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

“They ‘shall have judgment without mercy’ that have ‘showed no mercy.’ James 2:13. Not long hence they will stand before the Judge of all the earth, to render an account for the pain they have caused to the bodies and souls of His heritage. They may now indulge in false accusations, they may deride those whom God has appointed to do His work, they may consign His believing ones to prison, to the chain gang, to banishment, to death; but for every pang of anguish, every tear shed, they must answer. God will reward them double for their sins. Concerning Babylon, the symbol of the apostate church, He says to His ministers of judgment, ‘Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.’ Revelation 18:5, 6.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 178, 179.

“Such are the judgments that fall upon Babylon in the day of the visitation of God’s wrath. She has filled up the measure of her iniquity; her time has come; she is ripe for destruction.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 654.

2. How do the wicked relate to the righteous? What will happen to those who delighted in evil and opposed God and His work?

PSALM 11:2 *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

PSALM 64:2-4 *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*

PSALM 11:5, 6 *The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

“The wicked are filled with regret, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered. They lament that the result is what it is; but they do not repent of their wickedness. They would leave no means untried to conquer if they could.

“The world see the very class whom they have mocked and derided, and desired to exterminate, pass unharmed through pestilence, tempest, and earthquake. He who is to the transgressors of His law a devouring fire, is to His people a safe pavilion.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 654.

3. What did the false ministers do against God and His flock? Although it will be too late, what will they see?

EZEKIEL 13:22 *Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.*

JEREMIAH 6:14 *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*

JEREMIAH 23:1 *Woe unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.*

JEREMIAH 25:34, 35 *Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.*

“The minister who has sacrificed truth to gain the favor of men now discerns the character and influence of his teachings. It is apparent that the omniscient eye was following him as he stood in the desk, as he walked the streets, as he mingled with men in the various scenes of life.

Every emotion of the soul, every line written, every word uttered, every act that led men to rest in a refuge of falsehood, has been scattering seed; and now, in the wretched, lost souls around him, he beholds the harvest....

“Ministers and people see that they have not sustained the right relation to God. They see that they have rebelled against the Author of all just and righteous law. The setting aside of the divine precepts gave rise to thousands of springs of evil, discord, hatred, iniquity, until the earth became one vast field of strife, one sink of corruption. This is the view that now appears to those who rejected truth and chose to cherish error. No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever—eternal life.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 654, 655.

THE SITUATION OF THE WICKED

4. What did the prophets write about the punishment of the wicked when the time of mercy is over?

ZECHARIAH 14:12, 13 *And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.*

JEREMIAH 25:33 *And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.*

“‘And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.’ Zechariah 14:12, 13. In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God’s unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low. ‘And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.’ Jeremiah 25:33.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 657.

THE EARTH EMPTIED

5. After the wicked receive the wages of their sins, what will happen to the earth?

REVELATION 19:17, 18 *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; That 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.*

JEREMIAH 4:23-26 *I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger.*

“The earth looked like a desolate wilderness. Cities and villages, shaken down by the earthquake, lay in heaps. Mountains had been moved out of their places, leaving large caverns. Ragged rocks, thrown out by the sea, or torn out of the earth itself, were scattered all over its surface. Large trees had been uprooted and were strewn over the land.” —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

A THOUSAND YEARS OF ISOLATION

6. Who will remain on the desolated earth? What is meant by the bottomless pit in these verses?

REVELATION 20:1, 2 *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*

GENESIS 1:2 *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

“Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Here he will be confined, to wander up and down over the broken surface of the earth and see the effects of his rebellion against God’s law. For a thousand years he can enjoy the fruit of the curse which he has caused. Limited alone to the earth, he will not have the privilege of ranging to other planets, to tempt and annoy those who have not fallen. During this time, Satan suffers extremely. Since his fall his evil traits have been in constant exercise. But he is then to be deprived of his power, and left to reflect upon the part which he has acted since his fall, and to look forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future, when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done and be punished for all the sins that he has caused to be committed.” —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

ACCEPTING GOD’S OFFER

7. What should we do today while God’s voice still invites us to accept the great gift of salvation?

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

HEBREWS 3:13-15 *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; 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; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

“The Spirit of God is freely bestowed to enable every man to lay hold upon the means of salvation. Thus Christ, ‘the true Light,’ ‘lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ John 1:9. Men fail of salvation through their own willful refusal of the gift of life.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 262.

“It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ Hebrews 4:7.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 215, 216.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 18:6-10; Matthew 25:34; Isaiah 40:1-5.

“We know that the last great conflict will be Satan’s most determined effort to accomplish his purposes. He will come, not only as a roaring lion, but as a seducer, clothing sin with beautiful garments of light that he may take human beings in his snare.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 152.

“‘The prince of this world cometh,’ said Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

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Crowns and Joy for God's People

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”
Revelation 3:11, 12.

THE REDEEMED RECEIVE A CROWN

1. What Biblical promise will be fulfilled when the redeemed enter heaven?

1 PETER 5:4 *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

REVELATION 3:11 *Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

“Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the note, and then every voice was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains.” —*Early Writings*, p. 288.

THE RESIDENCE OF THE REDEEMED

2. Where will the redeemed live in heaven? What will our Saviour Jesus Christ be satisfied about?

REVELATION 21:10 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*

ISAIAH 26:2 *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.*

ISAIAH 53:11 *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

“Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, ‘I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.’ I saw the redeemed host bow and cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus, and then, as His lovely hand raised them up, they touched their golden harps and filled all heaven with their rich music and songs to the Lamb.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 288, 289.

FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE

3. What divine promise will be fulfilled? As in Eden, what will be abundant in the new earth?

REVELATION 2:7 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

REVELATION 22:2 *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

EZEKIEL 47:12 *And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

“I then saw Jesus leading His people to the tree of life, and again we heard His lovely voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying, ‘The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. Eat ye all of it.’ Upon the tree of life was most beautiful fruit, of which the saints could partake freely. In the city was a most glorious throne, from which proceeded a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. On each side of this river was the tree of life, and on the banks of the river were other beautiful trees bearing fruit which was good for food....

“I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 289, 19.

PARTICIPATION IN THE GREAT SUPPER

4. What will be celebrated when the redeemed are with their Redeemer? Who will serve at the great supper?

REVELATION 19:9 *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

MATTHEW 26:29 *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

LUKE 22:28-30 *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

"This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, 'Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you.' We shouted, 'Alleluia! glory!' and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it." —*Early Writings*, p. 19.

NEW VISTAS OF KNOWLEDGE

5. In this world, can we fully grasp God's great love and the plan of redemption? What promises are for the future?

ROMANS 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

DEUTERONOMY 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:9, 10 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:12 *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

"In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 651.

6. In the home of the redeemed, who will guide their education? What will be the main subject of that education?

ISAIAH 54:13 *And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*

JOHN 6:45 *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

EPHESIANS 1:20, 21 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*

“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. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore—humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father’s face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary’s cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. 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!’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 651, 652.

UNIMAGINABLE THINGS AWAIT THE REDEEMED

7. Is it possible to imagine or describe the greatness and glory of the kingdom prepared for the redeemed?

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.*

ISAIAH 28:5 *In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.*

“Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendor and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, ‘Oh, what love! what wondrous love!’ The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love.” —*Early Writings*, p. 289.

Isaiah 53:7-11; Philippians 2:6-11; Luke 1:31-33.

“God has entrusted to mortals precious treasures of truth. These treasures may be likened to beautiful fruit, which is to be presented to the people in vessels that are clean and pure and holy, so that they will accept this fruit and enjoy it, to the glory of God.”—(Manuscript 127, 1902) *Evangelism*, p. 346.

“Jesus presents a white robe, a crown of glory richer than any that ever decked the brow of a monarch, and titles above those of honored princes. The recompense for a life devoted to the service of Christ exceeds anything that the human imagination can grasp.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 91.

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24

Sabbath, June 14, 2014

Judgment of the Wicked During the Millennium

“‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’ 1 Corinthians 4:5. Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, ‘judgment was given to the saints of the most High.’ Daniel 7:22. 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.”—*Maranatha*, p. 335.

BOUND FOR ONE THOUSAND YEARS

1. Looking at the past and also to the future, what did two prophets write concerning Lucifer?

ISAIAH 14:12-17 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the*

world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

REVELATION 20:1-3 *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

“The prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the time of Satan’s overthrow, exclaims: ‘How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!... Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.... I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?’ Isaiah 14:12-17....

“The revelator foretells the banishment of Satan and the condition of chaos and desolation to which the earth is to be reduced, and he declares that this condition will exist for a thousand years. After presenting the scenes of the Lord’s second coming and the destruction of the wicked, the prophecy continues: ‘I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon,... and bound him a thousand years,...’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 659, 658.

JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

2. What does the Bible say about the judgment of the wicked? Who will take part in this judgment?

REVELATION 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon 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 *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?*

“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.... Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, ‘judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.’ Daniel 7:22. 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.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 660, 661.

3. Who is in charge in this judgment?

2 TIMOTHY 4:1 *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*

JOHN 5:22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*

“Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then they meted out to the wicked the portion which they must suffer, according to their works; and it was written against their names in the book of death.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 290, 291.

JUDGMENT OF SATAN AND HIS ANGELS

4. Who else will be judged in this court? Why will Satan receive the heaviest sentence?

1 CORINTHIANS 6:3 *Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

2 PETER 2:4 *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

JUDE 6 *And 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.*

“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*, p. 661.

“Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints. Satan’s punishment was to be far greater than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear no comparison with it. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on much longer.” —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

5. What events follow the end of the thousand years in heaven? How will Jesus prepare the place for the holy city on this earth?

REVELATION 21:2 *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

ZECHARIAH 14:4 *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

“At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels....

“Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives, whence, after His resurrection, He ascended, and where angels repeated the promise of His return. Says the prophet: ‘The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.’ ‘And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof,... and there shall be a very great valley.’ ‘And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.’ Zechariah 14:5, 4, 9. As the New Jerusalem, in its dazzling splendor, comes down out of heaven, it rests upon the place purified and made ready to receive it, and Christ, with His people and the angels, enters the Holy City.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 662, 663.

6. Who will be brought back to life in the second resurrection? What difference will there be between the first and second resurrections?

REVELATION 20:5, FIRST PART, 6 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.... 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 *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

“At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place. Then the wicked will be raised from the dead and appear before God for the execution of ‘the judgment written.’ Thus the revelator, after describing the resurrection of the righteous, says: ‘The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.’ Revelation 20:5. And Isaiah declares, concerning the wicked: ‘They shall be gathered to-

gether, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.' Isaiah 24:22." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 661.

"Then, in terrible, fearful majesty, Jesus called forth the wicked dead; and they came up with the same feeble, sickly bodies that went into the grave. What a spectacle! what a scene! At the first resurrection all came forth in immortal bloom; but at the second the marks of the curse are visible on all. The kings and noblemen of the earth, the mean and low, the learned and unlearned, come forth together." —*Early Writings*, p. 292.

OUR DESIRE—TO RISE IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION

7. What does the Lord say in His word to those who desire to rise in the resurrection of the righteous?

1 JOHN 5:11, 12 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

2 PETER 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

2 PETER 3:11 *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*

2 PETER 3:13, 14 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

"All of us, as beings blessed of God with reasoning powers, with intellect and judgment, should acknowledge our accountability to God. The life He has given us is a sacred responsibility, and no moment of it is to be trifled with, for we shall have to meet it again in the record of the judgment. In the books of heaven our lives are as accurately traced as in the picture on the plate of the photographer. Not only are we held accountable for what we have done, but for what we have left undone. We are held to account for our undeveloped characters, our unimproved opportunities." —(*Review and Herald*, September 22, 1891) *That I May Know Him*, p. 93.

FOR MEDITATION

Jude 14, 15; 1 Peter 4:18, 19; Psalm 37:9; Revelation 5:11, 12, 13.

"All behold the Son of man; and those very men who despised and mocked Him, who put the crown of thorns upon His sacred brow, and smote Him with the reed, behold Him in all His kingly majesty. Those who spit upon Him in the hour of His trial now turn from His piercing gaze and from the glory of His countenance. Those who drove the nails through His hands and feet now look upon the marks of His crucifixion. Those who thrust the spear into His side behold the marks of their cruelty on His body." —*Early Writings*, p. 292.

“As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion. They are to have no new probation in which to remedy the defects of their past lives. Nothing would be gained by this.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 662.

“I heard shouts of triumph from the angels and from the redeemed saints, which sounded like ten thousand musical instruments, because they were to be no more annoyed and tempted by Satan and because the inhabitants of other worlds were delivered from his presence and his temptations.” —*Early Writings*, p. 290.

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25

Sabbath, June 21, 2014

Execution of the Sentence

“When the judgment shall sit, and everyone shall be judged by the things written in the books, the authority of God’s law will be looked upon in a light altogether different from that in which it is now regarded by the Christian world. Satan has blinded their eyes and confused their understanding, as he blinded and confused Adam and Eve, and led them into transgression. The law of Jehovah is great, even as its Author is great. In the judgment it will be recognized as holy, just, and good in all its requirements. Those who transgress this law will find that they have a serious account to settle with God; for His claims are decisive.” —(*Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 986.

SATAN’S DECEPTIVE, MILITANT ATTITUDE

1. What will be Satan’s attitude after the wicked are resurrected? What type of people will he have at his command?

REVELATION 20:3, LAST PART ... *And after that he must be loosed a little season.*

REVELATION 20:7 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.*

“Then Jesus and the holy angels, accompanied by all the saints, again go to the city, and the bitter lamentations and wailings of the doomed wicked fill the air. Then I saw that Satan again commenced his work. He passed around among his subjects, and made the weak and feeble strong, and told them that he and his angels were powerful. He pointed to the countless millions who had been raised. There were mighty warriors and kings who were well skilled in battle and who had conquered kingdoms. And there were mighty giants and valiant men who had never lost a battle. There was the proud, ambitious Napoleon, whose approach had caused kingdoms to tremble. There stood men of

lofty stature and dignified bearing, who had fallen in battle while thirsting to conquer. As they come forth from their graves, they resume the current of their thoughts where it ceased in death. They possess the same desire to conquer which ruled when they fell.” —*Early Writings*, p. 293.

2. How will he convince the people to join the fight against Jesus and the redeemed?

JOHN 8:44, LAST PART ... *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

REVELATION 20:8 *And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

“Now Satan prepares for a last mighty struggle for the supremacy. While deprived of his power and cut off from his work of deception, the prince of evil was miserable and dejected; but as the wicked dead are raised and he sees the vast multitudes upon his side, his hopes revive, and he determines not to yield the great controversy. He will marshal all the armies of the lost under his banner and through them endeavor to execute his plans. The wicked are Satan’s captives. In rejecting Christ they have accepted the rule of the rebel leader. They are ready to receive his suggestions and to do his bidding. Yet, true to his early cunning, he does not acknowledge himself to be Satan. He claims to be the prince who is the rightful owner of the world and whose inheritance has been unlawfully wrested from him. He represents himself to his deluded subjects as a redeemer, assuring them that his power has brought them forth from their graves and that he is about to rescue them from the most cruel tyranny. The presence of Christ having been removed, Satan works wonders to support his claims. He makes the weak strong and inspires all with his own spirit and energy.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 663.

THE FINAL STRUGGLE FOR POWER

3. Continuing his battle for power, what march will Satan and the wicked undertake?

REVELATION 20:9, FIRST PART *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:...*

“He proposes to lead them against the camp of the saints and to take possession of the City of God. With fiendish exultation he points to the unnumbered millions who have been raised from the dead and declares that as their leader he is well able to overthrow the city and regain his throne and his kingdom....

“Satan consults with his angels, and then with these kings and conquerors and mighty men. They look upon the strength and numbers on their side, and declare that the army within the city is small in compari-

son with theirs, and that it can be overcome. They lay their plans to take possession of the riches and glory of the New Jerusalem. All immediately begin to prepare for battle. Skillful artisans construct implements of war. Military leaders, famed for their success, marshal the throngs of warlike men into companies and divisions.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 663, 664.

4. Although lost and fully knowledgeable of God’s power, will Satan ever concede? What point will he and his army reach?

DANIEL 10:13 *But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.*

REVELATION 20:9, MIDDLE PART ... *And compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:...*

“At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on—an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth’s broken and uneven surface to the City of God. By command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 664.

MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE GLORY

5. What prophecy will then be fulfilled? What will the wicked see?

COLOSSIANS 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

“Jesus and all the angelic host and all the saints, with the glittering crowns upon their heads, ascend to the top of the wall of the city. Jesus speaks with majesty, saying, ‘Behold, ye sinners, the reward of the just! And behold, My redeemed, the reward of the wicked!’ The vast multitude behold the glorious company on the walls of the city. And as they witness the splendor of their glittering crowns and see their faces radiant with glory, reflecting the image of Jesus, and then behold the unsurpassed glory and majesty of the King of kings and Lord of lords, their courage fails.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 293, 294.

END OF THE BATTLE FOR POWER

6. What will then happen to that vast multitude of the wicked? In view of all this, what do we absolutely need to learn?

REVELATION 20:9, 10 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

1 JOHN 3:4 *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

ROMANS 6:23, FIRST PART *For the wages of sin is death;...*

“Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, ‘son of the morning;’ how changed, how degraded! From the council where once he was honored, he is forever excluded. He sees another now standing near to the Father, veiling His glory. He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 669.

“Satan rushes into the midst of his followers and tries to stir up the multitude to action. But fire from God out of heaven is rained upon them, and the great men, and mighty men, the noble, the poor and miserable, are all consumed together. I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, ‘The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.’” —*Early Writings*, p. 294.

HAPPINESS OF THE REDEEMED

7. How will God purify the earth, and what joy will the redeemed enjoy forever? Who will then be the sole sovereign over the earth?

MALACHI 4:2, 3 *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.*

ZECHARIAH 14:9 *And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.*

LUKE 1:31-33 *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 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 for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

“Said the angel, ‘Satan is the root, his children are the branches. They are now consumed root and branch. They have died an everlasting

death. They are never to have a resurrection, and God will have a clean universe.' I then looked and saw the fire which had consumed the wicked, burning up the rubbish and purifying the earth. Again I looked and saw the earth purified. There was not a single sign of the curse. The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God's entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended. Wherever we looked, everything upon which the eye rested was beautiful and holy. And all the redeemed host, old and young, great and small, cast their glittering crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him, and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever. The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever."—*Early Writings*, p. 295.

FOR MEDITATION

Isaiah 34:2; Psalm 11:6; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 15:3, 4.

"The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them....

"The earth's surface seems one molten mass—a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men—the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.' Isaiah 34:8....

"The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 668, 672, 673.

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***Please read the Missionary Report
from Sri Lanka on page 134.***

26

Sabbath, 28 June 2014

Living in God's Kingdom

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Revelation 21:3-5.

THE PURIFIED WORLD

1. What will happen to the earth once evil is eradicated? Who will receive this wonderful inheritance?

ISAIAH 65:17 *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

2 PETER 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

REVELATION 21:5-7 *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

“While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield. Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11.

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” Revelation 21:1. The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 673, 674.

“The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 17.

2. What traces will remain throughout the ages as a reminder of the price paid for redemption?

ZECARIAH 13:6 *And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

“One reminder alone remains: Our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of His crucifixion. Upon His wounded head, upon His side, His hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought. Says the prophet, beholding Christ in His glory: ‘He had bright beams coming out of His side: and there was the hiding of His power.’ Habakkuk 3:4, margin. That pierced side whence flowed the crimson stream that reconciled man to God—there is the Saviour’s glory, there ‘the hiding of His power.’ ‘Mighty to save,’ through the sacrifice of redemption, He was therefore strong to execute justice upon them that despised God’s mercy. And the tokens of His humiliation are His highest honor; through the eternal ages the wounds of Calvary will show forth His praise and declare His power.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM

3. Who will have the joy of being translated into the kingdom of peace and righteousness?

COLOSSIANS 1:12-14 *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*

PSALM 37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

“‘O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto Thee shall it come, even the first dominion.’ Micah 4:8. The time has come to which holy men have looked with longing since the flaming sword barred the first pair from Eden, the time for ‘the redemption of the purchased possession.’ Ephesians 1:14. The earth originally given to man as his kingdom, betrayed by him into the hands of Satan, and so long held by the mighty foe, has been brought back by the great plan of redemption. All that was lost by sin has been restored. ‘Thus saith the Lord ... that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited.’ Isaiah 45:18. God’s original purpose in the creation of the earth is fulfilled as it is made the eternal abode of the redeemed. ‘The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.’ Psalm 37:29.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 674.

REJOICING IN GOD’S KINGDOM

4. What will God’s children experience there? What innumerable activities will they take part in?

ISAIAH 65:18, 19 *But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*

ISAIAH 65:24, 25 *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.*

ISAIAH 65:21-23 *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.*

“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.” —*Maranatha*, p. 362.

“There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

GOD'S GOVERNMENT IN THE NEW WORLD

5. On what special day will the redeemed assemble to worship God?

PSALM 111:7, 8 *The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*

ISAIAH 66:22, 23 *For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.*

“The nations of the saved will know no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy....

“‘And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord.’ The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh

shall see it together.' 'The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.' 'In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people.'

"So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. 'From one sabbath to another' the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall go up 'to worship before Me, saith the Lord.' Isaiah 66:23." —*Marranatha*, p. 371.

6. What will be the capital city of the eternal government of grace and love?

REVELATION 21:10, 11 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

REVELATION 21:24 *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.*

"The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called 'the bride, the Lamb's wife.'...

"There is the New Jerusalem, the metropolis of the glorified new earth, 'a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.' 'Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.' 'The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.' Saith the Lord: 'I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people.' 'The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.' Isaiah 62:3; Revelation 21:11, 24; Isaiah 65:19; Revelation 21:3." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 427, 676.

7. How and why will the earth be exalted in eternity? From where will the universe be governed?

REVELATION 21:3 *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

ROMANS 5:20, 21 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

"The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted.

Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, ‘and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.’ And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift—Immanuel, ‘God with us.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 26.

FOR MEDITATION

Isaiah 9:6, 7; 33:14-17; 35:10; 1 Corinthians 13:12, 13.

“With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator’s name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed....

“Those who accept the teachings of God’s word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, ‘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.’ 1 Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678, 675.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM SRI LANKA

To be read on Sabbath, June 28, 2014

*The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, July 5, 2014*

Sri Lanka is an island country in the northern Indian Ocean, twenty-two miles off the Indian subcontinent in South Asia. Until 1972, it was known as Ceylon. The country has a documented history of well over 3,000 years, particularly because its geographic location made it strategically important on the ancient spice and trade routes, such as the Silk Road. It is even believed that King Solomon and monarchs such as King Nebuchadnezzar had trade relations with Sri Lanka for its rich gem stones and spices.

The country's recent history has been marred by a thirty-year civil war which ended in a military victory in 2009. Of course, this war claimed many lives and also affected the church.

The climate is tropical and warm with average temperatures of 28 degrees C. (82.4 degrees F.) to 31 degrees C. (87.8 degrees F.) year round. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Sri Lanka recorded an annual per capita income of U.S. \$2,877 and 8.3% GDP growth in the most recent report. This is the highest in South Asia.

Furthermore, the island was ranked the third most religious country in the world. This is because 99% of the population believes that religion is an important part of life. The population of 20.3 million is 70.2 percent Buddhist, 12.6 percent Hindu, 9.7 percent Muslim, and 7.4 percent Christian (82 percent of them being Roman Catholic). The average literacy rate is 92.5 percent, but the youth literacy rate is close to 99 percent. This is mainly because the government provides free education to all as well as provides free health care.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church entered Sri Lanka in 1904, and the Reform Movement was introduced in 1980. In 1983, bloody riots erupted in this island nation and claimed the lives of many minority Tamils. This greatly limited the growth of the church. Civil war then erupted between minority Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan Army. This war scattered many of our members, and many others emigrated to Canada, the U.S.A., and Europe.

Now peace is being restored among the communities, but Buddhist extremists still attack and destroy Protestant churches. In fact, we cannot go door to door to distribute leaflets without being attacked by Buddhist mobs. We are unable to do canvassing work for the same reason. The only areas in which we can work freely are in the north and northwestern provinces. We have established two churches in these areas so far, and the majority of our members are from there. We have a total of 31 baptized members and nearly 20 regular visitors gathering in three locations. There are no paid workers, and all activities are carried out by volunteers.

The members are very faithful in paying their tithes and offerings and have purchased property where they can construct a headquarters building. This property is about 15 kilometers from the international airport and 15 kilometers from the commercial capital, the city of Colombo. Furthermore, the area where the property is located is a Christian area and therefore safe for the church. However, the government does not allow churches to be registered, and therefore we cannot purchase any property in the name of the church. We set up an institute which is legally registered with the government, called the “Voice of Reformation Publishing Institute,” and we publish all our materials through this. We even bought the property under this name, and we will build the church under this registration.

The work in Sri Lanka is challenging, and we appeal to your generosity and prayers to help us erect a headquarters building and place of worship. We also need missionary support to advance the work and evangelize this island for Jesus Christ. May God bless you in your continued support of the gospel work.

*—Douglas Francis, Sri Lankan Field President
and General Conference Treasurer*

