

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Second Half 2016

***God's People
in the Last Days***

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INTRODUCTION

As he considered the last days, the apostle Paul saw clearly how it would be and wrote: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." 2 Timothy 3:1. Other versions translate the word "perilous" as "difficult."

The message of Jesus for the last days is also very impressive: "... Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24:12. What is the world without love? Who can be happy without it in the family, in the church, and in society?

His next picture of our days is related to faith: "... When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. This sentence is very short, but also very significant. Fewer and fewer people believe in God, His word, His miracles, His resurrection, and His second coming. What is left of spirituality for many people? Only "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." 2 Timothy 3:5. Every day shows that the end is coming.

Looking back at history, the servant of the Lord writes: "The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.

"Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.

"The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God's law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.

"The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot Him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value." —*The Youth's Instructor*, September 22, 1903.

Then, turning her view to her day, she added: "We have come to a time when God's sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble. Every soul who is loyal to the commandments of God will see that the distinguishing feature of our faith is the seventh-day Sabbath. If the government would honor the Sabbath as God has commanded, it would stand in the strength of God and in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But statesmen will uphold the spurious sabbath, and will mingle their religious faith with the observance of this child of the papacy, placing it above the Sabbath which the Lord has sanctified and

blessed, setting it apart for man to keep holy, as a sign between Him and His people to a thousand generations. The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves." —(Manuscript 63, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1168, 1169.

The coming events will be much more shocking and severe than we can imagine, because everything that is not firmly established will be shaken. Hebrews 12:27. Therefore, in view of the future test, the Spirit of prophecy counsels: "There is an earnest work of preparation to be done by Seventh-day Adventists if they would stand firm in the trying experiences just before them. If they remain true to God in the confusion and temptation of the last days, they must seek the Lord in humility of heart for wisdom to resist the deceptions of the enemy....

"Ever are we to keep in mind the solemn thought of the Lord's soon return, and in view of this to recognize the individual work to be done. Through the aid of the Holy Spirit we are to resist natural inclinations and tendencies to wrong, and weed out of the life every un-Christlike element. Thus we shall prepare our hearts for the reception of God's blessing, which will impart to us grace and bring us into harmony with the faith of Jesus. For this work of preparation great advantages have been granted to this people in light bestowed, in messages of warning and instruction, sent through the agency of the Spirit of God." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 347.

These Sabbath School Lessons, "God's People in the Last Days," have been prepared in view of what is happening now and what lies just ahead. It is the desire and sincere prayer of the writer as well as of all the brethren of the General Conference and the Ministerial Department that the students will consider these matters with the great earnestness that these times deserve. May every week's lesson be a great blessing to all our brothers and sisters, young people, and interested souls.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference
and the Ministerial Department*

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
BANGALORE, INDIA**

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1

Sabbath, July 2, 2016

The Books of Daniel and the Revelation

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

PROPHECY, THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

1. What is the importance of prophecy for those who live at the end of time?

AMOS 3:7 *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14:22 *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

2 PETER 1:19 *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.*

“Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’

“The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is presented to me again and again as something that is to be brought to the attention of all. We are today living in the time when the predictions of this chapter are fulfilling. Let our ministers and teachers explain these prophecies to those whom they instruct. Let them leave out of their discourses matters of minor consequence, and present the truths that will decide the destiny of souls.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 148 (1915).

ASSURANCE OF PROPHECY

2. How can we be sure that the prophecies given for the last days will be fulfilled?

HABAKKUK 2:3 *For 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.*

HEBREWS 10:36, 37 *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. ³⁷For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

"All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come in its order will be. Daniel, God's prophet, stands in his place. John stands in his place. In the Revelation the Lion of the tribe of Judah has opened to the students of prophecy the book of Daniel, and thus is Daniel standing in his place. He bears his testimony, that which the Lord revealed to him in vision of the great and solemn events which we must know as we stand on the very threshold of their fulfillment.

"In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress. Those things which have been, will be repeated. Old controversies will be revived, and new theories will be continually arising. But God's people, who in their belief and fulfillment of prophecy have acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages, know where they stand. They have an experience that is more precious than fine gold. They are to stand firm as a rock, holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 109.

THE DANGER OF IGNORING PAST HISTORY

3. Can we be satisfied with the knowledge of prophecy that we already have? Will a simple knowledge of prophecy be sufficient to pass safely through the final dangers?

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

"All genuine experience in religious doctrines will bear the impress of Jehovah. All should see the necessity of understanding the truth for themselves individually. We must understand the doctrines that have been studied out carefully and prayerfully.... There is great need to search the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, and learn the texts thoroughly, that we may know what is written....

"The Lord desires that every soul who claims to believe the truth shall have an intelligent knowledge of what is truth. False prophets will arise and will deceive many.... Then does it not become everyone to understand the reasons for our faith? In place of having so many sermons, there should be a more close searching of the Word of God, opening the Scriptures text by text, and searching for the strong evidences that sustain the fundamental doctrines that have brought us where we now are, upon the platform of eternal truth....

"When men turn away from the landmarks the Lord has established that we may understand our position as marked out in prophecy, they are going they know not whither." — *Evangelism*, pp. 363, 364.

4. In facing the danger of false christs and false prophets, what is particularly important?

EPHESIANS 4:13-15 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

"Times that will try men's souls are just before us, and those who are weak in the faith will not stand the test of those days of peril. The great truths of revelation are to be carefully studied, for we shall all want an intelligent knowledge of the word of God. By Bible study and daily communion with Jesus we shall gain clear, well-defined views of individual responsibility and strength to stand in the day of trial and temptation. He whose life is united to Christ by hidden links will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation....

"The Christian is required to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, to read over and over again the truths of God's word. Willful ignorance on this subject endangers the Christian life and character. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the noblest powers. It is this that brings confusion into our lives. Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine.

"Great changes are soon to take place in the world, and everyone will need an experimental knowledge of the things of God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 273.

5. What will the faithful have to face—those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?

ACTS 14:22 *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*

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

"Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" —*The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

THE PROPHETIC BOOK OF DANIEL

6. Is the book of Daniel still sealed? Was the little book that the angel of Revelation 10 had in his hand closed or open?

DANIEL 12:4 *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*

REVELATION 10:2 *And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.*

“After these seven thunders uttered their voices, the injunction comes to John as to Daniel in regard to the little book: ‘Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered.’ These relate to future events which will be disclosed in their order. Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel’s prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels’ messages to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the message in relation to time.” —(Manuscript 59, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971.

“When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, ‘Time shall be no longer.’ See Revelation 10:6. The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 105.

REVELATION IS AN OPEN BOOK

7. Since the book of Revelation is for our time, how should we study it? Who will be specially blessed by studying it?

REVELATION 22:10, 6, 7 *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.... ⁶And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. ⁷Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

“The book of Revelation opens to the world what has been, what is, and what is to come; it is for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come. It should be studied with reverential awe. We are privileged in knowing what is for our learning....

“The Lord Himself revealed to His servant John the mysteries of the book of Revelation, and He designs that they shall be open to the study of all. In this book are depicted scenes that are now in the past, and some of eternal interest that are taking place around us; other of its prophecies will not receive their complete fulfillment until the close of time, when the last great conflict between the powers of darkness and the Prince of heaven will take place.” —(*Review and Herald*, August 31, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 954.

FOR MEDITATION

“Prophecy has been fulfilling, line upon line. The more firmly we stand under the banner of the third angel’s message, the more clearly shall we understand the prophecy of Daniel; for the Revelation is the supplement of Daniel. The more fully we accept the light presented by the Holy Spirit through the consecrated servants of God, the deeper and surer, even as the eternal throne, will appear the truths of ancient prophecy; we shall be assured that men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Men must themselves be under the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Spirit’s utterances through the prophets. These messages were given,

not for those that uttered the prophecies, but for us who are living amid the scenes of their fulfillment.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 114.

“It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

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2

Sabbath, July 9, 2016

The Three Angels’ Messages

“Christ is coming the second time, with power unto salvation. To prepare human beings for this event, He has sent the first, second, and third angels’ messages. These angels represent those who receive the truth, and with power open the gospel to the world.” —(Letter 79, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 978.

A MESSAGE FOR MANKIND

1. What vision was given to the apostle John for the end time? What type of message does it contain?

REVELATION 14:6-10 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. ⁸And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. ⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*

“The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old....

“The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel’s message. There cannot be a third without the first and second.

These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 104.

2. Why do the three angels' messages need to be given? Who is commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel contained in these messages?

PSALM 14:2 *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

REVELATION 1:1-3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: ²Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

PSALM 51:13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

"To prepare a people to stand in the day of God, a great work of reform was to be accomplished. God saw that many of His professed people were not building for eternity, and in His mercy He was about to send a message of warning to arouse them from their stupor and lead them to make ready for the coming of the Lord.

"This warning is brought to view in Revelation 14. Here is a threefold message represented as proclaimed by heavenly beings and immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man to reap 'the harvest of the earth'...

"This message is declared to be a part of 'the everlasting gospel.' The work of preaching the gospel has not been committed to angels, but has been entrusted to men. Holy angels have been employed in directing this work, they have in charge the great movements for the salvation of men; but the actual proclamation of the gospel is performed by the servants of Christ upon the earth." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 311, 312.

A GREAT WORK

3. Why is the proclamation of the three angels' messages so important?

MATTHEW 24:12-14 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹³But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

"A great work is to be accomplished in setting before men the saving truths of the gospel. This is the means ordained by God to stem the tide of moral corruption. This is His means of restoring His moral image in man. It is His remedy for universal disorganization. It is the power that draws men together in unity. To present these truths is the work of the third angel's message. The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in the world at this time." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 11.

4. What is therefore the most solemn, urgent responsibility of God's people?

ISAIAH 58:1 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

ACTS 17:30, 31 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God’s messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declares to His followers: ‘Ye are the light of the world.’ To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: ‘Behold the worth of the soul: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”’ Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 455.

5. How far-reaching are the three angels’ messages that must be proclaimed?

REVELATION 14:6 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*

MATTHEW 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

“From town to town, from city to city, from country to country, the warning message is to be proclaimed, not with outward display, but in the power of the Spirit, by men of faith.

“And it is necessary that the best kind of labor be given. The time has come, the important time, when, through God’s messengers, the scroll is being unrolled to the world. The truth comprised in the first, second, and third angels’ messages must go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; it must lighten the darkness of every continent and extend to the islands of the sea....” —*Evangelism*, p. 19.

ATTEMPTS TO OPPOSE THE WORK

6. What will the three messages cause the dragon and his followers to do? Is this a reason to minimize the messages given by the Lord?

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.*

EPHESIANS 6:11-13 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness In high places. ¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

“The three angels of Revelation 14 are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels’ messages. All are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to the church, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place; but they live and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 17.

“Our work now is to rouse the people. Satan with all his angels has come down with great power, to work with every conceivable deception to counterwork the work of God. The Lord has a message for His people. This message will be borne, whether men will accept or reject it. As in the days of Christ, there will be the deep plottings of the powers of darkness, but the message must not be muffled with smooth words or fair speeches, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace, to those who are turning away from God. ‘There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’ Isaiah 57:21.” —(Manuscript 36, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1149.

7. Who will especially be the target of those who oppose the divine warning messages?

REVELATION 14:12; 12:17 *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.... ^{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.*

“God has presented to me the dangers that are threatening those who have been given the sacred work of proclaiming the third angel’s message. They are to remember that this message is of the utmost consequence to the whole world. They need to search the Scriptures diligently, that they may learn how to guard against the mystery of iniquity, which plays so large a part in the closing scenes of this earth’s history.

“There will be more and still more external parade by worldly powers. Under different symbols, God presented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of His people. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation speaks of mystic Babylon, fallen from her high estate to become a persecuting power. Those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus are the object of the wrath of this power. [Revelation 18:1-8 quoted.]” —(Manuscript 135, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

FOR MEDITATION

“Truth, passing by those who despise and reject it, will triumph. Although at times apparently retarded, its progress had never been checked. When the message of God

meets with opposition, He gives it additional force, that it may exert greater influence. Endowed with divine energy, it will cut its way through the strongest barriers, and triumph over every obstacle.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 601 (1911).

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3

Sabbath, July 16, 2016

The People of God and the Sanctuary Doctrine

“All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

THE SANCTUARY AND THE JUDGMENT

1. What place does the truth about the sanctuary occupy in the faith of God’s people?

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

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 correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.” —(Letter 208, 1906) *Evangelism*, p. 221.

“The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

2. Why is it so important to know what is going on today in the heavenly sanctuary?

HEBREWS 8:1, 2; 9:27 *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: ²We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man....^{9:27} And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

"The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days." —*Evangelism*, p. 221.

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

3. What ministry is Jesus performing for man in the heavenly sanctuary today? While He is pleading in heaven for every repentant sinner, what should we do?

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 7:25 *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.*

"... Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary." —*Early Writings*, p. 253.

"In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood in the sinner's behalf." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 415.

"While Christ is cleansing the sanctuary, the worshipers on earth should carefully review their life, and compare their character with the standard of righteousness." —(*Review and Herald*, April 8, 1890) *Evangelism*, p. 224.

4. How is this work being done? What will thus be removed forever?

JOB 31:14, *Basic English Bible* *What then will I do when God comes as my judge? and what answer may I give to his questions?*

ISAIAH 43:25; 44:22 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins....* ^{44:22}*I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

"And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 421.

HUMBLING ONESELF AND TURNING AWAY FROM SIN

5. What was important for God's people during the typical day of atonement and still is today, as the close of probation nears and Jesus completes the investigative judgment?

1 JOHN 3:3 *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

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.*

"The whole ceremony was designed to impress the Israelites with the holiness of God and His abhorrence of sin; and, further, to show them that they could not come in contact with sin without becoming polluted. Every man was required to afflict his soul while this work of atonement was going forward. All business was to be laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel were to spend the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart....

"While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 419, 425.

6. What should be the special concern of those whose names were written in the book of life at their baptism?

REVELATION 3:5; 21:26, 27 *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....^{21:26}And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

"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....

"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.

THE ADVERSARY'S ERRONEOUS THEORIES

7. What warning is given as Satan tries to unsettle the faith of God's people in the sanctuary message? How will the faithful ones fight for the crown of life?

COLOSSIANS 2:8, 9, 6, 7 *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. ³For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.... ⁶As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: ⁷Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

"Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel's message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work."—(*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 17 [1905]) *Evangelism*, p. 225.

"You are fighting for the crown of life.... Live to please Him who thought you of such value that He gave Jesus, His only begotten Son, to save you from your sins.... Ever keep before you the thought that what is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Depend upon God for wisdom, that you may not discourage one soul in right doing. Work with Christ in drawing souls to Him.... Do your very best in everything you undertake. Jesus is your Saviour, and rely upon Him to help you day by day, that you may not sow tares, but the good seed of the kingdom...." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 283.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

The Great Controversy, chapters 23, 24, 28.

Selected Messages, book 1, p. 344.

Evangelism, pp. 222, 223.

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Sabbath, July 23, 2016

The Investigative Judgment

"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." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

JUDGED ACCORDING TO ONE'S WORKS

- 1. When will the judgment take place and in accordance with what standard?**

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

REVELATION 20:12, LAST PART; 2:23, LAST PART ... *And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....^{2:23} I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.*

“At the time appointed for the judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged ‘out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 486.

“At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart? What can be of any worth to us now except to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there of any real value in this world when we are on the very borders of the eternal world?” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 526.

2. With whom does the investigative judgment in the heavenly courts begin? Not knowing when our names will pass into judgment, what should be our attitude?

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?¹⁸ And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

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

“... 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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

“What is our condition in this fearful and solemn time? Alas, what pride is prevailing in the church, what hypocrisy, what deception, what love of dress, frivolity, and amusement, what desire for the supremacy! All these sins have clouded the mind, so that eternal things have not been discerned.... If we have any regard for our souls’ salvation, we must make a decided change. We must seek the Lord with true penitence; we must with deep contrition of soul confess our sins, that they may be blotted out.

“We must no longer remain upon the enchanted ground. We are fast approaching the close of our probation. Let every soul inquire, How do I stand before God? We know not how soon our names may be taken into the lips of Christ, and our cases be finally decided. What, oh, what will these decisions be! Shall we be counted with the righteous, or shall we be numbered with the wicked?” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 125.

THE COURT OF JUDGMENT

3. Who is the presiding Judge in this court, and who is the Advocate? What will the adversary continue to do?

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. ¹⁰A 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.*

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.*

REVELATION 12:10 *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

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.*

“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....

“Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God....

“While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 479, 482, 484.

4. What is the standard in the heavenly judgment?

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.*

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

ROMANS 3:19 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

“In His teachings, Christ showed how far reaching are the principles of the law spoken from Sinai. He made a living application of that law whose principles remain forever the great standard of righteousness—the standard by which all shall be judged in that great day when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened....

“When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every man shall be judged according to the things written in the books, then the tables of stone, hidden by God until that day, will be presented before the world as the standard of righteousness. Then men and women will see that the prerequisite of their salvation is obedience to the perfect law of God. None will find excuse for sin. By the righteous principles of that law, men will receive their sentence of life or of death.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 211, 225.

5. What books provide evidence in the judgment?

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 20:11, 12 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹²And 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.*

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.*

"The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service 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.... 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...." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 480, 481.

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGMENT

6. Knowing that sins that remain unconfessed and unforgiven are not erased and that then the record of good works is erased from the book of remembrance, of what should God's people make sure?

PSALM 32:1 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

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.*

"Another book was opened, wherein were recorded the *sins* of those who profess the truth. Under the general heading of selfishness came every other sin. There were also headings over every column, and underneath these, opposite each name, were recorded, in their respective columns, the lesser sins.

"Under covetousness came falsehood, theft, robbery, fraud, and avarice; under ambition came pride and extravagance; jealousy stood at the head of malice, envy, and hatred; and intemperance headed a long list of fearful crimes, such as lasciviousness, adultery, indulgence of animal passions, etc. As I beheld I was filled with inexpressible anguish and exclaimed: 'Who can be saved? who will stand justified before God? whose robes are spotless? who are faultless in the sight of a pure and holy God?' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 384, 385.

"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.

7. When the investigative judgment is finished and the destiny of everyone has been decided for life or for death, what will be the overcomers’ reward?

REVELATION 3:5, 21 *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....* ²¹*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.*

“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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“‘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.’ Malachi 3:2, 3. Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, pp. 384-387.

The Great Controversy, chapter 28.

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Laodicea—Judgment of the People

“The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 66.

“The message to the church of the Laodiceans applies especially to the people of God today. It is a message to professing Christians who have become so much like the world that no difference can be seen. [Vs. 14-18 quoted].” —(*Review and Herald*, August 20, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 959.

MESSAGE TO THE LAST CHURCH

1. What earnest message is given to the church of Laodicea?

REVELATION 3:14-17 *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; ¹⁵I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

“The Lord here [Revelation 3:14-17] shows us that the message to be borne to His people by ministers whom He has called to warn the people is not a peace-and-safety message. It is not merely theoretical, but practical in every particular. The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans as in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves to be in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments. ‘Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ ” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252.

2. If a person does not compare himself with his Redeemer, how will he consider himself? Would he then be conscious of his lukewarm state?

LUKE 18:11 *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

MATTHEW 5:20 *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

“What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right when they are all wrong! The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not

that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 252.

3. Why is there such a condition of lukewarmness in the church? Can the Lord and the world be followed simultaneously?

HOSEA 10:2, FIRST PART *Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty:...*

MATTHEW 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

1 JOHN 2:15, 16 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

“It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, and who believe themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.’ I was shown that many are flattering themselves that they are good Christians, who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 253.

“The danger of God’s people for a few years past has been the love of the world. Out of this have sprung the sins of selfishness and covetousness....

“The strong love of the world overcomes, or swallows up, the love of the truth. The kingdoms of the world are offered them, and they eagerly grasp their treasure and think they are wonderfully prospered. Satan triumphs because his plan has succeeded. They have given up the love of God for the love of the world.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 141, 142.

DESIRE AND PRAYER FOR CLEANSING

4. What does God say He will do to those who refuse His counsel and reproofs?

PROVERBS 1:23-26 *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. ²⁴Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ²⁵But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: ²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.*

“Many inquire: Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the *Testimonies* continually charge us with backsliding and with grievous sins? We love the truth; we are prospering; we are in no need of these testimonies of warning and reproof. But let these murmurers see their hearts and compare their lives with the practical teachings of the Bible, let them humble their souls before God, let the grace of God illuminate the darkness, and the scales will fall from their eyes, and they will realize their true spiritual poverty and wretchedness....

"Very many feel impatient and jealous because they are frequently disturbed with warnings and reproofs which keep their sins before them....

"They cannot endure to be told of their neglect of duty and of their wrongs, their selfishness, their pride and love of the world." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 254, 256, 258.

5. When one is concerned about this message, what great longing will he have?

PSALM 139:23, 24; 51:2, 7 *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.... ^{51:2}Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.... ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

"... Sin is deceptive, and tends to deaden the moral perceptions. But through self-examination, searching of the Scriptures, and humble prayer, they will, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, be enabled to see their mistake. If they then confess their sins and turn from them, the tempter will not appear to them as an angel of light, but as a deceiver, an accuser of those whom God desires to use to his glory. Those who acknowledge reproof and correction as from God, and are thus enabled to see and correct their errors, are learning precious lessons, even from their mistakes. Their apparent defeat is turned into victory. They stand trusting not to their own strength, but to the strength of God. They have earnestness, zeal, and affection, united with humility, and regulated by the precepts of God's word. Thus they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The Lord can teach them his will, and they shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God. They walk not stumblingly, but safely, in a path where the light of heaven shines." —*Review and Herald*, December 16, 1890.

PRAYING FOR INCREASED FAITH

6. What is lacking among God's people? Like the disciples, what should be every sincere soul's desire and constant request to God?

LUKE 18:8, SECOND PART; 17:5, 6 *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?... ^{17:5}And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. ⁶And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

"Faith and love are golden treasures, elements that are greatly wanting among God's people....

"Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning. 'My Lord delayeth His coming' is not only said in the heart, but expressed in words and most decidedly in works. Stupidity in this watching time is sealing the senses of God's people as to the signs of the times... Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree, and it is only by exercise that it can increase." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 255.

"Faith should be cultivated. If it has become weak it is like a sickly plant that should be placed in the sunshine and carefully watered and tended. The Lord would have every one who has had light and evidence cherish that light and walk in its brightness. God has blessed us with reasoning powers so that we may trace from cause to effect. If we would have light we must come to the light. We must

individually lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel.... How foolish it would be to go into a cellar, and mourn because we were in the dark. If we want light we must come up into a higher room. It is our privilege to come into the light, to come into the presence of God...." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 230.

7. What exhortation do the Lord and the Spirit of prophecy address to everyone while the door of grace is still open?

JOEL 2:12, 13 *Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

"I would make my brethren alarmed if I could. I would urge upon them with pen and voice, Live in the Lord, walk with God, if you would die in the Lord, and enter by and by where the Lord abideth forever. Be not disobedient to the heavenly warnings; grasp the neglected appeals, the entreaties, the warnings, the rebukes, the threatenings of God, and let them correct your wayward, sinful heart. Let the transforming grace of Christ make you pure, true, holy, and lovely as the pure white lily which opens its blossom on the bosom of the lake. Transfer your love and affections to Him who died for you on Calvary's cross. Train your lips to speak forth His praises, and to offer up your prayers as holy incense." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 430.

"Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. The plain message of rebuke to the Laodiceans is not received. Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing.... Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge. They lack almost every qualification necessary to perfect Christian character. They have not a practical knowledge of Bible truth, which leads to lowliness of life and a conformity of their will to the will of Christ. They are not living in obedience to all God's requirements....

"We are living in a most solemn, important time of this earth's history. We are amid the perils of the last days. Important and fearful events are before us. How necessary that all who do fear God and love His law should humble themselves before Him, and be afflicted and mourn, and confess the sins that have separated God from His people. That which should excite the greatest alarm, is that we do not feel or under-

stand our condition, our low estate, and that we are satisfied to remain as we are. We should flee to the word of God and to prayer, individually seeking the Lord earnestly, that we may find Him. We should make this our first business.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 254, 53.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 252-258.

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6

Sabbath, August 6, 2016

Show the People Their Transgressions

“Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. The world is a workshop in which, through the cooperation of human and divine agencies, Jesus is making experiments by His grace and divine mercy upon human hearts.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 49.

“We have no discouraging message for the church. Although reproofs and cautions and corrections have been made, yet the church has stood as God’s instrumentality to diffuse light....” —(Manuscript 96, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 967.

NEVER EXCUSE SIN

1. Why is it so important to reprove and be reproved for sin? What are the terrible consequences of sin?

ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

EZEKIEL 18:4, 20 *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die....²⁰The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

“In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who rebukes evil the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 675.

2. What does God instruct His people to do when they become aware of sin?

ISAIAH 58:1 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

TITUS 2:15, FIRST PART *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

“If there is given to the angel of any church a commission like unto that given to the angel of the church of Ephesus, let the message be heard through human agents rebuking carelessness, backsliding, and sin, that the people may be brought to repentance and confession of sin. Never seek to cover sin; for in the message of rebuke, Christ is to be proclaimed as the first and the last, He who is all in all to the soul.

“His power awaits the demand of those who would overcome. The reprover is to animate his hearers so that they shall strive for the mastery. He is to encourage them to struggle for deliverance from every sinful practice, to be free from every corrupt habit, even if this denial of self is like taking the right eye, or separating the right arm from the body. No concession or compromise is to be made to evil habits or sinful practices.” – *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 380.

CONSEQUENCES OF TRYING TO HIDE SIN

3. What happens when one tries to hide sin? What attitude do some church members exhibit when they are reproved?

PSALMS 31:10; 32:3 *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed....^{32:3} When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

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

“The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people....

“Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God and who murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! Unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work and in holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, they will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 266, 267.

4. How did God manifest His displeasure with sin among the people of Israel as well as in the early days of the Christian church?

NUMBERS 16:30-35 *But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. ³¹And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: ³²And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. ³³They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. ³⁴And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. ³⁵And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*

JOSHUA 7:19-21, 25 *And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. ²⁰And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: ²¹When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.... ²⁵And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*

ACTS 5:5, 9, 10 *And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.... ⁹Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. ¹⁰Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

“Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God’s word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 147.

ACT WITH LOVE

5. What course of action do the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy provide for dealing with such matters?

2 TIMOTHY 4:1, 2 *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; ²Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

"We are authorized to hold in the same estimation as did the beloved disciple those who claim to abide in Christ while living in transgression of God's law. There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded. 'You must have charity,' is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 554.

6. Reproof should always be given in the love of Christ. What counsel does the apostle Paul stress?

GALATIANS 6:1, 2 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. ²Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

"Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 62.

"To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from the right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 503.

7. If reproof is given under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what will be the result?

JAMES 5:19, 20 *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

MATTHEW 18:15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

"It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. None should make the experience more bitter by needless censure. No one was ever reclaimed by reproach; but many have thus been repelled and have been led to steel their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins.

"The apostle Paul found it necessary to reprove wrong, but how carefully he sought to show that he was a friend to the erring! How anxiously he explained to them the reason of his action! He made them understand that it cost him pain to give them pain. He showed his confidence and sympathy toward the ones who were struggling to overcome." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 166.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, pp. 260-264.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 358-362, 265-269.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 210, 211.

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7

Sabbath, August 13, 2016

“Be Zealous Therefore, and Repent!”

“... The Lord has shown me in vision some things concerning the church in its present lukewarm state, which I will relate to you. The church was presented before me in vision. Said the angel to the church: ‘Jesus speaks to thee, “Be zealous and repent.”’ This work, I saw, should be taken hold of in earnest. There is something to repent of. Worldly-mindedness, selfishness, and covetousness have been eating out the spirituality and life of God’s people.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 141.

COUNSEL OF THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

- 1. Being conscious of our perilous condition and of the investigative judgment, what counsel of the Faithful Witness should be earnestly heeded?**

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

“Heed the counsel of the True Witness.... Make some effort. These precious treasures will not drop upon us without some exertion on our part. We must buy—‘be zealous and repent’ of our lukewarm state. We must be awake to see our wrongs, to search for our sins, and to zealously repent of them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 142.

“The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eyesalve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern between the evil and the good, and to detect sin under any guise. God has given His church eyes which He requires them to anoint with wisdom, that they may see clearly; but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could; for they would not have their deeds come to the light, lest they should be reproved. The divine eyesalve will impart clearness to the understanding.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 88.

2. Knowing that sin will have no place in the eternal kingdom and that the sinner will perish along with sin at the coming of the Lord, what should we do while there are still a few moments left?

ROMANS 6:13 *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

1 CORINTHIANS 9:25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

HEBREWS 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:12, FIRST PART *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called...."*

"Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves.

"No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white.... By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 472.

A TERRIBLE RISK

3. What risk is there in delaying even a moment to turn away from sin?

HEBREWS 3:7-13 *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) ¹²Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

"Beware of procrastination. Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God's Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 32.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

4. After one becomes aware of his sin through application of the eyesalve, what is a person invited to do by the Faithful Witness? What does true repentance consist of?

REVELATION 3:19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

JAMES 4:7-10 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. ⁹Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

PROVERBS 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

“Who is desirous of becoming truly repentant? What must he do? He must come to Jesus, just as he is, without delay. He must believe that the word of Christ is true, and, believing the promise, ask, that he may receive. When sincere desire prompts men to pray, they will not pray in vain. The Lord will fulfill His word, and will give the Holy Spirit to lead to repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He will pray and watch, and put away his sins, making manifest his sincerity by the vigor of his endeavor to obey the commandments of God. With prayer he will mingle faith, and not only believe in but obey the precepts of the law. He will announce himself as on Christ’s side of the question. He will renounce all habits and associations that tend to draw the heart from God.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 393.

5. What does Jesus desire from every sinner for whom He gave His life?

REVELATION 3:20 *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 saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove. Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness, to remove before they can open the door. Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door. All this rubbish must be taken away, and then they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in.

“After all our lukewarmness and sins He says: ‘Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.’ This was repeated by the angel a number of times. ‘Return unto Me, and I will return unto thee, and will heal all thy backslidings.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 143.

“How willing is Christ to take possession of the soul temple if we will let Him! He is represented as waiting and knocking at the door of the heart. Then why does He not enter? It is because the love of sin has closed the door of the heart. As soon as we consent to give sin up, to acknowledge our guilt, the barrier is removed between the soul and the Saviour.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 325.

TWO POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO THE LAODICEAN MESSAGE

6. What will happen to all who will not repent?

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

"Some, I saw, would gladly return. Others will not let this message to the Laodicean church have its weight upon them. They will glide along, much after the same manner as before, and will be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Those only who zealously repent will have favor with God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144.

"There are those who, though professedly serving God, are witnessing against Him. To them the message to the Laodicean church is given. Christ says to them, 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.' When the avenging angel shall pass through the land, Christ cannot say of them, 'Touch them not. I have graven them upon the palms of my hands.' No; of these halfhearted ones He says, 'I will spew them out of my mouth. They are offensive to Me.' " —(Letter 44, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 963.

7. What will be the happy future of every overcomer who heeds the Faithful Witness' counsel?

REVELATION 3:21 *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.*

"We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144.

"Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the divine nature. How? By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 409.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

The Upward Look, p. 283.

"All who have a true sense of the sacrifice made by Christ in leaving His home in heaven to come to this world that He might by His own life show man how to resist temptation will cheerfully deny self and choose to be partakers with Christ of His sufferings." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 491.

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The Tares and the Good Seed

“Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord’s great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, ‘Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?’ The master answered, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ Matthew 13:27, 28. All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 288.

THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT

1. What do the tares and the wheat represent? According to the Spirit of prophecy, where are both found?

MATTHEW 13:37, 38 *He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; ³⁸The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.*

“Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. We are sorry that there are defective members, that there are tares amid the wheat....

“... There are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world,...” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 45, 49 (1893).

“The good seed represents those who are born of the word of God, the truth. The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 70.

“God has precious ones in His church; there are also men and women who are as tares among the wheat. But the Lord does not give you or anyone else the office of saying who are tares and who are wheat.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 333.

2. What is Satan’s method? Especially when is he able to work?

MATTHEW 13:25 *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

“... It is from enmity to Christ that Satan scatters his evil seed among the good grain of the kingdom. The fruit of his sowing he attributes to the Son of God. By bringing into the church those who bear Christ’s name while they deny His character, the wicked one causes that God shall be dishonored, the work of salvation misrepresented, and souls imperiled.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 71.

3. What are we responsible for if we let Satan scatter tares?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

"It is not by force that Satan takes possession of the human mind. While men sleep, the enemy sows tares in the church. While men are spiritually sleeping, the enemy accomplishes his work of iniquity. It is when his subject 'understandeth it not' (Matthew 13:19) that he catcheth away the good seed sown in the heart. When men and women are in this condition, when their spiritual life is not being constantly fed by the Spirit of God, Satan can imbue them with his spirit, and lead them to work his works." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 353.

"If faithfulness and vigilance had been preserved, if there had been no sleeping or negligence upon the part of any, the enemy would not have had so favorable an opportunity to sow tares among the wheat. Satan never sleeps. He is watching, and he improves every opportunity to set his agents to scatter error, which finds good soil in many unsanctified hearts." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 113.

THE TARES MUST NOT BE ROOTED UP NOW

4. What counsel is given in the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy about the tares? How do the wheat and the tares appear at first?

MATTHEW 13:28, SECOND PART, 29, 30 ... *The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

"In the East, men sometimes took revenge upon an enemy by strewing his newly sown fields with the seeds of some noxious weed that, while growing, closely resembled wheat. Springing up with the wheat, it injured the crop and brought trouble and loss to the owner of the field....

"Christ's servants are grieved as they see true and false believers mingled in the church. They long to do something to cleanse the church. Like the servants of the householder, they are ready to uproot the tares. But Christ says to them, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest....'

"There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 71, 72.

5. How is this parable to be applied when a person persists in open sin? What work has the Saviour not given to any human being?

MATTHEW 18:15-17 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.*

"Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 71.

6. What do those represented by the tares do?

MATTHEW 15:8, 9 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. ⁹But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5 *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

"The growth of the tares among the wheat would draw special attention to it. The grain would be subjected to severe criticism. Indeed, the whole field might be set down as worthless by some superficial observer, or by one who delighted to discover evil. The sower might be condemned by him, as one who had mingled the bad seed with the good for his own wicked purpose. Just so the erring and hypocritical ones who profess to follow Jesus bring reproach upon the cause of Christianity, and cause the world to doubt concerning the truths of Christ. As the presence of the tares among the wheat counteracted to a great degree the work of the sower, so sin among the people of God frustrates, in a measure, the plan of Jesus to save fallen man from the power of Satan and render the barren ground of the human heart fruitful of good works." —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 248, 249.

"The world has no right to doubt the truth of Christianity because there are unworthy members in the church, nor should Christians become disheartened because of these false brethren." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 72.

AT THE HARVEST

7. When will the difference between the wheat and the tares be clearly seen?

MALACHI 3:18 *Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*

MATTHEW 13:39, 40 *The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*

"Not judgment and condemnation of others, but humility and distrust of self, is the teaching of Christ's parable. Not all that is sown in the field is good grain. The fact that men are in the church does not prove them Christians.

"The tares closely resembled the wheat while the blades were green; but when the field was white for the harvest, the worthless weeds bore no likeness to the wheat that bowed under the weight of its full, ripe heads,... But in the harvest

of the world there will be no likeness between good and evil. Then those who have joined the church, but who have not joined Christ, will be manifest.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 74.

8. What will be the fate of the tares, and what will happen to the wheat?

MATTHEW 13:41-43; 15:13 *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.... ^{15:13}But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

“Christ Himself will decide who are worthy to dwell with the family of heaven. He will judge every man according to his words and his works. Profession is as nothing in the scale. It is character that decides destiny.

“The Saviour does not point forward to a time when all the tares become wheat. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, the end of the world. Then the tares are bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat is gathered into the garner of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 74, 75.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 70-75.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 113-116.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 494.

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Read the Missionary Report from Mali on page 43

9

Sabbath, August 27, 2016

The Shaking

“There will be a shaking of the sieve. The chaff must in time be separated from the wheat. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxeth cold. It is the very time when the genuine will be the strongest.” —(Letter 46, 1887) *Last Day Events*, p. 173.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF THE FAITHFUL WITNESS’ MESSAGE

1. What must happen in the church before Jesus returns? Why?

MATTHEW 3:11, 12 *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: ¹²Whose fan is in his hand, and he*

will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

AMOS 9:9 *For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

"The Lord is soon to come. There must be a refining, winnowing process in every church, for there are among us wicked men who do not love the truth or honor God." —(*Review and Herald*, March 19, 1895) *Last Day Events*, p. 173.

"We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 332 (1900).

2. What other prophecy tells of a great shaking? According to the Spirit of prophecy, when did the shaking begin?

HAGGAI 2:6, 7, FIRST PART *For thus saith the Lord of hosts; ⁷Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations,...*

HEBREWS 12:26, 27 *Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. ²⁷And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

"The Lord gave me a view, January 26, 1850, which I will relate....

"The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause. The angel said, 'Think ye that any will be compelled to sacrifice? No, no. It must be a freewill offering. It will take all to buy the field.'" —*Early Writings*, p. 50.

3. Why does a shaking occur?

1 KINGS 18:21 *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

REVELATION 3:15, 16 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

"November 20, 1857, I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken....

"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 will cause a shaking among God's people." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 181.

"One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit." —*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 84 (1903).

A PURE CHURCH

4. What is God's purpose in the shaking?

ROMANS 12:2, 3 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. ³For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; ¹⁰That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

DANIEL 12:10 *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*

"Where is the spirituality of the church? Where are men and women full of faith and the Holy Spirit? My prayer is: Purify Thy church, O God....

"God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church. We cannot read the heart of man. But the Lord has provided means to keep the church pure. A corrupt people has arisen who could not live with the people of God. They despised reproof, and would not be corrected. They had an opportunity to know that theirs was an unrighteous warfare. They had time to repent of their wrongs; but self was too dear to die. They nourished it, and it grew strong, and they separated from the trusting people of God, whom He is purifying unto Himself. We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church; for the wrath of God must have come upon us if these corrupt pretenders had remained with us....

"The sieve is moving. Let us not say: Stay Thy hand, O God. The church must be purged, and it will be." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 99, 100.

5. While God is testing His people, how is the shaking going forward?

1 PETER 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*

MALACHI 3:1-3 *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. ²But 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: ³And 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.*

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.*

"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.

“In the absence of the persecution there have drifted into our ranks men who appear sound and their Christianity unquestionable, but who, if persecution should arise, would go out from us.” —*Evangelism*, p. 360 (1890).

THE FINAL TEST

6. With what test will the shaking end?

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. ¹⁶And 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: ¹⁷And 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 time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81 (1882).

“When the law of God is made void the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 368 (1891).

7. Will many people be found faithful and pass successfully through the shaking time?

ROMANS 11:3-5 *Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. “But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. ⁵Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

ZEPHANIAH 3:12, 13 *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. ¹³The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*

“The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But, it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven, but do not see stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.” —*Christian Service*, p. 49.

"The time is not far distant, when the test will come to every soul.... 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, pp. 80, 81.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Last Day Events, chapter 12

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MISSIONARY REPORT from Mali

To be read on Sabbath, August 27, 2016

***The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, September 3, 2016***

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:5, 6.

The Republic of Mali is a relatively large landlocked country in northwest Africa bordering Algeria on the north, Mauritania on the west, Niger on the east, and Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso on the south. The country covers 1.24 million square kilometers (480,000 square miles) and has a population of about 14.5 million. In addition to local languages such as Bambara, the official national language is French.

Mali was once part of three West African empires that controlled the trans-Saharan trade. At its peak in the 1300's, the Malian Empire covered an area about twice the size of modern-day France and stretched to the west coast of Africa. In the late nineteenth century, France seized control of Mali, making it a part of French Sudan. However, in 1960, Mali declared itself an independent republic. After a long period of one-party rule, a coup in 1991 led to the writing of a new constitution.

The country's economy centers on agriculture, fishing, and mining; it is the third largest producer of gold and salt. About half of the population lives below the international poverty level of US \$1.25 per day. Almost 90 percent of the people are Muslims (mostly Sunni and Ahmaddiya), approximately 5 percent are Christians (about two-thirds of whom are Roman Catholic), and the remaining 5 percent adhere to indigenous or traditional animist beliefs. The 1991 constitution established Mali as a democratic, multi-party state and provided for freedom of religion, which the government generally respects.

A few years ago, the present truth entered Mali under the International Missionary Society, S.D.A. Church, Reform Movement, through the private visit of Brother Christian Gadoxor from Ghana. Later, missionary activities in Mali were intensified when the General Conference requested Pastor Mohammed Inusah, from Benin, to follow up on the interest. In April 2014, he baptized the first two souls in Mali, and more individuals have become believers and joined the church. The work is still very young in this new missionary field and therefore needs both your prayers and your financial support. One of the great needs is a place for worship and the field headquarters. At present a house is being rented for services; but since people in Mali do not appreciate home churches, a suitable building is very necessary for the growth of God's cause.

Furthermore, since Mali is dominated by the Muslim religion, the General Conference would like to push forward a concentrated effort through the use of focused materials and public outreach to Muslims. Therefore, your cooperation is very important here. Not everyone can travel to such countries to work, but everyone can support with their gifts those who have the ability and opportunity to do so. The Special Sabbath School offering to be gathered next week provides the perfect opportunity for that. As you consider how you will join with your fellow believers to meet the needs of the gospel work in Mali, remember these inspired words: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.” Matthew 24:14, 45, 46, *New International Version*.

“God has made men His stewards. The property which He has placed in their hands is the means that He has provided for the spread of the gospel. To those who prove themselves faithful stewards He will commit greater trusts. Saith the Lord, ‘Them that honor Me I will honor.’ 1 Samuel 2:30. ‘God loveth a cheerful giver,’ and when His people, with grateful hearts, bring their gifts and offerings to Him, ‘not grudgingly, or of necessity,’ His blessing will attend them as He has promised.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 529.

May God’s rich blessing attend your sacrifice for His cause.

—*Parmenas N. Shirima*
African Division Leader

Special Sabbath School Offering for
MALI

God bless your generous gift for the salvation of precious souls!

10

Sabbath, September 3, 2016

One Head, One Body

THE HEAD AND THE MEMBERS

1. Who is the head of the spiritual body?

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

EPHESIANS 4:15 *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

“... Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 215.

“‘The head of every man is Christ.’ God, who put all things under the Saviour’s feet, ‘gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.’ 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22, 23. The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.

2. Who are the members of the body?

EPHESIANS 1:22, 23 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

ROMANS 12:4, 5 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

“We are members of His mystical body. He is the head, controlling all the members of the body.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 731.

“The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 95.

"Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out. All who will, may be reconciled to God, and receive everlasting life. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to Israel first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. It is to be given to Jews and Gentiles. All who believe are to be gathered into one church." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 821.

DEPENDENCE

3. What relationship exists among the members of the human body? Can one member exist without the other or function independently of the rest of the body?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-21 *For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now are they many members, yet but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

"By a comparison of the church with the human body, the apostle aptly illustrated the close and harmonious relationship that should exist among all members of the church of Christ." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317.

"No organ of the body could live should it confine its service to itself. The heart, failing to send its lifeblood to the hand and the head, would quickly lose its power. As our lifeblood, so is the love of Christ diffused through every part of His mystical body. We are members one of another, and the soul that refuses to impart will perish." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 417.

4. As each member of the physical human body has a specific role, how do the church members function as parts of the church body?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-13 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. ⁸For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ⁹To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; ¹⁰To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. ¹²For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

"The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. All the branches obtain their nourishment from one source. This is an illustration of the unity that is to exist among Christ's followers. In their different lines of work they all have but one Head. The same Spirit, in different ways, works through them. There is harmonious action,

though the gifts differ. Study this chapter. You will see from it that the man who is truly united with Christ will never act as though he were a complete whole in himself....

"The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability which has been given him." —(Letter 19, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090.

CONNECTED TO THE VINE

5. What is absolutely necessary for one to bear fruit? How alone can God's people escape the perversion and wickedness of the last days?

JOHN 15:4-6 *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. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

"The most licentious and corrupt are highly flattered by these satanic spirits, which they believe to be the spirits of their dead friends, and they are vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds. Colossians 2:19: 'And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,' they deny Him who ministers strength to the body, that every member may increase with the increase of God....

"Vain philosophy. The members of the body are controlled by the head. Spiritualists lay aside the Head and believe that all the members of the body must act themselves and that fixed laws will lead them on in a state of progression to perfection without a head....

"Christ is the source of our strength. He is the Vine, we are the branches. We must receive nourishment from the living Vine. Deprived of the strength and nourishment of that Vine, we are as members of the body without a head and are in the very position which Satan wishes us to be in, that he may control us as pleases himself...." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 300, 301.

SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

6. What kind of spirit does Satan convey to those who do not have solid faith in Jesus?

HEBREWS 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

PROVERBS 11:14 *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*

"By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous—as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man's say-so, that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that

God is pleased to have them choose their own course independent of the counsel of their brethren....

"Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent.... And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together....

"If men wear the yoke of Christ, they can not pull apart; they will draw with Christ." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 257, 258.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

7. What ordinance unites the soul with God, Christ, and the members of the spiritual family?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16, 17 *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ¹⁷For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

"Christ has instituted this service that it may speak to our senses of the love of God that has been expressed in our behalf. There can be no union between our souls and God except through Christ. The union and love between brother and brother must be cemented and rendered eternal by the love of Jesus....

"As faith contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

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11

Sabbath, September 10, 2016

God's Remnant People

"God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to co-operate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 269.

A REMNANT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN JESUS' TIME

1. What can we determine as to the number of people who were faithful to God in the time of the Old Testament?

2 KINGS 19:31 *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.*

ISAIAH 10:22 *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

"The story of Israel's call, of their successes and failures, of their restoration to divine favor, of their rejection of the Master of the vineyard, and of the carrying out of the plan of the ages by a goodly remnant to whom are to be fulfilled all the covenant promises—this has been the theme of God's messengers to His church throughout the centuries that have passed....

"His burden of soul in behalf of erring Judah was not to be borne in vain. His mission was not to be wholly fruitless.... The divine purpose finally accomplished, the full fruitage of his efforts, and of the labors of all God's faithful messengers, would appear. A remnant should be saved. That this might be brought about, the messages of warning and entreaty were to be delivered to the rebellious nation,..."
—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 22, 308.

2. What was this remnant situation like in the days of Jesus?

JOHN 3:32 *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.*

LUKE 12:32 *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

"The disciples of John had declared that all men were coming to Christ; but with clearer insight, John said, 'No man receiveth His witness;' so few were ready to accept Him as the Saviour from sin....

"The Saviour knew that His days of personal ministry on earth were nearly ended, and that few would receive Him as their Redeemer." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 181, 379.

"Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, He who was equal with God, was in the world thirty-three years, and yet there were but few who acknowledged His divine character." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 69.

IN OUR DAY

3. Today, with billions of people living on the earth, how are God's people considered?

ROMANS 9:27 *Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*

"In comparison with the millions of the world, God's people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority. When the sound of the last trump shall penetrate the prison house of the dead, and the righteous shall come forth with triumph, exclaiming, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55)—standing then with God, with Christ, with the angels, and with the loyal and true of all ages, the children of God will be far in the majority." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

4. What characterizes God's remnant?

REVELATION 12:17; 14:12 *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....* ^{14:12}*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

1 THESSALONIANS 1:9, 10 *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; ¹⁰And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

“‘In that day’ ‘the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob ... shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.’ Isaiah 10:20. From ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’ They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will ‘worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God’s mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept ‘the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:6, 7, 12.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 299.

A SMALL, FAITHFUL REMNANT UNTIL THE END

5. At the end of time, how will a small minority in the eyes of the world become an instrument to proclaim the three angels’ messages?

ZEPHANIAH 3:12, 13 *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. ¹³The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.*

“A high position does not give us value in the sight of God. Man is measured by his consecration and faithfulness in working out the will of God. If the remnant people of God will walk before Him in humility and faith, He will carry out through them His eternal purpose, enabling them to work harmoniously in giving to the world the truth as it is in Jesus. He will use all—men, women, and children—in making the light shine forth to the world and calling out a people that will be true to His commandments. Through the faith that His people exercise in Him, God will make known to the world that He is the true God, the God of Israel.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 274.

6. How do the Scriptures explain the fact that there will always be a remnant, even though a large number of people are informed about the truth and are called out of Babylon?

ACTS 28:26, 27 *Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ²⁷For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

JOHN 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

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.*

"The subject of man's personal responsibility is understood by but few; and yet it is a matter of the greatest importance. We may each obey and live, or we may transgress God's law, defy His authority, and receive the punishment that is meet. Then to every soul the question comes home with force, Shall I obey the voice from heaven, the ten words spoken from Sinai, or shall I go with the multitude who trample on that fiery law? To those who love God it will be the highest delight to keep His commandments, and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. But the natural heart hates the law of God, and wars against its holy claims. Men shut their souls from the divine light, refusing to walk in it as it shines upon them. They sacrifice purity of heart, the favor of God, and their hope of heaven, for selfish gratification or worldly gain." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 216.

"Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 752.

7. What will be the reward of God's remnant—those who love God and keep His commandments, and who are faithful to the end?

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

REVELATION 3:10-12 *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. ¹¹Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. ¹²Him 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.*

"Christ's true disciples follow Him through sore conflicts, enduring self-denial and experiencing bitter disappointment; but this teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they are led to look upon it with abhorrence. Partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God's remnant church....

"In this world their minds were consecrated to God; they served Him with the intellect and with the heart; and now He can place His name 'in their foreheads.'" —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Isaiah 11:11; 49:6.

"A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls. Angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 298.

"I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 406 (1913).

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12

Sabbath, September 17, 2016

The History of Israel, a Warning for God's People Today

"In these last days God's people will be exposed to the very same dangers as were ancient Israel. Those who will not receive the warnings that God gives will fall into the same perils as did ancient Israel and come short of entering into rest through unbelief. Ancient Israel suffered calamities on account of their unsanctified hearts and unsubmitted wills. Their final rejection as a nation was a result of their own unbelief, self-confidence, impenitence, blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. In their history we have a danger signal lifted before us." —*Last Day Events*, p. 60.

CROSSING THE RED SEA

1. At varying times, what command has God given His people, especially in the face of enormous difficulties?

EXODUS 14:10, 15 *And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.... ¹⁵And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*

HEBREWS 11:29 *By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*

ISAIAH 30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

"The great lesson here taught is for all time. Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, 'Go forward.' We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all. Unbelief whispers, 'Let us wait till the obstructions are removed, and we can see our way clearly;' but faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290.

2. What warning does the apostle Paul sound?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

“The history of the wilderness life of Israel was chronicled for the benefit of the Israel of God to the close of time. The record of God’s dealings with the wanderers of the desert in all their marchings to and fro, in their exposure to hunger, thirst, and weariness, and in the striking manifestations of His power for their relief, is fraught with warning and instruction for His people in all ages. The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“The history of the children of Israel is written for our admonition and instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come. Those who would stand firm in the faith in these last days, and finally gain an entrance into the heavenly Canaan, must listen to the words of warning spoken by Jesus Christ to the Israelites. These lessons were given to the church in the wilderness to be studied and heeded by God’s people throughout their generations forever. The experience of the people of God in the wilderness will be the experience of His people in this age. Truth is a safeguard in all time to those who will hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints.” —(Manuscript 110, August 6, 1899, “The Unfaithful Husbandmen”) *The Upward Look*, p. 232.

MOSES’ SIN

3. What was the consequence of Moses’ sin in dishonoring God? Why does He continue to chasten His people today?

NUMBERS 20:12 *And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

HEBREWS 12:7, 11 *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?... ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

“‘The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes,’ said Moses. The eyes of all Israel were upon Moses, and his sin cast a reflection upon God, who had chosen him as the leader of His people. The transgression was known to the whole congregation; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been given that unbelief and impatience under great provocation might be excused in those in re-

sponsible positions. But when it was declared that because of that one sin Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will surely punish the transgressor.

“The history of Israel was to be placed on record for the instruction and warning of coming generations. Men of all future time must see the God of heaven as an impartial ruler, in no case justifying sin. But few realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Men flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the transgressor. But in the light of Bible history it is evident that God’s goodness and His love engage Him to deal with sin as an evil fatal to the peace and happiness of the universe.”
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 420.

THE SERPENT OF BRASS

4. Of what experience of God’s people in the wilderness did Jesus remind Nicodemus?

NUMBERS 21:9 *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

JOHN 3:14-17 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

“The lifting up of the brazen serpent was to teach Israel an important lesson. They could not save themselves from the fatal effect of the poison in their wounds. God alone was able to heal them. Yet they were required to show their faith in the provision which He had made. They must look in order to live. It was their faith that was acceptable with God, and by looking upon the serpent their faith was shown....

“The fatal effects of sin can be removed only by the provision that God has made. The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice....

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. ‘Him that cometh to Me,’ says Christ, ‘I will in no wise cast out.’ John 6:37. But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 430, 431.

APOSTASY AT THE JORDAN

5. What grave sin did Israel commit in Shittim? What did God instruct His people not to do when they were at the border of the Jordan? Explain how this instruction is still applicable today.

NUMBERS 25:1 *And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.*

DEUTERONOMY 7:2, LAST PART, 3, 4 ... *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-16 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

"It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 458.

ACHAN'S SIN

6. What experience of ancient Israel will be made by God's people today if they do not walk with integrity?

HEBREWS 3:12-14 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*

"Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away. The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people.

"When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, instead of folding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members inquire if there is not an Achan in the camp. With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God's presence." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497.

FAITHFUL IN TRIAL

7. As the end approaches, what experiences made by Daniel and his companions will inspire God's people to meet the trials just ahead?

DANIEL 3:17, 18; 6:8, 22 *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.... ^{6:8}Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.... ²²My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocence was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*

"The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death.

"As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a 'God of gods,' able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 512, 513.

FOR MEDITATION

Revelation 13:16, 17.

Colossians 2:6-8.

"The murmurings of ancient Israel and their rebellious discontent, as well as the mighty miracles wrought in their favor and the punishment of their idolatry and ingratitude, are recorded for our benefit. The example of ancient Israel is given as a warning to the people of God, that they may avoid unbelief and escape His wrath. If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 11.

"The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to go forth to all the world. In a limited degree, it has already gone forth. In several places the civil power is speaking with the voice of a dragon, just as the heathen king spoke to the Hebrew captives.

"Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false Sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now. The papacy has exercised her power [of false religion] to compel men to obey her, and she will continue to do so. We need the same spirit that was manifested by God's servants in the conflict with paganism." —(*Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 976.

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God's People in the World, but Not of the World

"By His own example the Saviour has shown that His followers can be in the world and yet not of the world. He came not to partake of its delusive pleasures, to be swayed by its customs, and to follow its practices, but to do His Father's will, to seek and save the lost. With this object before him the Christian may stand uncontaminated in any surroundings. Whatever his station or circumstances, exalted or humble, he will manifest the power of true religion in the faithful performance of duty." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 467.

SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

1. How does God characterize His people? What does He command?

DEUTERONOMY 14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*

EXODUS 20:2, 3 *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

MATTHEW 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

"Christians are to keep themselves distinct and separate from the world, its spirit, and its influences. God is fully able to keep us in the world, but we are not to be of the world. His love is not uncertain and fluctuating. Ever He watches over His children with a care that is measureless. But He requires undivided allegiance. 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' " Matthew 6:24." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 59.

2. What is one of Satan's primary ways to ensnare God's people? Why does this work so well for him?

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

1 JOHN 2:15, 17 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.... ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

"God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to

imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God. As they depart from the Lord they become ambitious for the gains and honors of the world. Christians are constantly seeking to imitate the practices of those who worship the god of this world. Many urge that by uniting with worldlings and conforming to their customs they might exert a stronger influence over the ungodly. But all who pursue this course thereby separate from the Source of their strength. Becoming the friends of the world, they are the enemies of God. For the sake of earthly distinction they sacrifice the unspeakable honor to which God has called them, of showing forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 607.

"Never does man show greater folly than when he seeks to secure acceptance and recognition in the world by sacrificing in any degree the allegiance and honor due to God. When we place ourselves where God cannot cooperate with us, our strength will be found weakness." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 151.

GOD'S INSTRUCTION TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE FROM DANGER

3. What danger do those who unite with and imitate the world face?

MATTHEW 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

MARK 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

"There is constant danger that professing Christians will come to think that in order to have influence with worldlings, they must to a certain extent conform to the world. But though such a course may appear to afford great advantages, it always ends in spiritual loss. Against every subtle influence that seeks entrance by means of flattering inducements from the enemies of truth, God's people must strictly guard. They are pilgrims and strangers in this world, traveling a path beset with danger. To the ingenious subterfuges and alluring inducements held out to tempt from allegiance, they must give no heed.

"It is not the open and avowed enemies of the cause of God that are most to be feared." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 570, 571.

4. What did the Lord instruct His people for their protection?

DEUTERONOMY 7:2-4 *And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee;... thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

ROMANS 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-16 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of*

God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"The principles set forth in Deuteronomy for the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God's people to the end of time. True prosperity is dependent on the continuance of our covenant relationship with God. Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering into alliance with those who do not fear Him." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 570.

"Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God..."

"Those who profess the truth trample on the will of God in marrying unbelievers; they lose His favor and make bitter work for repentance. The unbelieving may possess an excellent moral character, but the fact that he or she has not answered to the claims of God and has neglected so great salvation is sufficient reason why such a union should not be consummated." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 63.

"Even in business relations we cannot, without involving principle, connect ourselves with those who are not loyal to God. What the one party feels that conscience forbids, the other allows. And this not merely in regard to religious matters, but in business transactions." —*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, pp. 215, 216 [*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 181].

5. What firm counsel does the Lord give?

ISAIAH 52:11 *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.*

ACTS 2:40 *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

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

"It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 458.

"The world is given up to self-indulgence. 'The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' control the masses of the people. But Christ's followers have a holier calling. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.' In the light of God's word we are justified in declaring that sanctification cannot be genuine which does not work this utter renunciation of the sinful pursuits and gratifications of the world." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 475.

6. Why does God emphasize the importance of His people's being separate from the world?

1 PETER 1:14-16 *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

LEVITICUS 20:24, 26 *But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.... ²⁶And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

NUMBERS 23:9 *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

“Christ calls upon every one to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ “—*Messages to Young People*, p. 130.

LABOR IN THE WORLD TO SAVE SOULS

7. However, while being separate from the world, what special privilege and responsibility do God’s people carry?

JOHN 17:16, 17 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

MATTHEW 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

“Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects—God and truth and eternity—their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony....

“But we are to beware of indulging a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. We are not to stand aside from others in a spirit that seems to say, ‘Come not near me; I am holier than thou.’ Do not shut yourselves away from your fellow men, but seek to impart to them the precious truth that has blessed your own heart. Let it be manifest that yours is the religion of love....

“But if we are Christians, having the Spirit of Him who died to save men from their sins, we shall love the souls of our fellow men too well to countenance their sinful pleasures by our presence or our influence. We cannot sanction their course by associating with them, partaking in their feasts and their councils, where God does not preside. Such a course, so far from benefiting them, would only cause them to doubt the reality of our religion. We should be false lights, by our example leading souls to ruin.”—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 127, 128.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“I appeal to the churches in every conference. Stand out separate and distinct from the world—in the world, but not of it, reflecting the bright beams of the Sun of

Righteousness, being pure, holy, and undefiled, and in faith carrying light into all the highways and byways of the earth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 437.

Messages to Young People, pp. 129-131, 81, 82.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 535, 536, 209, 210.

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14

Sabbath, October 1, 2016

Repairers of the Breach

“Here are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel’s message, those who avow themselves God’s commandment-keeping people, and who honor God, and are earnestly engaged, in the sight of all the universe, in building up the old waste places. Who is it that calls them, The repairers of the breach, The restorers of paths to dwell in? It is God. Their names are registered in heaven as reformers, restorers, as raising the foundations of many generations.” —(*Review and Herald*, October 13, 1891) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1151.

A BREACH IN GOD’S LAW

1. What breach was made in God’s law?

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.*

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.*

“During the Christian dispensation, the great enemy of man’s happiness has made the Sabbath of the fourth commandment an object of special attack. Satan says, ‘I will work at cross purposes with God. I will empower my followers to set aside God’s memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus I will show the world that the day sanctified and blessed by God has been changed. That day shall not live in the minds of the people. I will obliterate the memory of it. I will place in its stead a day that does not bear the credentials of God, a day that cannot be a sign between God and His people. I will lead those who accept this day to place upon it the sanctity that God placed upon the seventh day.

“‘Through my vicegerent, I will exalt myself. The first day will be extolled, and the Protestant world will receive this spurious sabbath as genuine. Through the nonobservance of the Sabbath that God instituted, I will bring His law into contempt. The words, “A sign between Me and you throughout your generations,” I will make to serve on the side of my sabbath.’” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 183, 184.

2. What will God's people do at the end of time?

ISAIAH 61:4; 58:12, 13 *And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations....^{58:12} And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.¹³ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.*

"In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. See verse 12." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.

GOD'S LAW IMMUTABLE AND ETERNAL

3. What did Jesus clearly affirm regarding His law? What will His people uphold?

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.*

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

MATTHEW 5:19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

"In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the work of those who worship God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is specified: 'They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations.' Isaiah 58:12. God's memorial, His seventh-day Sabbath, will be uplifted....

"The history of the church and the world, the loyal and the disloyal, is here [Isaiah 58:12-14] plainly revealed. The loyal under the proclamation of the third angel's message have turned their feet into the way of God's commandments, to respect, to honor, and glorify Him who created the heavens and the earth. The opposing forces have dishonored God by making a breach in His law, and when light from His Word has called attention to His holy commandments, revealing the breach made in the law by the papal authority, then, to get rid of conviction, men have tried to destroy the whole law. But could they destroy it? No; for all who will search the Scriptures for themselves will see that the law of God stands immutable, eternal, and His memorial, the Sabbath, will endure through eternal ages, pointing to the only true God in distinction from all false gods." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 106, 107.

4. What will the repairers of the breach have to face for their stand?

1 PETER 3:13-17 *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? ¹⁴But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ¹⁶Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. ¹⁷For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.*

"We are to maintain the truth because it is truth, in the face of the bitterest opposition. God is at work upon human minds; it is not man alone that is working. The great illuminating power is from Christ; the brightness of His example is to be kept before the people in every discourse." —(Letter 1f, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1152.

"The opposition and discouragement that the builders in Nehemiah's day met from open enemies and pretended friends is typical of the experience that those today will have who work for God. Christians are tried, not only by the anger, contempt, and cruelty of enemies, but by the indolence, inconsistency, lukewarmness, and treachery of avowed friends and helpers. Derision and reproach are hurled at them. And the same enemy that leads to contempt, at a favorable opportunity uses more cruel and violent measures." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 644.

"Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 270.

GOD WATCHES OVER HIS CHURCH

5. How does God consider His church on the earth, even though it is small in the eyes of the world?

DEUTERONOMY 32:9, 10 *For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. ¹⁰He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.*

ZECHARIAH 2:8 *For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*

"We should remember that the church, enfeebled and defective though it be, is the only object on earth on which Christ bestows His supreme regard. He is constantly watching it with solicitude, and is strengthening it by His Holy Spirit." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 396 (1902); *Last Day Events*, p. 58.

"The Lord has His appointed agencies, and a church that has lived through persecution, conflict, and darkness. Jesus loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and He will replenish, refine, ennoble, and elevate it, so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men. There will ever be fierce conflict

between the church and the world. Mind will come into contact with mind, principle with principle, truth with error; but in the crisis soon to culminate, which has already begun, the men of experience are to do their God-appointed work, and watch for souls as they that must give an account." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 52.

6. As God's people point to the narrow path to His kingdom, what will be seen despite fierce opposition?

ISAIAH 30:21 *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

PSALM 51:13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

"The Lord's people are seeking to heal the breach which has been made in the law of God....

"This disturbs the enemies of our faith, and every means is employed to hinder us in our work. And yet the broken-down wall is going steadily up. The world is being warned, and many are turning away from trampling under their feet the Sabbath of Jehovah. God is in this work, and man cannot stop it. Angels of God are working with the efforts of His faithful servants, and the work steadily advances. We shall meet with opposition of every description, as did the builders of the walls of Jerusalem; but if we watch and pray and work, as they did, God will fight our battles for us and give us precious victories." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 573.

"If the remnant people of God will walk before Him in humility and faith, He will carry out through them His eternal purpose, enabling them to work harmoniously in giving to the world the truth as it is in Jesus. He will use all—men, women, and children—in making the light shine forth to the world and calling out a people that will be true to His commandments. Through the faith that His people exercise in Him, God will make known to the world that He is the true God, the God of Israel." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 274.

NEED OF REFORMERS

7. What leaders in ancient Israel are special examples for God's people today?

NEHEMIAH 1:6-9 *Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. ⁷We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. ⁸Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: ⁹But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.*

EZRA 10:10-12 *And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. ¹¹Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure:*

and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.
¹²Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

“In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who rebukes evil the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed.

“In their work, Ezra and Nehemiah humbled themselves before God, confessing their sins and the sins of their people, and entreating pardon as if they themselves were the offenders. Patiently they toiled and prayed and suffered.” —*Prophecies and Kings*, p. 675.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“This prophecy [Isaiah 58:12-14] also applies in our time. The breach was made in the law of God when the Sabbath was changed by the Roman power. But the time has come for that divine institution to be restored. The breach is to be repaired and the foundation of many generations to be raised up.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 452.

“This is the people that are repairing the breach in the law of God. They see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been supplanted by a spurious sabbath, a day that has no sanction in the Word of God. Amid great opposition they become loyal to their God, and take their position under the standard of the third angel.” —(Manuscript 48, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1152.

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15

Sabbath, October 8, 2016

As Watchmen

“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19.

EACH ONE IS TO BE A WATCHMAN

- 1. What responsibility did the Lord give to the prophet Ezekiel? Is this responsibility entrusted only to the minister and the church elder, or also to every child of God?**

EZEKIEL 33:7 *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.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

"So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel to whom came the word:...

"Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, 'even at the doors.' Let us read and understand before it is too late." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 19, 20.

2. Why must the watchmen be constantly on the lookout?

MATTHEW 24:42-46 *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. ⁴³But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. ⁴⁴Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. ⁴⁵Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

"Time, precious time, has been lost. Golden opportunities have passed by unimproved, because of a lack of clear spiritual eyesight and wise generalship to plan and devise ways and means to frustrate the enemy and preoccupy the field....

"Slumbering watchmen, what of the night? Do you not know the time of night? Do you feel no burden to lift the danger signal and give the warnings for this time? If you do not, come down from the walls of Zion, for God will not entrust you with the light He has to give. Light is only given to those who will reflect that light upon others." —(Manuscript 107, 1898) *Evangelism*, p. 144.

"Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 234.

THE WATCHMEN'S MESSAGE

3. What message are the watchmen commanded to proclaim?

JOEL 2:1, 15 *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand;... ¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.*

ISAIAH 40:10 *Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*

MATTHEW 24:32, 33 *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: ³³So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*

"Sound an alarm through the land. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. We might have been in the place of the poor souls who are in error. According to the truth that we have received above others, we are debtors to impart the same to them....

"If we firmly take our stand as God's workmen, saying, 'The Lord has given us a message, and we cannot be faithful watchmen unless we stand at our post of duty; we will carry the work through at all hazards,' then we shall find that angels of God will minister to our households at home, and will say to the enemy, 'Stand back.' " —(*Historical Sketches*, pp. 127, 128 [1886]) *Evangelism*, pp. 218, 655.

4. What did God command His servants? Are we as watchmen giving a clear tone to the message?

ISAIAH 58:1 *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

"Let the church arise, and repent of her backslidings before God. Let the watchmen awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. It is a definite warning that we have to proclaim. God commands His servants, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins' (Isaiah 58:1)." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 126.

"It is the privilege of the watchmen on the walls of Zion to live so near to God, and to be so susceptible to the impressions of His Spirit, that He can work through them to tell sinners of their peril, and point them to the place of safety. Chosen of God, sealed with the blood of consecration, they are to rescue men and women from impending destruction. Faithfully are they to warn their fellow-men of the sure result of transgression, and faithfully are they to safeguard the interest of the church. At no time may they relax their vigilance. Theirs is a work requiring the exercise of every faculty of the being. In trumpet tones their voices are to be lifted, and never should they sound one wavering, uncertain note. Not for wages are they to labor, but because they cannot do otherwise, because they realize that there is a woe upon them if they fail to preach the gospel." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 15.

THE WATCHMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

5. Is it sufficient for a watchman to have accepted Jesus as his Saviour? What is his responsibility?

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. ⁸When 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. ⁹Nevertheless, 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.*

"These words of the prophet declare the solemn responsibility resting upon those who are appointed as guardians of the church, stewards of the mysteries of God. They are to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, to sound the note of alarm at the approach of the enemy. If for any reason their spiritual senses

become so benumbed that they are unable to discern danger, and through their failure to give warning the people perish, God will require at their hands the blood of those who are lost.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 15.

“The watchmen will need to live very near to God, to hear His word and be impressed with His Spirit, that the people may not look to them in vain. ‘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.’ Ambassadors of Christ should take heed that they do not, through their unfaithfulness, lose their own souls and the souls of those who hear them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 403.

6. While the whole world will be urged to accept the mark of the beast, what great messages must the watchman preach?

REVELATION 14:6-10; 18:2, LAST PART-5 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. ⁸And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. ⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.... ^{18:2}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. ³For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. ⁴And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

“While the Protestant world is by her attitude making concessions to Rome, let us arouse to comprehend the situation and view the contest before us in its true bearings. Let the watchmen now lift up their voice and give the message which is present truth for this time. Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history and seek to arouse the spirit of true Protestantism, awaking the world to a sense of the value of the privileges of religious liberty so long enjoyed.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 716.

7. What connection is there between the watchman’s responsibility and Jesus’ second coming?

ISAIAH 40:9 *O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!*

JOEL 2:11-13 *And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? ¹²Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

"The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given them to see the dangers." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 715.

"If every soldier of Christ had done his duty, if every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 29.

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 449.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"On which side are we standing? Have we placed ourselves fully under the direction and protection of the Holy Spirit, and are we giving the message for this time? Does every effort we put forth tend to advance the proclamation of the message? So far as his opportunities extend, every one who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet of Israel, to whom came the word: '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.'" —*Review and Herald*, July 28, 1904.

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The Mission of God's People in the Last Days

"To carry the truth to the inhabitants of the earth, to rescue them from their guilt and indifference, is the mission of the followers of Christ. Men must have the truth in order to be sanctified through it, and we are the channels of God's light. Our talents, our means, our knowledge, are not merely for our own benefit; they are to be used for the salvation of souls, to elevate man from his life of sin and bring him, through Christ, to the infinite God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 80.

PROCLAMATION OF THE TRUTH

1. As what does Christ consider His church?

MATTHEW 5:14-16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

"Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity.

"The church is God's agency for the proclamation of truth, empowered by Him to do a special work; and if she is loyal to Him, obedient to all His commandments, there will dwell within her the excellency of divine grace. If she will be true to her allegiance, if she will honor the Lord God of Israel, there is no power that can stand against her." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600.

2. What is the mission of His remnant people?

1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-19 *For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. ¹⁸What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. ¹⁹For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

1 PETER 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

"The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them....

"The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message; it means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance till the close of time." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 19, 154.

TO ALL THE WORLD

3. How far does the work of Christ's disciples extend?

MATTHEW 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

REVELATION 14:6 *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*

"Our watchword is to be: Onward, ever onward. The angels of God will go before us to prepare the way. Our burden for the 'regions beyond' can never be laid down until the whole earth shall be lightened with the glory of the Lord." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 29.

"The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. Today, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. The Lord calls for pastors, teachers, and evangelists. From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation. To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people the tidings of pardon through Christ are to be carried.

"Not with tame, lifeless utterance is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity. Not merely in a few places, but throughout the world, messengers of mercy are needed." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 15, 16.

4. What did Jesus say about the need for workers in His vineyard? As the final harvest approaches, are we ready to answer as did Isaiah the prophet?

MATTHEW 9:37, 38 *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; ³⁸Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

ISAIAH 6:8 *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

"Today the same needs exist. The world is in need of workers who will labor as Christ did for the suffering and the sinful. There is indeed a multitude to be

reached. The world is full of sickness, suffering, distress, and sin. It is full of those who need to be ministered unto—the weak, the helpless, the ignorant, the degraded.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 254.

“The work is before us; will we engage in it? We must work fast, we must go steadily forward. We must be preparing for the great day of the Lord. We have no time to lose, no time to be engaged in selfish purposes. The world is to be warned. What are we doing as individuals to bring the light before others? God has left to every man his work; every one has a part to act, and we cannot neglect this work except at the peril of our souls.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 126.

5. What is the purpose of God’s people?

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.*

ISAIAH 60:1 *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

“And still our General, who never makes a mistake, says to us, ‘Advance; enter new territory; lift the standard in every land.’ ‘Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.’

“The time has come when through God’s messengers the scroll is being unrolled to the world. The truth contained in the first, second, and third angels’ messages must go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; it must lighten the darkness of every continent, and extend to the islands of the sea. There must be no delay in this work.

“Our watchword is to be, Onward, ever onward! Angels of heaven will go before us to prepare the way. Our burden for the regions beyond can never be laid down till the whole earth is lightened with the glory of the Lord.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 470 (1915); *Evangelism*, p. 707.

JESUS IS WITH HIS PEOPLE TO THE END

6. What promise of Jesus to His disciples belongs to His people at the end of time?

MATTHEW 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

“Christ made full provision for the prosecution of the work entrusted to the disciples, and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail.

“To us also the promise of Christ’s abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciplines, and He will be with us ‘even unto the end.’

“‘Go forth preaching the gospel to all nations,’ the Saviour says to us, ‘that they may become children of God. I am with you in this work, teaching, guiding, comforting, strengthening you, giving you success in your work of self-denial and sacrifice. I will move upon hearts, convincing them of sin, and turning them from darkness to light, from disobedience to righteousness. In My light they shall see

light. You will meet the opposition of satanic agencies, but put your trust in Me. I will never fail you.' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 17.

7. What armor will be worn by those who go and preach the gospel until Christ's second coming and who will meet the powers of darkness?

EPHESIANS 6:14-18 *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

"Zeal for God and His cause moved the disciples to bear witness to the gospel with mighty power. Should not a like zeal fire our hearts with a determination to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the Saviour.

"If the church will put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, withdrawing from all allegiance with the world, there is before her the dawn of a bright and glorious day. God's promise to her will stand fast forever. He will make her an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Truth, passing by those who despise and reject it, will triumph. Although at times apparently retarded, its progress has never been checked. When the message of God meets with opposition, He gives it additional force, that it may exert greater influence. Endowed with divine energy, it will cut its way through the strongest barriers, and triumph over every obstacle." —*My Life Today*, p. 266.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"The time has come when those who choose the Lord for their present and future portion must trust in Him alone. Everyone professing godliness must have an experience of his own. The recording angel is making a faithful record of the words and acts of God's people. Angels are watching the development of character and weighing moral worth. Those who profess to believe the truth should be right themselves and exert all their influence to enlighten and win others to the truth. Their words and works are the channel through which the pure principles of truth and holiness are conveyed to the world. They are the salt of the earth and the light thereof." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 262.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, pp. 14-17.

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Warning against the Cry of “Peace and Safety”

“The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. ‘Escape for thy life’ is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: ‘Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.’ Those who are at ease in Zion cry ‘Peace and safety,’ while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 233.

HESITATION AND UNCERTAINTY

1. What does the cry of “peace and security” really mean?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-3 *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ²For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. ³For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

“If the leading men in our conferences do not now accept the message sent them by God, and fall into line for action, the churches will suffer great loss. When the watchman, seeing the sword coming, gives the trumpet a certain sound, the people along the line will echo the warning, and all will have opportunity to make ready for the conflict. But too often the leader has stood hesitating, seeming to say: ‘Let us not be in too great haste. There may be a mistake. We must be careful not to raise a false alarm.’ The very hesitancy and uncertainty on his part is crying: “Peace and safety.” Do not get excited. Be not alarmed. There is a great deal more made of this religious amendment question than is demanded. This agitation will all die down.’ Thus he virtually denies the message sent from God, and the warning which was designed to stir the churches fails to do its work. The trumpet of the watchman gives no certain sound, and the people do not prepare for the battle. Let the watchman beware lest, through his hesitancy and delay, souls shall be left to perish, and their blood shall be required at his hand.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 715.

2. What spirit soothes the consciences of those who cry “peace and security” as judgment looms over the world?

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3, 4, 13, 14 *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ³For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.... ¹³For such*

are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

“God has not changed toward His faithful servants who are keeping their garments spotless. But many are crying, ‘Peace and safety,’ while sudden destruction is coming upon them. Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing.

“Who can truthfully say: ‘Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world’? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: ‘Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? “How is the faithful city become an harlot!” My Father’s house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking.’ “ –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 250.

SATAN TRIES TO CONTROL PEOPLE’S MINDS

3. What is Satan’s intention in calling evil good?

ISAIAH 5:20, 21 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*
²¹*Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*

JEREMIAH 9:8, 9 *Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.*
⁹*Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

COLOSSIANS 2:4 *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

“It [a theory of sanctification] gives them an appearance of being good Christians, and of possessing holiness, when their hearts are corrupt. It is a peace-and-safety theory, which does not bring to light evil and reprove and rebuke wrong. It heals the hurt of the daughter of God’s people slightly, crying: Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Men and women of corrupt hearts throw around them the garb of sanctification, and are looked upon as examples to the flock, when they are Satan’s agents, used by him to allure and deceive honest souls into a bypath, that they may not feel the force and importance of the solemn truths proclaimed by the third angel.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 335.

4. Why do even those who say that they belong to God’s people enjoy fables?

JOHN 3:19-21 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. ²¹But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

2 TIMOTHY 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*

"These reproofs and warnings disturb the quiet of these sleepy, ease-loving sentinels, and they are not pleased. They say in heart, if not in words: 'This is all uncalled for. It is too severe, too harsh.... Why don't they prophesy smooth things, and cry: Peace, peace? Then everything would move on smoothly.'

"These are the true feelings of many of our people. And Satan exults at his success in controlling the minds of so many who profess to be Christians. He has deceived them, benumbed their sensibilities, and planted his hellish banner right in their midst, and they are so completely deceived that they know not that it is he." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 440.

GOD'S WRATH

5. What will be the end of those who were given an abundance of light but did not love it or walk in it?

EZEKIEL 9:5, 6 *And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: ⁶Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*

"Here [Ezekiel 9:5, 6] we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus 'Peace and safety' is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 211.

6. What will be the fate of those who may be compared to the foolish virgins? What loving admonition does the Lord give to His people?

MATTHEW 25:6-13 *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. ⁹But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹²But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

"The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working....

"This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. They lull their hearts into security, and dream not of danger. When startled from their

lethargy, they discern their destitution, and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency.... But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 411.

PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD

7. Therefore, what call will God's people heed so as not to fall into deadly lethargy?

1 THESSALONIANS 5:4-6 *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

LUKE 21:34-36 *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. ³⁵For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

AMOS 4:12 *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

"The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God's people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 205.

"There are in the world today many who close their eyes to the evidences that Christ has given to warn men of His coming. They seek to quiet all apprehension, while at the same time the signs of the end are rapidly fulfilling, and the world is hastening to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven. Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede the second coming of Christ. Those guilty of this neglect he calls children of the night and of darkness. He encourages the vigilant and watchful...." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 260.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"Shirkers can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might into the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will. God is a sin-hating God. And those who encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse.

"...They are not in harmony with right. They despise the straight testimony that reaches the heart, and would rejoice to see everyone silenced who gives reproof." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 272.

"The message preceding the public ministry of the Son of God was, Repent, publicans; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees, 'for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Matthew 3:2. Our message is not to be one of 'peace and safety.' 1 Thessalonians 5:3. As a people who believe in Christ's soon appearing, we have a work to do, a message to bear—'Prepare to meet thy God.' Amos 4:12. We are to lift up the standard, and bear

the third angel's message—the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 150.

Last Day Events, p. 233.

Selected Messages, book 1, p. 410.

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***Read the Missionary Report
from the General Conference Ministerial Department
on page 83***

18

Sabbath, October 29, 2016

Warning against Spiritualism and False Doctrines

“Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions....

“As spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day, it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power....

“The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 588, 551.

GOD'S COMMAND

1. What did God always command His people?

DEUTERONOMY 18:10, 11 *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,¹¹Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

ISAIAH 8:19 *And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?*

"Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form of the witchcraft and demon worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. It is foretold in the Scriptures, which declare that 'in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.' 1 Timothy 4:1. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, points to the special working of Satan in spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ's second coming, he declares that it is 'after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

"The word of the Lord to ancient Israel is addressed also to His people in this age: 'Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them;' 'for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord.' Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:12." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 686, 689.

2. To what words of Scripture must God's people refer so as not to fall into Satan's snares concerning the state of the dead?

ECCLESIASTES 9:5, 6 *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.*

"But none need be deceived by the lying claims of spiritualism. God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare. As already shown, the theory which forms the very foundation of spiritualism is at war with the plainest statements of Scripture. The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth.

"Furthermore, God has expressly forbidden all pretended communication with departed spirits. In the days of the Hebrews there was a class of people who claimed, as do the spiritualists of today, to hold communication with the dead. But the 'familiar spirits,' as these visitants from other worlds were called, are declared by the Bible to be 'the spirits of devils.' (Compare Numbers 25:1-3; Psalm 106:28; 1 Corinthians 10:20; Revelation 16:14.) The work of dealing with familiar spirits was pronounced an abomination to the Lord, and was solemnly forbidden under penalty of death. Leviticus 19:31; 20:27." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 556.

UNDER A CHRISTIAN GUISE

3. How does Satan operate in these last days?

2 TIMOTHY 4:3, 4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

"It is true that spiritualism is now changing its form and, veiling some of its more objectionable features, is assuming a Christian guise....

"Even in its present form, so far from being more worthy of toleration than formerly, it is really a more dangerous, because a more subtle, deception. While it formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now *professes* to accept both. But the Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its

solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God, but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, making little distinction between good and evil. God's justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight. The people are taught to regard the Decalogue as a dead letter. Pleasing, bewitching fables captivate the senses and lead men to reject the Bible as the foundation of their faith. Christ is as verily denied as before; but Satan has so blinded the eyes of the people that the deception is not discerned." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 557, 558, italics added.

"But the mass of mankind despise the truths of God's word and prefer fables. 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11: 'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 300.

4. How far will Satan's deceptions go?

2 CORINTHIANS 11:13, 14 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

MATTHEW 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

"Among the most successful agencies of the great deceiver are the delusive teachings and lying wonders of spiritualism. Disguised as an angel of light, he spreads his nets where least suspected. If men would but study the Book of God with earnest prayer that they might understand it, they would not be left in darkness to receive false doctrines. But as they reject the truth they fall a prey to deception.

"Another dangerous error is the doctrine that denies the deity of Christ, claiming that He had no existence before His advent to this world. This theory is received with favor by a large class who profess to believe the Bible;...

"Still another subtle and mischievous error is the fast-spreading belief that Satan has no existence as a personal being; that the name is used in Scripture merely to represent men's evil thoughts and desires." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 524.

OUR ONLY SAFEGUARD

5. What words of the prophet Isaiah are a standard that exposes the seductions of so-called miracle workers? In addition, what principle will keep God's people from being deceived by false christs?

1 JOHN 4:1 *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

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.*

MICAH 3:5, 6 *Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. ⁶Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.*

"We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God." —(*Preach the Word*, p. 5 [1905]) *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 32.

6. How will those who are faithful to God overcome spiritualism?

EPHESIANS 6:11, 12, 17 *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness In high places.... ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

"Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are assailing, not men alone, but Satan and his angels. They have entered upon a contest against principalities and powers and wicked spirits In high places. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of heavenly messengers. The people of God should be able to meet him, as did our Saviour, with the words: 'It is written.' Satan can quote Scripture now as in the days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings to sustain his delusions. Those who would stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.

"Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 559, 560.

"The only safety now is to search for the truth as revealed in the word of God, as for hid treasure. The subjects of the Sabbath, the nature of man, and the testimony of Jesus are the great and important truths to be understood; these will prove as an anchor to hold God's people in these perilous times." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 300.

7. Is it possible for those who have departed from Christ to return to the right path?

ISAIAH 55:6, 7 *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

HOSEA 12:6 *Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.*

"I was shown that Satan cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. Those who depart from the right are in serious danger now. They separate themselves from God and from the watchcare of His angels, and Satan, ever upon the watch to destroy souls, begins to present to them his deceptions. Such are in

the utmost peril; and if they see and try to resist the powers of darkness and to free themselves from Satan's snare, it is not an easy matter. They have ventured on Satan's ground, and he claims them. He will not hesitate to engage all his energies and call to his aid all his evil host to wrest a single human being from the hand of Christ. Those who have tempted the devil to tempt them will have to make desperate efforts to free themselves from his power. But when they begin to work for themselves, then angels of God whom they have grieved will come to their rescue. Satan and his angels are unwilling to lose their prey. They contend and battle with the holy angels, and the conflict is severe. But if those who have erred continue to plead, and in deep humility confess their wrongs, angels who excel in strength will prevail and wrench them from the power of the evil angels." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 301.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

"Spiritualism is a lie. It is founded upon the great original lie, 'Ye shall *not* surely die.' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 301.

Early Writings, pp. 262-266.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 297-302.

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 171-173.

The Great Controversy, chapter 34.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

from the General Conference Ministerial Department

To be read on Sabbath, October 29, 2016

*The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, November 5, 2016*

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:28.

“Those who give themselves to the ministry of the Word enter a most important work.” —Review and Herald, October 6, 1904.

Dear fellow believers in Christ,
The Lord established His church as an organized body, making the apostles (ministers) responsible for the advancement of His cause and the instruction of the believers in sound doctrine. The Ministerial/Sabbath School Department in a special sense watches over the doctrine which is preached in the spoken and written word by the church organization.

One of the main institutions for the believers' growth in knowledge and unity in the faith is the Sabbath school. Under God's guidance, the Department determines the sequence of subjects to be studied in the weekly *Sabbath School Lessons*. In addition, with the assistance of primarily my wife, I produce a video every week in English and one in Spanish for ministers and teachers to facilitate the unity of belief in doctrinal points through the Sabbath school. Thousands of people (both members and non-members) have watched these online video programs. Some active members also use them as missionary tools to establish study groups for interested souls. These videos are promoted on Facebook, Google, YouTube, and the Ministerial Department's website. However, because the General Conference has limited financial resources, all the media activities of the Department are financed by private donations. More funds are needed to maintain the website and to facilitate Internet outreach.

Another important function of the Department is the support and supervision of missionary schools. There are currently six such schools in Latin America, one in Asia, and two in Africa. The schools in Latin America are financed by the unions and fields benefiting from the schools, but the ones in Africa and Asia depend on outside support. The financial needs of the missionary schools are great not only because teachers' salaries, materials, food, and lodging must be paid but also because many students need financial aid in the form of scholarships. Very often young people desire to obtain missionary training but cannot afford it. Your generous donations can make it possible for a young brother or sister to be educated as a missionary.

The Ministerial Department is responsible for preparing doctrinal materials and manuals and supervising doctrinal publications. At present the *Church Manual* is being updated, and manuals for ministers and leaders are being prepared. Position papers on doctrinal questions are also required from time to time. All of the Department's projects are carried out in accordance with the requests of the General Conference delegates in session. Unfortunately, some projects have to be put on hold because of lack of funds, even though there is a desire to have such things as an online school for ministers and workers, a book on the church's history, an online missionary school, and other spiritual resources.

In 1902, Sister Ellen G. White wrote: "In all departments of ministerial work, there is need of greater earnestness. Time is passing, and the work that should be far advanced is almost at a standstill." —*Review and Herald*, August 19, 1902. Unfortunately we are still confronted with this situation today. Your contributions, prayers, and support are urgently needed. May God bless your generous heart.

—Tzvetan Petkov
General Conference Ministerial Department Leader

**Special Sabbath School Offering for the
GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENT**

Help spread Heaven's spiritual gifts through your generous offering!

19

Sabbath, November 5, 2016

Warning against the Mark of the Beast and Its Image

"It is for the interest of all to understand what the mark of the beast is, and how they may escape the dread threatenings of God. Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast and his image? It is in direct contrast with the mark of God. [Exodus 31:12-17 quoted.]" —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

1. What will be God's people's position when the Sunday law is imposed?

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

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, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

"The people of God will recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment and will by precept and example teach obedience to it as a sacred duty so long as its authority is exercised within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God we must choose to obey God rather than men. The Word of God must be recognized and obeyed as an authority above that of all human legislation. 'Thus saith the Lord' is not to be set aside for a 'Thus saith the church or the state.' The crown of Christ is to be uplifted above all the diadems of earthly potentates." —(*The Home Missionary*, November 1, 1893) *Last Day Events*, p. 142.

"The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word

of God. Of all who receive this mark, God says, '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.'..." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 979.

THE TWO-HORNED BEAST

2. According to Revelation 13:15-17, what will the two-horned beast do?

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. ¹⁶And 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: ¹⁷And 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 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.

3. What characterizes the beast and its image?

DANIEL 8:25 *And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.*

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; ⁴Who 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, shewing himself that he is God.*

"The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God's commandments. Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy: 'He shall think to change times and the law.' Daniel 7:25, R.V. And Paul styled the same power the 'man of sin,' who was to exalt himself above God. One prophecy is a complement of the other. Only by changing God's law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God....

"As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite 'the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of;... because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.' —Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, p. 58. What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church—the mark of the beast?" —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 446, 448.

4. How will the observance of Sunday be imposed?

REVELATION 13:16, 17 *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: ¹⁷And 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.*

“‘He causeth all, both small and great, ... to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.’ Revelation 13:16. Not only are men not to work with their hands on Sunday, but with their minds are they to acknowledge Sunday as the Sabbath.” —(*Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church*, pp. 6, 7 [1897]) *Last Day Events*, p. 224.

“Those who choose to follow antichrist are subjects of the great apostate. Ranged under the banner of Satan, they break God’s law and lead others to break it. They endeavor so to frame the laws of nations that men shall show their loyalty to earthly governments by trampling upon the laws of God’s kingdom....

“The so-called Christian world is to be the theater of great and decisive actions. Men in authority will enact laws controlling the conscience, after the example of the papacy. Babylon will make all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Every nation will be involved... [Revelation 18:3-7 quoted].” —(Manuscript 24, 1891) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.

5. Do people today have the opportunity to choose whether or not to accept the mark of the beast?

EXODUS 23:32, 33 *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.*

ACTS 17:30, 31 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

“John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the beast or his image by keeping the first day of the week. The observance of this day is the mark of the beast.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 133 (1898); *Last Day Events*, p. 223.

“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.

“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*, p. 234.

6. What will show that one has received the mark of the beast?

JOSHUA 24:15 *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

1 KINGS 18:21 *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

"If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls 'My holy day,' you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.

"If we receive this mark in our foreheads or in our hands, the judgments pronounced against the disobedient must fall upon us. But 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. 981.

"But now time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months. They will also have much to unlearn and much to learn again. Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision *now* to say, *Nay*, we will not regard the institution of the beast." —*Early Writings*, p. 67.

THE CALL OF THE OTHER ANGEL

7. What will be the fruit of God's people's labor at the time of the loud cry?

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.*

"I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant." —*Early Writings*, p. 261.

"Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord." —*Evangelism*, p. 700 (1895).

"Many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 401 (1900); *Last Day Events*, p. 211.

FOR MEDITATION

“The substitution of the false for the true is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself. When the laws of men are exalted above the laws of God, when the powers of this earth try to force men to keep the first day of the week, know that the time has come for God to work. He will arise in His majesty, and will shake terribly the earth. He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

“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.

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20

Sabbath, November 12, 2016

The People Who Receive God’s Seal

“Who are these? God’s denominated people—those who on this earth have witnessed to their loyalty. Who are they? Those who have kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ; those who have owned the Crucified One as their Saviour.” —(Manuscript 132, 1903) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 981.

GOD’S SIGN

1. What is the sign between God and His people?

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.*

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

“The sign of obedience is the observance of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. If men keep the fourth commandment, they will keep all the rest.” —(Letter 31, 1898.)

“There is to be a mark placed upon God’s people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath.” —(*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 217) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 981.

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

2. When did God’s people use a sign that identified and protected them? Is God’s sign necessary today?

EXODUS 12:3, 7, 13 *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.... ⁷And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.... ¹³And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

“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.’ Ezekiel 20:12.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 969 (1900); *Last Day Events*, p. 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.” —(Letter 126, 1898) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161.

THOSE WHO HONOR GOD’S COMMANDMENTS

3. What will clearly distinguish God’s people?

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

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.*

“After the warning against the worship of the beast and his image the prophecy declares: ‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Since those who keep God’s commandments are thus placed in contrast with those that worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, it follows that the keeping of God’s law, on the one hand, and its violation, on the other, will make the distinction between the worshipers of God and the worshipers of the beast.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 445.

“The work of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The world can only be warned by seeing those who believe the truth sanctified through the truth, acting upon high and holy principles, showing in a high, elevated sense, the line of demarcation between those who keep the commandments of God and whose who trample them under their feet. The sanctification of the Spirit signalizes the difference between those who have the seal of God and those who keep a spurious rest day.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

4. What characterizes those who will receive God’s seal?

REVELATION 14:1, 4, 5 *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....⁴These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

"The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970 (1895); *Last Day Events*, p. 221.

"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....

"Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 216.

AFFLICTION

5. What will God's people feel when they face the iniquity of those who pretend to serve God?

EZEKIEL 9:4 *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.*

"Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect....

"The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God....

"The day of God's vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 210-212.

6. What warning is given concerning the danger of superficial Sabbath observance?

ISAIAH 29:13 *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.*

JAMES 2:20 *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

“Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 213.

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 411.

SIGN OF DISTINCTION

7. Why is it so important to receive God’s sign now?

MARK 8:37, 38 *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

MATTHEW 10:32; 25:34 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.... ^{25:34}Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

“Those who come out from the world, to stand distinct from worldlings in words and works, those who realize that it is an honor to bear God’s sign, will receive power to become His sons. The Lord will have men who can be depended on. No one will enter the courts above who does not bear the sign of God. Those who in this sin-cursed earth bear this sign in holy boldness, looking upon it as an honor, will be recognized and honored by Christ in the courts above.” —(Letter 125, 1903.)

“Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This is what distinguishes them from the disloyal, who have accepted a man-made institution in the place of the true Sabbath. The observance of God’s rest day is the mark of distinction between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.” —(Manuscript 27, 1899) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 969, 970.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

“Every individual soul, if he would receive the seal of the living God, must hear the Word of the Lord, and do it with exactitude. There must be no such thing as haphazard religion if men would have a place in the family of God.

“Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 288.

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The Latter Rain

“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.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 506 (1897); *Last Day Events*, p. 183.

“At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” —*Early Writings*, p. 86 (1854); *Last Day Events*, p. 186.

PREPARATION

1. Why is it important not to neglect church assemblies?

HEBREWS 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

“The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God’s appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508 (1897); *Last Day Events*, p. 188.

2. Is it possible to receive the latter rain without preparation?

JEREMIAH 4:3 *For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God’s Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the Word; but when the Spirit’s power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God’s Word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience,

and returning home, will be prepared to exert a healthful influence.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121.

UNITY AND BROTHERLY LOVE

3. How will the faithful believers come to that indispensable unity and brotherly love that make it possible for them to receive the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

HEBREWS 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

EPHESIANS 4:1-3 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ²With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; ³Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

ACTS 2:1, 2 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

“When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God’s promise will never fail in one jot or tittle. But when the work of others is discounted, that the workers may show their own superiority, they prove that their own work does not bear the signature it should. God cannot bless them.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 175 (1896); *Last Day Events*, p. 190.

“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.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 21 (1904); *Last Day Events*, p. 191.

4. How will God demonstrate that His people are ready to be sealed?

EPHESIANS 4:13, 15 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.... ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

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.*

“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!” —(*Review and Herald*, May 27, 1862.)

“We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves

to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled [Isaiah 61:11 quoted]. The whole earth is to be filled with the glory of God.” –(Letter 151, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

WORKING AND PRAYING

5. Who is an example in ministry for God’s people?

ROMANS 15:16 *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

“The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.” –(Review and Herald, July 21, 1896) *Christian Service*, p. 253.

6. What should faithful believers request of the Lord every day?

LUKE 11:9-13 *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. ¹⁰For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹¹If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? ¹²Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³If 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?*

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.*

“The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future, but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it.” –*Evangelism*, p. 701 (1895).

“The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it, and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given to us.” –*Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896.

“We are not willing enough to trouble the Lord with our petitions, and to ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Lord wants us to trouble Him in this matter. He wants us to press our petitions to the throne.” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 537 (1909); *Last Day Events*, p. 188.

NO EXACT TIME

7. In what general period of time do the Holy Scriptures place the latter rain?

ACTS 2:16-18 *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.*

"I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning." —(*Review and Herald*, March 29, 1892) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

"The baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential for the success of the ministry in the early gospel age; but it is no less necessary in this age when 'darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.' And the Lord has promised the same quickening spiritual power to his servants in these days. 'It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'" —*Signs of the Times*, February 24, 1888.

FOR MEDITATION

"Peculiar and rapid changes will soon take place, and God's people are to be endowed with the Holy Spirit, so that with heavenly wisdom they may meet the emergencies of this age, and as far as possible counteract the demoralizing movements of the world. If the church is not asleep, if the followers of Christ watch and pray, they may have light to comprehend and appreciate the movements of the enemy." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 436; *Christian Service*, p. 254.

"I was shown that if God's people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 619 (1867); *Last Day Events*, p. 195.

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The Loud Cry

“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. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

BABYLON IS FALLEN

1. The voice of what angel joins that of the third angel?

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. ²And 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. ³For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

“I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven, preparing for the fulfillment of some important event. 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. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, ‘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.’ The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. 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. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel’s message.” —*Early Writings*, p. 277.

2. What does spiritual Babylon represent?

REVELATION 17:1-6 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: ²With 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. ³So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

"The whole chapter shows that Babylon that has fallen is the churches who will not receive the messages of warning the Lord has given in the first, second, and third angels' messages. They refused the truth and accepted a lie. They refused the messages of truth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. The message in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is plain and clearly defined. '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.' Verse 3. Anyone who reads this chapter need not be deceived.

"How Satan would exult to have a message go broadcast that the only people whom God has made the repositories of His law are the ones to whom this message applies. The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon. Kings, merchants, rulers, and religious teachers are all in corrupt harmony." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 68.

BABYLON'S SINS

3. Of what sins is Babylon guilty?

MARK 7:21, 22 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

"I saw that since Jesus left the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and entered within the second veil, the churches have been filling up with every unclean and hateful bird. I saw great iniquity and vileness in the churches; yet their members profess to be Christians. Their profession, their prayers, and their exhortations are an abomination in the sight of God. Said the angel, 'God will not smell in their assemblies. Selfishness, fraud, and deceit are practiced by them without the reproving of conscience. And over all these evil traits they throw the cloak of religion.' I was shown the pride of the nominal churches. God is not in their thoughts; their carnal minds dwell upon themselves; they decorate their poor mortal bodies, and then look upon themselves with satisfaction and pleasure. Jesus and the angels look upon them in anger. Said the angel, 'Their sins and pride have reached

unto heaven. Their portion is prepared. Justice and judgment have slumbered long, but will soon awake. Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' The fearful threatenings of the third angel are to be realized, and all the wicked are to drink of the wrath of God. An innumerable host of evil angels are spreading over the whole land and crowding the churches. These agents of Satan look upon the religious bodies with exultation, for the cloak of religion covers the greatest crime and iniquity." —*Early Writings*, p. 274.

4. What event will cause the message of the third angel to swell into a loud cry?

REVELATION 13:16, 17 *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: ¹⁷And 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.*

"Heretofore those who presented the truths of the third angel's message have often been regarded as mere alarmists. Their predictions that religious intolerance would gain control in the United States, that church and state would unite to persecute those who keep the commandments of God, have been pronounced groundless and absurd. It has been confidently declared that this land could never become other than what it has been—the defender of religious freedom. But as the question of enforcing Sunday observance is widely agitated, the event so long doubted and disbelieved is seen to be approaching, and the third message will produce an effect which it could not have had before." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 605.

"This message embraces the two preceding messages. It is represented as being given with a loud voice; that is, with the power of the Holy Spirit. Everything is now at stake. The third angel's message is to be regarded as of the highest importance. It is a life and death question. The impression made by this message will be proportionate to the earnestness and solemnity with which it is proclaimed" (Manuscript 16, 1900) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 980.

5. Will the message swell into a loud cry through human power or numbers? To whom will the Lord give His power to reveal the sins of Babylon?

ZECARIAH 4:6 *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*

PSALM 33:16 *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4, 5 *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

"Many ... will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. 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.

THE LAST CALL

6. What call will be sounded so that sincere souls may be spared from destruction?

REVELATION 18:4, 5 *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. ⁵For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*

"Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.' This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel's message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God's people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom." —*Early Writings*, pp. 277, 278.

7. What will be the result of this call?

ISAIAH 10:21, 22 *The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. ²²For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

"Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

"There are many souls to come out of the ranks of the world, out of the churches—even the Catholic Church—whose zeal will far exceed that of those who have stood in rank and file to proclaim the truth heretofore." —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 386, 387 (1889); *Last Day Events*, p. 211.

FOR MEDITATION

"Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven. Souls that were scattered all through the religious bodies answered to the call, and the precious were hurried out of the doomed churches, as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before her destruction. God's people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation. I heard everywhere a multitude of voices saying, 'Here is the patience of the

saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' "*—Early Writings*, p. 278.

"During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere." *—(Review and Herald, October 13, 1904) Evangelism*, p. 694.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"The third angel's message must be strengthened and confirmed. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power.... There has been too much beating about the bush in the proclamation of the third angel's message. The message has not been given as clearly and distinctly as it should have been." *—(Manuscript 16, 1900) Evangelism*, p. 230.

Bible Commentaries on Revelation 18:1-5.

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23

Sabbath, December 3, 2016

The People of God Persecuted but United

"Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. 'If the world hate you,' He said, 'ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 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. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.' The gospel is to be carried forward by aggressive warfare, in the midst of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. But those who do this work are only following in their Master's steps." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

THE POWERS OF EVIL AND THE SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE

1. Who will wage war against God's remnant people?

REVELATION 12:12, SECOND PART, 17 ... *For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time....*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.*

EPHESIANS 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

“Those who love and keep the commandments of God are most obnoxious to the synagogue of Satan, and the powers of evil will manifest their hatred toward them to the fullest extent possible. John foresaw the conflict between the remnant church and the power of evil, and said, ‘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.’”—*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

“The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. Satan will excite indignation against the humble minority who conscientiously refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 450.

2. What spirit that prevailed in the time of Christ will strengthen in the last days?

JOHN 11:50 *Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*

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

“As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. 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....

“In the absence of Bible testimony in their favor, many with unwearying persistence urged—forgetting how the same reasoning had been employed against Christ and His apostles: ‘Why do not our great men understand this Sabbath question? But few believe as you do. It cannot be that you are right and that all the men of learning in the world are wrong.’” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 455.

CHRIST IS ALWAYS WITH HIS PEOPLE

3. What wonderful assurance is given to God’s children?

ISAIAH 41:9-11 *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. ¹⁰Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. ¹¹Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.*

PSALM 9:9, 10 *The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. ¹⁰And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

"Often those who suffer reproach or persecution for their faith are tempted to think themselves forsaken by God. In the eyes of men they are in the minority. To all appearance their enemies triumph over them. But let them not violate their conscience. He who has suffered in their behalf, and has borne their sorrows and afflictions, has not forsaken them." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 172.

"The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world. It is at this time that God has promised to avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 210.

"The time is right upon us when persecution will come to those who proclaim the truth. The outlook is not flattering; but, notwithstanding this, let us not give up our efforts to save those ready to perish, for whose ransom the Prince of heaven offered up His precious life. When one means fails, try another. Our efforts must not be dead and lifeless. As long as life is spared, let us work for God. In all ages of the church God's appointed messengers have exposed themselves to reproach and persecution for the truth's sake. But wherever God's people may be forced to go, even though, like the beloved disciple, they are banished to desert islands, Christ will know where they are and will strengthen and bless them, filling them with peace and joy." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 227.

THE SUNDAY LAW

4. Similar to the decree in the time of Mordecai and Esther, what law will be issued all over the world?

ESTHER 3:8, 9 *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. ⁹If 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.*

REVELATION 13:16, 17 *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: ¹⁷And 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 same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. Satan will excite indignation against the humble minority who conscientiously refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education, will combine to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals they will stir up the passions of the people. Not having

a 'Thus saith the Scriptures' to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for a Sunday law. Those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield comes the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Now, as in the days of Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 450.

SATAN'S MIRACLES

5. What will Satan do to gather crowds, make believe that God's people are in error, and deceive, if possible, the elect?

MATTHEW 24:24 *For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

2 CORINTHIANS 11:13, 14 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12 *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

"Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain....

"It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan will counterfeit the miracles that will be wrought. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living word: 'It is written.' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 15, 16.

PERSECUTION REVEALS UNITY AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

6. What has always been God's purpose for His people? Therefore, what are His children to seek in difficult times?

EPHESIANS 4:3, 13 *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.... ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

"It is the purpose of God that His children shall blend in unity. Do they not expect to live together in the same heaven? Is Christ divided against Himself? Will

He give His people success before they sweep away the rubbish of evil surmising and discord, before the laborers, with unity of purpose, devote heart and mind and strength to the work so holy in God's sight? Union brings strength; disunion, weakness....

"The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God's servants will speak the same things. The Lord will cooperate with His servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ taught His servants: 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' Matthew 6:10." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 240, 251.

7. What will be the fruit of unity among God's people in the upcoming time of persecution?

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4 *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

"Strive earnestly for unity. Pray for it, work for it. It will bring spiritual health, elevation of thought, nobility of character, heavenly-mindedness, enabling you to overcome selfishness and evil surmisings, and to be more than conquerors through Him that loved you and gave Himself for you. Crucify self; esteem others better than yourselves. Thus you will be brought into oneness with Christ. Before the heavenly universe, and before the church and the world, you will bear unmistakable evidence that you are God's sons and daughters. God will be glorified in the example that you set." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 188.

"When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril strife for supremacy will cease, there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 401 (1900); *Last Day Events*, p. 152.

FOR MEDITATION

"The decree which is to go forth against the people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews in the time of Esther....

"Angels that excel in strength were commissioned to protect the people of God, and the plots of their adversaries returned upon their own heads. The Protestant world today see in the little company keeping the Sabbath a Mordecai in the gate. His character and conduct, expressing reverence for the law of God, are a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling upon His Sabbath; the unwelcome intruder must by some means be put out of the way." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 450.

“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.

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24

Sabbath, December 10, 2016

God's People Accused and Condemned

“I saw that those who oppose the Sabbath of the Lord could not take the Bible and show that our position is incorrect; therefore they would slander those who believe and teach the truth and would attack their characters. Many who were once conscientious and loved God and His Word have become so hardened by rejecting the light of truth that they do not hesitate to wickedly misrepresent and falsely accuse those who love the holy Sabbath, if by so doing they can injure the influence of those who fearlessly declare the truth. But these things will not hinder the work of God. In fact, this course pursued by those who hate the truth will be the very means of opening the eyes of some. Every jewel will be brought out and gathered, for the hand of the Lord is set to recover the remnant of His people, and He will accomplish the work gloriously.” —*Early Writings*, p. 69.

GOD'S CHILDREN BLAMED AND ACCUSED

1. For what will God's children be blamed, as happened to the prophet Elijah in the time of King Ahab?

1 KINGS 18:17, 18 *And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? ¹⁸And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.*

“Those who honor the law of God have been accused of bringing judgments upon the world, and they will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe. The power attending the last warning has enraged the wicked; their anger is kindled against all who have received the message, and Satan will excite to still greater intensity the spirit of hatred and persecution.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

2. Who will blame God's people?

LUKE 21:16 *And 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.*

MATTHEW 10:21, 34-36 *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....* ³⁴*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.* ³⁵*For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.* ³⁶*And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

"Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be 'betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends,' even unto death. Luke 21:16."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 588.

"We shall find that we must let loose of all hands except the hand of Jesus Christ. Friends will prove treacherous and will betray us. Relatives, deceived by the enemy, will think they do God service in opposing us and putting forth the utmost efforts to bring us into hard places, hoping we will deny our faith. But we may trust our hand in the hand of Christ amid darkness and peril."—*Maranatha*, p. 197 (1889); *Last Day Events*, p. 150.

3. Who else will accuse God's children?

JOHN 16:1-3 *These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. ²They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*

MATTHEW 24:9, 10, 12 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.... ¹²And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. 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."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 608.

BEFORE MAGISTRATES

4. Who will be beside God's people when they are brought before authorities? What fruit will their endurance produce when they defend the truth?

MATTHEW 10:17-20 *But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹But 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. ²⁰For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

2 TIMOTHY 4:17, 18 *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

“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.

“In cases where we are brought before the courts, we are to give up our rights, unless it brings us in collision with God. It is not our rights we are pleading for, but God’s right to our service.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 69 (1895); *Last Day Events*, p. 146.

IN MOUNTAINS AND CAVES

5. What will God’s children do when the order to put them to death is issued? Knowing that they will have to flee, what prayer of assurance will connect them to the Almighty?

PSALMS 121:1-4; 50:15 *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ²My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. ³He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. ⁴Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.... ^{50:15}And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

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

“The heathen may rage and imagine vain things, but the Lord is unchangeable. He has made the strength of the everlasting hills to be a safe retreat for His people. He has prepared the mountains and the caves for His oppressed and persecuted children.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 327.

IN PRISON

6. However, what will some of God’s children suffer?

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.*

ACTS 16:23-25 *And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. ²⁵And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

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

"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*, pp. 626, 627.

ETERNAL VICTORY

7. What vision of the apostle John will give hope, perseverance, and courage to God's children who keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus?

REVELATION 15:2 *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.*

"The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for the fourth commandment, since this is the sign of God's creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage. The wicked will be distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial and to exalt the institution of Rome. In the issue of the conflict 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,' to receive the mark of the beast, yet the people of God will not receive it. Revelation 13:16. 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." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 16.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"As faithful husbandmen in God's great field, we must sow with tears, and be patient and hopeful. We must meet troubles and sorrows. Temptations and wearisome toil will afflict the soul, but we must patiently wait in faith to reap with joy. In the final victory, God will have no use for those persons who are nowhere to be found in time of peril and danger, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are required to make a charge upon the enemy. Those who stand like faithful soldiers to battle against wrong, and to vindicate the right, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness. In high places, will each receive the commendation from the Master, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Matthew 25:23." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 206, 207 (1892).

* * *

God's People During the Time of Trouble

"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 host cannot destroy them, for angels that excel in strength will protect them." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 17.

THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

1. How does the prophet Jeremiah describe this time of trouble?

JEREMIAH 30:5-7 *For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. ⁶Ask 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? ⁷Alas! 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.*

"The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... 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.' Jeremiah 30:5-7.

"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....

"Like Jacob, all are wrestling with God. Their countenances express their internal struggle. Paleness sits upon every face. Yet they cease not their earnest intercession." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 616, 630.

2. When will the time of trouble begin?

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.*

"When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. When Jesus leaves His position as man's intercessor before God, the solemn announcement is made, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' Revelation 22:11. Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch

wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.

“Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

THE SEVEN PLAGUES

3. What will happen on the earth when Jesus is no longer interceding for man in the sanctuary? Therefore, what call is especially appropriate now?

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.*

AMOS 4:12, LAST PART ... Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

“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.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

“Then my eyes were taken from the glory, and I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them, ‘Will ye shun the seven last plagues? Will ye go to glory and enjoy all that God has prepared for those who love Him and are willing to suffer for His sake? If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.’” —*Early Writings*, p. 66.

BREAD AND WATER FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

4. While God’s people, who do not receive the mark of the beast, will not be able to buy or sell, how will they be sustained?

ISAIAH 33:16; 41:17 *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....^{41:17} When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.*

“The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation and suffer for want of food they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them, and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous and supply their wants.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 629.

“I saw that a time of trouble was before us, when stern necessity will compel the people of God to live on bread and water.... In the time of trouble none will labor with their hands. Their sufferings will be mental, and God will provide food for them.” —(Manuscript 2, 1858) *Last Day Events*, p. 265.

5. How will Satan try to make God's people despair? But what promise will the faithful believers trust?

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.*

PSALM 37:39, 40 *But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble. ⁴⁰And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

"As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. As they review the past, their hopes sink; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. Satan endeavors to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God.

"Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise: I 'will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.' Revelation 3:10. If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death; but should they prove unworthy, and lose their lives because of their own defects of character, then God's holy name would be reproached." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 618, 619.

6. What vision of the prophet Zechariah will strengthen the faithful remnant?

ZECHARIAH 3:1-5 *And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. ²And 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? ³Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. ⁴And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. ⁴And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. ⁵And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.*

"But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them.'

"The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 589.

7. Having been informed about what will happen during the time of trouble, how are God's faithful children to be prepared now?

PSALM 26:1-3; 139:23, 24 *Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide. ²Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. ³For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.... ^{139:23}Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

1 JOHN 5:3, 4 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. ⁴For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time....

"Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement....

"As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to work they are led to exercise faith, hope, and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect's sake the time of trouble will be shortened." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 621, 622, 631.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

"Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, '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 that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence." —*Early Writings*, p. 71.

"The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 633.

26

Sabbath, December 24, 2016

God's People Delivered

"The deliverance of the people of God and His mercies to them in past trials are to be called to mind as an assurance of that which, if we trust in God, He will do for us in present and future emergencies. Whatever may have been their experience, if they will surrender to God with full purpose of heart, with humility and contrition, He will receive them. To all who by faith receive Christ as their personal Saviour, He will give power to become overcomers—sons and daughters of God. They become partakers of the divine nature, and fully realize His mercy and the grace of His Holy Spirit...." —*The Upward Look*, p. 17.

THE DEATH DECREE

1. How will God intervene to save His people as their enemies do everything possible to destroy them?

PSALMS 33:10, 11; 50:3-6 *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. ¹¹The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.... ^{50:3}Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. ⁴He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. ⁵Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. ⁶And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

ISAIAH 12:2 *Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

"When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof....

"The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 635, 631.

THE SPECIAL RESURRECTION

2. When the godless think they have triumphed, what will suddenly happen?

REVELATION 16:17, 18 *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. ¹⁸And 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.*

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. ²And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

"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.... 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...."

"Graves are opened, and 'many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth ... awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' Daniel 12:2. All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. 'They also which pierced Him' (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient...."

"The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them. And when the blessing is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 636, 637, 640.

JESUS' SECOND COMING AND THE FIRST RESURRECTION

3. How do the Bible and Spirit of prophecy describe Jesus' coming and the resurrection of the righteous, who have died in faith?

MATTHEW 24:30, 31 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

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. ¹²His 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. ¹³And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand.... As the living cloud comes still nearer, every eye beholds the Prince of life. No crown of thorns now mars that sacred head; but a diadem of glory rests on His holy brow. His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. 'And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*' Revelation 19:16....

"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*, pp. 640, 644.

CHANGED AND CAUGHT UP TO MEET JESUS

4. What change will occur before the redeemed begin their journey to heaven?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-55 *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-17 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶For 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: ¹⁷Then 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.*

"The living righteous are changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.' At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels 'gather together His

elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 645.

5. What kind of reception will be given to the multitude of the redeemed as they get ready to meet their God? How will they express their gratitude?

MATTHEW 25:34 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

REVELATION 7:9, 10 *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; ¹⁰And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

"Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence. Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: 'Your conflict is ended.' 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" –*The Great Controversy*, p. 646.

"There the redeemed greet those who led them to the Saviour, and all unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. Tribulation and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven as the ransomed ones take up the joyful strain, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and lives again, a triumphant conqueror." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 602.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

6. How will God's people gain the victory? Summarize the good fight of faith that will bring the redeemed into the eternal kingdom.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

2 TIMOTHY 4:7, 8 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

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

"Then I was pointed to the glory of heaven, to the treasure laid up for the faithful. Everything was lovely and glorious. The angels would sing a lovely song, then they would cease singing and take their crowns from their heads and cast them glittering at the feet of the lovely Jesus, and with melodious voices cry, 'Glo-

ry, Alleluia!’ I joined with them in their songs of praise and honor to the Lamb, and every time I opened my mouth to praise Him, I felt an unutterable sense of the glory that surrounded me. It was a far more, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Said the angel, ‘The little remnant who love God and keep His commandments and are faithful to the end will enjoy this glory and ever be in the presence of Jesus and sing with the holy angels.’ —*Early Writings*, p. 66.

“Let us by faith behold the blessed hereafter as pictured by the hand of God. He who died for the sins of the world is opening wide the gates of Paradise to all who believe on Him. Soon the battle will have been fought, the victory won. Soon we shall see Him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. And in His presence the trials and sufferings of this life will seem as nothingness.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 731.

7. What supreme desire of the psalmist as well as of the church militant will become a reality for the church triumphant?

PSALMS 15:1; 27:4 *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?...^{27:4} One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*

“Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry. But the day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. 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—the robe of Christ’s righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a tribute of praise and adoration. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, ‘There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death.’” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 504.

“The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant.” —(Letter 32, 1892) *Evangelism*, p. 707.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Revelation 15:2, 3.

“We may have a vision of the future, the blessedness of heaven. In the Bible are revealed visions of the future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these are dear to His church. By faith we may stand on the threshold of the eternal city, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life cooperate with Christ, regarding it as an honor to suffer for His sake. As the words are spoken, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father,’ they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.... Honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’ Matthew 25:34; Revelation 5:12, 13.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 601, 602.

Prophets and Kings, chapter 60.

* * *

God's People in the New Earth

"As your senses delight in the attractive loveliness of the earth, think of the world that is to come, that shall never know the blight of sin and death; where the face of nature will no more wear the shadow of the curse. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray. In the varied gifts of God in nature we see but the faintest gleaming of His glory. 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.' 1 Corinthians 2:9." —*Steps to Christ*, pp. 86, 87.

NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

1. What did the apostle John see in vision, and what will be the privilege of the redeemed? Finally, what will no longer exist?

REVELATION 21:1-4, 10, 11 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ²And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And 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. ⁴And 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.... ¹⁰And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.*

"There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 506.

"In the city of God 'there shall be no night.' None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to His name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning, and shall ever be far from its close. 'And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.' Revelation 22:5. The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the holy city with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day.

“‘I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.’ Revelation 21:22. The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 676.

TREE OF LIFE

2. After centuries of degeneration and weakness, what will God’s people experience?

REVELATION: 22:2, 14 *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....*

¹⁴*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

“In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will ‘grow up’ (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory. The last lingering traces of the curse of sin will be removed, and Christ’s faithful ones will appear in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God,’ in mind and soul and body reflecting the perfect image of their Lord.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 644, 645.

“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.” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 414.

SONG OF THE REDEEMED

3. How will the redeemed express their gratitude to God and their Saviour?

REVELATION 15:2, 3; 5:12 *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. ³And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.... ^{5:12}Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

“While John was shown the last great struggles of the church with earthly powers, he was also permitted to behold the final victory and deliverance of the faithful. He saw the church brought into deadly conflict with the beast and his image, and the worship of that beast enforced on pain of death. But looking beyond the smoke and din of the battle, he beheld a company upon Mount Zion with the

Lamb, having, instead of the mark of the beast, the 'Father's name written in their foreheads.' And again he saw "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." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 752, 753.

ACTIVITY ON THE NEW EARTH

4. What will the redeemed be able to do on the new earth?

ISAIAH 65:21, 22 *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. ²²They 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.*

"There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.

"'My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.' 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.' '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:... Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.' Isaiah 32:18; 60:18; 65:21, 22." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

THE SCHOOL OF THE HEREAFTER

5. How will knowledge be changed? What great subject will the redeemed never tire of studying?

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.*

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

"As the life of Christ and the character of His mission are dwelt upon, rays of light will shine forth more distinctly at every attempt to discover truth. Each fresh search will reveal something more deeply interesting than has yet been unfolded. The subject is inexhaustible. The study of the incarnation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice and mediatorial work, will employ the mind of the diligent student as long as time shall last; and looking to heaven with its unnumbered years he will exclaim, 'Great is the mystery of godliness.'

"In eternity we shall learn that which, had we received the enlightenment it was possible to obtain here, would have opened our understanding. The themes of redemption will employ the hearts and minds and tongues of the redeemed through the everlasting ages. They will understand the truths which Christ longed to open to His disciples, but which they did not have faith to grasp. Forever and forever new views of the perfection and glory of Christ will appear. Through end-

less ages will the faithful Householder bring forth from His treasure things new and old.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 134.

6. What wonderfully beautiful things will the redeemed enjoy? What treasures will be open to their study?

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.*

“There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love.... Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased.... There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized...

“All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God’s handiwork. 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.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 677, 678.

THE SABBATH IN PARADISE

7. According to the prophet Isaiah, what will the redeemed do every Sabbath on the new earth?

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. ²³And 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 Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.’ 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.’ Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283.

FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Revelation 22:3-5.

“The privileges of those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony are beyond comprehension.” —*Maranatha*, p. 367.

"And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

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MISSIONARY REPORT

for the Establishment of Tertiary Schools

To be read on Sabbath, December 31, 2016

***The Special Sabbath School Offering will be gathered
on Sabbath, January 7, 2017***

“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.” Acts 19:9.

What are tertiary schools? Elementary schools are primary schools. The upper-grade schools, including middle and high schools, are secondary schools. All schools offering certificates, diplomas, and degrees beyond secondary school are tertiary schools, including technical schools, vocational schools, colleges, and universities.

In 2002, the World Assembly of delegates in session approved a resolution to establish such schools: “The General Conference [should] develop an Internet college or university and offer courses on the Internet; mail books and tapes [or CDs and DVDs] to students enrolled; and offer various degrees, especially in Theology and Natural Medicine.” —*General Conference Delegates’ Sessions Resolutions* (Ministerial Department, Health—July 22, 2002), p. 272 (comments in brackets are not in the original resolution). The vote for this resolution was nearly unanimous.

The introductory Bible text refers to the apostle Paul, who taught at a tertiary school in Ephesus. The Scriptures state that the school belonged to a man named Tyrannus, and Paul taught there on a daily basis for two years. Through his teaching at this school, thousands of Greeks and Jews directly or indirectly heard the gospel message. “And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Acts 19:10.

Sister Ellen G. White gives us some additional details about this: “Paul separated from them and gathered the disciples into a distinct body, continuing his public instructions in the school of Tyrannus, a teacher of some note.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 285. Tyrannus was a renowned professor of his day. His school was well respected among all in Asia Minor. But the most interesting thing is that Paul did not limit his teaching to believers. He gave “public instruction.”

Dr. Adam Clarke, the favorite commentator of the Adventist pioneers, believed that Tyrannus was a Jew who favored the Christians and owned an academy where classes were held on a daily basis. —Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary*, vol. 4 (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1831), p. 842. Paul may have rented a classroom at the academy for his daily public instruction to both Christians and non-Christians.

As we approach the end of time, there is still a need to establish institutions where believers, the children of believers, and the public in general can receive instruction in the different fields of knowledge, but always within a Biblical context. I have observed that one of the two major reasons why we lose our youth is that they attend worldly institutions and we lack godly tertiary schools—vocational and technical colleges, Internet institutes, and universities.

However, to establish such schools requires a large outlay of funds, qualified spiritual instructors, approved curricula, academic centers, and students. Given today's virtual Internet world, with many online courses and degrees offered by licensed tertiary institutions, the Reform Movement is called to pull together its resources of funds and personnel to establish such virtual study opportunities! Are you willing to assist with this for the benefit of your children, young people, and the general public?

The General Conference has set up a Tertiary Schools Fund to give everyone the opportunity to participate in building an international tertiary institute with a strong Internet component and instruction in English. At the time of this writing, several locations in different countries are being considered. However, we need your strong moral support, prayers, and financial contributions to begin this effort. Will you make a significant contribution to this tertiary school project?

Furthermore, if you are a believer with an advanced degree and have teaching experience, please add your name to the prospective faculty pool. Write to info@sda1844.org and attach your curriculum vitae (resume) with contact information for follow-up.

The funds collected for next week's Special Sabbath School Offering will go to cover the cost of research, salaries, infrastructure, and software development. The goal is to establish a licensed tertiary institution with professional programs in a hybrid format of dual live and digital Internet classes, leading to the granting of diplomas and degrees in education, nutrition, medical missionary work, public health, nursing, natural medicine, and Biblical studies. Will you join us?

Please make a significant, sacrificial offering for this project. We also urge you to add it to your prayer list. Let us, like the apostle Paul, establish tertiary schools to reach out with the present truth. God grant this and richly bless every contributor.

*—Idel Suarez, Jr.
General Conference President*

