

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

For the Second Half Year 2017

***Life, Work, and Teachings
of Jesus, Part 5***

From Resurrection to Return in Glory

Published by the
General Conference
International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

625 West Avenue / Cedartown, GA 30125
Telephone 770-748-0077 / Fax 770-748-0095
Email: info@sda1844.org / Internet: www.sda1844.org

Author: Antonino Di Franca

Review and editing of content
by the General Conference Ministerial Department

Translation, editing, and design
by the General Conference Publishing Department

CONTENTS

Life, Work, and Teachings of Jesus, Part 5

Introduction	5
1. A Great Surprise	7
2. From Despair to Joy	11
3. Appearance and Commission.	15
4. Blessed Are Those Who Believe.	19
5. At Lake Tiberias	23
6. "Feed My Sheep"	26
7. "Go, Preach the Gospel"	30
8. Baptism of the Holy Spirit.	33
9. "I Ascend to My Father"	37
<i>Missionary Report from Southeast Asia</i>	<i>41</i>
10. The Prophet to Come	43
11. The Chief Shepherd.	47
12. Sufficiency of Christ's Atonement	51
13. The Saviour	55
14. God in Christ, Reconciling the World to Himself.	60
15. Mediator between God and Man	64
16. The Great High Priest	67
17. After the Order of Melchisedek	72
18. Lord and King.	76
<i>Missionary Report from Emerging Countries of the Americas</i>	<i>81</i>
19. "I Will Come Again"	85
20. Coming in Power and Glory	89
21. Relying on His Word	93
22. Character Preparation.	97
23. Facing Religious Conflict	101
24. War, Consequences, and Escape	105
25. Past, Present, and Future Signs	109
26. Watch and Be Ready.	113
27. "Come, Ye Blessed of My Father"	117
<i>Missionary Report from BAMl and GAMI</i>	<i>121</i>

INTRODUCTION

Many people and churches are familiar with Jesus and preach about Him, presenting primarily the events connected with His earthly ministry. They begin by telling about His birth, continue with His preaching and passion, and end with His resurrection and ascension. Beyond that, it seems that there is not much to say. But His earthly ministry was only part of His great work for mankind. His ministry involves all this and much more. Referring to this, the prophet Isaiah writes: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. In addition, the letter to the Hebrews presents His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as the great High Priest. In other epistles, there are references to His intercession in heaven, showing clearly that His ministry did not end with the ascension. The apostle Paul writes: "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." 1 Timothy 3:16.

However, even these inspired descriptions show only part of His greatness. The Spirit of prophecy tells what the focus of our attention and meditation should be: "Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ our intercessor before God;...

"His pre-existence. His coming the second time in glory and power, His personal dignity, His holy law uplifted, are the themes that have been dwelt upon with simplicity and power." —*Evangelism*, p. 187.

Jesus Christ—His character, sacrifice, and ministry in man's behalf—is the center of the plan of redemption, all history, and all Scripture. Prophets have spoken and written messages of hope that center in Him. The writings of Moses, the Psalms, and the holy Scriptures speak of Him. Luke 24:25, 27. Although the prophets had greater light than did others, because they were blessed with messages and prophecies from on high, they were particularly interested in the events concerning the Messiah and studied deeply to acquire more understanding. As the apostle Peter writes, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 1 Peter 1:10, 11.

Should we study less or have less commitment than did they? Our study, preaching, publications, and life should all be centered in Christ. Sister Ellen G. White writes: "Bear with a certain voice an affirmative message. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ....

“Christ is to be preached, not controversially, but affirmatively. Take your stand without controversy. Let not your words at any time be uncertain. The word of the living God is to be the foundation of our faith. Gather up the strongest affirmative statements regarding the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world. Show the necessity for this atonement and tell men and women that they may be saved if they will repent and return to their loyalty to God’s law. Gather all the affirmatives and proofs that make the gospel the glad tidings of salvation to all who receive and believe on Christ as a personal Saviour.” —(Letter 65, 1905) *Evangelism*, p. 187.

“More people than we think are longing to find the way to Christ. Those who preach the last message of mercy should bear in mind that Christ is to be exalted as the sinner’s refuge. Some ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith; they take it for granted that their hearers are acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. But many people are sadly ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation; they need more instruction upon this all-important subject than upon any other.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 158.

We have been inspired by studying the “Life, Work, and Teachings of Jesus” in several previous quarters. We want to conclude this series with the final scenes of His life on earth, His heavenly ministry, and His second coming. May these lessons be a great blessing to every believer who waits longingly for the Saviour’s return.

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

Special Sabbath School Offering for INDONESIA

Let your gift reflect your generosity and love for souls!

1

Sabbath, July 1, 2017

A Great Surprise

“‘Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen....’ He is risen, He is risen! The women repeat the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. The Saviour is living, and not dead. They remember now that when speaking of His death He said that He would rise again. What a day is this to the world! Quickly the women departed from the sepulchre ‘with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.’” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 789.

AT THE TOMB

1. **After spending the hours in Sabbath rest after the crucifixion, what did the believing women plan to do? When did they go to the sepulchre to embalm the body of Jesus?**

MARK 16:1, 2 *And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. ²And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*

JOHN 20:1, FIRST PART *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark,...*

“The women who had stood by the cross of Christ waited and watched for the hours of the Sabbath to pass. On the first day of the week, very early, they made their way to the tomb, taking with them precious spices to anoint the Saviour’s body. They did not think about His rising from the dead. The sun of their hope had set, and night had settled down on their hearts. As they walked, they recounted Christ’s works of mercy and His words of comfort. But they remembered not His words, ‘I will see you again.’ John 16:22.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 788.

2. **What powerful event occurred that the women never imagined? What did they see when they arrived at the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with spices?**

MATTHEW 28:2, FIRST PART *And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven,...*

"Ignorant of what was even then taking place, they drew near the garden, saying as they went, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?' They knew that they could not remove the stone, yet they kept on their way. And lo, the heavens were suddenly alight with glory that came not from the rising sun. The earth trembled. They saw that the great stone was rolled away. The grave was empty." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 788.

"Early in the morning of the first day of the week, before it was yet light, holy women came to the sepulcher, bringing sweet spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They found that the heavy stone had been rolled away from the door of the sepulcher, and the body of Jesus was not there. Their hearts sank within them, and they feared that their enemies had taken away the body." —*Early Writings*, p. 186.

AN ASTONISHING TURN OF EVENTS

3. What news did the angel give the fearful women? What did he invite them to do to confirm what he was saying?

MARK 16:5 *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.*

MATTHEW 28:5, 6 *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. ⁶He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

"A light was shining about the tomb, but the body of Jesus was not there. As they lingered about the place, suddenly they saw that they were not alone. A young man clothed in shining garments was sitting by the tomb. It was the angel who had rolled away the stone. He had taken the guise of humanity that he might not alarm these friends of Jesus. Yet about him the light of the heavenly glory was still shining, and the women were afraid. They turned to flee, but the angel's words stayed their steps. 'Fear not ye,' he said; 'for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 788, 789.

4. What good news of the resurrection did the frightened women hear? In what convincing manner did the angels give them the message?

LUKE 24:5-7 *And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, ⁷Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

"Again they look into the tomb, and again they hear the wonderful news. Another angel in human form is there, and he says, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 789.

5. What sudden change came in the women's thoughts? With what joyful mission did they leave the tomb?

MATTHEW 28:8 *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.*

LUKE 24:9 *And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.*

“He is risen, He is risen! The women repeat the words again and again. No need now for the anointing spices. The Saviour is living, and not dead. They remember now that when speaking of His death He said that He would rise again. What a day is this to the world! Quickly the women departed from the sepulchre ‘with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.’” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 789.

HUMAN REACTIONS

6. How did the disciples react when they heard the news brought by the women? However, what did Peter and John do? To what conclusion did John come when he saw the evidence?

LUKE 24:11, 12 *And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. ¹²Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

JOHN 20:3, 8 *Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.... ⁸Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*

“The disciples hurried to the tomb, and found it as Mary had said. They saw the shroud and the napkin, but they did not find their Lord. Yet even here was testimony that He had risen.... John ‘saw, and believed.’ He did not yet understand the scripture that Christ must rise from the dead; but he now remembered the Saviour’s words foretelling His resurrection.

“When the mighty angel came down to the tomb, he was joined by another, who with his company had been keeping guard over the Lord’s body. As the angel from heaven rolled away the stone, the other entered the tomb, and unbound the wrappings from the body of Jesus.... Order and perfection are seen in all His work.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 789.

7. Despite the good news given to her by the angel, what did Mary continue doing? Why did she not recognize the Master when He first spoke to her?

JOHN 20:13-15 *And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.*

“Mary had followed John and Peter to the tomb; when they returned to Jerusalem, she remained. As she looked into the empty tomb, grief filled her heart...

“Then she turned away, even from the angels, thinking that she must find someone who could tell her what had been done with the body of Jesus. Another

voice addressed her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?' Through her tear-dimmed eyes, Mary saw the form of a man, and thinking that it was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790.

THE DIVINE PLAN IN ACTION

8. What did she realize when Jesus addressed her by name? What message did He give her for His disciples?

JOHN 20:16, 17 *Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

"Now she knew that it was not a stranger who was addressing her, and turning she saw before her the living Christ. In her joy she forgot that He had been crucified. Springing toward Him, as if to embrace His feet, she said, 'Rabboni.' But Christ raised His hand, saying, Detain Me not....

"Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790.

9. What message for the disciples did Jesus repeat to the women?

MATTHEW 28:9, 10 *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

"Since the death of Christ, Peter had been bowed down with remorse. His shameful denial of the Lord, and the Saviour's look of love and anguish, were ever before him. Of all the disciples he had suffered most bitterly. To him the assurance is given that his repentance is accepted and his sin forgiven. He is mentioned by name.

" 'Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him.' All the disciples had forsaken Jesus, and the call to meet Him again includes them all. He has not cast them off. When Mary Magdalene told them she had seen the Lord, she repeated the call to the meeting in Galilee. And a third time the message was sent to them. After He had ascended to the Father, Jesus appeared to the other women, saying, '... Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 793.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"How many are still doing what these disciples did! How many echo Mary's despairing cry, 'They have taken away the Lord,... and we know not where they have laid Him'! To how many might the Saviour's words be spoken, 'Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?' He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him. He speaks to them, but they do not understand....

"While the Saviour was in God's presence, receiving gifts for His church, the disciples thought upon His empty tomb, and mourned and wept. The day that was a day

of rejoicing to all heaven was to the disciples a day of uncertainty, confusion, and perplexity. Their unbelief in the testimony of the women gives evidence of how low their faith had sunk. The news of Christ's resurrection was so different from what they had anticipated that they could not believe it. It was too good to be true, they thought." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 794, 790-793.

* * *

2

Sabbath, July 8, 2017

From Despair to Joy

"Had the disciples failed on this occasion to press their invitation, they would not have known that their traveling Companion was no other than the risen Lord. Christ never forces His company upon anyone. He interests Himself in those who He knows need Him. But if they pass along, indifferent and careless, never thinking of the heavenly Guest, or asking Him to abide with them, He passes on. Thus many meet with great loss. They do not know Christ any more than did the disciples as He walked and talked with them by the way." — (Manuscript 113, 1897) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 296.

WALKING AND CONVERSING

1. Toward the end of the resurrection day, where were two disciples on their way to? What was the topic of their conversation?

LUKE 24:13, 14 *And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. ¹⁴And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*

"Late in the afternoon of the day of the resurrection, two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus, a little town eight miles from Jerusalem. These disciples had had no prominent place in Christ's work, but they were earnest believers in Him. They had come to the city to keep the Passover, and were greatly perplexed by the events that had recently taken place. They had heard the news of the morning in regard to the removal of Christ's body from the tomb, and also the report of the women who had seen the angels and had met Jesus. They were now returning to their homes to meditate and pray. Sadly they pursued their evening walk, talking over the scenes of the trial and the crucifixion. Never before had they been so utterly disheartened. Hopeless and faithless, they were walking in the shadow of the cross." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 795.

AN UNKNOWN TRAVELING COMPANION

2. Who approached them as they spoke? What did He ask them?

LUKE 24:15-17 *And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. ¹⁷And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*

“... They were so absorbed in their gloom and disappointment that they did not observe him closely. They continued their conversation, expressing the thoughts of their hearts. They were reasoning in regard to the lessons that Christ had given, which they seemed unable to comprehend. As they talked of the events that had taken place, Jesus longed to comfort them. He had seen their grief; He understood the conflicting, perplexing ideas that brought to their minds the thought, Can this Man, who suffered Himself to be so humiliated, be the Christ? Their grief could not be restrained, and they wept. Jesus knew that their hearts were bound up with Him in love, and He longed to wipe away their tears, and fill them with joy and gladness. But He must first give them lessons they would never forget.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 795, 796.

PERPLEXITY AND UNCERTAINTY

3. How did Cleopas respond to Jesus’ questions? What was evidenced by his version of the events that had transpired?

LUKE 24:18-21, FIRST PART *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? ¹⁹And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: ²⁰And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. ²¹But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:...*

“After the death of Christ the disciples were well-nigh overcome by discouragement. Their Master had been rejected, condemned, and crucified.... The sun of the disciples’ hope had set, and night settled down upon their hearts. Often they repeated the words, ‘We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.’ Luke 24:21. Lonely and sick at heart, they remembered His words, ‘If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?’ Luke 23:31.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 25.

“They did not realize that the last part of His disclosure would be just as verily fulfilled as the first part, that the third day He would rise again. This was the part they should have remembered. The priests and rulers did not forget this. On the day ‘that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.’ Matthew 27:62, 63. But the disciples did not remember these words.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 796.

4. Had the appearance of the angels and their message of the resurrection been convincing to these disciples?

LUKE 24:21, LAST PART-24 ... *And beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. ²²Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; ²³And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. ²⁴And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.*

“Many, especially those who are young in the Christian life, are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. There are in the Bible many things which they cannot explain, or even understand, and Satan employs these to shake their

faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. They ask, 'How shall I know the right way? If the Bible is indeed the word of God, how can I be freed from these doubts and perplexities?' " —*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 45.

"While you take counsel with your doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that you cannot see clearly before you have faith, your perplexities will only increase and deepen. If you come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as you really are, and in humble, trusting prayer make your wants known to Him whose knowledge is infinite,... He can and will attend to your cry, and will let light shine into your heart and all around you; for through sincere prayer your soul is brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite.... You may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon you in love and pitying tenderness." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 204, 205 (1892).

OPENING MINDS TO PROPHECY AND ITS FULFILLMENT

5. Without identifying Himself, what did Jesus do to help these perplexed disciples understand the prophecies concerning His death and resurrection?

LUKE 24:25-27 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ²⁶Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

"Beginning at Moses, the very Alpha of Bible history, Christ expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.... It was necessary for them to understand the witness borne to Him by the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. Upon these their faith must be established. Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scriptures.... Now He showed from the prophets that this was the very strongest evidence for their faith....

"The Saviour is revealed in the Old Testament as clearly as in the New. It is the light from the prophetic past that brings out the life of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament with clearness and beauty. The miracles of Christ are a proof of His divinity; but a stronger proof that He is the world's Redeemer is found in comparing the prophecies of the Old Testament with the history of the New." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 796, 799.

"ABIDE WITH US"

6. Greatly moved by Jesus' explanations, what did the disciples invite Him to do, since it was getting late? When did they recognize Him? What special privilege was theirs?

LUKE 24:28-31, FIRST PART *And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. ²⁹But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. ³⁰And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they knew him;...*

"'Abide with us,' they said. He did not seem to accept the invitation, but they pressed it upon Him, urging, 'It is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' Christ yielded to this entreaty and 'went in to tarry with them.'

"Had the disciples failed to press their invitation, they would not have known that their traveling companion was the risen Lord. Christ never forces His company upon anyone. He interests Himself in those who need Him. Gladly will He enter the humblest home, and cheer the lowliest heart. But if men are too indifferent to think of the heavenly Guest, or ask Him to abide with them, He passes on. Thus many meet with great loss. They do not know Christ any more than did the disciples as He walked with them by the way." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 800.

MESSENGERS OF THE RESURRECTION AND HOPE

7. What happened at the moment when they recognized Him? How surprised were they by this, and what did it cause them to do?

LUKE 24:31, LAST PART-33, 35 ... *And he vanished out of their sight. ³²And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? ³³And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.... ³⁵And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

"They leave their meal untasted, and full of joy immediately set out again on the same path by which they came, hurrying to tell the tidings to the disciples in the city.... They do not see, they do not know, that they have the protection of Him who has traveled the road with them. With their pilgrim staff in hand, they press on, desiring to go faster than they dare.... Sometimes running, sometimes stumbling, they press forward, their unseen Companion close beside them all the way....

"Their hearts leap for joy.... Christ is a living Saviour. They no longer mourn over Him as dead. Christ is risen—over and over again they repeat it. This is the message they are carrying to the sorrowing ones. They must tell them the wonderful story of the walk to Emmaus. They must tell who joined them by the way. They carry the greatest message ever given to the world, a message of glad tidings upon which the hopes of the human family for time and for eternity depend." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 801.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Reasoning from prophecy, Christ gave His disciples a correct idea of what He was to be in humanity. Their expectation of a Messiah who was to take His throne and kingly power in accordance with the desires of men had been misleading.... Christ desired that the ideas of His disciples might be pure and true in every specification. They must understand as far as possible in regard to the cup of suffering that had been apportioned to Him. He showed them that the awful conflict which they could not yet comprehend was the fulfillment of the covenant made before the foundation of the world was laid. Christ must die, as every transgressor of the law must die if he continues in sin. All this was to be, but it was not to end in defeat, but in glorious, eternal victory. Jesus told them that every effort must be made to save the world from sin." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 799.

"The truths they had but dimly discerned now stand revealed in a blaze of light. The very things He had told them have been accomplished. Faith begins to revive. Their hearts beat with a strong and renewed hope as they listen eagerly to the plain, simple words of their unknown fellow traveler. They are surprised to find their bur-

dened hearts becoming light; and as they think of Jesus, of all He was to them, of all He suffered, their tears flow freely. Their confidence had not been misplaced.” —*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1888.

* * *

3

Sabbath, July 15, 2017

Appearance and Commission

“Christ gave no ecclesiastical right to forgive sin, nor to sell indulgences, that men may sin without incurring the displeasure of God, nor did He give His servants liberty to accept a gift or bribe for cloaking sin, that it may escape merited censure. Jesus charged His disciples to preach the remission of sin in His name among all nations; but they themselves were not empowered to remove one stain of sin from the children of Adam.... Whoever would attract the people to himself as one in whom is invested power to forgive sins, incurs the wrath of God, for he turns souls away from the heavenly Pardoner to a weak and erring mortal.” — (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 245, 246) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1151.

MESSENGERS BEARING STARTLING NEWS

1. When the two disciples arrived in Jerusalem with their good news, what were the other disciples talking about?

LUKE 24:33-35 *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, ³⁴Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. ³⁵And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

“On reaching Jerusalem the two disciples ... go to the upper chamber where Jesus spent the hours of the last evening before His death. Here they know that their brethren are to be found. Late as it is, they know that the disciples will not sleep till they learn for a certainty what has become of the body of their Lord.... They knock for admission, but no answer comes. All is still. Then they give their names. The door is carefully unbarred, they enter, and Another, unseen, enters with them. Then the door is again fastened, to keep out spies.

“The travelers find all in surprised excitement. The voices of those in the room break out into thanksgiving and praise, saying, ‘The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.’ Then the two travelers, panting with the haste with which they have made their journey, tell the wondrous story of how Jesus has appeared to them.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 802

THE RISEN SAVIOUR APPEARS

2. As the disciples spoke together, what greeting did they hear? Who appeared among them? What effect did His presence have?

LUKE 24:36, 37 *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ³⁷But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.*

"They have just ended, and some are saying that they cannot believe it, for it is too good to be true, when behold, another Person stands before them. Every eye is fastened upon the stranger. No one has knocked for entrance. No footstep has been heard. The disciples are startled, and wonder what it means. Then they hear a voice which is no other than the voice of their Master. Clear and distinct the words fall from His lips, 'Peace be unto you.'

"'But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 802, 803.

3. What did Jesus do to convince them that He had really risen from the dead? After they saw His wounds, how did their thoughts change?

LUKE 24:38-40 *And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. ⁴⁰And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.*

JOHN 20:20, 21, FIRST PART *And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. ²¹Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you:...*

"They beheld the hands and feet marred by the cruel nails. They recognized His voice, like no other they had ever heard.... Faith and joy took the place of unbelief, and with feelings which no words could express they acknowledged their risen Saviour....

"Now at His first appearance to the disciples after His resurrection, the Saviour addressed them with the blessed words, 'Peace be unto you.' Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 803, 804.

"This is the work of salvation.... Christ has vanquished! This is the joyful news; and we are saved by His work, and not by our own.... Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Peace be unto you; behold My hands;' that is to say, Behold, O man! It is I, I alone, who have taken away thy sin, and ransomed thee; and now thou hast peace, saith the Lord." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 152.

PROMISE OF THE FUTURE RESURRECTION

4. What does Jesus' resurrection show about the future resurrection of the redeemed? What will happen to their identity? Will it be retained so they are recognizable by their friends and loved ones?

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 JOHN 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

"The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The countenance of the risen Saviour, His manner, His speech, were all

familiar to His disciples. As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again. We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus. They may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured, in this mortal life, and they rise in perfect health and symmetry; yet in the glorified body their identity will be perfectly preserved. Then shall we know even as also we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12. In the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, we shall recognize the lineaments of those we love.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 804.

EXPLAINING THE PROPHECIES

5. What did Jesus tell His disciples to convince them that His death was not something strange and unexpected? What did they begin to understand?

LUKE 24:44-48 *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸And ye are witnesses of these things.*

“When Jesus met with His disciples, He reminded them of the words He had spoken to them before His death, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him....

“The disciples began to realize the nature and extent of their work. They were to proclaim to the world the wonderful truths which Christ had entrusted to them. The events of His life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies that pointed to these events, the sacredness of the law of God, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they were witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 804, 805.

THE GIFT OF SERVICE

6. What special gift did the Lord give them? How is the granting of this sacred trust to be understood?

JOHN 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

“The Holy Spirit was not yet fully manifested; for Christ had not yet been glorified. The more abundant impartation of the Spirit did not take place till after Christ’s ascension.... The Spirit was now given for a special purpose. Before the disciples could fulfill their official duties in connection with the church, Christ breathed His Spirit upon them. He was committing to them a most sacred trust, and He desired to impress them with the fact that without the Holy Spirit this work could not be accomplished.

“The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are

to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 805.

7. What did Jesus say about forgiving sins? Were the disciples personally authorized to forgive people’s sins?

JOHN 20:23 *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

“Christ gave no ecclesiastical right to forgive sin, nor to sell indulgences, that men may sin without incurring the displeasure of God.... Jesus charged His disciples to preach the remission of sin in His name among all nations; but they themselves were not empowered to remove one stain of sin from the children of Adam.” —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 245.

“... On the church in its organized capacity He places a responsibility for the individual members. Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore.... Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbath breaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.’ Galatians 5:21. If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God’s word is pronounced upon them in heaven. In choosing to sin, they disown Christ; the church must show that she does not sanction their deeds, or she herself dishonors her Lord.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 805, 806.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The act of Christ in breathing upon His disciples the Holy Ghost, and in imparting His peace to them, was as a few drops before the plentiful shower to be given on the day of Pentecost.... They were appointed to be witnesses for the Saviour; they were to testify what they had seen and heard of His resurrection; they were to repeat the gracious words which proceeded from His lips. They were acquainted with His holy character; He was as an angel standing in the sun, yet casting no shadow. It was the sacred work of the apostles to present the spotless character of Christ to men, as the standard for their lives. The disciples had been so intimately associated with this Pattern of holiness that they were in some degree assimilated to Him in character, and were specially fitted to make known to the world His precepts and example.” —(*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 243, 244) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1151.

* * *

Blessed Are Those Who Believe

“In His treatment of Thomas, Jesus gave a lesson for His followers. His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers. Unbelief is seldom overcome by controversy. It is rather put upon self-defense, and finds new support and excuse. But let Jesus, in His love and mercy, be revealed as the crucified Saviour, and from many once unwilling lips will be heard the acknowledgment of Thomas, ‘My Lord and my God.’ ” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 808.

MERITS OF THE REDEEMER

1. After Jesus’ death, would believers be benefitted by offering animal sacrifices?

HEBREWS 10:4; 9:14 *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins....^{9:14}How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

“But there is a brighter side to the picture. ‘Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted.’ Let this thought be kept uppermost. In labor for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. Let the shepherds have a tender care for the flock of the Lord’s pasture. Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour. Let them encourage the sinner to repent, and believe in Him who can pardon. Let them declare, on the authority of God’s word, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1:9. All who repent have the assurance, ‘He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.’ Micah 7:19.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

2. In what name, or by whose merits, were the disciples to preach repentance and remission of sin in Jerusalem as well as everywhere else in the world?

LUKE 24:46, 47 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:⁴⁷And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

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

“Only in this sense has the church power to absolve the sinner. Remission of sins can be obtained only through the merits of Christ. To no man, to no body

of men, is given power to free the soul from guilt. Christ charged His disciples to preach the remission of sins in His name among all nations; but they themselves were not empowered to remove one stain of sin. The name of Jesus is the only 'name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts 4:12." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

ABSENCE AND LOSS

3. Was Thomas with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared to them? What great privilege did he thus lose?

JOHN 20:24 *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.*

"When Jesus first met the disciples in the upper chamber, Thomas was not with them. He heard the reports of the others, and received abundant proof that Jesus had risen; but gloom and unbelief filled his heart. As he heard the disciples tell of the wonderful manifestations of the risen Saviour, it only plunged him in deeper despair. If Jesus had really risen from the dead, there could be no further hope of a literal earthly kingdom. And it wounded his vanity to think that his Master should reveal Himself to all the disciples except him. He was determined not to believe, and for a whole week he brooded over his wretchedness, which seemed all the darker in contrast with the hope and faith of his brethren." *—The Desire of Ages*, pp. 806, 807.

DOUBT AND UNBELIEF

4. Although he had heard the news, was he ready to believe in Jesus' resurrection? What did he require to be convinced?

JOHN 20:25 *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

MARK 16:14, LAST PART ... *And upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

"During this time he repeatedly declared, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.' He would not see through the eyes of his brethren, or exercise faith which was dependent upon their testimony. He ardently loved his Lord, but he had allowed jealousy and unbelief to take possession of his mind and heart." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 807.

5. What happened a week later? What did Jesus invite Thomas to do?

JOHN 20:26, 27, FIRST PART *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. ²⁷Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side:...*

"One evening Thomas determined to meet with the others. Notwithstanding his unbelief, he had a faint hope that the good news was true. While the disciples were taking their evening meal, they talked of the evidences which Christ had

given them in the prophecies. 'Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.'

"Turning to Thomas He said, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands;...' These words showed that He was acquainted with the thoughts and words of Thomas. The doubting disciple knew that none of his companions had seen Jesus for a week. They could not have told the Master of his unbelief. He recognized the One before him as his Lord. He had no desire for further proof. His heart leaped for joy, and he cast himself at the feet of Jesus crying, 'My Lord and my God.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 807.

DO NOT BE FAITHLESS

6. What did Jesus say to Thomas after presenting to him reasons for belief? What testimony do we have so we will not be doubters like Thomas and deserve the same reproach?

JOHN 20:27, LAST PART ... *And be not faithless, but believing.*

1 JOHN 1:1, 2 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ²(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).*

"Hope in God, trust in Him, and rest in His promises, whether you feel happy or not.... Come to the Scriptures and intelligently take God at His word. Comply with the conditions and believe He will accept you as His child. Be not faithless, but believing....

"We must pray more and in faith. We must not pray and then run away as though afraid we should receive an answer. God ... will answer if we watch unto prayer, if we believe we receive the things we ask for, and keep believing and never lose patience in believing. This is watching unto prayer. We guard the prayer of faith with expectancy and hope. We must wall it in with assurance and be not faithless, but believing. The fervent prayer of the righteous is never lost. The answer may not come according as we expected, but it will come, because God's word is pledged." —*Our High Calling*, pp. 119, 134.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE

7. After seeing Him and touching His wounds, what did Thomas acknowledge to the Saviour? Are we blessed when we act like Thomas or when we trust the Lord's word fully?

JOHN 20:28, 29 *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. ²⁹Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

1 PETER 1:8 *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

LUKE 1:45 *And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.*

“Jesus accepted his acknowledgment, but gently reproved his unbelief: ‘Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’ The faith of Thomas would have been more pleasing to Christ if he had been willing to believe upon the testimony of his brethren. Should the world now follow the example of Thomas, no one would believe unto salvation; for all who receive Christ must do so through the testimony of others.

“Many who are given to doubt excuse themselves by saying that if they had the evidence which Thomas had from his companions, they would believe.... Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, will never realize their desire. They gradually become confirmed in unbelief. Those who educate themselves to look on the dark side, and murmur and complain, know not what they do. They are sowing the seeds of doubt, and they will have a harvest of doubt to reap. At a time when faith and confidence are most essential, many will thus find themselves powerless to hope and believe.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 807, 808.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Let the repentance of the sinner be accepted by the church with grateful hearts. Let the repenting one be led out from the darkness of unbelief into the light of faith and righteousness. Let his trembling hand be placed in the loving hand of Jesus. Such a remission is ratified in heaven.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

“God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant.... Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith.

“It is impossible for finite minds fully to comprehend the character or the works of the Infinite One. To the keenest intellect, the most highly educated mind, that holy Being must ever remain clothed in mystery.” —*A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 46.

* * *

At Lake Tiberias

“‘Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him.’ All the disciples had forsaken Jesus, and the call to meet Him again includes them all. He has not cast them off. When Mary Magdalene told them she had seen the Lord, she repeated the call to the meeting in Galilee. And a third time the message was sent to them. After He had ascended to the Father, Jesus appeared to the other women, saying, ‘All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 793.

JESUS APPEARS AGAIN

1. What had Jesus said about seeing the disciples in the days ahead? Where did the Saviour appear to His beloved disciples?

MATTHEW 26:32; 28:10 *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee....* ^{28:10}*Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

JOHN 21:1 *After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.*

“Jesus had appointed to meet His disciples in Galilee; and soon after the Pass-over week was ended, they bent their steps thither. Their absence from Jerusalem during the feast would have been interpreted as disaffection and heresy, therefore they remained till its close; but this over, they gladly turned homeward to meet the Saviour as He had directed.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 809.

RESULT OF HUMAN EFFORTS

2. What did Peter propose to the other disciples when they were back in Galilee? What was their response?

JOHN 21:2, 3, FIRST PART *There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. ³Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.*

“Seven of the disciples were in company. They were clad in the humble garb of fishermen; they were poor in worldly goods, but rich in the knowledge and practice of the truth, which in the sight of Heaven gave them the highest rank as teachers....

“The evening was pleasant, and Peter, who still had much of his old love for boats and fishing, proposed that they should go out upon the sea and cast their nets. In this plan all were ready to join; they were in need of food and clothing, which the proceeds of a successful night’s fishing would supply.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 809, 810.

3. What was the result of their fishing expedition, even though they worked all night? Who appeared to them in the morning?

JOHN 21:3, LAST PART, 4 ... *And that night they caught nothing. ⁴But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

“So they went out in their boat, but they caught nothing. All night they toiled, without success. Through the weary hours they talked of their absent Lord, and recalled the wonderful events they had witnessed in His ministry beside the sea. They questioned as to their own future, and grew sad at the prospect before them.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 810.

BEYOND ALL EXPECTATION

4. Without identifying Himself, what counsel did Jesus give the fishermen? What extraordinary thing happened, even though the time of day was not suitable for fishing?

JOHN 21:5, 6 *Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. ⁶And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

“All the while a lone watcher upon the shore followed them with His eye, while He Himself was unseen. At length the morning dawned. The boat was but a little way from the shore, and the disciples saw a stranger standing upon the beach, who accosted them with the question, ‘Children, have ye any meat?’ When they answered, ‘No,’ ‘He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 810.

5. Who recognized Jesus? Without any work or effort on their part, what did the Master miraculously provide for His disciples?

JOHN 21:7-9 *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. ⁸And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. ⁹As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*

“John recognized the stranger, and exclaimed to Peter, ‘It is the Lord.’... ‘As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.’

“They were too much amazed to question whence came the fire and the food. ‘Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.’ Peter rushed for the net, which he had dropped, and helped his brethren drag it to the shore. After the work was done, and the preparation made, Jesus bade the disciples come and dine. He broke the food, and divided it among them, and was known and acknowledged by all the seven. The miracle of feeding the five thousand on the mountainside was now brought to their minds; but a mysterious awe was upon them, and in silence they gazed upon the risen Saviour.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 810.

6. How was their readiness to obey the Lord without question rewarded? Of what did He want to remind His disciples through this experience?

JOHN 21:10-13 *Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.*

¹¹*Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.* ¹²*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.* ¹³*Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.*

MATTHEW 4:18-20 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.* ¹⁹*And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

²⁰*And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

“Vividly they recalled the scene beside the sea when Jesus had bidden them follow Him. They remembered how, at His command, they had launched out into the deep, and had let down their net, and the catch had been so abundant as to fill the net, even to breaking. Then Jesus had called them to leave their fishing boats, and had promised to make them fishers of men. It was to bring this scene to their minds, and to deepen its impression, that He had again performed the miracle. His act was a renewal of the commission to the disciples. It showed them that the death of their Master had not lessened their obligation to do the work He had assigned them.... While they were doing His work, He would provide for their needs. And Jesus had a purpose in bidding them cast their net on the right side of the ship. On that side He stood upon the shore. That was the side of faith. If they labored in connection with Him—His divine power combining with their human effort—they could not fail of success.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 810, 811.

SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

7. What appearance of Jesus was this at the shore of Galilee? What was His purpose?

JOHN 21:14 *This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.*

“Christ’s first work on earth after His resurrection was to convince His disciples of His undiminished love and tender regard for them. To give them proof that He was their living Saviour, that He had broken the fetters of the tomb, and could no longer be held by the enemy death; to reveal that He had the same heart of love as when He was with them as their beloved Teacher, He appeared to them again and again. He would draw the bonds of love still closer around them. Go tell My brethren, He said, that they meet Me in Galilee.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 793.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The prayer for daily bread includes not only food to sustain the body, but that spiritual bread which will nourish the soul unto life everlasting. Jesus bids us, ‘Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.’ John 6:27.... Our Saviour is the bread of life, and it is by beholding His love, by receiving it into the soul, that we feed upon the bread which came down from heaven.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 131.

"In teaching us to ask every day for what we need—both temporal and spiritual blessings—God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His Word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life." —*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 112, 113.

* * *

6

Sabbath, August 5, 2017

"Feed My Sheep"

"Another lesson Christ had to give, relating especially to Peter. Peter's denial of his Lord had been in shameful contrast to his former professions of loyalty. He had dishonored Christ, and had incurred the distrust of his brethren. They thought he would not be allowed to take his former position among them, and he himself felt that he had forfeited his trust. Before being called to take up again his apostolic work, he must before them all give evidence of his repentance. Without this, his sin, though repented of, might have destroyed his influence as a minister of Christ. The Saviour gave him opportunity to regain the confidence of his brethren, and, so far as possible, to remove the reproach he had brought upon the gospel." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

CLARIFICATION AND RESTORATION

1. **On this occasion, what did Jesus ask Peter? What should one understand from His question and the command that He gave to the disciple?**

JOHN 21:15 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

"While Christ and the disciples were eating together by the seaside, the Saviour said to Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?' referring to his brethren. Peter had once declared, 'Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.' Matthew 26:33. But he now put a truer estimate upon himself. 'Yea, Lord,' he said, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee.' There is no vehement assurance that his love is greater than that of his brethren. He does not express his own opinion of his devotion. To Him who can read all the motives of the heart he appeals to judge as to his sincerity—'Thou knowest that I love Thee.' And Jesus bids him, 'Feed My lambs.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

2. **When Jesus asked Peter the same question a second time, what did he answer? Was Jesus perhaps reprimanding the disciple for his triple denial? What had happened immediately after Peter denied his Lord?**

JOHN 21:16 *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

LUKE 22:61, 62 *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

“This time He did not ask Peter whether he loved Him better than did his brethren. The second response was like the first, free from extravagant assurance: ‘Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 812.

3. Why did Jesus repeat the same question three times? What deep change did the answers of this impulsive disciple show?

JOHN 21:17, FIRST PART *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?*

“Three times Peter had openly denied his Lord, and three times Jesus drew from him the assurance of his love and loyalty.... Before the assembled disciples Jesus revealed the depth of Peter’s repentance, and showed how thoroughly humbled was the once boasting disciple.

“Peter was naturally forward and impulsive, and Satan had taken advantage of these characteristics to overthrow him. Just before the fall of Peter, Jesus had said to him, ‘Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ Luke 22:31, 32. That time had now come, and the transformation in Peter was evident. The close, testing questions of the Lord had not called out one forward, self-sufficient reply; and because of his humiliation and repentance, Peter was better prepared than ever before to act as shepherd to the flock.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 812.

HIS LIFE’S MISSION

4. What mission did Jesus entrust to Peter after the disciple’s deep repentance and spiritual transformation? What transformation qualified him to carry out this service?

JOHN 21:17, LAST PART *And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

“The first work that Christ entrusted to Peter on restoring him to the ministry was to feed the lambs. This was a work in which Peter had little experience. It would require great care and tenderness, much patience and perseverance.... Heretofore Peter had not been fitted to do this, or even to understand its importance. But this was the work which Jesus now called upon him to do. For this work his own experience of suffering and repentance had prepared him.

“Before his fall, Peter was always speaking unadvisedly, from the impulse of the moment.... But the converted Peter was very different. He retained his former fervor, but the grace of Christ regulated his zeal. He was no longer impetuous, self-confident, and self-exalted, but calm, self-possessed, and teachable. He could then feed the lambs as well as the sheep of Christ’s flock.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 812, 815.

AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT

- 5. What is one of the essential qualifications for being a shepherd of the Lord's flock? What final perspective did the Lord make Peter see so that he would be prepared to serve the Master?**

JOHN 21:18, 19 *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.* ¹⁹*This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.*

"He mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service. 'Lovest thou Me?' He said. This is the essential qualification. Though Peter might possess every other, yet without the love of Christ he could not be a faithful shepherd over the Lord's flock. Knowledge, benevolence, eloquence, gratitude, and zeal are all aids in the good work; but without the love of Jesus in the heart, the work of the Christian minister is a failure.

"Before His death, Jesus had said to him, 'Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.' To this Peter had replied, 'Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.' John 13:36, 37.... Peter had failed when the test came, but again he was to have opportunity to prove his love for Christ. That he might be strengthened for the final test of his faith, the Saviour opened to him his future. He told him that after living a life of usefulness, when age was telling upon his strength, he would indeed follow his Lord." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 815.

CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO MARTYRDOM

- 6. When Peter asked about the future of a fellow disciple, what did Jesus reply? Is the instruction to follow Him only for Peter or for every one of us?**

JOHN 21:20-22 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?* ²¹*Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?* ²²*Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.*

"Now he [Peter] was prepared to share in his Lord's mission of sacrifice. When at last brought to the cross, he was, at his own request, crucified with his head downward. He thought it too great an honor to suffer in the same way as his Master did.

"To Peter the words 'Follow Me' were full of instruction.... Do not run ahead of Me. Then you will not have the hosts of Satan to meet alone. Let Me go before you, and you will not be overcome by the enemy....

"How many today are like Peter! They are interested in the affairs of others, and anxious to know their duty, while they are in danger of neglecting their own. It is our work to look to Christ and follow Him. We shall see mistakes in the lives of others.... But in Christ we shall find perfection. Beholding Him, we shall become transformed." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 815, 816.

7. How long did Peter carry out the gospel mission that the Lord entrusted to him? To whom did he direct the gaze of others who, like him, were church elders?

1 PETER 5:1-4 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ²Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

"Peter had been restored to his apostleship, but the honor and authority he received from Christ had not given him supremacy over his brethren.... Peter was not honored as the head of the church.... The lesson which Christ had taught him by the Sea of Galilee Peter carried with him throughout his life." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 817.

"Now, when his once active form was bowed with the burden of years and labors, he could write, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.'..."

"Pastors are needed—faithful shepherds—who will not flatter God's people, nor treat them harshly, but who will feed them with the bread of life—men who in their lives feel daily the converting power of the Holy Spirit and who cherish a strong, unselfish love toward those for whom they labor." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 525, 526.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Here is given a lesson for all Christ's followers. The gospel makes no compromise with evil. It cannot excuse sin. Secret sins are to be confessed in secret to God; but, for open sin, open confession is required. The reproach of the disciple's sin is cast upon Christ. It causes Satan to triumph, and wavering souls to stumble. By giving proof of repentance, the disciple, so far as lies in his power, is to remove this reproach." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 811.

* * *

“Go, Preach the Gospel”

“The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND INFALLIBLE PROOF

- 1. For how long after His crucifixion did Jesus continue to meet with His disciples, giving evidence of His resurrection as well as instructing them concerning the kingdom of God?**

ACTS 1:3 *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

“Jesus remained with His disciples forty days, causing them joy and gladness of heart as He opened to them more fully the realities of the kingdom of God. He commissioned them to bear testimony to the things which they had seen and heard concerning His sufferings, death, and resurrection, that He had made a sacrifice for sin, and that all who would might come unto Him and find life. With faithful tenderness He told them that they would be persecuted and distressed; but they would find relief in recalling their experience and remembering the words which He had spoken to them. He told them that He had overcome the temptations of Satan and obtained the victory through trials and suffering.... But they could overcome as He had overcome.” —*Early Writings*, p. 189.

- 2. What did they ask Him? What did this question show?**

ACTS 1:6, 7 *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

“Just before leaving His disciples, Christ once more plainly stated the nature of His kingdom. He recalled to their remembrance things He had previously told them regarding it. He declared that it was not His purpose to establish in this world a temporal kingdom. He was not appointed to reign as an earthly monarch on David’s throne. When the disciples asked Him, ‘Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ He answered, ‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.’ Acts 1:6, 7. It was not necessary for them to see farther into the future than the revelations He had

made enabled them to see. Their work was to proclaim the gospel message.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 30.

THE GOSPEL COMMISSION

3. Where did the disciples go when the time came for the Saviour to bid them farewell? What did He tell them about the church’s mission and His relationship to it?

MATTHEW 28:16-18 *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

“This was the only interview that Jesus had with many of the believers after His resurrection. He came and spoke to them saying, ‘All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.’ The disciples had worshiped Him before He spoke, but His words, falling from lips that had been closed in death, thrilled them with peculiar power. He was now the risen Saviour. Many of them had seen Him exercise His power in healing the sick and controlling satanic agencies. They believed that He possessed power to set up His kingdom at Jerusalem, power to quell all opposition, power over the elements of nature. He had stilled the angry waters; He had walked upon the white-crested billows; He had raised the dead to life. Now He declared that ‘all power’ was given to Him. His words carried the minds of His hearers above earthly and temporal things to the heavenly and eternal. They were lifted to the highest conception of His dignity and glory.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 819.

4. What great commission did He entrust to them? What special message were they to share with the entire world?

MARK 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

“The events of Christ’s life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies pointing to these events, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they had been witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 27.

“The disciples were not to wait for the people to come to them. They were to go to the people, hunting for sinners as a shepherd hunts for lost sheep. Christ opened the world before them as their field of labor.... It was of the Saviour that they were to preach, of His life of unselfish service, His death of shame, His unparalleled, unchanging love. His name was to be their watchword, their band of union. In His name they were to subdue the strongholds of sin. Faith in His name was to mark them as Christians.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 14, 15.

BELIEF, BAPTISM, AND SALVATION

5. In what name were the believers to be baptized? How far-reaching is this great mission?

MATTHEW 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

"The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy....

"They were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christ's name was to be their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing was to be recognized in His kingdom that did not bear His name and superscription." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

"To us also the commission is given. We are bidden to go forth as Christ's messengers, to teach, instruct, and persuade men and women, to urge upon their attention the word of life. And to us also the assurance of Christ's abiding presence is given. Whatever the difficulties with which we may have to contend, whatever the trials we may have to endure, the gracious promise is always ours, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'" —(Manuscript 24, 1903) *Evangelism*, p. 15.

6. Although Jesus had worked and preached there extensively, where were the disciples to begin their ministry? What will be the wonderful results for all who believe in the good news and make their baptismal covenant with the Lord?

LUKE 24:47 *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

MARK 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

"Christ commissioned His disciples to do the work He had left in their hands, beginning at Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been the scene of His amazing condescension for the human race...

"But the work was not to stop here. It was to be extended to the earth's remotest bounds....

"The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ's workers is to begin where he is." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 820-822.

"There is no limit to the missionary work to be done in fulfilling this commission, and yet because of a lack of faith on the part of God's people, the work has often come almost to a standstill.... If God's people had possessed the true missionary spirit, the lands lying in darkness would ere this have been enlightened by their self-sacrificing labors." —*Australian Union Conference Record*, October 14, 1907.

OBEDIENCE AND TEACHING

7. In addition to believing His message, what do all true followers of Christ do? Who assist the gospel preachers in fulfilling their mission?

MATTHEW 28:20 *Teaching 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.*

"In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, 'to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out.... 'The law and the prophets,' with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. Christ's name is their watchword, their badge of distinction, their bond of union, the authority for their course of action, and the source of their success. Nothing that does not bear His superscription is to be recognized in His kingdom." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

"The worker in a foreign field must carry in his heart the peace and love of heaven; for this is his only safety.... Energy and self-sacrifice are needed in the missionary field. God calls for men who will push the triumphs of the cross; men who will persevere under discouragements and privations; men who have the zeal and resolution and faith that are indispensable in the missionary field." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 469.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"These words point out our field and our work. Our field is the world; our work, the proclamation of the truths which Christ came to our world to proclaim. Men and women are to have opportunity to gain a knowledge of present truth, an opportunity to know that Christ is their Saviour, that 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:16." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 204.

* * *

8

Sabbath, August 19, 2017

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

"The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy. He would have His servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character, and may rejoice in the assurance of His great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

PROMISE OF A SPECIAL BAPTISM

- 1. According to John the Baptist, what great gift was Jesus going to give to His followers?**

MATTHEW 3:11 *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.*

LUKE 3:16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

“What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. Jesus knew their destitution, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high. Every teacher must be a learner, that his eyes may be anointed to see the evidences of the advancing truth of God. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness must shine into his own heart if he would impart light to others.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 411.

2. What marvelous promise did Jesus give the disciples before His death and resurrection? But what had to happen before the Comforter could come?

JOHN 14:16, 17; 16:7 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.... ^{16,7}Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

“God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 19.

“We need the holy unction from on high. However intelligent, however learned a man may be, he is not qualified to teach unless he has a firm hold on the God of Israel.... If divine power does not combine with human effort, I would not give a straw for all that the greatest man could do. The Holy Spirit is wanting in our work. Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible.”—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 411.

A SPECIAL GIFT FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE

3. What was the purpose for which the Lord was going to give the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

LUKE 24:48 *And ye are witnesses of these things.*

JOHN 15:27 *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

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.*

"It seems strange that Christ should direct the disciples to begin their work in Jerusalem, the very place where the spirit of Satan had been most manifest in opposition and enmity to the Prince of life. It was there that he had been hunted, persecuted, denied, and betrayed." —*Review and Herald*, April 19, 1892.

"The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

"As the disciples went forth to proclaim the gospel, filled with the power of the Spirit, so God's servants are to go forth today. All around us are fields white unto the harvest. These fields are to be reaped. We are to take up the work, filled with an unselfish desire to give the message of mercy to those who are in the darkness of error and unbelief. God will move on the hearts of believers to carry forward His work to the regions beyond." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 344.

4. What signs would accompany the faithful believers as they proclaimed the message of salvation? How should this motivate every church to advance the missionary outreach?

MARK 16:15, 17, 18 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature....¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;¹⁸They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

"Through the gift of the Holy Spirit the disciples were to receive a marvelous power. Their testimony was to be confirmed by signs and wonders. Miracles would be wrought, not only by the apostles, but by those who received their message.

"The promise is as far-reaching as the commission. Not that all the gifts are imparted to each believer. The Spirit divides 'to every man severally as He will.' 1 Corinthians 12:11. But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. 'These signs shall follow them that believe.' This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an endorsement of faith." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 821, 823.

UNITY AND HARMONY

5. In view of this special baptism, what command did Jesus give the disciples after His resurrection?

LUKE 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

ACTS 1:4, 5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. ⁵For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

"The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit.... All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.

“... But not until after the ascension was the gift received in its fullness. Not until through faith and prayer the disciples had surrendered themselves fully for His working was the outpouring of the Spirit received. Then in a special sense the goods of heaven were committed to the followers of Christ. ‘When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.’ Ephesians 4:8.... The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 327.

6. In accordance with Jesus’ words, where did the disciples await the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How did they spend the days of preparation?

ACTS 1:12-14; 2:1 *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. ¹³And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. ¹⁴These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.... ²¹And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

“The first disciples went forth preaching the word. They revealed Christ in their lives. And the Lord worked with them, ‘confirming the word with signs following.’ Mark 16:20. These disciples prepared themselves for their work. Before the day of Pentecost they met together, and put away all differences. They were of one accord. They believed Christ’s promise that the blessing would be given, and they prayed in faith. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely; they were weighted with the burden for the salvation of souls. The gospel was to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth, and they claimed the endowment of power that Christ had promised. Then it was that the Holy Spirit was poured out, and thousands were converted in a day.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 827.

FULFILLMENT AND GREAT RESULTS

7. When did the baptism of the Holy Spirit take place? What miraculous results were seen as the disciples preached the gospel message?

ACTS 2:2, 14, 41 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.... ¹⁴But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:... ⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

“The apostles spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost; and their words could not be controverted, for they were confirmed by mighty miracles, wrought by them through the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The disciples were themselves astonished at the results of this visitation, and the quick and abundant harvest of souls. All the people were filled with amazement.” —*The Story of Redemption*, p. 245.

“It is in doing Christ’s work that the church has the promise of His presence... The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord’s commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

“These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fulness by the Holy Spirit’s power.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 121.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“So it may be now. Instead of man’s speculations, let the word of God be preached. Let Christians put away their dissensions, and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them in faith ask for the blessing, and it will come. The outpouring of the Spirit in apostolic days was the ‘former rain,’ and glorious was the result. But the ‘latter rain’ will be more abundant. Joel 2:23.

“All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 827.

* * *

Read the Missionary Report from Southeast Asia on page 41

9

Sabbath, August 26, 2017

“I Ascend to My Father”

“The most precious fact to the disciples in the ascension of Jesus was that He went from them into heaven in the tangible form of their divine Teacher....

“The disciples not only saw the Lord ascend, but they had the testimony of the angels that He had gone to occupy His Father’s throne in heaven. The last remembrance that the disciples were to have of their Lord was as the sympathizing Friend, the glorified Redeemer. Moses veiled his face to hide the glory of the law which was reflected upon it, and the glory of Christ’s ascension was veiled from human sight. The brightness of the heavenly escort and the opening of the glorious gates of God to welcome Him were not to be discerned by mortal eyes.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1053.

TIME TO RETURN TO THE FATHER

- 1. What did Jesus say twice in His prayer to His Father in Gethsemane? What moment was now approaching?**

JOHN 17:11, 13 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast*

given me, that they may be one, as we are.... ¹³And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

“Christ had finished the work that was given Him to do. He had gathered out those who were to continue His work among men. And He said: ‘I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.’ ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one;... I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.’ John 17:10, 11, 20-23.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 24.

2. What happened as Jesus was speaking to His disciples about things pertaining to the kingdom of God? What happened as they watched?

ACTS 1:3, 9 *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.... ⁹And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

“Jesus spoke these words just before His ascension to heaven; for the record says, ‘When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.’ These were the last words of the Saviour to His disciples, and in them we see the commission which was given them, and the work that they were to do. They were to be witnesses unto Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. The very same charge has been given to us as was given to them, and how desirous should we be to fulfill our Lord’s commission to save those that are lost and to glorify God in the world.” —*Review and Herald*, April 19, 1892.

“Christ came to earth as God in the guise of humanity. He ascended to heaven as the King of saints. His ascension was worthy of His exalted character. He went as one mighty in battle, a conqueror, leading captivity captive. He was attended by the heavenly host, amid shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1053.

DEPARTURE AND BLESSING

3. What was Jesus doing as He departed from them? Following His example, what should we do when we say good-by to the members and congregations of brothers and sisters?

LUKE 24:50, 51 *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. ⁵¹And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

“When the time came for Christ to ascend to His Father, He led the disciples out as far as Bethany. Here He paused, and they gathered about Him. With hands outstretched in blessing, as if in assurance of His protecting care, He slowly ascended from among them. ‘It came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.’ Luke 24:51.

“While the disciples were gazing upward to catch the last glimpse of their ascending Lord, He was received into the rejoicing ranks of heavenly angels.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 32.

4. What did the disciples who witnessed this triumphant scene realize? How did they express their faith in Him as He said farewell and ascended into the cloud?

LUKE 24:52 *And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.*

“They now saw that the prophecies had been literally fulfilled.... The divine Teacher was indeed all that He claimed to be. The prophecies relating to Christ and His mission were no longer a mystery to His disciples, but a living reality; and as they told their experience to the world, as they exalted the love of God, the divine assurance which they manifested was an evidence to men that they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Men’s hearts were melted and subdued. The promise, ‘Greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto My Father,’ was fulfilled. Christ, the Messiah, had come. The Saviour of the world had died, that all might have life, eternal life. It was no more a matter of faith with them that He was a Teacher sent of God. They realized that although He was clothed with humanity, He was of divine origin.” –*Review and Herald*, June 18, 1895.

JESUS’ ASCENSION AND PROMISE TO RETURN

5. Who stayed and explained to the disciples what would happen after the Saviour was gone? To what event did these messengers direct their attention?

ACTS 1:10, 11 *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*

“Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet—the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father’s throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended. He will come ‘with clouds; and every eye shall see Him.’ ‘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....’ Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.... Thus will be fulfilled the Lord’s own promise to His disciples: ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ John 14:3. Well might the disciples rejoice in the hope of their Lord’s return.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

ON THE THRONE OF GLORY

6. After His great struggle and His victory over sin and death, where was the Lord Jesus seated? What position did He receive?

MARK 16:19 *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

JOHN 17:5 *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:8-11 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

"The glory of the Father was revealed in the Son; Christ made manifest the character of the Father. He was so perfectly connected with God, so completely embraced in His encircling light, that He who had seen the Son, had seen the Father. His voice was as the voice of God. Mark Christ's prayer before His crucifixion: 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' " —*Review and Herald*, January 7, 1890.

PREACHING AND DIVINE CONFIRMATION

7. No longer blessed by Jesus' physical presence, what kept the disciples from being hindered by doubt or disorientation? What experiences did they make immediately?

ACTS 1:12 *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*

LUKE 24:53 *And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

MARK 16:20 *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

"The disciples no longer had any distrust of the future. They knew that Jesus was in heaven, and that His sympathies were with them still. They knew that they had a friend at the throne of God, and they were eager to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' John 16:23, 24. They extended the hand of faith higher and higher, with the mighty argument, 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Romans 8:34. And Pentecost brought them fullness of joy in the presence of the Comforter, even as Christ had promised." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 833.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"From that scene of heavenly joy, there comes back to us on earth the echo of Christ's own wonderful words, 'I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.' John 20:17. The family of heaven and the family of earth are one. For us our Lord ascended, and for us He lives. 'Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Hebrews 7:25." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 835.

"The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 286.

* * *

MISSIONARY REPORT from Southeast Asia

To be read on Sabbath, August 26, 2017

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, September 2, 2017*

Between the Silk Route and the Spice Trade Route

*“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”
Matthew 8:11.*

Recent archaeological discoveries are revealing that the commerce of the great ancient monarchies was far more extensive than scholars imagined. The immigration of Jews into China is believed to have taken place about B.C. 200. Many believe that the people of China and the Oriental countries heard the gospel from the apostle Thomas. But there are also Bible researchers who believe that Barnabas traveled with Thomas and then proceeded on to China. It is evident that these disciples followed the traders on the two main trade routes; namely, the “Spice Trade Route” and the “Silk Route.” Nestorian Christian missionaries are believed to have been in China around A.D. 500. Adventist history shows that Abram LaRue was the first missionary to China, performing self-supporting service in Hong Kong from 1888 until his death in 1903. In 1902, Elder J.N. Andrews arrived in China and further developed the work in Hong Kong.

The International Missionary Society began working in many countries of the Orient about a decade ago, with the exception of the Philippines, where the church has been in existence for many decades. There are now many believers in the People’s Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia; and interested souls are studying for baptism in Cambodia, Laos, Hong Kong, and Mongolia. There are also openings in Singapore, Macau, and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The majority religions in these countries are Buddhism and Confucianism. In addition, there are many indigenous religions that are practiced, while atheism is very strong among the younger generation. The industrial and technology revolutions brought tremendous changes to the lifestyles of the people. It is a great challenge to convert busy professionals to any religion because of their tight work schedules.

Faithful brethren from the Philippines have accepted the challenge to advance God’s work into many of the Asian countries, and souls have already been baptized. The Bible worker in Vietnam is traveling across the border to

visit Cambodia and is preparing people for baptism. Brethren in Malaysia are advancing toward the main cities. The work is opening in Thailand, with one baptism as of this writing and many interested souls longing for spiritual light. The Chinese brethren have engaged in missionary outreach in Mongolia and some parts of North Korea. The South Korean brethren are also putting forth efforts to spread the gospel in North Korea. So far, one soul from North Korea has been baptized. The believers in Japan are making plans to extend the work to the main cities, too.

Dear brothers and sisters, we need your prayers and support to carry out the gospel commission in the Asian countries. Funds are needed to produce literature in different languages and to meet the expenses of travel, renting and furnishing places of worship, complying with visa requirements, meeting governmental regulations, etc. Your generous contributions for next week's Special Sabbath School Offering will strengthen and give power to the light of the gospel that is shining in this part of the globe. God bless you.

—Douglas Francis
General Conference Treasurer and Asian Division Leader

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
SOUTHEAST ASIA**

God bless and reward your generous gifts!

10

Sabbath, September 2, 2017

The Prophet to Come

“Moses, near the close of his work as a leader and teacher of Israel, plainly prophesied of the Messiah to come. ‘The Lord thy God,’ he declared to the assembled hosts of Israel, ‘will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.’ And Moses assured the Israelites that God Himself had revealed this to him while in Mount Horeb, saying, ‘I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.’ Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 222.

I WILL RAISE UP A PROPHET

- 1. What wonderful news had the Lord given to His people through Moses many centuries before?**

DEUTERONOMY 18:15, 18, 19 *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken....*

¹⁸I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. ¹⁹And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

“The heaven-appointed Teacher appears, and He is no less a personage than the Son of the Infinite God. Unroll the scroll, and read of Him. Moses declared to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.’ Here is the prediction announcing the distinguished arrival. His words were not to be disregarded; for His authority was supreme, and His power invincible.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 35.

ARE YOU THE PROPHET?

- 2. What can we see in some of the questions that a commission posed to John the Baptist? What connection did this have to the above prophecy?**

JOHN 1:21, 25 *And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No....* ²⁵*They asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*

“Among the Jews there were yet steadfast souls, descendants of that holy line through whom a knowledge of God had been preserved. These still looked for the hope of the promise made unto the fathers. They strengthened their faith by dwelling upon the assurance given through Moses, ‘A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.’ Acts 3:22. Again, they read how the Lord would anoint One ‘to preach good tidings unto the meek,’ ‘to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,’ and to declare the ‘acceptable year of the Lord.’ Isaiah 61:1, 2. They read how He would ‘set judgment in the earth,’ how the isles should ‘wait for His law,’ how the Gentiles should come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising. Isaiah 42:4; 60:3.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 34.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN’S UNDERSTANDING

- 3. What did the Samaritan woman realize when she spoke with Jesus? Expressing her surprise, what question did she put to the people of the city? What wonderful testimony was expressed by the man whom Jesus healed of blindness?**

JOHN 4:19, 28, 29; 9:17 *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet....* ²⁸*The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,* ²⁹*Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?...* ^{9:17}*They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.*

“Jesus had a double object in view; He wished to arouse her conscience as to the sin of her manner of life, as well as to prove to her that a sight wiser than human eyes had read the secrets of her life. But the woman, although not fully realizing the guilt of her manner of living, was greatly astonished that this stranger should possess such knowledge. With profound reverence she said, ‘Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet;...’ ” —*Daughters of God*, p. 62.

“This lesson is for our encouragement as well, and while there are many who will not yield to the convicting power of God’s Spirit, there are also many who are hungering for the words of light and salvation. Many will receive the truth, and testify as did the Samaritans that Christ is the Saviour of the world. In their turn they will become sowers of the seed of truth. We are to lift up our eyes and look upon the fields that are white already for the harvest.” —*The Southern Work*, p. 59.

MANY CONSIDERED JESUS A PROPHET

- 4. How many recognized Jesus as a prophet or as the Prophet who was to come into the world?**

LUKE 7:15, 16 *And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.* ¹⁶*And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.*

JOHN 6:14; 7:40 *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world....^{7:40} Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.*

MARK 6:15 *Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.*

MATTHEW 21:10, 11, 46 *And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? ¹¹And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee....⁴⁶ But when they [the chief priests and Pharisees] sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.*

“For more than a thousand years the Jewish people had awaited the coming of the promised Saviour. Their brightest hopes had rested upon this event. For a thousand years, in song and prophecy, in temple rite and household prayer, His name had been enshrined....” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 710.

“Reports have reached the rulers in Jerusalem that Jesus is approaching the city with a great concourse of people. But they have no welcome for the Son of God. In fear they go out to meet Him, hoping to disperse the throng. As the procession is about to descend the Mount of Olives, it is intercepted by the rulers. They inquire the cause of the tumultuous rejoicing. As they question, ‘Who is this?’ the disciples, filled with the spirit of inspiration, answer this question. In eloquent strains they repeat the prophecies concerning Christ....” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 578.

SOME DISCIPLES RECOGNIZED JESUS AS THE PROPHET

5. Who referred to this wonderful prophecy and pointed to its fulfillment in the holy Person of Jesus?

ACTS 7:37 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.*

JOHN 1:45 *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

LUKE 24:18, 19, 27 *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? ¹⁹And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people....²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

“Had not the disciples heard this very exposition of these scriptures from their Master’s lips while He was with them? But how little had they comprehended them! How forcible is their meaning now! How startling their fulfillment! The truths they had but dimly discerned now stand revealed in a blaze of light. The very things He had told them have been accomplished. Faith begins to revive. Their hearts beat with a strong and renewed hope as they listen eagerly to the plain, simple words of their unknown fellow traveler. They are surprised to find

their burdened hearts becoming light; and as they think of Jesus, of all He was to them, of all He suffered, their tears flow freely. Their confidence had not been misplaced. He was all and even more than they had believed.” —*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1888.

JESUS SPEAKS OF HIMSELF

6. Did Jesus acknowledge that He was a Prophet?

MATTHEW 13:57, 58 *And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.⁵⁸ And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

LUKE 13:33 *Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*

Nazareth was the place where Jesus was raised, and His family was well known to the people. The inhabitants heard about what He had done in other places; and after listening to His teachings in the synagogue, instead of opening their hearts to His words, they began to raise doubts and objections. Being one of humble origins, they queried, from where had His knowledge come? While they did not think that He could be a messenger of God, in applying to Himself the expression, “A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country” (Matthew 13:57), Jesus proved that He considered Himself a prophet. How different would have been the experience of the inhabitants of Nazareth if they had accepted Him at least as a prophet!

LET US HEAR THE PROPHET

7. How did the apostle Peter apply the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18? If we truly recognize that Jesus is the Prophet, how will we consider His teachings?

ACTS 3:22-24 *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.²³ And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.²⁴ Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.*

“Christ brought to our world a certain knowledge of God, and to all who received and obeyed His word, gave He power to become the sons of God. He who came forth from God to our world gave instruction on every subject about which it is essential that man should know in order to find the pathway to heaven. To Him, truth was an ever-present, self-evident reality; He uttered no suggestions, advanced no sentiments, notions, or opinions, but presented only solid, saving truth.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 405, 406.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Truth, saving truth, never languished on His tongue, never suffered in His hands, but was made to stand out plainly and clearly defined amid the moral darkness prevailing in our world. For this work He left the heavenly courts. He said of Himself, ‘For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.’ The truth came

from His lips with freshness and power, as a new revelation. He was the way, the truth, and the life. His life, given for this sinful world, was full of earnestness and momentous results; for His work was to save perishing souls. He came forth to be the True Light, shining amid the moral darkness of superstition and error, and was announced by a voice from heaven, proclaiming, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'...

"Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 405.

* * *

11

Sabbath, September 9, 2017

The Chief Shepherd

"Christ, in His relation to His people, is compared to a shepherd. After the Fall He saw His sheep doomed to perish in the dark ways of sin. To save these wandering ones He left the honors and glories of His Father's house. He says, 'I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.' I will 'save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey.' 'Neither shall the beast of the land devour them.' Ezekiel 34:16, 22, 28. His voice is heard calling them to His fold.... His care for the flock is unwearied." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 190, 191.

SPECIAL CARE FOR THE PEOPLE

1. What special care does the Lord want to bestow on His people? What are the characteristics of the perfect shepherd?

ISAIAH 40:11 *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

EZEKIEL 34:23 *And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.*

"The guarding care that the under-shepherd will give the lambs of his flock is well illustrated by a picture I have seen representing the Good Shepherd. The shepherd is leading the way, while the flock follow close behind. Carried in his arms is a helpless lamb, while the mother walks trustingly by his side. Of the work of Christ, Isaiah says, 'He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.' Isaiah 40:11. The lambs need more than daily food. They need protection, and must constantly be guarded with tender care. If one goes astray, it must be searched for. The figure is a beautiful one, and well represents the loving service that the under-shepherd of the flock of Christ is to give to those under his protection and care." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 211.

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

2. Who is the good Shepherd? How do we identify the true Shepherd of the flock?

JOHN 10:11, 14 *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... ¹⁴I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

"Christ, the great example for all ministers, likens Himself to a shepherd. 'I am the good Shepherd,' He declares; 'the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.' 'I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep.' John 10:11, 14, 15.

"As an earthly shepherd knows his sheep, so does the divine Shepherd know His flock that are scattered throughout the world. 'Ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.' Ezekiel 34:31." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 181.

LOST WITHOUT HIM

3. Without His pastoral care, what would happen to us in this world full of blindness and confusion?

ISAIAH 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

1 PETER 2:25 *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

"When all hope was excluded from Adam and Eve in consequence of transgression and sin,... Christ gave Himself to be a sacrifice for the sin of the world.... Christ became substitute and surety for man. He would give His life for the world, which is represented as the one lost sheep that had strayed from the fold, whose guilt as well as helplessness was charged against them and stood in the way, hindering their return. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Every son and daughter of God, if they have an abiding Saviour will act out Christ. Every soul that has not an abiding Saviour will reveal the same in unchristlikeness in character. Love is not cherished and put in exercise." —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 283, 284.

WILLING TO DO THE UTMOST

4. Because of His great love, what is possible for the lost sheep? In addition to putting forth tremendous efforts and searching, what has the true Shepherd done for every lost soul?

LUKE 15:4, 5 *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? ⁵And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*

JOHN 10:15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

MATTHEW 18:11-14 *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. ¹²How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? ¹³And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. ¹⁴Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

“Jesus Christ has taken the position of one who came to seek and to save that which is lost, and He has exalted the world inasmuch as He died to redeem it, to bring back the one lost sheep to the fold. Jesus has given His precious life, His personal attention, to the least of God’s little ones; and angels that excel in strength encamp round about them that fear God. Then let us be upon our guard, and never permit one contemptuous thought to occupy the mind in regard to one of the little ones of God. We should look after the erring with solicitude, and speak encouraging words to the fallen, and fear lest by some unwise action we shall turn them away from the pitying Saviour.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 209.

PROVIDING RICH PASTURE

5. What will the sheep who faithfully follow the good Shepherd have in abundance? What special attention does He give the little lambs?

PSALM 23:1, 2 *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

JOHN 10:9 *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

ISAIAH 40:11 *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

“Jesus is the good Shepherd. His followers are the sheep of His pasture. A shepherd is always with his flock to defend them, to keep them from the wolves, to hunt up the lost sheep and carry them back to the fold, to lead them beside green pastures and beside living waters...

“Jesus was the good shepherd to whom the porter openeth, who knows the sheep, calleth His own by name, and leadeth them out. He it is who is stronger than the thief and the robber, those who enter not in at the door, but climb up some other way.... Christ presented Himself as the only one in whom were qualifications for making a good shepherd.” —*Lift Him Up*, pp. 215, 197.

SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SICK AND INJURED

6. Does the great Shepherd give time, attention, and care to those who are afflicted, injured, weak, and sick?

EZEKIEL 34:16 *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.*

MICAH 4:6, 7 *In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; ⁷And I will make her that*

halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

“Christ applied these prophecies to Himself, and He showed the contrast between His own character and that of the leaders in Israel. The Pharisees had just driven one from the fold, because he dared to bear witness to the power of Christ. They had cut off a soul whom the True Shepherd was drawing to Himself. In this they had shown themselves ignorant of the work committed to them, and unworthy of their trust as shepherds of the flock. Jesus now set before them the contrast between them and the Good Shepherd, and He pointed to Himself as the real keeper of the Lord’s flock. Before doing this, however, He speaks of Himself under another figure.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 477.

THE CHIEF SHEPHERD GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

7. Considering His great love for souls, what is the Master of our souls called? What will He bring with Him when He comes in glory?

HEBREWS 13:20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant....*

1 PETER 5:4 *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

JOHN 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

“Jesus was the good shepherd to whom the porter openeth, who knows the sheep, calleth his own by name, and leadeth them out. He it is who is stronger than the thief and the robber, those who enter not in at the door, but climb up some other way.... Christ presented Himself as the only one in whom were qualifications for making a good shepherd. He is represented as the ‘Chief Shepherd.’... Again He is called the great Shepherd. ‘Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever.’ ” —*Signs of the Times*, December 4, 1893; *Lift Him Up*, p. 197.

“Christ ... requires these shepherds to have the same interest for His sheep which He has ever manifested, and to ever feel the responsibility of the charge He has intrusted to them.... If they imitate His self-denying example, the flock will prosper under their care.... They will be constantly laboring for the welfare of the flock.” —(*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 122-124) *Lift Him Up*, p. 196.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“This figure the prophet Isaiah had applied to the Messiah’s mission, in the comforting words, ‘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!... He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.’ Isaiah 40:9-11. David had sung, ‘The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.’ Psalm 23:1. And the Holy Spirit through Ezekiel had declared: ‘I will set up one Shepherd over them,

and He shall feed them.' 'I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.' 'And I will make with them a covenant of peace.' 'And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen;... but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.' Ezekiel 34:23, 16, 25, 28." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 476, 477.

* * *

12

Sabbath, September 16, 2017

Sufficiency of Christ's Atonement

"'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' All other knowledge is worthless only as Christ dwells in the heart, and is interwoven with the affections. Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him. His children derive their enjoyment from a Source higher than the world can comprehend; and as they are constantly receiving of God's bounty in spiritual and temporal gifts, they are to represent to the world the love and beneficence of Christ." —*Review and Herald*, December 11, 1888.

THE SAVIOUR

1. How did the angel of the Lord describe Jesus' atoning work for the penitent? What was necessary before He could wash away the sins of the people?

MATTHEW 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

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

"We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger. Our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be more intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and you will have a daily, living experience in the willingness and power of Christ to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him...." —*Our High Calling*, p. 113.

HE WHO KNEW NO SIN WAS MADE SIN FOR MAN

2. Despite being innocent and holy, what did Jesus take upon Himself to atone for man's sin and save him from condemnation? What would He give to cleanse man's sin?

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

HEBREWS 9:28 *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

ISAIAH 53:11, 12 *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

"Hating sin with a perfect hatred, He yet gathered to His soul the sins of the whole world. Guiltless, He bore the punishment of the guilty. Innocent, yet offering Himself as a substitute for the transgressor. The guilt of every sin pressed its weight upon the divine soul of the world's Redeemer. The evil thoughts, the evil words, the evil deeds of every son and daughter of Adam, called for retribution upon Himself; for He had become man's substitute. Though the guilt of sin was not His, His spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men, and He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 321.

WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

3. What suffering did the Saviour endure to atone for man's sin?

ISAIAH 53:4, 5, 10 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.... ¹⁰Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

"It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted.... Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner.

"Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who 'hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows' was looked upon by the Jews as 'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;' and they hid their faces from Him. Isaiah 53:4, 3." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 471.

"The cry of the soul must be,... Let me see Him as my helper, as the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Thou, O Lord, must be my helper. Thou wast wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities,... and with Thy stripes I am healed." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 110.

REDEMPTION THROUGH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

4. Can the value of the precious blood and life of God's Son be estimated? Was man's redemption accomplished by the giving of corruptible things, such as money or material goods?

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

HEBREWS 9:13, 14 *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

"All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 326.

"You should be willing for all to know that you are not your own but His who bought you with an infinite price, and that you are not only bound but are determined to glorify Him in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. May the love of so great magnitude constrain you to confess Christ not only with the mouth but with the life, to bear fruit to the glory of God." —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 90.

GIVING HIS OWN LIFE

5. In the Old Testament time, the sinner brought and sacrificed the animal as the victim, but how was the greatest sacrifice ever made in history carried out?

MATTHEW 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

JOHN 10:15 *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:6 *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

"Thus Christ, in His own spotless righteousness, after shedding His precious blood, enters into the holy place to cleanse the sanctuary. And there the crimson current is brought into the service of reconciling God to man." —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 200.

"As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so, while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven,

fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrongdoers. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 970.

THE SUFFICIENT ATONEMENT

- 6. Did the sacrifice provided by God's Son have a limited result, as was the case for the animal sacrifices in ancient times? How far does the redemption purchased by Jesus reach?**

HEBREWS 9:11, 12 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

"There is a blessing pronounced upon all who mourn. Had there been no mourners in our world, Christ could not have revealed to man the parental character of God. Those oppressed by the conviction of sin are to know the blessedness of forgiveness, and to have their transgressions blotted out. Had there been none who mourn, the sufficiency of Christ's expiation for sin would not have been understood." —*Signs of the Times*, August 8, 1895.

"The blood of Christ is efficacious, but it needs to be applied continually. God not only wants His servants to use the means He has entrusted to them for His glory, but He desires them to make a consecration of themselves to His cause. If you, my brethren, have become selfish,... then you need the blood of sprinkling thoroughly applied, consecrating you and all your possessions to God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 122, 123.

PREACHING REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS IN HIS NAME

- 7. Considering the great value of the redemption purchased for all humanity, what do God's faithful people proclaim to the world?**

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.*

LUKE 24:46, 47 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

MATTHEW 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

ACTS 20:21 *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

"Christ told His disciples that they were to begin their work at Jerusalem. That city had been the scene of His amazing sacrifice for the human race. There, clad in the garb of humanity, He had walked and talked with men, and few had discerned how near heaven came to earth. There He had been condemned and crucified. In Jerusalem were many who secretly believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah,

and many who had been deceived by priests and rulers. To these the gospel must be proclaimed. They were to be called to repentance. The wonderful truth that through Christ alone could remission of sins be obtained, was to be made plain. And it was while all Jerusalem was stirred by the thrilling events of the past few weeks, that the preaching of the disciples would make the deepest impression.”
—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 31, 32.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

TITUS 2:14 *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

“The offering made by our Saviour was of sufficient value to make a full expiation for the sins of the whole world, and all who by repentance and faith flee to this Refuge, will find security; here they will find peace from the heaviest pressure of guilt, and relief from the deepest condemnation. By the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and His work of mediation in our behalf, we may become reconciled to God. The blood of Christ will prove efficacious to wash away the crimson stain of sin.” —*Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881.

“When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of heaven in dying in man’s stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified,... This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man’s redemption, the precious blood of God’s dear Son.... Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world as He hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 212.

* * *

13

Sabbath, September 23, 2017

The Saviour

“While we know Christ in one sense, that He is the Saviour of the world, it means more than this. We must have a personal knowledge and experience in Christ Jesus, an experimental knowledge of Christ, what He is to us, and what we are to Christ. That is the experience that everyone wants. Now, I cannot have it for any of you, nor can you have it for me. The work that is to be done for us, is to be through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God upon human minds and human hearts. The heart must be purified and sanctified.” —*This Day with God*, p. 213.

PROMISES OF SALVATION

- 1. What wonderful promise did the Lord give centuries ago to fill human hearts with joy and hope?**

ISAIAH 49:6; 56:1 *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give*

thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.... ^{56:1}*Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.*

“God has spoken in the plainest language upon every subject that affects the salvation of the soul.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 162.

“In the words, ‘I am the light of the world,’ Jesus declared Himself the Messiah. The aged Simeon, in the temple where Christ was now teaching, had spoken of Him as ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.’ Luke 2:32. In these words he was applying to Him a prophecy familiar to all Israel. By the prophet Isaiah, the Holy Spirit had declared, ‘It is too light a thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.’ Isaiah 49:6, R.V. This prophecy was generally understood as spoken of the Messiah, and when Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world,’ the people could not fail to recognize His claim to be the Promised One.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 465.

REDEEMER OF THE WORLD

2. Through whom does the Lord accomplish the great work of redemption? How did Jesus express this when He spoke about His mission in the world?

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

JOHN 12:47; 3:17 *And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world....* ^{3:17}*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

“Christ came to bring salvation within the reach of all. Upon the cross of Calvary He paid the infinite redemption price for a lost world. His self-denial and self-sacrifice, His unselfish labor, His humiliation, above all, the offering up of His life, testifies to the depth of His love for fallen man. It was to seek and to save the lost that He came to earth. His mission was to sinners, sinners of every grade, of every tongue and nation. He paid the price for all, to ransom them and bring them into union and sympathy with Himself. The most erring, the most sinful, were not passed by; His labors were especially for those who most needed the salvation He came to bring. The greater their need of reform, the deeper was His interest, the greater His sympathy, and the more earnest His labors. His great heart of love was stirred to its depths for the ones whose condition was most hopeless and who most needed His transforming grace.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 603.

“It is when Christ is received as a personal Saviour that salvation comes to the soul.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 556.

REDEEMED BY HIS BLOOD

3. What is more precious than gold and silver, by which we are redeemed?

EPHESIANS 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

1 PETER 1:18, 19 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition*

from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

REVELATION 5:9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

"It is now the day of His salvation. The light from the cross of Calvary is now shining forth in clear, bright rays, revealing Jesus, our Sacrifice for sin. As you read the promises which I have set before you, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. 'We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.' Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw nigh to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw nigh to you with mercy and forgiveness. We owe the Lord everything. He is the author of our salvation. As you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 'it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' " —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634.

SALVATION FROM SIN

4. From what infectious, deadly malady do we find healing, because of the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ?

MATTHEW 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

1 JOHN 3:5 *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

"Christ 'gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Titus 2:14. He made an offering so complete that through His grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of those who receive His grace and follow His example it will be written in the book of life, 'Complete in Him—without spot or stain.' " —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 7.

"The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. By constantly contemplating heavenly themes our faith and love will grow stronger." —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 406.

FREE FROM CONDEMNATION

5. Despite all the mistakes and sins we commit in life, from what does the Lord free us in His great mercy?

ROMANS 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

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

"It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 8:1." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 477.

SAVED FROM DEATH

6. Besides the stain of sin and subsequent condemnation, from what frightening end will the Lord free every individual who comes to Him?

PSALM 49:15 *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.*

HOSEA 13:14 *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54, 55 *So 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?*

"Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God....

"What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! What a wonderful scene will open when Christ shall come to be admired of them that believe! All who were partakers with Christ in His humiliation and sufferings will be partakers with Him in His glory. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead every believing saint who falls asleep in Jesus will come forth from his prison house in triumph. The resurrected saint will proclaim, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Corinthians 15:55....

"Jesus Christ has triumphed over death and rent the fetters of the tomb, and all who sleep in the tomb will share the victory; they will come forth from their graves as did the Conqueror...." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 271, 272.

HE WILL RETURN AND SAVE HIS CHILDREN

7. In view of all these blessings, to what wonderful event does every child of God direct his attention and hope?

ISAIAH 25:9 *And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

JOHN 10:10, LAST PART, 28 ... *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.... ²⁸And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

"Jesus is coming ... in the glory of the Father, and with all the retinue of holy angels with Him, to escort Him on His way to earth. All heaven will be emptied of the angels. The waiting saints will be looking for Him, and gazing into heaven, as were the 'men of Galilee' when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then, those only who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern will, with rapturous joy, exclaim as they behold Him, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.' And they will be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,' that wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality, shouting, Victory! Victory! over death and the grave." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 360.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"We cannot earn salvation, but we are to seek for it with as much interest and perseverance as though we would abandon everything in the world for it." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 117.

"What a representation is here given! 'My salvation is near to come'—that great salvation wrought out for each soul through Jesus Christ, the salvation for which the prophets have inquired and searched diligently. Our Lord is soon to come to us in mercy and compassion and love. We must go forth to receive Him as a welcome guest." —*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 87.

"The more we contemplate the character of Christ, and the more we experience of His saving power, the more keenly shall we realize our own weakness and imperfection, and the more earnestly shall we look to Him as our strength and our Redeemer. We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God we may be sanctified, and thus obtain a fitness for the society of holy angels and the white-robed redeemed ones in the kingdom of glory." —*The Sanctified Life*, p. 83.

* * *

God in Christ, Reconciling the World to Himself

“Man, who has defaced the image of God in his soul by a corrupt life cannot, by mere human effort, effect a radical change in himself. He must accept the provisions of the gospel; he must be reconciled to God through obedience of His law and faith in Jesus Christ. His life from thenceforth must be governed by a new principle. Through repentance, faith and good works he may develop and perfect a righteous character, and claim through the merits of Christ the privileges of the sons of God. The principles of divine truth received and cherished in the heart will carry us to a height of moral excellence we had not deemed possible for us to reach.” —(*Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1878) *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 294.

ENEMIES AND HATERS OF GOD

1. How do the Scriptures describe man's unconverted state in relation to God?

JEREMIAH 5:23 *But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.*

ROMANS 1:30; 5:10, FIRST PART *Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boast-ers, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents....* ^{5:10}*For if, when we were enemies,...*

“The human family have all transgressed the law of God, and as transgressors of the law, man is hopelessly ruined; for he is the enemy of God, without strength to do any good thing. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ Romans 8:7. Looking into the moral mirror—God’s holy law—man sees himself a sinner, and is convicted of his state of evil, his hopeless doom under the just penalty of the law. But he has not been left in a state of hopeless distress in which sin has plunged him; for it was to save the transgressor from ruin that He who was equal with God offered up His life on Calvary. ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 321.

THE GREATEST OFFERING

2. What special event took place while we were still sinners, rebels, and enemies of God?

ROMANS 5:8, 10 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us....* ¹⁰*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled*

to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

“Jesus was the majesty of heaven, the beloved commander of the angels, who delighted to do His pleasure. He was one with God, ‘in the bosom of the Father’ (John 1:18), yet He thought it not a thing to be desired to be equal with God while man was lost in sin and misery. He stepped down from His throne, He left His crown and royal scepter, and clothed His divinity with humanity. He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, that man might be exalted to a seat with Him upon His throne. In Him we have a complete offering, an infinite sacrifice, a mighty Saviour, who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. In love He comes to reveal the Father, to reconcile man to God, to make him a new creature renewed after the image of Him who created him.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 321.

3. In His dealings with man, what has the Father done through His Son?

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18, FIRST PART *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ...*

EPHESIANS 2:17, 18 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

“Christ suffered in order that through faith in Him our sins might be pardoned. He became man’s substitute and surety, Himself taking the punishment, though all undeserving, that we who deserved it might be free, and return to our allegiance to God through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. He is our only hope of salvation. Through His sacrifice we who are now on probation are prisoners of hope. We are to reveal to the universe, to the world fallen and to worlds unfallen, that there is forgiveness with God, that through the love of God we may be reconciled to God. Man repents, becomes contrite in heart, believes in Christ as His atoning sacrifice, and realizes that God is reconciled to him.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 369.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

4. How does Jesus’ sacrifice reconcile man to God?

COLOSSIANS 1:20-22 *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ²¹And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ²²In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight.*

EPHESIANS 2:13 *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

“Without the cross, man could have no connection with the Father. On it hangs our every hope. In view of it the Christian may advance with the steps of a conqueror; for from it streams the light of the Saviour’s love. When the sinner reaches the cross, and looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. The light of the knowledge of the glory

of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ; and the words of pardon are spoken: Live, O ye guilty sinners, live." —(*Review and Herald*, April 29, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133.

"It required the infinite merits of His blood to make an atonement for those who receive His love, and follow in His footsteps. Man may obtain pardon and peace only through Him who has loved us, and who will wash us from our sins in His own blood." —*Sigs of the Times*, July 6, 1888.

5. How complete is Jesus' blood in cleansing man from sin and reconciling him to God?

EPHESIANS 1:10 *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*

COLOSSIANS 1:14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.... See also verses 20-22.*

"And the apostle Paul, writing to the church at Colosse, says: 'And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight.' " —*Bible Echo*, February 21, 1898.

"There is a serious, solemn work to be done at this time. In all places the standard is to be lifted. God has 'made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:...' " —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 51.

RECONCILIATION AMONG PEOPLE

6. How did Jesus' sacrifice bridge the gap between heaven and earth, and also remove divisions among men?

EPHESIANS 2:12-14, 16 *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;... ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*

"Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven, and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life." —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 27.

A SPECIAL MINISTRY

7. Having accomplished such great healing between heaven and earth, what wonderful ministry has Jesus Christ given to His people?

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-20 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now 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.*

"There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. The truth is to be translated into many languages, that all nations may enjoy its pure, life-giving influence. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has entrusted to our keeping—the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. Christ has made us ambassadors to make known His salvation to the children of men; and if we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace." —*Evangelism*, pp. 570, 571.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Those who are in Christ's stead beseeching souls to be reconciled to God should by precept and example manifest an undying interest to save souls. Their earnestness, perseverance, self-denial, and spirit of sacrifice should as far exceed the diligence and earnestness of those securing earthly gain as the soul is more valuable than the trash of earth and the subject more elevated than earthly enterprises.... Earthly things are not enduring, although they cost so much. But one soul saved will shine in the kingdom of heaven throughout eternal ages." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 336.

"Through the cross we learn that our heavenly Father loves us with an infinite and everlasting love, and draws us to Him with more than a mother's yearning sympathy for a wayward child. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'? It is our privilege also to glory in the cross of Calvary, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then with the light of love that shines from His face on ours, we shall go forth to reflect it to those in darkness." —(*Review and Herald*, April 29, 1902) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1133.

* * *

Mediator between God and Man

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ, and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes; but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 118; *Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

JESUS INTERCEDES FOR US

1. Did Jesus' ministry for man end with His earthly ministry and the sacrifice on Calvary, or did it continue from His ascension until today? What is Jesus doing for His people?

ROMANS 8:34 *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

“Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of wrath on our world, full of hypocrisy and sin, destroying those who are filled with hatred to God. He might blot this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. ‘Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.’ ” —*Daughters of God*, p. 240.

MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

2. Through Jesus' death what happened to the sins committed during the time of the Old Testament? So, what is His role in the New Testament?

HEBREWS 9:15; 12:24 *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance....^{12:24} And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

“Our faith must grasp the glorious fact that God hears and answers the prayers of every sincere seeker. As the believer bows in supplication before God, and in humility and contrition offers his petition from unfeigned lips, keeping his eyes fixed steadily on the Mediator of the new covenant, he loses all thought of self. His mind is filled with the thought of what he must have in order to build up a Christlike character.” —*Review and Herald*, January 27, 1903.

"Our crucified Lord is pleading for us in the presence of the Father at the throne of grace. His atoning sacrifice we may plead for our pardon, our justification, and our sanctification. The Lamb slain is our only hope. Our faith looks up to Him, grasps Him as the One who can save to the uttermost, and the fragrance of the all-sufficient offering is accepted of the Father.... Christ's glory is concerned in our success. He has a common interest in all humanity. He is our sympathizing Saviour." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 71; (Letter 33, 1895) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948.

A MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY

3. Comparing the ministry performed by the Levitical high priest in the sanctuary with that of Jesus, what is man's great High Priest doing in heaven?

HEBREWS 8:6 *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

"A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 344.

"God's people are justified through the administration of the 'better covenant,' through Christ's righteousness. A covenant is an agreement by which parties bind themselves and each other to the fulfillment of certain conditions. Thus the human agent enters into agreement with God to comply with the conditions specified in His word. His conduct shows whether or not he respects these conditions." —(Manuscript 148, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 932.

LIVING TO MAKE INTERCESSION

4. Is the salvation purchased by Jesus limited, as were the effects of the Levitical ministry? For whom is Jesus making continual intercession?

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.*

"He is making intercession for the most lowly, the most oppressed and suffering, for the most tried and tempted ones. With upraised hands He pleads, 'I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.' God loves to hear, and responds to the pleadings of His Son." —(*Review and Herald*, August 15, 1893) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 948.

"He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness is willing to shine in your heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the veil, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 149.

THE ADVOCATE

5. What is Jesus doing today for His children? How great are His merits?

1 JOHN 2:1, 2 *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: ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

“How careful is the Lord Jesus to give no occasion for a soul to despair. How He fences about the soul from Satan’s fierce attacks. If through manifold temptations we are surprised or deceived into sin, He does not turn from us and leave us to perish. No, no, that is not our Saviour.... He was tempted in all points like as we are; and having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tempted. Our crucified Lord is pleading for us in the presence of the Father at the throne of grace. His atoning sacrifice we may plead for our pardon, our justification, and our sanctification. The Lamb slain is our only hope. Our faith looks up to Him, grasps Him as the One who can save to the uttermost, and the fragrance of the all-sufficient offering is accepted of the Father.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 49.

THE ONLY MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN

6. At least how many parties are involved when mediation takes place? Can we say that there are many beings—angels, saints, priests—carrying out mediation?

GALATIANS 3:20 *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

“As one who understands his subject, John ascribes all power to Christ, and speaks of His greatness and majesty. He flashes forth divine rays of precious truth, as light from the sun. He presents Christ as the only Mediator between God and humanity.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 74; *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 246.

“The Scripture bids us, ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.’ James 5:16.... If you repent of your sins, it is your duty to make confession of them.’ Sin of a private character is to be confessed to Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. For ‘if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 1 John 2:1. Every sin is an offense against God and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as openly confessed.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 228, 229.

FREE ACCESS TO THE HEAVENLY THRONE

7. What is the effect of sin in man’s relationship with God? What is possible because of Christ’s mediation?

ISAIAH 59:2 *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

EPHESIANS 2:18; 3:11, 12 *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.... ^{3:11}According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: ¹²In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*

"After the enemy had betrayed Adam and Eve into sin, the connection between heaven and earth was severed, and had it not been for Christ, the way to heaven would never have been known by the fallen race.... Christ is the mystic ladder, the base of which rests upon the earth, and whose topmost round reaches to the throne of the Infinite." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 82.

"We have access to God through the merits of the name of Christ, and God invites us to bring to Him our trials and temptations; for He understands them all. He would not have us pour out our woes to human ears. Through the blood of Christ we may come to the throne of grace and find grace to help in time of need. We may come with assurance, saying, 'My acceptance is in the Beloved.' 'For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.' Ephesians 2:18; 3:12." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 18.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 18.

"The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Romans 8:33, 34." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

* * *

16

Sabbath, October 14, 2017

The Great High Priest

"Confess the peculiar sins that you have cherished; repent of them, and put them away.... The mighty Conqueror has presented toil and struggle as the price of victory. Those who would win the crown must lift and bear the cross....

"By faith we should keep our eyes on Jesus our High Priest, who ministers in heaven for us. No other light has shone or ever will shine upon fallen men, save that which has been and shall be communicated by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. We should ever recount our blessings. We should gather them together and hang them in memory's hall." —*Review and Herald*, March 26, 1889.

A VERY IMPORTANT TRUTH

- 1. Considering the sanctuary and its services, what is most important for man? In what sanctuary is Jesus ministering for His people?**

HEBREWS 4:14; 8:1-3 *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession....*^{8:1}*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ²A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. ³For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.*

"As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne. Upon the throne with the eternal, self-existent One, is He who 'hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows' (Isaiah 53:4), who 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Hebrews 4:15.... 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.' 1 John 2:1. His intercession is that of a pierced and broken body, of a spotless life. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet, plead for fallen man, whose redemption was purchased at such infinite cost." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 69.

OFFERING HIS OWN BLOOD

- 2. Is Jesus like the Levitical priests, who in the sacrificial system offered blood that was not their own? Unlike the Levitical priesthood that in the ministry never suffered pain or death, what was the experience of God's Son in giving the greatest of all sacrifices?**

HEBREWS 9:11, 12; 2:18 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us....*^{2:18}*For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

"The very system of sacrifices was devised by Christ, and given to Adam as typifying a Saviour to come, who would bear the sins of the world, and die for its redemption....

"The blood of the Son of God was symbolized by the blood of the slain victim, and God would have clear and definite ideas preserved between the sacred and the common. Blood was sacred, inasmuch as through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God alone could there be atonement for sin." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 55.

"Thank God that we have a great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Christ has not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. By virtue of His own blood He entered in once for all into the holy place above, having obtained eternal redemption for us." —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 49.

THE DAILY SERVICE IN SYMBOL AND REALITY

- 3. What did the daily service of the Levitical priests include? What corresponding ministry has the great High Priest performed in heaven since His ascension?**

HEBREWS 9:6 *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.*

NUMBERS 28:3, 4; 15:27, 28 *This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. ⁴The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even;... ^{15:27}And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. ²⁸And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.*

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 priests ministered daily in the holy place,... Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim’s head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain.... The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 418.

“After His ascension, our Saviour was to begin His work as our High Priest. Says Paul, ‘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.’ Hebrews 9:24.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.

JESUS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY

4. What cleansing took place on the Day of Atonement in the typical service? What holy work has the antitypical High Priest performed in the heavenly sanctuary since the end of the 2,300 prophetic days of Daniel 8:14?

LEVITICUS 16:33 *And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*

HEBREWS 9:7, 23 *But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.... ²³It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

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

“As the sins of the people were anciently transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary by the blood of the sin offering, so our sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ. 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. This necessitates 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 Faith I Live By*, p. 206.

"Let faith ... center in Jesus, our High Priest, who hath entered for us within the veil. Whatever clouds overcast the sky, whatever storms surge around the soul, this anchor holds firm, and we may be sure of victory." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 127.

A GREATER, MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE

5. How does the heavenly tabernacle where Jesus ministers compare with the earthly tabernacle, which was just a symbol? What is Jesus accomplishing in His heavenly ministry?

HEBREWS 8:5; 9:9, FIRST PART, 11, 12 *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount....* ^{9:9}*Which was a figure for the time then present....* ¹¹*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;* ¹²*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

"Such was the service performed 'unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.' And what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary is done in reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary. After His ascension our Saviour began His work as our high priest. Says Paul: '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.' Hebrews 9:24." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 420.

"'The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:... but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Hebrews 12:24; 9:8-12." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 166.

A HIGH PRIEST SUCH AS NEVER WAS

6. What is clear when we compare the ancient Levitical priesthood with that of Jesus? Therefore, with what faith should we approach the heavenly throne of grace?

HEBREWS 7:26; 4:15, 16 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens....* ^{4:15}*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* ¹⁶*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

"The people were taught each day, by means of types and shadows, the great truths relative to the advent of Christ as Redeemer, Priest, and King; and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners. The sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic ritual were ever pointing toward a better service, even a heavenly." —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 195.

"No sooner does the child of God approach the mercy seat than he becomes the client of the great Advocate. At his first utterance of penitence and appeal for pardon Christ espouses his case and makes it His own, presenting the supplication before the Father as His own request." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 68.

7. Considering the Saviour's faithfulness and love, to whom will we be eternally grateful? Knowing that we have such a High Priest ministering in our behalf, what will we feel?

HEBREWS 3:1, 2; 6:19; 2:17 *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; ²Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.... ^{6:19}Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;... ^{2:17}Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

"'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.' 1 John 2:1. His intercession is that of a pierced and broken body, of a spotless life. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet, plead for fallen man, whose redemption was purchased at such infinite cost." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 69.

"Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer." —*My Life Today*, p. 297.

"We are to have free access to the atoning blood of Christ. This we must regard as the most precious privilege, the greatest blessing, ever granted to sinful man." —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 195.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"Our great High Priest completed the sacrificial offering of Himself when He suffered without the gate. Then a perfect atonement was made for the sins of the people. Jesus is our Advocate, our High Priest, our Intercessor. Our present position therefore is like that of the Israelites, standing in the outer court, waiting and looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ....

"Here we see the great Intercessor presenting His petition to His Father. No middle man comes between the sinner and Christ. No dead prophet, no buried saint is seen. Christ Himself is our Advocate. All that the Father is to His Son, He is to those whom His Son in His humanity represented. In every line of His work Christ acted as a representative of the Father. He lived as our substitute and surety. He labored as He would have His followers labor, unselfishly appreciating the value of every human being for whom He suffered and died. (Manuscript 128, 1897)." —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 913, 914.

* * *

After the Order of Melchizedek

“It was Christ that spoke through Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchizedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father. And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led His people, and has been the light of the world.” —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 409.

MELCHISEDEK, KING OF SALEM

1. What do the Scriptures relate about Melchisedek? When did the patriarch Abraham’s meeting with this famous king take place? Besides being king, what other ministry did he have?

GENESIS 14:18-20 *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. ¹⁹And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: ²⁰And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

“Melchizedek, in bestowing the benediction upon Abraham, had acknowledged Jehovah as the source of his strength and the author of the victory.... God was speaking to that people by His providence, but the last ray of light was rejected as all before had been.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 157.

Historical calculations indicate that Abraham was born around the year B.C. 1950. He left Haran at the age of 75 (Genesis 12:4) in B.C. 1875 and took Hagar as his second wife when he was 85 (Genesis 16:3) in B.C. 1865. The Bible puts his meeting with Melchisedek within this ten-year period and also gives the information that the King of Salem met the patriarch during this period of Abraham’s life (B.C. 1875-1865).

Concerning “Salem,” Sister White writes the following: “Near this place Abraham had proved his loyalty to God.... It had been the home of Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. It held a central and elevated position in the country and was protected by an environment of hills.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 703.

MELCHISEDEK’S HOLY OFFICES

2. What other appellations does the New Testament add to “king of Salem” and “priest of the Most High God”—those found in the Old Testament? Does the Spirit of prophecy give information about Melchisedek’s identity?

HEBREWS 7:2 *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.*

"God has never left Himself without witness on the earth. At one time Melchisedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ in person, to reveal the truth of heaven, and perpetuate the law of God." —(Letter 190, 1905.)

"It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchisedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father. And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led His people, and has been the light of the world. When God chose Abraham as a representative of His truth, He took him out of his country, and away from his kindred, and set him apart. He desired to mold him after His own model. He desired to teach him according to His own plan." —(*Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 1092, 1093.

UNKNOWN LINEAGE AND DESCENT

3. Do we know anything about Melchizedek's lineage? Can we suppose that he belonged to the tribe of Levi when Isaac, Jacob, and Levi were not yet born?

HEBREWS 7:3, 5, 6 *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually....⁵ And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: ⁶But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.*

While the Levitical priests could serve in the holy office only by proving their descent from Levi (Numbers 3:9, 10; Ezra 1:59-62), this was not the case with Melchisedek, whose genealogy is not presented in the Scriptures and therefore is unknown. Thus, the priesthood of Melchizedek was different from that of Levi and is thus an appropriate symbol of Jesus' priestly ministry.

PROPHECIES OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

4. What prophecies declared a century in advance that one day the Father would "beget" or consecrate His Son as priest? According to what order was He to become priest?

PSALM 2:7; 110:4 *I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee....^{110:4} The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

"As the divine Sufferer hung upon the cross, angels gathered about Him, and as they looked upon Him, and heard His cry, they asked, with intense emotion, 'Will not the Lord Jehovah save Him?'... Then were the words spoken: 'The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent.' Father and Son are pledged to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant.... Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between Him and His Father before the foundation of the world was laid. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry." —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 76.

SCRIPTURE EXPLAINS THE PROPHECY

- 5. Where do we find the connection of the sentence, “Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee” with Jesus’ office as High Priest? What does the prophecy mean by the expression “after the order of Melchisedek”?**

HEBREWS 5:4-6 *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. ⁵So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. ⁶As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.*

Connected with Psalm 2:6, where the Son of God was set as King on the holy hill of Zion, verse 7 states that “this day” He was “begotten.” How does the New Testament apply this verse? How is the term “begotten” interpreted? Psalm 2:7 is quoted at least three times in the New Testament (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5), applying the word “begotten” in one place to the resurrection of Jesus. Acts 13:33. In Hebrews 5:5, there is also a figurative reference to His designation as High Priest: “So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest.” The meaning seems to be that when “a child is born,” or begotten, “a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6) to the people. On this occasion, setting His Son as High Priest, the Father gave mankind His Son in the new function of High Priest.

The priesthood of Christ was according to the order of Melchizedek for a number of reasons:

1) Melchisedek, as a man (Hebrews 7:4), was both king and priest at the same time (Genesis 14:8), exactly as Jesus is now Priest and the soon coming King of kings. Hebrews 8:1, 2; Zechariah 6:12, 13; Revelation 19:16.

2) The Scriptures call Melchisedek the king of righteousness (Hebrews 7:2), just as Jesus is called “the Lord our righteousness.” Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16; Isaiah 11:5.

3) The Scriptures define Melchisedek as the king of peace (Hebrews 7:2) and call Jesus the Prince of Peace in prophecy. Isaiah 9:5.

4) The priesthood of Melchizedek was individual, and the priesthood of Jesus consists of a single person (Hebrews 7:23, 24) who is not part of a tribe.

5) The Levitical priests were temporary because of death (Hebrews 7:23, 24), while Melchisedek is presented as having no record of end of life and thus is a type of the Son of God, who continues to be the Priest. Hebrews 7:3; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:15-17, 21.

6) Melchisedek was not a descendant of Levi, who lived a century later. Jesus was also not a descendant of Levi but of Judah. Hebrews 7:13, 14.

7) Melchisedek came to the holy office not through law (Hebrews 7:15, 16) but by God’s call, exactly as Jesus did. Psalm 110:4.

How thankful we should be for the special ministry of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, in our behalf! Hebrews 8:1, 2.

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

- 6. Before becoming High Priest, what did Jesus become for those who believe in and obey Him? Can we think that He appointed Himself to this office? Who called Him “High Priest after the order of Melchisedek”?**

HEBREWS 5:9, 10 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; ¹⁰Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedek.*

“Christ was put to the closest test, requiring the strength of all His faculties to resist the inclination when in danger, to use His power to deliver Himself from peril, and triumph over the power of the prince of darkness. Satan showed his knowledge of the weak points of the human heart, and put forth his utmost power to take advantage of the weakness of the humanity which Christ had assumed in order to overcome his temptations on man’s account.” —(*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1875.)

“Christ glorified not Himself in being made High Priest. God gave Him His appointment to the priesthood. He was to be an example to all the human family. He qualified Himself to be, not only the representative of the race, but their Advocate, so that every soul if he will may say, I have a Friend at court. He is a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” —(*Manuscript 101*, 1897) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 930.

A MINISTRY ESTABLISHED FOREVER

7. How long will Jesus exercise the ministry of High Priest after the order of Melchisedek? As Priest and Forerunner, what place did He enter for mankind?

HEBREWS 5:6; 6:19, 20 *As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.... ^{6:19}Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; ²⁰Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.*

“We have a good hope through Jesus. It is sure and steadfast and entereth into that within the veil. It yields us consolation in affliction, it gives us joy amid anguish, disperses the gloom around us, and causes us to look through it all to immortality and eternal life.... Earthly treasures are no inducement to us, for while we have this hope it reaches clear above the treasures of earth that are passing away and takes hold of the immortal inheritance, the treasures that are durable, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fade not away....” —(*In Heavenly Places*, p. 352).

“The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent Christ, who was to become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. This order of priesthood was not to pass to another, or be superseded by another.” —(*Redemption: The First Advent of Christ*, p. 14) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 930.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant.” —(*The Faith I Live By*, p. 76).

“In human nature, as our substitute, as our surety, He laid hold upon the very hope that it is our privilege to take hold of, and that is infinite power. Through this, our Saviour overcame the temptations of the enemy and obtained the victory. For whom? Why, in our behalf. Why? That not one of the members of the human family need to stumble in the road that leads to everlasting life. Because He has traveled it before us,

He knows every obstruction, He knows every difficulty that every soul upon the face of the earth must meet. He knows this...." —(Manuscript 12, 1895) *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 185.

* * *

***Read the Missionary Report from the
Emerging Countries of the Americas on page 81***

18

Sabbath, October 28, 2017

Lord and King

"The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Immanuel 'shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.' 'The tabernacle of God' shall be with men, 'and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.' Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 21:3." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 108.

THE PROMISED ONE WILL BE KING

- 1. What message is contained in one of the oldest prophecies concerning the position of the Messiah who was to come? For how long would this descendant of David reign?**

GENESIS 49:10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

2 SAMUEL 7:12, 16 *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.... ¹⁶And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*

"The Messiah was to be of the royal line, for in the prophecy uttered by Jacob the Lord said, 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.' Genesis 49:10.

"Isaiah prophesied: 'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.' 'Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the

Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee.' Isaiah 11:1; 55:3-5." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 223.

2. How did a later prophet confirm His preexistence and royal dignity? What did another prophecy say about the humble, lowly King who would bring salvation?

MICAH 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

ZECHARIAH 9:9 *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings.... Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Isaiah 9:6. His 'goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: 'The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' Proverbs 8:22-30." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

STAR OF THE KING OF THE JEWS

3. What did the wise men say about the Baby they were searching for? What joyful event called attention to the prophecy concerning the coming of the humble King?

MATTHEW 2:1, 2; 21:4, 5 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, ²Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.... ^{21:4}All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

"Five hundred years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Zechariah thus foretold the coming of the King to Israel. This prophecy is now to be fulfilled. He who has so long refused royal honors now comes to Jerusalem as the promised heir to David's throne." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 569.

"These wise men had seen the heavens illuminated with light, which enshrouded the heavenly host who heralded the advent of Christ to the humble shepherds....

"This light was a distant cluster of flaming angels, which appeared like a luminous star. The unusual appearance of the large bright star, which they had never seen before, hanging as a sign in the heavens, attracted their attention.... The wise men directed their course where the star seemed to lead them." –*Maranatha*, p. 11.

HIS KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

4. What did the procurator Pilate ask Jesus during His trial? Was Jesus' answer negative or positive? What inscription did the governor order to be put over the cross?

JOHN 18:33, 36, 37; 19:19 *Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?...³⁶Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.³⁷Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice....^{19:19}And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews.*

"Look at the superscription written above the cross. The Lord arranged it. Written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it is a call for all, Jew and Gentile, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, hopeless, helpless, and perishing, to come. Christ has made of none effect the power of Satan. He laid hold of the pillars of Satan's kingdom, and passed through the conflict, destroying him that had the power of death. A way was now opened whereby mercy and truth could meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other." —(Manuscript 111, 1897), *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1107.

"Truth was truth to Him, and it never suffered in His hands; for He was the author of truth. 'To this end,' He says, 'was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' ... He was the embodiment of truth and holiness. He who had stood in the councils of God, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, was speaking that whereof He knew." —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 26.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

5. As what does the book of Revelation recognize Jesus on the very first page? Accordingly, in His own time, what glorious role will the Son of God take up?

REVELATION 1:5; 17:14; 19:11, 12, 16 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood....^{17:14}These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful....^{19:11}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....¹⁶And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

"Not now a 'Man of Sorrows, to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. 'Faithful and True,' 'in righteousness He doth judge and make war.' ... The firmament seems filled with radiant forms—ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thou-

sands.' No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. 'His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.' Habakkuk 3:3, 4. 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." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

6. Who will one day exalt the merits of Jesus Christ as Lord? How many will bow down and acknowledge that Jesus is not only the Son of Man, but also the Lord, to the glory of God?

REVELATION 5:11-13 *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ¹²Saying 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. ¹³And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:10, 11 *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

"Christ is now acknowledged as the King of Glory. 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' Matthew 21:9. The question of His divinity is forever settled. Where are those who held the Saviour bound at Pilate's bar, who smote Him in the face, who scourged Him, who drove the nails through His hands and feet? those who mocked Him, saying, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save...'? Matthew 27:42. Where is the puny arm that will be lifted against Him now? The scene is changed. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Christ, Lord of heaven and earth...." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 358.

DOMINION AND GLORY OVER ALL

7. To whom will all dominion, greatness, glory, and the kingdom belong? For how long will the kingdom of peace and righteousness exist?

DANIEL 7:13, 14, 27 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.... ²⁷And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

"The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this

coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2,300 days in 1844.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

“The kingdom of God’s grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. ‘The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,’ is to be given to ‘the people of the saints of the Most High.’ Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them ‘from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 108.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Again I looked and saw the earth purified. There was not a single sign of the curse. The broken, uneven surface of the earth now looked like a level, extensive plain. God’s entire universe was clean, and the great controversy was forever ended. Wherever we looked, everything upon which the eye rested was beautiful and holy. And all the redeemed host, old and young, great and small, cast their glittering crowns at the feet of their Redeemer, and prostrated themselves in adoration before Him, and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever. The beautiful new earth, with all its glory, was the eternal inheritance of the saints. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was then given to the saints of the Most High, who were to possess it forever, even forever and ever.” —*Early Writings*, p. 295.

* * *

MISSIONARY REPORT

from the Emerging Countries of the Americas

To be read on Sabbath, October 28, 2017

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, November 4, 2017*

*“Keep silence before Me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.”
Isaiah 41:1.*

The emerging countries and “mission fields” in the Americas at present include Aruba, Belize, Cuba, French Guiana, Guyana, Haiti, and Suriname. Each has its own unique characteristics and opportunities, and that is what makes this Special Sabbath School Offering different. The funds gathered will be used to help these countries be better organized; and their members, better established in the present truth. In addition, as God opens the way, a portion of the funds gathered may also be used as seed money to enter other countries in the region—Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Greenland, Grenada, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago.

The General Conference is humbled by the task our Master has given us to carry the gospel to the whole world. Observing world developments, we can only ask, “How long, Lord Jesus?” We do not know how much time is left before the opportunities and freedoms we still enjoy will disappear as prophecy is fulfilled. What will we do then with our influence, money, time, and talents? In the day of Christ’s coming, either those things will witness against us, or our treasure chest of jewels will be full in the coming kingdom.

As you consider your own special blessings, please also consider the souls in darkness who are hungering and thirsting for that righteousness that comes with the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Buy the truth for another, and pray that they will sell it not.

Here is a brief summary of the work being done in the emerging countries in the Americas.

ARUBA is a small Caribbean island 29 kilometers (18 miles) north of Venezuela. It measures just 32 kilometers (20 miles) long and 10 kilometers (6 miles) across at its widest point. It is a popular tourist destination for visitors who love its warm, sunny weather and dry climate.

For many years, the work in Aruba was done by volunteers, with an occasional visit from pastors, usually from Venezuela. Now a full-time pastor is searching for interested individuals among the approximately 100,000 inhabitants.

BELIZE, a country on the eastern coast of Central America, is bordered by Mexico on the north, Guatemala on the south and west, and the Caribbean Sea on the east. Its mainland is about 290 kilometers (180 miles) long and 110 kilometers (68 miles) wide. It has a culturally diverse population of 368,310 with a growth rate of 1.87% per year. While English is the official language, the many other languages that are spoken tell of this country's rich history and diversity.

While Belize is part of the British Commonwealth, with Queen Elizabeth II as its monarch and head of state, the country also has strong ties to the Caribbean region. *The Sabbath Watchman* reported on the first chapel that was erected there and that the work in Belize has gained new interested souls.

CUBA is the island nation located in the Caribbean west of Haiti and north of Jamaica. Culturally and linguistically, Cuba is part of Latin America; but because of the government's Communist ideology, freedom of religion is very limited. The population numbers about 11 million, with 65% claiming to be Christian (60% Roman Catholic and 5% Evangelical Protestant); 23%, unaffiliated; 17%, no religion; and 0.4%, affiliated with other religions.

The 100-plus members in Cuba are moving forward with God's blessing, and new souls are being added to the church. The work has been supported financially by individuals in the U.S. and Mexico and by the General Conference; but more help is needed to support the increasing interest.

FRENCH GUIANA is located on the north Atlantic coast of South America. Bordering Brazil on the east and south and Suriname on the west, it covers 83,534 square kilometers (32,253 square miles), with half of its approximately 250,000 inhabitants living in or near Cayenne, the capital. While the official language is French, each ethnic community has its own language, with French Guianese Creole being the most widely spoken. The dominant religion is Roman Catholicism.

The first missionary entered this country just recently, so the need for spiritual and financial support is critical, as is the case at the start of any new work.

GUYANA is also located on the northern mainland of South America, on the western side of Suriname. It is the fourth-smallest country on mainland South America after Uruguay, Suriname, and French Guiana. It is the only South American country with English as its official language. However, the majority of the racially and ethnically heterogeneous population speaks Guyanese Creole. Approximately 64% are Christian; 25%, Hindu; and 7%, Muslim, while 3% do not profess any faith. Most Guyanese Christians are Protestant or Roman Catholic, coming from East India, Africa, China, and Europe, while a significant portion of the population is of indigenous ancestry.

New interest in Guyana calls for the appropriation of time and means.

HAITI shares the Western portion of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. In the 18th Century, Haiti's sugar cane planta-

tions were among the most lucrative in the world. That changed on January 1, 1804, when it became the first independent nation of Latin America and the Caribbean and the second republic in the Americas. It is the only country in the western hemisphere to have defeated three European superpowers (Britain, France, and Spain), and the only nation in the world established as a result of a successful slave revolt.

Today Haitians struggle with a per capita GDP of just \$1,200 per year. Despite having a viable tourist industry, Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world and the poorest in the Americas. The landmass of the country is 27,750 square kilometers (10,714 square miles), with an estimated population of about 10.6 million people—the second-most populous country in the Caribbean after Cuba. Approximately 80% of the people profess to be Roman Catholic; and 16%, Protestant (10% Baptist, 4% Pentecostal, 1% Adventist, 1% other). Other religions (Islam, Baha'i, Judaism, and Buddhism) are professed by 3%, and 1% claim no faith.

Despite hurricanes, earthquakes, widespread spiritualism, and government corruption, Haiti has been blessed by the Lord to have honest souls being called to the foot of the cross. May God bless all who have already sacrificed and are sacrificing so the work recently begun anew can continue.

SURINAME is bordered by French Guiana on the east, Guyana on the west, Brazil on the south, and the Caribbean Sea on the north. With a landmass of just under 165,000 square kilometers (64,000 square miles), it is the smallest country on the South American continent. Most of the approximately 565,000 inhabitants live near the country's north coast. About a third of them live in or near the capital, Paramaribo. While Suriname became independent of the Netherlands in 1975, there are close economic, diplomatic, and cultural ties between the two countries. The first 14 years of its independence were quite unstable politically.

Half of the Surinamese profess Christianity (about 22% Roman Catholic, 11% Pentecostal, 12% Moravian, and 4% other Protestant denominations). Approximately 22% are Hindu, 14% are Islamic, 5% are other religions, and 10% are unaffiliated.

"There is work to be done for the Master. How many souls might be saved, if each professed follower of Christ would do all that lay in his power to do! My brother, my sister, there are all around us the poor, who may receive from you the words of Christ, after you have fed and clothed them. There are the sick, whom it is your duty to visit. There are sorrowing ones to be comforted and prayed for. If the Lord has blessed you with this world's goods, it is not that you may greedily hoard it, or expend it in the indulgence of pride. Remember that He will one day say, 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' Let us invest our means in the bank of heaven by using it to supply the wants of the needy or to advance the cause of God. Then the Master at His coming, having found us faithful over a few things, will make us each

ruler over ‘many things’ in the kingdom of glory.” –*Review and Herald*, December 6, 1881.

“... For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” Matthew 10:23.

–*Brethren of the General Conference*

LIST OF CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	POPULATION	DENSITY/SQUARE KM
Antigua & Barbuda	89,000	202
Aruba	102,000	569
Bahamas	372,000	37
Barbados	283,000	659
Belize	324,000	14
Cayman Islands	58,000	240
Cuba	11,270,000	106
Curacao	152,000	342
Dominica	72,000	96
Dominican Republic	10,000,000	213
Grenada	1,058,000	310
Guyana	795,000	4
Haiti	10,600,000	369
Jamaica	2,700,000	250
Puerto Rico	3,670,000	413
St. Kitts & Nevis	54,000	206
St. Lucia	181,000	297
St. Martin	31,000	569
St. Maarten	39,000	1,150
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	109,000	280
Suriname	565,000	3
Trinidad & Tobago	1,340,000	261
TOTAL	43,864,000	

**Special Sabbath School Offering for
EMERGING COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS**

Let your generous offerings reflect God's love for people in every culture!

19

Sabbath, November 4, 2017

“I Will Come Again”

“Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’ John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34. Well might the disciples rejoice in the hope of their Lord’s return.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

ENOCH PROCLAIMED JESUS’ COMING IN GLORY

1. What did Enoch see and warn about way back in his time?

JUDE 1:14, 15 *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, ¹⁵To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

“Enoch had been troubled in regard to the dead. It had seemed to him that the righteous and the wicked would go to the dust together, and that this would be their end. He could not see the life of the just beyond the grave. In prophetic vision he was instructed concerning the death of Christ, and was shown His coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave. He also saw the corrupt state of the world when Christ should appear the second time—that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation, denying the only God and the Lord Jesus Christ, trampling upon the law, and despising the atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor, and the wicked banished from the presence of the Lord, and destroyed by fire.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 85, 86.

JOB BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD SEE THE LORD

2. What other patriarch had the firm conviction that the Redeemer would come and that he would rejoice to see Him?

JOB 19:25-27 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

“The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures.... Enoch, only the seventh in descent from them that dwelt in Eden, he who for three centuries on earth walked with his God, was permitted to behold from afar the coming of the Deliverer. ‘Behold,’ he declared, ‘the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all.’ Jude 14, 15. The patriarch Job in the night of his affliction exclaimed with unshaken trust: ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:... in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.’ Job 19:25-27.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 299.

THE LORD’S COMING WITH FIRE

3. What was the firm belief even of the psalmist Asaph? How did he describe the future powerful manifestation of God?

PSALM 50:1-3 *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. ²Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. ³Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

“The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place.

“Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a ‘man of sorrows,’ to drink the bitter cup of shame and woe, He comes, victor in heaven and earth, to judge the living and the dead. ‘Faithful and True,’ ‘in righteousness he doth judge and make war.’... No human pen can portray the scene; no mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor. ‘His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light.’ Habakkuk 3:3, 4. 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.” —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 349.

GATHERING THE SAINTS

4. What will the Lord do for His saints who have made and kept their covenant of loyalty to Him?

PSALM 50:4-6 *He 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.*

“When Christ shall come the earth will tremble before Him, and the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, and every mountain and every island will be moved out of its place. ‘Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall

call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.' Psalm 50:3-6. In view of the great day of God, we can see that our only safety will be found in departing from all sin and iniquity. Those who continue in sin will be found among the condemned and perishing." —*Faith and Works*, pp. 116, 117.

JESUS TELLS OF HIS DEPARTURE

5. What did Jesus say to the officers who were sent to arrest Him? How did He repeat that message just before the crucifixion in a conversation with His disciples?

JOHN 7:33, 34; 13:33, 36 *Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. ³⁴Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.... ^{13:33}Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come;.... ³⁶Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whithersoever I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

"The leaders of the Pharisees, who were anxiously watching the course of events, caught the expressions of sympathy among the throng. Hurrying away to the chief priests, they laid their plans to arrest Him. They arranged, however, to take Him when He was alone; for they dared not seize Him in the presence of the people. Again Jesus made it manifest that He read their purpose. 'Yet a little while am I with you,' He said, 'and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.' Soon He would find a refuge beyond the reach of their scorn and hate. He would ascend to the Father, to be again the Adored of the angels; and thither His murderers could never come." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 457, 458.

"Soon the Saviour of the world will find a refuge from the persecution of His enemies, where their scorn and hate will be powerless to harm Him. He will ascend to His Father, to be again the Adored of angels; and thither His murderers can never come." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 343.

JESUS' PROMISE TO RETURN

6. Did Jesus tell His disciples only about His leaving? What did He add to comfort and strengthen them in their faith?

JOHN 14:2-4 *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

"He spoke to them also words of hope and courage. '... If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.' John 14:1-4. For your sake I came into the world; for you I have been working.

"When I go away I shall still work earnestly for you. I came to the world to reveal Myself to you, that you might believe. I go to My Father and yours to cooperate with Him in your behalf." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 21, 22.

“... Sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 254.

HIS RETURN CONFIRMED BY ANGELS

7. What good news did the disciples hear in the moment when He ascended? According to what they heard, will Jesus’ coming be a spiritual or a real, personal one?

ACTS 1:9-11 *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

“The disciples were still looking earnestly toward heaven when, ‘behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.’ Acts 1:10, 11.

“The promise of Christ’s second coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end,’ would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 33.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Christ’s favorite theme was the paternal tenderness and abundant grace of God; He dwelt much upon the holiness of His character and His law; He presented Himself to the people as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let these be the themes of Christ’s ministers. Present the truth as it is in Jesus. Make plain the requirements of the law and the gospel. Tell the people of Christ’s life of self-denial and sacrifice; of His humiliation and death; of His resurrection and ascension; of His intercession for them in the courts of God; of His promise, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’ John 14:3.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 40.

* * *

Coming in Power and Glory

“When Christ shall come to the earth again, not as a prisoner surrounded by a rabble will men see Him. They will see Him then as heaven’s King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.... And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ Revelation 19:16.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

VISIBLE TO ALL ON EARTH

1. **What did say Jesus about His glorious return? Does “coming in the clouds” mean that He will be invisible to human eyes?**

MATTHEW 24:30 *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.*

MARK 14:62 *And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

REVELATION 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

“The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them ... had now gone to share His Father’s throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended... Thus will be fulfilled the Lord’s own promise to His disciples: ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ John 14:3.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

“Jesus is coming, coming with clouds and great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to honor those who have loved Him and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them or His promise. There will be a relinking of the family chain.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 565.

2. **Will He appear in some remote, hidden place? What illustration did the Lord use to show how visible His coming will be?**

MATTHEW 24:23-28 *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ²⁴For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. ²⁵Behold, I have told you before. ²⁶Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret cham-*

bers; believe it not. ²⁷For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ²⁸For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

LUKE 17:24 *For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

“And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit the manner of Christ’s advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold the manner of His second coming. ‘... Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’ Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This coming there is no possibility of counterfeiting. It will be universally known—witnessed by the whole world.” —*Darkness before Dawn*, p. 42.

ACCOMPANIED BY ANGELS

3. Will Jesus’ coming be something He does by Himself, or will He be accompanied by others?

MATTHEW 25:31; 16:27 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:... ^{16:27}For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

“It is called the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. His coming surpasses in glory all that the eye has ever seen. Far exceeding anything the imagination has conceived will be His personal revelation in the clouds of heaven.... At His second appearing He comes with His own glory and the glory of the Father and attended by the angelic host of heaven. In the place of that crown of thorns which marred His brow, He wears a crown within a crown. No longer is He clad with the garments of humility, with the old kingly robe placed upon Him by His mockers. No: He comes clad in a robe whiter than the whitest white. Upon His vesture and thigh a name is inscribed, ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ ” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 357.

4. What great changes in nature will take place when the Lord appears in power and glory?

PSALM 50:3; 97:5 *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.... ^{97:5}The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*

REVELATION 6:14 *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*

“When Christ shall come the earth will tremble before Him, and the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, and every mountain and every island will be moved out of its place. ‘Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His

people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.' Psalm 50:3-6. In view of the great day of God, we can see that our only safety will be found in departing from all sin and iniquity. Those who continue in sin will be found among the condemned and perishing." —*Faith and Works*, pp. 116, 117.

THE LORD'S VOICE AND THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET

5. Will His coming be a silent event, or will it be characterized by great sound? Even who will hear His voice?

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*

MATTHEW 24:31 *And 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.*

JOHN 5:25, 28 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live....²⁸Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.*

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This is the word of comfort wherewith He bids us comfort one another." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 320.

"This is high authority for our faith. Jesus and His apostles dwell upon the event of the second advent with joy and triumph; and the holy angels proclaim that Christ, who ascended to heaven, shall come again. This is our offense—believing the word of Jesus and His disciples. This is a very old doctrine, and bears no taint of heresy." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 42.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

6. What do the Scriptures call the final day, the day of His return?

JOEL 2:31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.*

MALACHI 4:5 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

ACTS 2:20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.*

"After speaking of the end of the world, Jesus comes back to Jerusalem, the city then sitting in pride and arrogance, and saying, 'I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow' (see Revelation 18:7). As His prophetic eye rests upon Jerusalem, He sees that as she was given up to destruction, the world will be given up to its doom. The scenes that transpired at the destruction of Jerusalem will be repeated at

the great and terrible day of the Lord, but in a more fearful manner....” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 417.

REDEMPTION AMID THE GREATEST TURMOIL

7. While for the wicked Jesus’ coming will be a day of terror and punishment, what great assurance do those who love the Lord and trust in Him have?

MALACHI 3:16, 17; 4:2 *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. ¹⁷And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.... ^{4:2}But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

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

“Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God.... Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great antitypical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God’s protection. The names of those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Saviour—more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning—will be numbered with those who are sealed. Those who, while having all the light of truth flashing upon their souls, should have works corresponding to their avowed faith....” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 445.

“How strongly and brightly shines the mercy and lovingkindness of God in His dealings toward His heritage.... All heaven has the deepest interest in our welfare, that Satan shall not control us and conform us to his character.” —*This Day with God*, p. 123.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The proclamation of Christ’s coming should now be, as when made by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, good tidings of great joy. Those who really love the Saviour cannot but hail with gladness the announcement founded upon the word of God that He in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered is coming again, not to be insulted, despised, and rejected, as at His first advent, but in power and glory, to redeem His people. It is those who do not love the Saviour that desire Him to remain away, and there can be no more conclusive evidence that the churches have departed from God than the irritation and animosity excited by this Heaven-sent message.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 339, 340.

* * *

Relying on His Word

“Christ continues, pointing out the condition of the world at His coming: ‘As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’ Christ does not here bring to view a temporal millennium, a thousand years in which all are to prepare for eternity. He tells us that as it was in Noah’s day, so will it be when the Son of man comes again.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

SUDDENLY, AS A THIEF

1. Explaining His return, what vivid illustration did Jesus use?

REVELATION 16:15 *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1, 2 *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.*

2 PETER 3:10, FIRST PART *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night....*

“Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ’s return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise, ‘If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’ John 14:3. To the tried and faithful ones the coming might seem long delayed, but the apostle assured them: ‘The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...’” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 536.

2. Although we are informed about the signs preceding the Lord’s coming, does this mean that we know the exact time?

MATTHEW 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

“But the day and the hour of His coming Christ has not revealed. He stated plainly to His disciples that He Himself could not make known the day or the hour of His second appearing. Had He been at liberty to reveal this, why need He have exhorted them to maintain an attitude of constant expectancy? There are those who claim to know the very day and hour of our Lord’s appearing. Very earnest are they in mapping out the future. But the Lord has warned them off the ground they occupy. The exact time of the second coming of the Son of man is God’s mystery.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 632, 633.

3. While the Lord has revealed specific events and details of Jesus' return, why has He not made known the day and hour?

MARK 13:32, 33 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. ³³Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.*

ACTS 1:7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

"The exact time of Christ's second coming is not revealed. Jesus said, No man knoweth the day nor the hour. But He also gave signs of His coming, and said, 'When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.' He bade them, as the signs of His coming should appear, 'Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.' And in view of these things the apostle wrote: 'Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.' Since we know not the hour of Christ's coming, we must live soberly and godly in this present world, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'" —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 258.

4. In spite of the preaching of the gospel and the signs of the times that are becoming more and more obvious, what will Jesus' coming be for many people?

LUKE 21:34 *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.*

MARK 13:35, SECOND PART, 36 ... *For ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: ³⁶Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.*

"These words of Christ should sink into the hearts of all who believe present truth:... Our danger is presented before us by Christ Himself. He knew the perils we should meet in these last days, and would have us prepare for them. 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.' They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and swept them all away. The day of God will find men absorbed in like manner in the business and pleasures of the world, in feasting and gluttony, and in indulging perverted appetite in the defiling use of liquor and the narcotic tobacco. This is already the condition of our world, and these indulgences are found even among God's professed people, some of whom are following the customs and partaking of the sins of the world." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 309.

LIGHT AT THE PROPER TIME

5. In past events, did the Lord always provide every detail ahead of time and all at once? What did the apostle Paul write about this?

EPHESIANS 3:4, 5 *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:9, 10, 12 *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.... ¹²For 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.*

“Jesus is waiting with longing desire to open before His people the glory that will attend His second advent, and to carry them forward to a contemplation of the landscape of bliss. There are wonders to be revealed. A long lifetime of prayer and research will leave much unexplored and unexplained. But what we know not now will be revealed hereafter. The work of instruction begun here will be carried on to all eternity. The Lamb, as He leads the hosts of the redeemed to the fountain of living waters, will impart rich stores of knowledge; He will unravel mysteries in the works and providence of God that have never before been understood.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 361.

AVOIDING SPECULATION

- 6. If the Lord has not revealed certain aspects of the future, is it wise to speculate about them? Instead of making conjectures that will help no one, what should be our primary interest?**

DEUTERONOMY 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

2 PETER 1:20 *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*

MATTHEW 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

TITUS 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

“We can never by searching find out God. He does not lay open His plans to prying, inquisitive minds. We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty. The apostle exclaims, ‘How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!’ It is a proof of His mercy that there is the hiding of His power, that He is enshrouded in the awful clouds of mystery and obscurity; for to lift the curtain that conceals the Divine Presence is death. No mortal mind can penetrate the secrecy in which the Mighty One dwells and works. We can comprehend no more of His dealings with us and the motives that actuate Him than He sees fit to reveal.... He will reveal to us as much of His purposes as it is for our good to know; and beyond that we must trust the hand that is omnipotent, the heart that is full of love.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 361.

WAITING HOPEFULLY BY FAITH

- 7. Even though Abraham received the promise several times that he and his descendants would possess the land of Canaan, how did he live while waiting for the promise to be fulfilled? What does his example teach us?**

HEBREWS 11:9, 10 *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the*

same promise: ¹⁰For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

JAMES 5:7, 8 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ⁸Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

"God gave to Abraham a view of this immortal inheritance, and with this hope he was content. 'By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Hebrews 11:9, 10.

"Of the posterity of Abraham it is written, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Verse 13. We must dwell as pilgrims and strangers here if we would gain 'a better country, that is, an heavenly.' Verse 16. Those who are children of Abraham will be seeking the city which he looked for, 'whose builder and maker is God.' " —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 170.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"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.

"Abraham's unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith and reliance upon God to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: 'God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me.' Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 524.

* * *

Character Preparation

“Especially important to the church in our time are the teachings of the apostle upon this point. To those living so near the great consummation, the words of Paul should come with telling force: ‘Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.’ –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 260, 261.

THE BLESSED HOPE

- 1. For the faithful believers, is the return of Christ just a doctrine, or a cherished event in the near future? What did the apostle Paul call this?**

2 TIMOTHY 4:8 *Henceforth 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.*

TITUS 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

“‘The thoughts of the coming of the Lord,’ said Baxter, ‘are most sweet and joyful to me.’ –Richard Baxter, *Works*, vol. 17, p. 555. ‘It is the work of faith and the character of His saints to love His appearing and to look for that blessed hope.’... ‘This is the day that all believers should long, and hope, and wait for, as being the accomplishment of all the work of their redemption, and all the desires and endeavors of their souls.’ ‘Hasten, O Lord, this blessed day!’ –*Ibid.*, vol. 17, pp. 182, 183. Such was the hope of the apostolic church, of the ‘church in the wilderness,’ and of the Reformers.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 303, 304.

“We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world.” –*Evangelism*, p. 220.

FEW PREPARED

- 2. Although Noah warned the world about the coming flood, how many in his days were prepared for that event? Why were there so few?**

2 PETER 2:5 *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

MATTHEW 24:37-39 *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

"The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities....

"So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 228.

ALWAYS PREPARED

3. With the great day of the Lord approaching and knowing the experience of Noah's generation, what appeal does the Lord make?

MATTHEW 24:42-44 *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.*

"We know not the exact time of our Lord's coming. But whether it be this year, or next year, or in several years, Christ has told us that He will come as a thief in the night. He says unto all, 'Watch.' To very, very many, He will come in such an hour as they think not. At the time of His coming, men will be asking, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' ...

"If ever God's watchmen needed to be on their guard, it is now.... The trumpet must give a certain sound. There will be a general proclamation of truth, the whole earth will be enlightened with the glory of God, but those only will recognize the light who have sought to know the difference between holiness and sin." —*The Upward Look*, p. 365.

4. In the parable of the ten virgins, they were all expecting the bridegroom to come for the feast, but what happened to half of them? Therefore, what is the Lord's warning for today?

MATTHEW 25:6, 7, 10-13 *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.... 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.*

LUKE 12:40 *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

MARK 13:37 *And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

“Let none follow the example of the foolish virgins and think that it will be safe to wait until the crisis comes before gaining a preparation of character to stand in that time. It will be too late to seek for the righteousness of Christ when the guests are called in and examined. Now is the time to put on the righteousness of Christ—the wedding garment that will fit you to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. In the parable, the foolish virgins are represented as begging for oil and failing to receive it at their request. This is symbolic of those who have not prepared themselves by developing a character to stand in a time of crisis.... Character is not transferable. It is not to be bought or sold; it is to be acquired. The Lord has given to every individual an opportunity to obtain a righteous character..., but He has not provided a way by which one human agent may impart to another the character which he has developed....” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 350.

JOY AT HIS APPEARING

5. How will the faithful believers rejoice in the day of Jesus’ coming? With what wonderful words will they greet Him?

ISAIAH 25:9 *And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

“Jesus is coming! But not to listen to the woes of mankind, and to hear the guilty sinner confess his sins, and to speak pardon to Him; for everyone’s case will then be decided for life or death. Those who have lived in sin will remain sinners forever. Those who have confessed their sins to Jesus in the sanctuary, have made Him their friend, and have loved His appearing will have pardon written for all their sins, and they, having purified their souls ‘in obeying the truth,’ will remain pure and holy forever.

“Seek a thorough preparation to meet Jesus, that when He appears you may exclaim with joy, ‘Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.’ Eternal life will then be yours, and you will be a partaker with Christ of His glory, ever to hear His glorious approving voice, and behold His lovely person.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 379.

6. What did Jesus say would happen to those who are ready for His coming and actively carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them?

MATTHEW 24:46, 47 *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.* ⁴⁷*Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

“How many will mourn for lost opportunities when it is eternally too late! Today we have talent and opportunity, but we know not how long these may be ours. Then let us work while it is day; for the night cometh, in which no man can work.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 167.

“We are to be vigilant, watching for the coming of the Son of man; and we must also be diligent; working as well as waiting is required; there must be a union of the two. This will balance the Christian character, making it well developed, symmetrical. We should not feel that we are to neglect everything else, and give ourselves up to meditation, study, or prayer; neither are we to be full of bustle and hurry and work, to the neglect of personal piety. Waiting and watching and working are to be blended. ‘Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.’ ” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 23.

7. With what invitation and welcome will the Lord greet the redeemed of all ages?

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.*

“Thus will be fulfilled Christ’s promise to His disciples, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’ John 14:3. Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus,... ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 34.

“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.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“None who truly love Jesus will be sorry that He is coming again. And as they approach nearer to the coming of the Son of man, the true lovers of Jesus will look forward with joyous hope, and will seek to get all ready to behold Him whom their souls loveth, who died to redeem them.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 379.

“The day is coming, and it is close upon us, when every phase of character will be revealed by special temptation. Those who remain true to principle, who exercise faith to the end, will be those who have proved true under test and trial during the previous hours of their probation, and have formed characters after the likeness of Christ. It will be those who have cultivated close acquaintance with Christ who, through His wisdom and grace, are partakers of the divine nature. But no human being can give to another, heart devotion and noble qualities of mind, and supply his deficiencies with moral power.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 350.

* * *

Facing Religious Conflict

“There is a cause for alarm in the condition of the religious world today. God’s mercy has been trifled with.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 166.

“The condition of the world previous to the first appearing of Christ is a picture of the condition of the world just previous to His second advent. The same iniquity will exist; Satan manifests the same delusive power upon human minds.... He is securing his army of human agents to engage in the last conflict against the Prince of life, to overthrow the law of God, which is the foundation of His throne. Satan ... will turn his forces against those who are loyal to God; but though he may cause pain, distress, and human agony, he cannot defile the soul.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 259.

PERSECUTION AND BACKSLIDING

1. According to Jesus, what will happen in time of persecution?

MATTHEW 24:9, 10; 10:21, 22 *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.... ^{10:21}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. ²²And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

“On every occasion when persecution takes place, those who witness it make decisions either for Christ or against Him. Those who manifest sympathy for the ones wrongly condemned show their attachment for Christ. Others are offended because the principles of truth cut directly across their practice. Many stumble and fall, apostatizing from the faith they once advocated. Those who apostatize in time of trial will, to secure their own safety, bear false witness, and betray their brethren. Christ has warned us of this, that we may not be surprised at the unnatural, cruel course of those who reject the light.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 630.

2. What experience did the apostle Paul make with some believers in Asia? How will the same situation be repeated when the storm breaks upon God’s people?

2 TIMOTHY 1:15; 4:16 *This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.... ^{4:16}At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.*

“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.

RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

3. Especially what types of people will arise, and with what result?

MATTHEW 24:11 *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

2 PETER 3:3 *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.*

JUDE 1:18 *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.*

“Looking down through the ages to the close of time, Peter was inspired to outline conditions that would exist in the world just prior to the second coming of Christ. ‘There shall come in the last days scoffers,’ he wrote, ‘walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.’ But ‘when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy’s devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 535, 536.

4. What prophet suffered terribly from persecution? How intense will the deceptions be right before Jesus appears?

JEREMIAH 23:13, 14, 21, 16 *And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. ¹⁴I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing:... they strengthen also the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness:... ²¹I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.... ¹⁶Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.*

“There will be counterfeit messages coming from persons in all directions. One after another will rise up, appearing to be inspired, when they have not the inspiration of heaven, but are under the deception of the enemy. All who receive their messages will be led astray. Then let us walk carefully, and not open wide the door for the enemy to enter through impressions, dreams, and visions. God help us to look in faith to Jesus, and be guided by the words He has spoken.” —*Selected Messages*, book 3, pp. 404, 405.

CAREFULLY TENDING THE FLAME OF LOVE

5. What alarming conditions will be rampant throughout the world? What will happen to many?

MATTHEW 24:12 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

REVELATION 2:4, 5 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. ⁵Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

“He [Jesus] speaks of a class who have fallen from a high state of spirituality.... The love of the world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 538.

“In the closing work of God in the earth, the standard of His law will be again exalted. False religion may prevail, iniquity may abound, the love of many may wax cold, the cross of Calvary may be lost sight of...; plot after plot may be formed to overthrow the people of God; but in the hour of greatest peril the God of Elijah will raise up human instrumentalities to bear a message that will not be silenced.... The voice of stern rebuke will be heard. Boldly will men of God’s appointment denounce the union of the church with the world.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 186, 187.

THE NECESSITY OF ENDURANCE

6. Under such circumstances, how will the faithful child of God escape from the flood of wickedness in the world? To what heavenly counsel will he cling?

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

REVELATION 2:10, LAST PART, 11 ... *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. ¹¹And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

“The work of salvation is not child’s play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward.... All who are engaged in this warfare with Satan and his host have a close work before them. They must not be as impressible as wax, that the fire can melt into any form. They must endure hardness as faithful soldiers, stand at their post, and be true every time.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 101, 102.

“A religion formed after the divine pattern is the only one that will endure. Only by striving to live the life of Christ here can we prepare ourselves to live with Him through the eternal ages.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 342.

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

- 7. Before this world as we know it comes to an end, what good news will reach every corner? What mission will impel God's people forward in all the world?**

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.*

MARK 16:15, 16 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

“‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15), is Christ’s command to His followers. Not that all are called to be ministers or missionaries in the ordinary sense of the term; but all may be workers with Him in giving the ‘glad tidings’ to their fellow men. To all, great or small, learned or ignorant, old or young, the command is given.” —*Education*, p. 264.

“The waste places of the earth are to be cultivated, that they may bud and blossom as the rose. New territories are to be worked by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. New churches must be established, new congregations organized. At this time there should be representatives of present truth in every city and in the remote parts of the earth. The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God’s truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples. And it is from those who have received the light that it is to shine forth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 24.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 11.

“Hundreds, yea, thousands, who have heard the message of salvation are still idlers in the market place, when they might be engaged in some line of active service. To these Christ is saying, ‘Why stand ye here all the day idle?’ and He adds, ‘Go ye also into the vineyard.’ Matthew 20:6, 7. Why is it that many more do not respond to the call? Is it because they think themselves excused in that they do not stand in the pulpit? Let them understand that there is a large work to be done outside the pulpit by thousands of consecrated lay members.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 110, 111.

* * *

War, Consequences, and Escape

“The ruin of Jerusalem was a symbol of the final ruin that shall overwhelm the world. The prophecies that received a partial fulfillment in the overthrow of Jerusalem have a more direct application to the last days. We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed. And sweetly to us, as to the first disciples, comes the assurance that God’s kingdom ruleth over all. The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 120, 121.

PROPHECIES OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

1. Directing His hearers’ minds to the future of Jerusalem, what did Jesus tell them? What did the prophet Daniel write centuries before?

MARK 13:14, FIRST PART *But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,)...*

DANIEL 9:27 *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. See also Daniel 8:11-13.*

“The Jews, after their long captivity, would not make any image. The image on the Roman ensign or banner, they called an abomination, especially when these emblems were placed in a prominent place for them to respect. Such respect they regarded as a violation of the second commandment. When the Roman ensign was set up in the holy place in the temple, they looked upon it as an abomination.” —(Manuscript 126, 1901) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1145.

2. What was recorded in Scripture concerning this?

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

LUKE 21:20 *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*

“In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem,...” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

"The Saviour beheld the years that stretched out before His disciples, not, as they had dreamed, lying in the sunshine of worldly prosperity and honor, but dark with the tempests of human hatred and satanic wrath. Amid national strife and ruin, the steps of the disciples would be beset with perils, and often their hearts would be oppressed by fear. They were to see Jerusalem a desolation, the temple swept away, its worship forever ended, and Israel scattered to all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 120.

ESCAPING DANGER

3. What was Jesus' urgent command to His children? What were they to leave behind so they would not be hindered in fleeing from danger?

MATTHEW 24:17, 18 *Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: ¹⁸Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

"Jesus declared to the listening disciples the judgments that were to fall upon apostate Israel, and especially the retributive vengeance that would come upon them for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. Unmistakable signs would precede the awful climax. The dreaded hour would come suddenly and swiftly. And the Saviour warned His followers: 'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.' Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 25, 26.

4. While at other times the Lord called His people to come to worship at His house in Jerusalem, what completely different command did He give? How does this apply to God's people today?

DEUTERONOMY 12:5, 6, 26 *But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: ⁶And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks.... ²⁶Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose.*

LUKE 21:21 *Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.*

"Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 26.

DAY OF RECKONING

5. Having received great light, instruction, and prophecies, as well as divine grace and compassion, but failing to cherish God's grace, what would be experienced by those whom God had once chosen as His special people?

LUKE 21:22 *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

DEUTERONOMY 28:15, 25, 26, 49 *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:.... ²⁵The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.... ⁴⁹The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.*

DANIEL 9:26 *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

"The leaders of the opposing factions at times united to plunder and torture their wretched victims, and again they fell upon each other's forces and slaughtered without mercy. Even the sanctity of the temple could not restrain their horrible ferocity. The worshipers were stricken down before the altar, and the sanctuary was polluted with the bodies of the slain.... To the last, multitudes held fast to the belief that the Most High would interpose for the defeat of their adversaries. But Israel had spurned the divine protection, and now she had no defense. Unhappy Jerusalem! rent by internal dissensions, the blood of her children slain by one another's hands crimsoning her streets, while alien armies beat down her fortifications and slew her men of war!

"All the predictions given by Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled to the letter. The Jews experienced the truth of His words of warning: 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' Matthew 7:2." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 29.

6. In addition to the destruction of the temple and the city, what would happen to the people? Who would tread the soil of the holy city for a very long time?

MATTHEW 24:19 *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*

LUKE 21:23, 24 *But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

“Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him. But envy and jealousy made them implacable. They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and henceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce passions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site plowed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold to serve as bondmen in heathen lands.

“That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 712, 713.

FLIGHT AND ESCAPE

7. In view of such terrible upheavals and turmoil, what were the faithful believers to do? What was the result of their prayers?

MARK 13:18 *And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.*

MATTHEW 24:20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.*

“He who made the Sabbath did not abolish it, nailing it to His cross. The Sabbath was not rendered null and void by His death. Forty years after His crucifixion it was still to be held sacred. For forty years the disciples were to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 630.

“Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign.... The promised sign had been given to the waiting Christians, and now an opportunity was offered for all who would, to obey the Saviour’s warning. Events were so overruled that neither Jews nor Romans should hinder the flight of the Christians. Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army; and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity to leave the city.... Without delay they fled to a place of safety—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 30, 31.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“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.

“The time in which we are living calls for constant vigilance, and God’s ministers are to present the light on the Sabbath question. They should warn the inhabitants of the world that Christ is soon to come with power and great glory. The last message of warning to the world is to lead men to see the importance that God attaches to His law. So plainly is the truth to be presented that no transgressor, hearing it, shall be excusable in failing to discern the importance of obedience to God’s commands.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 148.

* * *

Past, Present, and Future Signs

“I urge you to prepare for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. Day by day cast the love of the world out of your hearts. Understand by experience what it means to have fellowship with Christ. Prepare for the judgment, that when Christ shall come to be admired in all them that believe, you may be among those who will meet Him in peace. In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 550.

GREAT TRIBULATION

1. According to the Spirit of prophecy, what event did Jesus describe immediately after telling about the fall of Jerusalem? What was going to happen during the long centuries between Jerusalem’s destruction and Jesus’ return?

MATTHEW 24:21, 22 *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.*

“From the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ passed on rapidly to the greater event, the last link in the chain of this earth’s history—the coming of the Son of God in majesty and glory. Between these two events, there lay open to Christ’s view long centuries of darkness, centuries for His church marked with blood and tears and agony. Upon these scenes His disciples could not then endure to look, and Jesus passed them by with a brief mention.... For more than a thousand years such persecution as the world had never before known was to come upon Christ’s followers. Millions upon millions of His faithful witnesses were to be slain. Had not God’s hand been stretched out to preserve His people, all would have perished. ‘But for the elect’s sake,’ He said, ‘those days shall be shortened.’ ” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 630, 631.

DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYONE

2. Who will become popular before Jesus’ coming? What strange claims will they make, and what will they show to gain credibility and popularity?

MATTHEW 24:23-26 *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ²⁴For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. ²⁵Behold, I have told you before. ²⁶Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*

"Now, in unmistakable language, our Lord speaks of His second coming, and He gives warning of dangers to precede His advent to the world.... As one of the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, Christ had said, 'Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.' False prophets did rise, deceiving the people, and leading great numbers into the desert.... But this prophecy was spoken also for the last days. This sign is given as a sign of the second advent. Even now false christs and false prophets are showing signs and wonders to seduce His disciples.... Have not thousands gone forth into the desert, hoping to find Christ? And from thousands of gatherings where men profess to hold communion with departed spirits is not the call now heard, 'Behold, He is in the secret chambers'? This is the very claim that spiritism puts forth. But what says Christ? 'Believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' " —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 631.

HIS COMING WILL BE UNMISTAKABLE

3. What illustration did Jesus use to explain that His coming would not be a hidden mystery but a great and glorious manifestation that no one can avoid?

MATTHEW 24:27, 28 *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ²⁸For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud,... In solemn silence they [God's people] gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant.... With anthems of celestial melody the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng, attend Him on His way.... 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." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 640, 641.

SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

4. Before the Lord's appearance, what extraordinary events would attract everyone's attention?

MATTHEW 24:29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*

LUKE 21: 25, FIRST PART *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars.*

"At the close of the great papal persecution, Christ declared, the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light. Next, the stars should fall from heaven. And He says, 'Learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the doors.' Matthew 24:32, 33, margin." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 631, 632.

"In Matthew 24, in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Christ had pointed out some of the most important events in the history of the world and of the church from His first to His second advent; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation of the church under the pagan and papal persecutions, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 393.

WORLD CONDITIONS

5. What terrible conditions will exist among the nations of earth, and what events in nature will signal the glorious return of the King of kings?

LUKE 21:25, LAST PART, 26 ... *And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

MARK 13:24-26 *But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, ²⁵And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. ²⁶And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

"Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near.... The revelator thus describes the first of the signs to precede the second advent: 'There was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.' Revelation 6:12.

"... In fulfillment of this prophecy there occurred, in the year 1755, the most terrible earthquake that has ever been recorded. Though commonly known as the earthquake of Lisbon, it extended to the greater part of Europe, Africa, and America. It was felt in Greenland, in the West Indies, in the island of Madeira, in Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland.... In Africa the shock was almost as severe as in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed; and a short distance from Morocco, a village containing eight or ten thousand inhabitants was swallowed up. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain and Africa engulfing cities and causing great destruction." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 304.

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

6. After all these extraordinary events, what sign will appear in heaven? Who will then be manifested in great glory and majesty, thus riveting the attention of the whole world?

MATTHEW 24:30 *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.*

"Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man's hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

"They will see Him then as heaven's King. Christ will come in His own glory, in the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels. Ten thousand times ten

thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, the beautiful and triumphant sons of God, possessing surpassing loveliness and glory, will escort Him on His way. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. In the place of a crown of thorns, He will wear a crown of glory—a crown within a crown. In place of that old purple kingly robe, He will be clothed in raiment of whitest white, ‘so as no fuller on earth can white them.’ Mark 9:3. And on His vesture and on His thigh a name will be written, ‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’ Revelation 19:16.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

THE GATHERING

7. What impressive sound will engulf the earth as the angels gather God’s elect from around the world? Describe your thoughts about those glorious moments.

MATTHEW 24:31; 13:39, LAST PART, 41-43 *And 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....* ^{13:39}*The reapers are the angels....* ⁴¹*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;* ⁴²*And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.* ⁴³*Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

“And the Saviour declares: ‘They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.’ ‘For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’ Matthew 24:30, 27.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 321.

“The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Every faithful one will surely be gathered. ‘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.’ Matthew 24:31.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 404.

“Christ has declared that He will come the second time to gather His faithful ones to Himself:...” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 37.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Christ has given signs of His coming. He says that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. When the trees put forth their leaves in the spring, we know that summer is near. Just so surely, when the signs appear in the sun and the moon and the stars, we are to know that Christ’s coming is near.” —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 176.

“The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of fire that speaks terror and wrath to the transgressor of God’s law, is a token of light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Everyone who is faithful will be saved. ‘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.’ ” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 358.

* * *

Watch and Be Ready

“The Lord is soon to come, and I must be prepared to meet Him in peace. I am sure that the world is ripening for the last great conflict. I am determined to do all in my power to impart light to those around me. I am not to be sad, but cheerful, and I am to keep the Lord Jesus ever before me. He is coming soon, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. O how glorious it will be to see Him and be saved through His merits.... The end is near and we are to put all our energies into the work of preparing to move from this lower school to the school above.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 279.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

1. **Although the Lord gave specific signs that will precede His return, did He give an exact date for that glorious event? What is the importance of this?**

MATTHEW 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

MARK 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

“The times and seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge? Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told His disciples to ‘watch,’ but not for definite time. His followers ... are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for ‘of that day and hour knoweth no man.’ You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years....” —(*Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892) *Evangelism*, p. 221.

PREVAILING CONDITIONS

2. **What conditions will prevail at the end of time? As in the time of Noah, how aware will people be of what is coming upon them?**

MATTHEW 24:37-39 *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

LUKE 21:34, 35 *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.*

“How was it in Noah’s day? ‘God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’ Genesis 6:5. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world turned from Jehovah, refusing to do His holy will. They followed their own unholy imagination and perverted ideas. It was because of their wickedness that they were destroyed; and today the world is following the same way. It presents no flattering signs of millennial glory. The transgressors of God’s law are filling the earth with wickedness. Their betting, their horse racing, their gambling, their dissipation, their lustful practices, their untamable passions, are fast filling the world with violence.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

DIVINITY DECIDES DESTINY

3. What will happen then, even within the same family?

MATTHEW 24:40-41 *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

LUKE 17:34 *I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.*

“Still there is room. The command is then given: ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.’ Here is a class rejected of God because they despised the invitation of the Master. The Lord declared to Eli: ‘Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.’ Says Christ: ‘If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor.’ God will not be trifled with. If those who have the light reject it, or neglect to follow it out, it will become darkness to them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 40.

ALERT, PREPARED, AND READY

4. In view of the fact that the day and hour of Jesus’ coming are unknown and that spiritual darkness and materialism will be dominant in the world, what should God’s children constantly do?

MATTHEW 24:42-44 *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.*

LUKE 21:36 *Watch 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.*

“Be assured that God gives no one authority to say that Christ delays His coming five years, ten years, or twenty years. ‘Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.’ Matthew 24:44. This is our message, the very message that the three angels flying in the midst of heaven are proclaiming. The work to be done now is that of sounding this last message of mercy to a fallen world. A new life is coming from heaven and taking possession of all God’s people. But divisions will come in the church. Two parties will be developed. The wheat and tares grow up together for the harvest.” —*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 113, 114.

“It is now the duty of God’s commandment-keeping people to watch and pray....” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 115.

ACTIVE AND FAITHFUL

- 5. Instead of being distracted or impacted by prevailing circumstances, what will the good and faithful servant do to the very end? What thought should be foremost in every mind?**

MATTHEW 24:45 *Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*

MARK 13:34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

“My heart is filled with anguish.... The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world. Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message.

“We are stewards, entrusted by our absent Lord with the care of His household and His interests, which He came to this world to serve. He has returned to heaven, leaving us in charge, and He expects us to watch and wait for His appearing. Let us be faithful to our trust, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 37.

ABUSE, MISTREATMENT, AND CONSEQUENCES

- 6. What evil tendencies tend to arise in man’s heart when his expectations are not met? What terrible fate awaits all who use circumstances to justify inflicting pain on their fellow man?**

MATTHEW 24:48-51 *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; ⁴⁹And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; ⁵⁰The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

“I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is that they will not receive correction. Many have despised the reproofs and warnings given them. The True Witness

condemns the lukewarm condition of the people of God, which gives Satan great power over them in this waiting, watching time. The selfish, the proud, and the lovers of sin are ever assailed with doubts. Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God ... gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 255.

THE REWARD OF FAITHFULNESS

7. What grace and honor will be bestowed on God's faithful children? What reward will the Lord grant them?

MATTHEW 24:46, 47 *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁷Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

JOHN 12:26 *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

"By communicating to others the grace we receive, we shall be made partakers of the rich blessings of God. Obedience to His will will keep the soul in the love of Christ. Bind yourselves up with Christ and with God, and reflect His glory to the souls ready to perish. Let there be a reconversion of soul on the part of those who have allowed themselves to grow careless and indifferent. If we would look upon suffering humanity with eyes that see their need, and would heed the command of Christ, 'Go work today in My vineyard;'...

"We become overcomers by helping others to overcome. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony. The keeping of the commandments of God will yield in us an obedient spirit, and the service that is the offspring of such a spirit, God can accept. O that we all in the day of final award might hear the words spoken to us individually, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'! How many in our churches will seek to set such an example as will reflect to mankind the Light of the world?" —*Review and Herald*, February 25, 1909.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

"The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in, and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life, and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. 'So,' says the Saviour, 'shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men.

"The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God." —*Maranatha*, p. 264.

* * *

“Come, Ye Blessed of My Father”

“In the last great day decisions will be made that will be a surprise to many. Human judgment will have no place in the decisions then made. Christ can and will judge every case; for all judgment has been committed to Him by the Father. He will estimate service by that which is invisible to men. The most secret things lie open to His all-seeing eye. When the Judge of all men shall make His investigation, many of those whom human estimation has placed first will be placed last, and those who have been put in the lowest place by men will be taken out of the ranks and made first.” —(*Review and Herald*, July 31, 1900) *Medical Ministry*, p. 133.

DIFFERENCE AND SEPARATION

- 1. While believers and unbelievers, faithful and unfaithful, have lived side by side for their entire lives, what will take place when the Redeemer appears in glory?**

MATTHEW 25:31-33 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: ³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

“Thus Christ on the Mount of Olives pictured to His disciples the scene of the great judgment day. And He represented its decision as turning upon one point. When the nations are gathered before Him, there will be but two classes, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and the suffering.

“In that day Christ does not present before men the great work He has done for them in giving His life for their redemption. He presents the faithful work they have done for Him.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 637.

WELCOME INTO THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM

- 2. What welcome will those who have listened to the Saviour’s voice and followed Him by faith hear on that great day? What imperishable kingdom will He invite them to enter and inherit?**

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.*

"To become a toiler, to continue patiently in well-doing which calls for self-denying labor, is a glorious work, which Heaven smiles upon. Faithful work is more acceptable to God than the most zealous and thought-to-be holiest worship. It is working together with Christ that is true worship. Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 24.

"May God help us in the great work of overcoming. He has crowns for those that overcome. He has white robes for the righteous. He has an eternal world of glory for those who seek for glory, honor, and immortality. Everyone who enters the city of God will enter it as a conqueror. He will not enter it as a condemned criminal, but as a son of God." —*Temperance*, p. 114.

SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

3. In addition to having faith in His message and promises, what will characterize those whom Jesus will welcome into His kingdom?

MATTHEW 25:35, 36 *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

"It is conscientious attention to what the world terms 'little things' that makes life a success. Little deeds of charity, little acts of self-denial, speaking simple words of helpfulness, watching against little sins—this is Christianity. A grateful acknowledgment of daily blessings, a wise improvement of daily opportunities, a diligent cultivation of entrusted talents—this is what the Master calls for.

"He who faithfully performs small duties will be prepared to answer the demands of larger responsibilities. The man who is kind and courteous in the daily life, who is generous and forbearing in his family, whose constant aim it is to make home happy, will be the first to deny self and make sacrifices when the Master calls." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 346.

4. How conscious are they of helping and serving? How do they view their actions, in contrast to the Pharisee who extolled himself in prayer?

MATTHEW 25:37-39 *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

LUKE 18:11, 12 *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. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

"That which is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Whatever your work may be, do it faithfully. Speak the truth in regard to the smallest matters. Each day do loving deeds and speak cheerful words. Scatter smiles along the pathway of life. As you work in this way, God will place His approval on you, and Christ will one day say to you, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

"At the day of judgment, those who have been faithful in their everyday life, who have been quick to see their work and do it, not thinking of praise or profit, will hear the words, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world.' " —(*The Youth's Instructor*, January 17, 1901) *Lift Him Up*, p. 346.

IDENTIFYING WITH THE NEEDY AND SUFFERING

5. In reality, whom have they served? How does the Lord consider the help and relief given to one who is in need?

MATTHEW 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

"By imparting to others the love and tenderness which God has so abundantly bestowed on us, we are to let our light shine. We should put every gift of God to the best possible use, making it a producer of good. To God we can give nothing which is not already His, but we can help the suffering ones around us. We can supply them with the necessities of this life, and at the same time speak to them of the wonderful love of God.

"Christ ... has plainly stated that we can minister to Him by ministering to His suffering ones.

"We are to be in the world as a corrective influence, as salt that retains its savor. Among an unholy, impure, idolatrous generation, we are to be pure and holy, showing that the grace of Christ has power to restore in man the divine likeness. We are to exert a saving influence upon those in the world." —(*Bible Echo*, June 11, 1900) *Reflecting Christ*, p. 198.

THE OPPOSITE—THOSE WHO ARE SELF-CENTERED

6. Did the other class serve Jesus by giving to the needy, such as those who were poor, thirsty, strangers, and prisoners?

MATTHEW 25:41-43 *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴²For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.*

"There are men in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers who are holding fast their earthly treasure. It is their god, their idol; and they love their money, their farms, their cattle, and their merchandise better than they love their Saviour, who for their sakes became poor, that they, through His poverty, might be made rich. They exalt their earthly treasures, considering them of greater value than the souls of men. Will such have the 'Well done' spoken to them? No; never. The irrevocable sentence, 'Depart,' will fall upon their startled senses. Christ has no use for them. They have been slothful servants, hoarding the means God has given them, while their fellow men have perished in darkness and error." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 123.

7. Did they see their Lord in the person of the needy and suffering? Not having cared for Him, what can they expect to meet on the day of judgment? What will be result of their selfishness?

MATTHEW 25:44-46 *Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did*

not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

“The whole world will then receive sentence. Of all the question will be asked, ‘Have you diligently studied the word of God that you might know the will of God, that you might be enabled to understand the difference between sin and righteousness?’ Sad will be the fate of those who would not come to Christ that they might be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Then sinners see the character of God as it is. And they see, too, the sinfulness of the sins that have drawn souls away from Christ, and placed them under the banner of rebellion, to war against Him who gave His life for them.

“Because Christ was one with the Father, equal with Him, He could make an atonement for transgression, and save man—not in his sins, but from his sins.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 272.

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God....

“As you open your door to Christ’s needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace.” —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 638, 639.

* * *

MISSIONARY REPORT from BAMl and GAMl

To be read on Sabbath, December 30, 2017

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, January 6, 2018*

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6.

Berea Adventist Missionary Institute (BAMl), located in Nairobi, Kenya, was dedicated on October 15, 2006, by Elder Branko Cholich, who served as General Conference President. The Institute currently offers Certificates and Diplomas in Bible Education and Church Administration. Its primary objective is to provide a balanced education to gospel workers and members for the purpose of promoting unity of action and teaching in every church, field, and union. Classes are open to students from Africa as well as from countries outside the continent.

While instruction is in English, the Institute wishes to add language classes in French, Spanish, and Swahili. In the near future, and as God allows, additional fields of study will include Medical Missionary Work, Business Administration, and Information Technology. Connected with the latter is a long-distance learning project for evangelists, missionary workers, and church members who are not privileged to attend a missionary school personally.

To achieve the above objectives and become self-reliant, the Institute needs to acquire its own facilities; currently it is housed in the Kenyan Union Headquarters. So far, BAMl has contributed to missionary work especially throughout Africa. Since its establishment, there have been five two-year classes from which more than eighty students from fifteen unions and fields in Africa have graduated. Today eight of those graduates are ordained ministers, while others are ordained elders helping to advance the work, most in new mission fields.

In addition to helping open new fields, former BAMl students now direct and teach in the newer Gilead Adventist Missionary Institute (GAMl) in Accra, Ghana. By God’s grace, its first class began in 2014, with students from Nigeria, Liberia, Cameroon, Togo, Benin, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Ghana. The second class was from Ivory Coast, Guinea, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Liberia, Togo, Benin, and Ghana. Many are now serving as missionaries in their home countries.

Like BAMl, GAMl also shares a headquarters building. The facilities in Accra, Ghana, are quite large, but they can accommodate no more than ten

students at a time, as space is needed for bedrooms, bath facilities, kitchen, classrooms, and a meeting place. There is no space for practical training in such things as gardening, baking, and beekeeping.

The teachers and staff of these Institutes are dedicated to the preparation of men and women for Christ's service. Under the authority of Scripture, the instructions of the Spirit of prophecy, and the delegates of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, the leaders of these Institutes seek to help carry out Christ's commission to His church by thoroughly training well-disciplined and -instructed missionaries who excel in matters of doctrine and faith.

"Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in the world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

"The source of such an education is brought to view in these words of Holy Writ, pointing to the Infinite One: In Him 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom.' Colossians 2:3. 'He hath counsel and understanding.' Job 12:13." —*Education*, p. 13.

Expenses of the Institutes are financed mostly by student tuition, and most students have been supported by grants from others and/or other institutions, such as fields, unions and the General Conference. The contributions gathered for the two Institutes will hasten the preparation of workers to serve in countries just recently entered or wherever they are most needed, thus supporting the expansion of missionary training worldwide.

As you prepare to give your gifts for BAMI and GAMI next week, we encourage everyone all over the world to see yourself as part of that great army of reformers who envision remarkable advances in the field of education in the church. May God grant you a willing, generous heart to give bountifully so an abundant harvest will be reaped, according to His promise.

"The Lord is soon coming, and for this very reason we need our schools, not that we may be educated after the order of the world, but that our institutions of learning may be more like the schools of the prophets—places where we may learn the will of God, and reach to the very highest branches of science, that we may better understand God and His works, and the character of Jesus Christ whom He has sent." —*General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1896.

—*Parmenas N. Shirima, African Division Leader*
Lencha Tekle, African Division Committee Member

