



SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

**This We
Believe (II)**

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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Foreword

During this quarter, Sabbath school students around the world will continue with the series of studies entitled *This We Believe*, for “we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (*The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29, 1893).

There are many basic truths vital to our understanding of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. These glorious truths must be thoroughly comprehended and meditated upon, for a mere superficial knowledge of them will not satisfy the soul’s need. We must hunger and thirst after righteousness, for only then can we be filled. (Matthew 5:6.)

“There is a kind of faith that takes it for granted that we have the truth; but the faith that takes God at His word, which works by love and purifies the heart, is very rare. All who profess the truth are not converted, although they may think they are. Some mistake transient emotions, ideas, and fancies, or resolutions formed in their own strength, for conversion. But faith is a living, abiding principle. Its object is truth—divine, eternal, changeless truth. Genuine, saving faith is inseparable from repentance and conversion, and will manifest the fruits of the Spirit. It is a continual, conscious trust in Jesus. The sinner’s only hope is in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. There is no resting in any efforts of our own, yet these efforts must be made.

“We have a solemn message, and it is not entrusted to ministers alone. Men and women who will never be called to the ministry, may have a part to act in warning the world. They must let their light shine.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.

These topics are vital to our salvation. The principles taught in these basic doctrinal lessons should be clearly brought into our daily life experience and carried forth to people everywhere. The time remaining before the return of our Master is short, yet there is a world in gross darkness and ignorance of these saving truths. “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

That these valuable lessons may continue to be a precious blessing and a source of light and strength to faithful souls around the world is the earnest prayer of

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for Belize

Dear Brethren in all parts of the world:

Belize is located on the north-east coast of Central America. With an area of 8,867 square miles (22,965 km²), it is the smallest nation, after El Salvador, on the mainland of the Americas, and it is also the least populous with 297,000 inhabitants. To the north and northwest, it is bounded by Mexico, to the west and south by Guatemala, and to the east by the Caribbean Sea, on which it has a 174-mile (280 km) coastline. Belize, which was known as British Honduras until 1973, was the last British colony on the American mainland. It achieved independence on September 21, 1981, but it remains a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The work of the Reform Movement started in 1994 when a brother from Honduras arrived here to work as a Bible worker. Soon the Mission was organized and registered with the government in 2002. Since the inception of the work our believers were renting a house for worship, but the place is becoming smaller to accommodate the increasing number of churchgoers. Realizing our urgent need to have a mission headquarters as a beacon of light in this country, we decided to buy a good property in Belize City. Even when everyone has sacrificed much in finding resources to begin the construction, it also became necessary to apply for a bank loan to finance the building.

When the First Sabbath Offering allocated to Belize is gathered, we hope and pray that the Lord will touch your heart to share your means in helping us to go forward with our project.

Your brethren and sisters in Belize



Repentance and Conversion

“Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19, NRSV).

“Genuine, saving faith is inseparable from repentance and conversion, and will manifest the fruits of the Spirit. It is a continual, conscious trust in Jesus. The sinner’s only hope is in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 12–26, 49–55.

Sunday

March 29

1. THE REAL HUMAN CONDITION

- a. How does the Word of God describe the spiritual state of an unconverted person? Ephesians 2:1–3; Colossians 2:13.

“By nature we are alienated from God.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 87.

- b. What is the condition of all humanity? Romans 3:10–18.

“To be without the graces of the Spirit of God is sad indeed; but it is a more terrible condition to be thus destitute of spirituality and of Christ, and yet try to justify ourselves by telling those who are alarmed for us that we need not their fears and pity. Fearful is the power of self-deception on the human mind! What blindness! setting light for darkness and darkness for light!”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 88.

“We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that results in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. We must know our true condition, or we shall not feel our need of Christ’s help. We must understand our danger, or we shall not flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds, or we shall not desire healing.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 9, 1902.

2. THE SINNER'S NEED

- a. What important truth is to be kept in mind, as recorded in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican? Luke 18:10–14; Psalm 51:17.

“The publican had gone to the temple with other worshipers, but he soon drew apart from them as unworthy to unite in their devotions. Standing afar off, he ‘would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast,’ in bitter anguish and self-abhorrence. He felt that he had transgressed against God, that he was sinful and polluted. He could not expect even pity from those around him, for they looked upon him with contempt. He knew that he had no merit to commend him to God, and in utter self-despair he cried, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner’ (Luke 18:13). He did not compare himself with others.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 151.

“When the sinner is conscious of his helpless condition, and feels his need of a Saviour, he may come with faith and hope to ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Christ will accept the soul who comes to Him in true repentance.”—*This Day With God*, p. 370.

- b. Why do we need a power outside of ourselves to make us righteous before God? Isaiah 64:6; Job 14:4.

“It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Job 14:4; Romans 8:7). Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

“Salvation is by Jesus Christ, for He alone is our righteousness. Would that everyone would cease to look to himself for merit. We are to find in Jesus Christ all we need, and by cooperating with Him, we shall be complete in Him.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 11.

3. SORROW FOR SIN

- a. What does a person exclaim when one realizes his or her undone condition? Romans 7:24; Psalm 51:1–3. What does true repentance involve? 2 Corinthians 7:10.

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

“Repentance is one of the first fruits of saving grace. Repentance includes sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin until we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. Repentance is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 28, 1905.

- b. Once we confess our sin and turn away from it, what should we confidently expect? 1 John 1:9; Romans 10:9.

“The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. This is a precious promise, given to fallen man to encourage him to trust in the God of love and to seek for eternal life in His kingdom.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 635.

“Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us His Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness.”—*My Life Today*, p. 45.

“If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 51.

4. CONVERSION

- a. What gracious invitation is extended to every human being who feels his or her need of salvation? Isaiah 1:18; 55:6, 7.

“In the heavenly courts our Saviour stands and extends to the world the gracious invitation, Come, ye weary, ye poor, ye hungry; come, ye burdened, ye heavyladen, sin-sick souls, come.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 5, 1875.

“As the sinner is convicted of sin, he is also attracted by the love and holiness of Christ; for Jesus is drawing him unto Himself. . . . Repentance is born in the heart by beholding the love of Christ, who gave His life to save the sinner. It is the love of God that softens the hardest hearts.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901.

“Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do?”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 34.

- b. What danger exists in procrastinating our return to the Lord? Hebrews 3:15; Amos 8:11, 12; Luke 13:25–27.

“I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God’s Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33.

“A man sees his danger. He sees that he needs a change of character, a change of heart. He is stirred; his fears are aroused. The Spirit of God is working in him, and with fear and trembling he works for himself, seeking to find out his defects of character and to see what he can do to bring about the needed change in his life. His heart is humbled. By confession and repentance he shows the sincerity of his desire to reform. He confesses his sins to God, and if he has injured anyone, he confesses the wrong to the one he has injured. While God is working, the sinner, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, works out that which God is working in mind and heart. He acts in harmony with the Spirit’s working, and his conversion is genuine.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 7, 1904.

5. BORN AGAIN

- a. Relate the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus. John 3:1–8. What was the result of that interview?

“Nicodemus received the lesson [that he was to look and live], and carried it with him. He searched the Scriptures in a new way, not for the discussion of a theory, but in order to receive life for the soul. He began to see the kingdom of heaven as he submitted himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

- b. What is the real meaning of being “born again” of water and of the Spirit? John 1:12, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

“Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, ‘love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance’ (Galatians 5:22, 23). They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated they now love, and the things they once loved they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 58.

“Those who experience the work of true conversion in their hearts will reveal the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. Oh, that those who have so little spiritual life would realize that eternal life can be granted only to those who become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust!”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 155.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- The philosophy of just fostering the “good” in ourselves, why is it flawed?
- In the parable, why was the publican justified and not the Pharisee?
- What characterizes genuine repentance?
- What is true conversion?
- What changes can be seen in those who are born again?

Christian Perfection

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

“Perfection alone can meet the standard of heaven. As God Himself is perfect in His exalted sphere, so should His children be perfect in the humble sphere they occupy.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 225.

Suggested Reading: *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 80–88.

Sunday

April 5

1. GOD MADE MAN PERFECT

- a. **When God ended His work of creation by forming man in His own image, what was declared? Genesis 1:31; Ecclesiastes 7:29.**

“In the beginning God created man in His own likeness. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. . . . To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created is the great object of life—the object that underlies every other.”—*Christian Education*, pp. 63, 64.

“God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance. Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness. On this condition he was to have access to the tree of life.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49.

- b. **How do we know that Adam was perfect in every aspect of life, awarded with supreme intelligence? Genesis 2:19, 20; Psalm 8:4–6.**

“To man, the crowning work of creation, God has given power to understand His requirements, to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and its sacred claims upon him; and of man unswerving obedience is required.”—*Ibid.*, p. 52.

Monday

April 6

2. PERFECTION LOST

- a. **How far had people gone in their degeneracy when the world was still in its infancy? Genesis 6:5, 11, 12.**

“After the Fall, men chose to follow their own sinful desires; and as the result, crime and wretchedness rapidly increased. Neither the marriage relation nor the rights of property were respected. Whoever coveted the wives or the possessions of his neighbor, took them by force, and men exulted in their deeds of violence. They delighted in destroying the life of animals; and the use of flesh for food rendered them still more cruel and bloodthirsty, until they came to regard human life with astonishing indifference.

“The world was in its infancy; yet iniquity had become so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 92.

“The inhabitants of the antediluvian world were intemperate in eating and drinking. They would have flesh meats, although God had at that time given man no permission to eat animal food. They ate and drank till the indulgence of their depraved appetite knew no bounds, and they became so corrupt that God could bear with them no longer. Their cup of iniquity was full, and He cleansed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 109.

- b. **How is the degradation of humanity described by the apostle Paul? Romans 1:21–32.**

“It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. . . . God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 91.

3. THE RESTORATION OF HUMANITY

- a. What plan was devised in the heavenly courts for the restoration of the human family? Job 33:24, 26–28; Mark 10:45.

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 222.

“Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery; but by the sacrifice of the Son of God, a second probation was granted to man. In the plan of redemption a way of escape is provided for all who will avail themselves of it. God knew that it was impossible for man to overcome in his own strength, and He has provided help for him. How thankful we should be that a way is open for us, by which we can have access to the Father; that the gates are left ajar, so that beams of light from the glory within may shine upon those who will receive them!”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, pp. 15, 16.

- b. Despite Satan’s plan to keep the human race entrapped in its fallen state, how did Jesus intervene for our recovery? John 10:27–29; 6:39, 40; Philippians 1:6.

“Ever since Adam’s sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity *through* Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ. Satan had hoped that God’s abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 116.

“That the transgressor might have another trial, that men might be brought into favor with God the Father, the eternal Son of God interposed Himself to bear the punishment of transgression. One clothed with humanity, who was yet one with the Deity, was our ransom. The very earth shook and reeled at the spectacle of God’s dear Son suffering the wrath of God for man’s transgression. The heavens were clothed in sackcloth to hide the sight of the Divine Sufferer.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 153.

4. THE ULTIMATE AIM

- a. Once we receive Christ and His truth, what further steps must be taken in order for us to reach perfection? Hebrews 5:12–14; 6:1, 2; 2 Peter 3:18.

“Our work is to strive to attain in our sphere of action the perfection that Christ in His life on the earth attained in every phase of character. He is our example. In all things we are to strive to honor God in character. In falling day by day so far short of the divine requirements, we are endangering our soul’s salvation. We need to understand and appreciate the privilege with which Christ invests us, and to show our determination to reach the highest standard. We are to be wholly dependent on the power that He has promised to give us.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 253.

“As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 141.

- b. When Jesus comes, will He make us perfect, or find us already perfect? 1 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:27; 2 Peter 3:14.

“When Christ shall come, He will not change the character of any individual. Precious, probationary time is given to be improved in washing our robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.”—*Christian Education*, p. 237.

“We cannot afford to lose eternal life because we are not willing to separate from the world. Self must be hidden in Christ. Our sight must be filled with a view of His perfection. We must stand wholly on the Lord’s side, remembering the word, ‘We are laborers together with God’ (1 Corinthians 3:9). God desires us to learn in the school of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart. Self is to be crucified, with the affections and lusts. There is no second probation for fallen man. Heaven is not the place for overcoming defects in the character.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 25, 1900.

5. PERFECTION COMPLETED

- a. What wonderful promise is given to those who will have fully purified their heart in the blood of the Lamb? Matthew 5:8; Revelation 7:14, 15; 1 John 3:2, 3.

“Jesus declared that the pure in heart should see God. They would recognize Him in the person of His Son, who was sent to the world for the salvation of the human race. Their minds, being cleansed and occupied with pure thoughts, would more clearly discover the Creator in the works of His mighty hand, in the things of beauty and magnificence which comprise the universe.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 208, 209.

“The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessings*, p. 27.

- b. What is the highest goal to be reached by everyone who strives for perfection? 1 Peter 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Isaiah 25:9.

“If we would have eternal life, we must cooperate with God, and thus reach the Bible standard, conforming our characters to the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Let every soul strive most zealously during these precious hours of probation, to form the very character that He would wish to have completed and perfected when our Lord comes in power and great glory.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 7, 1893.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Among all creatures on earth, in what sense is the human race unique?
- Why were the Flood and the destruction of Sodom necessary?
- What is the only hope for our degenerate race?
- Describe the depth of moral perfection we must attain before Christ returns—and the reason why this perfection is necessary.
- What does it mean to be pure in heart, in the practical sense?

Baptism

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16).

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97–108, 167–177.

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST

- a. Who was the first baptizer recorded in the New Testament, and what was the theme of his preaching? Matthew 3:1–6.

“John proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptized them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah’s kingdom.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

- b. When many Pharisees and Sadducees flocked to the wilderness to be baptized, what message did John give them? Matthew 3:7–10.

“John himself had not directed his hearers to forsake their former duties. He bade them give evidence of their repentance by faithfulness to God in the place where He had called them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 150.

2. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

- a. Among the many who came to the wilderness to see John the Baptist, Jesus came also. Why did He do this? Matthew 3:13–15.

“Jesus was our example in all things that pertain to life and godliness. He was baptized in Jordan, just as those who come to Him must be baptized.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 157.

“Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 111.

- b. When Jesus came out of the water, what happened? Matthew 3:16, 17.

“A new and important era was opening before [Jesus], and He felt the solemnity and responsibilities of the new duties He was to perform, and heavier burdens which He was henceforth to bear. His baptism was the first act of His public ministry; and He here identifies Himself with sinners as their representative, in taking upon Him their sins, and numbering Himself with transgressors. In His prayer, Christ, with His human arm, encircles fallen humanity, while with His divine arm He is reaching for the throne of the Infinite.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, March 1, 1874.

“Never had angels listened to such a prayer. They were solicitous to bear to the praying Redeemer messages of assurance and love. But no; the Father Himself will minister to His Son. Direct from the throne proceeded the light of the glory of God. The heavens were opened, and beams of light and glory proceeded therefrom and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. . . .

“The thunders rolled and the lightning flashed from the opening heavens, and a voice came therefrom in terrible majesty, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ The words of confirmation were given for the benefit of the witnesses at His baptism, and to assure God’s dear Son that His Father accepted humanity through Him, their substitute and surety, and that God would connect man to Himself, and open Heaven to the prayers of men through the intercession of His Son.”—*Ibid.*

3. BORN AGAIN, OF THE WATER

- a. In the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, what truth was presented which is valid for every human being? John 3:5–7.

“The figure of the new birth, which Jesus had used, was not wholly unfamiliar to Nicodemus. Converts from heathenism to the faith of Israel were often compared to children just born. Therefore he must have perceived that the words of Christ were not to be taken in a literal sense. But by virtue of his birth as an Israelite he regarded himself as sure of a place in the kingdom of God. He felt that he needed no change.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

“Nicodemus knew that Christ here referred to water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 172.

“While Jesus was speaking, some gleams of truth penetrated the ruler’s mind. The softening, subduing influence of the Holy Spirit impressed his heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 173.

“The power of the Holy Spirit transforms the entire man. This change constitutes the new birth.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 15, 1883.

- b. What is the significance of being “born of water” and “born of the Spirit”? Romans 6:3–7; John 1:12, 13.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

“True repentance of sin, faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, and baptism into His death, to be raised out of the water to live a new life, are the first steps in the new birth which Christ told Nicodemus he must experience in order to be saved.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 79.

“We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three great, infinite powers are unitedly pledged to work in our behalf if we will cooperate with them. We are buried with Christ in baptism as an emblem of His death. We are raised from the water as an emblem of His resurrection. We are to live as newborn souls, that we may be raised at the last great day.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 4, 1901.

4. NEW CREATURES

- a. Before we are baptized, what does the Lord require from us, and into what relationship do we then enter? 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.

“Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you, and ye shall be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. What a promise is this! It is a pledge to you that you shall become members of the royal family, heirs of the heavenly kingdom.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 592.

“Do you have to cut loose from friends and relatives in deciding to obey the elevated truths of God’s word? Take courage, God has made provision for you, His arms are open to receive you. Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and He will receive you. He promises to be a Father unto you. Oh, what a relationship is this! higher and holier than any earthly tie. If you make the sacrifice, if you have to forsake father, mother, sisters, brothers, wife, and children for Christ’s sake, you will not be friendless. God adopts you into His family; you become members of the royal household, sons and daughters of the King who rules in the heaven of heavens. Can you desire a more exalted position than is here promised? Is not this enough?”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 510.

- b. When one is born again, how does God consider that person—and what happens in his or her life? 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:22, 23; 2:1, 2.

“Pride is cleansed from the soul. Selfishness is uprooted. The quick, passionate temper no longer masters the man; for Jesus Christ has brought the thoughts into captivity to Himself. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let no arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 26, 1892.

“The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ.”—*Maranatha*, p. 237.

5. UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE GODHEAD

- a. In what name should converted souls be baptized, and what promise is given them? Matthew 28:19, 20. What privilege and responsibility rests upon them? Colossians 3:1–3.

“As Christians submit to the solemn rite of baptism, [God] registers the vow that they make to be true to Him. . . . They pledge themselves to renounce the world and to observe the laws of the kingdom of God. Henceforth they are to walk in newness of life. No longer are they to follow the traditions of men. No longer are they to follow dishonest methods. They are to obey the statutes of the kingdom of heaven. They are to seek God’s honor. If they will be true to their vow, they will be furnished with grace and power that will enable them to fulfill all righteousness.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 307, 308.

“The rite of baptism is administered in the name of the Father, and of Son, and of the Holy Ghost. These three great powers of heaven pledge themselves to be the efficiency of all who submit to this ordinance, and who faithfully keep the vow they then make.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 27.

“You stand under the sanction and the power of the three holiest beings in heaven, who are able to keep you from falling. You are to reveal that you are dead to sin; your life is hid with Christ in God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 267.

- b. When we are adopted as sons and daughters of God, what right and privilege belong to us? Romans 8:16, 17; Galatians 3:26–29; 4:6, 7.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What hope did John the Baptist offer those who came to him?
- Why was Jesus baptized?
- What significance does Christ’s interview with Nicodemus have for us?
- What is baptism to indicate in the life of a soul?
- In what sense is the entire Godhead involved in the baptism of repentant sinners?

Foot Washing

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).

“Christ gave His followers the ordinance of washing feet for them to practice, which would teach them lessons of humility. He connected this ordinance with the supper.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1880.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 642–651.

Sunday

April 19

1. HE LOVED THEM

- a. **What is recorded about Jesus’ love for His disciples just before His sufferings and death? John 13:1; 15:12, 13.**

“Jesus, the divine Teacher, assured His disciples of His love toward them. He assumed human nature for no other purpose than to display to men the mercy, the love, and the goodness of God in providing for the salvation and happiness of His creatures.”—*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 39, 40.

- b. **Unlike Jesus, what spirit controlled the disciples as they came together for the Communion service? Luke 22:24.**

“The disciples, though outwardly they had left all for Jesus’ sake, had not in heart ceased to seek great things for themselves. It was this spirit that prompted the strife as to who should be greatest.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 409.

“The disciples clung to their favorite idea that Christ would assert His power, and take His position on the throne of David. And in heart each still longed for the highest place in the kingdom. They had placed their own estimate upon themselves and upon one another, and, instead of regarding their brethren as more worthy, they had placed themselves first.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 643, 644.

Monday

April 20

2. THE MASTER’S EXAMPLE

- a. **What act of Jesus surprised all the disciples? John 13:3–5.**

“At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service. The pitcher, the basin, and the towel were there, in readiness for the feet washing; but no servant was present, and it was the disciples’ part to perform it. But each of the disciples, yielding to wounded pride, determined not to act the part of a servant. All manifested a stoical unconcern, seeming unconscious that there was anything for them to do. By their silence they refused to humble themselves.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 644.

“[The Saviour], the one [the disciples] loved, rose, and laid aside His garments, and, taking a towel, girded Himself, pouring water into the basin. It was then that the disciples were astonished and ashamed.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1898.

“[Jesus’] action opened the eyes of the disciples. Bitter shame and humiliation filled their hearts. They understood the unspoken rebuke, and saw themselves in altogether a new light.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 644.

- b. **Relate the objection of Peter, his attitude, and Jesus’ answer to his arguments. John 13:6–9.**

“Peter shrank from bringing his soiled feet in touch with the hands of his Lord and Master; yet how often we bring our sinful, polluted souls in contact with the heart of Christ, who hates nothing but sin. O, how we grieve the pure, holy Spirit of Christ with our defiling sins! We are not prepared for the appreciation of the holy communion with Christ and with one another unless we are cleansed by His efficacy.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1898.

- c. **What is the meaning of Jesus’ words: “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet”? John 13:10.**

“Peter and his brethren had been washed in the great fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Christ acknowledged them as His. But temptation had led them into evil, and they still needed His cleansing grace. When Jesus girded Himself with a towel to wash the dust from [the disciples’] feet, He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

3. THE DUSTY FEET

- a. How did Christ's washing the disciples' feet illustrate a timeless principle which all believers need to be aware? Proverbs 10:12. What reveals the positive results of Christ's action?

"Dissension always creates hatred, but Christ washed it away in the act of washing His disciples' feet. A change of feeling did come; the union of heart and love for one another did exist. They became meek, teachable, and loving, and would have conceded to anyone the highest place. They were prepared to partake of the last supper with fragrant feelings of love, deep and full, for their Master and for one another."—*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1898.

"The act of Christ in washing the feet of His disciples was a sacred one; His motive in so doing was to bring about, through their remembrance of what Christ had done for them, a state of feeling where no exaltation of one above another should find place. This ordinance was to bring brother to an understanding of the feelings of his brother."—*Ibid.*, June 14, 1898.

- b. What does the Lord wish to do to us as we humbly serve one another brethren washing the feet? Psalm 51:2, 7; Hebrews 10:22.

"It is not humiliating to the Master to allow Him to work for our purification. The truest humility is to receive with thankful heart any provision made in our behalf, and with earnestness do service for Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 646.

"You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then believe that He does this *because He has promised*. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 49, 50.

"Christ gave His disciples to understand that the washing of their feet did not cleanse away their sin, but that the cleansing of their heart was tested in this humble service. If the heart was cleansed, this act was all that was essential to reveal the fact. He had washed the feet of Judas; but He said, 'Ye are not all clean' (John 13:11). Judas brought a traitor's heart to this scene, and Christ revealed to all that He knew him to be the betrayer of his Lord, and that the washing of his feet was not an ordinance to cleanse the soul from its moral defilement."—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 299.

4. A SERVICE OF HUMILITY

- a. What blessings are promised to those who walk humbly before God? 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 23:12; James 4:6, 10.

"All human ambition, all boasting, is to be laid in the dust. Self, sinful self, is to be abased, not exalted."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 234.

"The more exalted opinion we have of ourselves, the less need shall we feel of Jesus. True goodness never exalts self; but the self-righteous are always reaching out for the honor and praise of men. They have set up a false standard, and have too high an opinion of themselves. All who fall upon the rock, and are broken, Christ shall build up in true purity and holiness."—*The Review and Herald*, August 7, 1888.

"Those who meekly and humbly pursue their course of duty, not to be praised, petted, and honored of men, but to glorify God, will receive as their reward glory, honor, and eternal life."—*Ibid.*, July 22, 1890.

"Christ gave His followers the ordinance of washing feet for them to practice, which would teach them lessons of humility. He connected this ordinance with the supper. He designed that this should be a season of self-examination, that His people might have an opportunity to become acquainted with the true feelings of their own hearts toward God and one another. If pride existed in their hearts, how soon would it be discovered to the honestly-erring ones, as they should engage in this humble duty. If selfishness or hatred existed, it would be more readily discovered as they engaged in this humble work. This ordinance was designed to result in mutual confessions, and to increase feelings of forbearance, forgiveness of each other's errors, and true love, preparatory to engaging in the solemn ordinance of commemorating the sufferings and death of Christ."—*The Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1880.

- b. What is the significance of the ceremony of washing one another's feet, and what did Jesus command us to do on this occasion? John 13:12–17.

"There is in man a disposition to esteem himself more highly than his brother, to work for self, to seek the highest place; and often this results in evil surmisings and bitterness of spirit. The ordinance preceding the Lord's Supper is to clear away these misunderstandings, to bring man out of his selfishness, down from his stilts of self-exaltation, to the humility of heart that will lead him to serve his brother."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

5. "BLESSED ARE YE"

- a. After Jesus finished washing the disciples' feet, including the feet of Judas, what did the Lord predict? John 13:21–26.

"The constraining power of [the] love [of Jesus] was felt by Judas. When the Saviour's hands were bathing those soiled feet, and wiping them with the towel, the heart of Judas thrilled through and through with the impulse then and there to confess his sin. But he would not humble himself. He hardened his heart against repentance; and the old impulses, for the moment put aside, again controlled him."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 645.

- b. What should we learn from the sad experience of Judas, and how should we approach the sacred ceremony of foot washing? Acts 1:15–20.

"The practice of the truths that Christ taught was at variance with [Judas'] desires and purposes, and he could not bring himself to yield his ideas in order to receive wisdom from heaven. Instead of walking in the light, he chose to walk in darkness. Evil desires, covetousness, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished until Satan gained full control of him."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 558.

"The performance of the ordinance of humility calls for self-examination. The noble principles of the soul are strengthened on every such occasion. Christ lives in us, and this draws heart to heart. We are led to love as brethren, to be kind, tender, courteous in daily service, having hearts that can feel another's woe."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1139.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How was Christ's attitude in the upper room widely different from that of His disciples?
- Why was Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet such a shock to them?
- How did Christ's action change the heart of the disciples?
- Why is humility so essential in the Christian life?
- What blessings do we reap as a result of washing one another's feet?

The Lord's Supper

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16).

"As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing Christ's broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 661.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652–661, 151, 152.

1. THE PASSOVER

- a. What important rite was instituted at the time of Israel's liberation from Egypt? Exodus 12:2–6.

"The observance of the Passover began with the birth of the Hebrew nation. On the last night of their bondage in Egypt, when there appeared no token of deliverance, God commanded them to prepare for an immediate release. He had warned Pharaoh of the final judgment on the Egyptians, and He directed the Hebrews to gather their families within their own dwellings. Having sprinkled the doorposts with the blood of the slain lamb, they were to eat the lamb, roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 76, 77.

- b. How do we know that the Passover feast was not a party of joy? Exodus 12:7–11. Who had no right to partake of the Passover? Exodus 12:43–49.

"Many of the Egyptians had been led to acknowledge the God of the Hebrews as the only true God, and these now begged to be permitted to find shelter in the homes of Israel when the destroying angel should pass through the land. They were gladly welcomed, and they pledged themselves henceforth to serve the God of Jacob and to go forth from Egypt with His people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 279.

2. THE TIME OF TRANSITION

- a. What ceremony was instituted by Jesus when He partook of the Passover ordinance for the last time? Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

“When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased, and the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 539.

“The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653.

- b. Before one takes part in the Communion service, what responsibility rests upon him or her? 1 Corinthians 11:27–30; 2 Corinthians 13:5.

“There is a necessity for close self-examination, and to closely investigate in the light of God’s word, Am I sound, or am I rotten, at heart? Am I renewed in Christ, or am I still carnal at heart, with an outside, new dress put on? Rein yourself up to the tribunal of God, and see as in the light of God if there is any secret sin, any iniquity, any idol you have not sacrificed. Pray, yes, pray as you have never prayed before, that you may not be deluded by Satan’s devices; that you may not be given up to a heedless, careless, and vain spirit, and attend religious duties to quiet your own conscience.”—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 83, 84.

“The holy Watcher from heaven is present at this [foot-washing] season to make it one of soul searching, of conviction of sin, and of the blessed assurance of sins forgiven. . . . Blessings forgotten, mercies abused, kindnesses slighted, are called to mind. Roots of bitterness that have crowded out the precious plant of love are made manifest. Defects of character, neglect of duties, ingratitude to God, coldness toward our brethren, are called to remembrance. Sin is seen in the light in which God views it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 650, 651.

3. “IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

- a. What is the meaning of Christ’s command, “This do in remembrance of me”? Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25.

“On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 399.

“In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for His church a memorial of His great sacrifice for man. ‘This do,’ He said, ‘in remembrance of Me’ (Luke 22:19). This was the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. The one was to close forever; the other, which He had just established, was to take its place, and to continue through all time as the memorial of His death.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 273, 274.

- b. How frequently should the Lord’s Supper be celebrated—and until when? 1 Corinthians 11:26.

“Christ designed that this [sacramental] supper should be often commemorated in order to bring to our remembrance His sacrifice in giving His life for the remission of the sins of all who will believe on Him and receive Him.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 152.

“The Lord’s Supper was not to be observed only occasionally or yearly, but more frequently than the annual Passover. This solemn ordinance commemorates a far greater event than the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. That deliverance was typical of the great atonement which Christ made by the sacrifice of His own life for the final deliverance of His people.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 203.

“Then I was pointed back to the time that Jesus took His disciples away alone, into an upper room, and first washed their feet, and then gave them to eat of the broken bread, to represent His broken body, and juice of the vine to represent His spilled blood. . . . All should move understandingly, and follow the example of Jesus in these things, and when attending to these ordinances, should be as separate from unbelievers as possible.”—*The Present Truth*, November 1, 1850.

4. THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

- a. In His discussion with the Jewish leaders, what truth did Jesus make plain? John 6:32–35.

“We cannot, as individuals, maintain our bodily life unless we eat and drink for ourselves of temporal food. In order to maintain spiritual life and health, we must feed on Jesus Christ by studying His word, and doing the things He has commanded in that word. This will constitute a close union with Christ. The branch that bears fruit must be in the vine, a part of it, receiving nourishment from the parent stalk. This is living by faith upon the Son of God.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 7, 1898.

“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

- b. What is the meaning of the words: “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed”? John 6:53–58.

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated.”—*Ibid.*, p. 389.

“ ‘He that eateth My flesh,’ He says, ‘and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me’ (John 6:54, 56, 57). To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord’s great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 660, 661.

5. THE GREAT SUPPER

- a. What glorious event should encourage us to remain faithful in our Christian experience? Revelation 19:6–9.

“Jesus, the compassionate Saviour, has sent to our world the general invitation, ‘Come; for all things are now ready’ (Luke 14:17). Will you imitate the Jews, who refused the invitation? To us the invitation is given, and the Lord would have you fear and tremble at His word, that He may kindle in your heart hope and faith and holy trust. He commands you to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and promises that all necessary things shall be added unto you. He unfolds before you the glories of paradise, and the question is, Will you accept His invitation?”—*The Review and Herald*, November 5, 1895.

- b. What gracious invitation is extended to every human being and through whom? Isaiah 55:1–3; Revelation 22:17.

“God has called this people [of the gospel ministry] to give to the world the message of Christ’s soon coming. We are to give to men the last call to the gospel feast, the last invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Thousands of places that have not heard the call are yet to hear it.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 64.

“The loving and compassionate Jesus declares that there is a greater sin than that for which Sodom was overthrown. It is the sin of those who, after hearing the gospel invitation to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, turn away, and refuse to respond to the heavenly invitation. The invitation to the gospel feast is often rejected with apologies.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 5, 1895.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How does the Lord’s Supper relate to the ancient Passover service?
- Why is self-examination so important before Communion?
- Why should church members separate from unbelievers on these occasions?
- What daily experience denotes “eating” and “drinking” of Christ?
- What event should we encourage both ourselves and others to seek?

First Sabbath Offering

for Whispering Pines Christian School



With the help of the Lord, Whispering Pines Christian School has during the past eight years provided its students with an education based on God's Word. Located among the pines thirty miles east of Sacramento, California, this God-ordained institution is rooted in a Bible-based curriculum with the singular purpose of developing the student's mind, soul, and body.

Through the Lord's mercy and His abundant grace, combined with the fervent prayers and efforts of many believers, the enrollment has increased beyond the capabilities of our current facilities.

As the Lord continues to send more precious souls to the school, we see a great need to construct a new school building. The temporary modular rooms and trailers that are currently being used as classrooms are old and somewhat inadequate. This, coupled with the possibility of more than doubling the enrollment next year, necessitates the building of a new facility.

However, "some may ask, 'How are such schools to be established?' We are not a rich people, but if we pray in faith, and let the Lord work in our behalf, He will open ways before us to establish small schools in retired places for the education of our youth."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 204.

Though the brethren and sisters are making great sacrifices to achieve this goal, the estimated cost (\$300,000) is still greater than all of their available resources. We therefore appeal to you, brethren and friends around the world, to extend your loving hands through generous contributions.

We desire that you pray about adopting Whispering Pines Christian School as one of your missionary endeavors. The believers in northern California wish to express in advance their gratitude for your brotherly kindness. May the Lord impress you how to help in this all-important work of training the young, and grant each giver a special blessing.

Whispering Pines Christian School, Wilson S. de Barros, Principal

The 2,300 Prophetic Days

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14).

"Those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 422.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 317–330, 409–422.

Sunday

May 3

1. THE VISION OF DANIEL 8

- a. **What was the prophet Daniel shown about the unfolding of world events? Daniel 8:3–14. What was the explanation given by the angel Gabriel? Daniel 8:20–25.**

"Light was thrown upon the events of the future. . . . Earnestly [Daniel] sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years' captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare should elapse before the cleansing of God's sanctuary."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 554.

"[Daniel] was being taught by God to read the mysteries of the future and to record for coming generations, through figures and symbols, events covering the history of this world till the close of time."—*Ibid.*, p. 485.

- b. **The angel explained the symbols of the ram, the goat, and the horns. What part of the vision was not explained to the prophet? Daniel 8:26, 27.**

"The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time—'unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed' (Daniel 8:14)."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 326.

2. GABRIEL EXPLAINS

- a. After the prophet's fervent prayer, what did the angel say to Daniel—and why is this important for us today? Daniel 9:20–23; 12:3, 4, 9, 10.

“As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. ‘The wise shall understand’ (Daniel 12:10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 547, 548.

- b. How are the 2300 days to be reckoned in prophetic time and subdivided into distinct portions? Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34; Daniel 9:24–27.

“The angel then outlined in detail the period of the seventy weeks.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 21, 1907.

“The 2300 days had been found to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes for the restoration and building of Jerusalem went into effect, in the autumn of 457 B.C. Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25–27. Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, A.D. 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. ‘Then,’ said the angel, ‘shall the sanctuary be cleansed’ (Daniel 8:14). All the preceding specifications of the prophecy had been unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 410.

3. FOUR HUNDRED NINETY YEARS

- a. For what purpose were the 70 prophetic weeks separated from the 2300 days? Daniel 9:25, 27 (first part).

“After bidding Daniel ‘understand the matter, and consider the vision,’ the very first words of the angel are: ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City’ (Daniel 9:23, 24). The word here translated ‘determined’ literally signifies ‘cut off.’ Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. If the date of this commandment could be found, then the starting point for the great period of the 2300 days would be ascertained.

“In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. Verses 12–26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 B.C. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built ‘according to the commandment [‘decree,’ margin] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.’ These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. Taking 457 B.C., the time when the decree was completed, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 326, 327.

- b. When and how was Jesus anointed? Luke 3:1–3; Acts 10:38; Matthew 3:16. (Messiah [Mashiach, Hebrew], Christ [Christos, Greek], mean “an anointed one.”)

“The decree of Artaxerxes went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C. From this date, 483 years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. At that time this prophecy was fulfilled. The word ‘Messiah’ signifies ‘the Anointed One.’ In the autumn of A.D. 27 Christ was baptized by John and received the anointing of the Spirit. The apostle Peter testifies that ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power’ (Acts 10:38). And the Saviour Himself declared: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor’ (Luke 4:18).”—*Ibid.*, p. 327.

4. THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

- a. According to prophecy, what would happen after the anointing of Jesus and the end of the seventieth week? Daniel 9:27.

“The ‘week’ here brought to view is the last one of the seventy; it is the last seven years of the period allotted especially to the Jews. During this time, extending from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34, Christ, at first in person and afterward by His disciples, extended the gospel invitation especially to the Jews. As the apostles went forth with the good tidings of the kingdom, the Saviour’s direction was: ‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matthew 10:5, 6).

“ ‘In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease’ (Daniel 9:27). In A.D. 31, three and a half years after His baptism, our Lord was crucified. With the great sacrifice offered upon Calvary, ended that system of offerings which for four thousand years had pointed forward to the Lamb of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 327, 328.

“In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34.”—*Ibid.*, p. 410.

- b. After Christ’s death in 31 A.D., the Jewish nation still had a time of probation for 3½ years. When did the 70 weeks expire? Acts 13:46–48.

“The seventy weeks, or 490 years, especially allotted to the Jews, ended, as we have seen, in A.D. 34. At that time, through the action of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the nation sealed its rejection of the gospel by the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the followers of Christ. Then the message of salvation, no longer restricted to the chosen people, was given to the world. The disciples, forced by persecution to flee from Jerusalem, ‘went everywhere preaching the word’ (Acts 8:4).”—*Ibid.*, p. 328.

“The door that many of the Jewish converts had closed against the Gentiles was now to be thrown open. And the Gentiles who accepted the gospel were to be regarded as on an equality with the Jewish disciples, without the necessity of observing the rite of circumcision.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 136.

5. THE SANCTUARY TO BE CLEANSED

- a. Until when did the 2,300 days extend? What then took place? Daniel 8:14.

“The seventy weeks—490 days—having been cut off from the 2300, there were 1810 days remaining. After the end of 490 days, the 1810 days were still to be fulfilled. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844. At the expiration of this great prophetic period, upon the testimony of the angel of God, ‘the sanctuary shall be cleansed’ (Daniel 8:14). Thus the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary—which was almost universally believed to take place at the second advent—was definitely pointed out.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 328.

“Instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming.”—*Ibid.*, p. 422.

- b. What is taking place now in the heavenly sanctuary? Hebrews 4:14–16; 7:25; 9:11, 12, 23, 24; Revelation 3:7, 8.

“The end of the 2300 days in 1844 marked an important crisis. But while it was true that that door of hope and mercy by which men had for eighteen hundred years found access to God, was closed, another door was opened, and forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ in the most holy. One part of His ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an ‘open door’ to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ was ministering in the sinner’s behalf.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 429, 430.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why is the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 so important?
- What evidence shows that the 2300 prophetic days are literal years?
- How does the Christ’s time on earth vindicate the year-day principle?
- Why is the year A.D. 34 significant in prophecy?
- Since 1844, what has been increasingly crucial to the Christian’s life?

The Sanctuary

“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

“The sanctuary in heaven, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 414.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 343–358.

Sunday

May 10

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE SANCTUARY

- a. Where, on earth, did God promise to dwell among His people? Exodus 25:8; 2 Chronicles 6:1, 2; Isaiah 66:1.

“When Moses was about to build the sanctuary as a dwelling place for God, he was directed to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. . . . So to Israel, whom He desired to make His dwelling place, He had revealed His glorious ideal of character. The pattern was shown them in the mount when the law was given from Sinai.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 208, 209.

“All who love the worship of God and prize the blessing of His sacred presence will manifest the same spirit of sacrifice in preparing a house where He may meet with them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 344.

“The house where Jesus is to meet with His people should be neat and attractive. If there are but few believers in a place, put up a neat but humble house, and by dedicating it to God invite Jesus to come as your guest.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 269.

- b. What has always been God’s purpose in relation to His people? Exodus 29:45; Isaiah 57:15.

“From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

Monday

May 11

2. THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

- a. When Moses received the charge to build the sanctuary, what plan was shown him? Exodus 25:9, 40; Hebrews 8:5. Of what was it all a pattern? Hebrews 8:1, 2.

“The question, What is the sanctuary? is clearly answered in the Scriptures. The term ‘sanctuary,’ as used in the Bible, refers, first, to the tabernacle built by Moses, as a pattern of heavenly things; and, secondly, to the ‘true tabernacle’ in heaven, to which the earthly sanctuary pointed. At the death of Christ the typical service ended. The ‘true tabernacle’ in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 202.

- b. How was the tabernacle divided, and what service was carried on in it daily? Ezekiel 45:4; Hebrews 9:2–5.

“The building was divided into two apartments by a rich and beautiful curtain, or veil, suspended from gold-plated pillars; and a similar veil closed the entrance of the first apartment. . . .

“Beyond the inner veil was the holy of holies, where centered the symbolic service of atonement and intercession, and which formed the connecting link between heaven and earth. In this apartment was the ark, a chest of acacia wood, overlaid within and without with gold, and having a crown of gold about the top. It was made as a depository for the tables of stone, upon which God Himself had inscribed the Ten Commandments. Hence it was called the ark of God’s testament, or the ark of the covenant, since the Ten Commandments were the basis of the covenant made between God and Israel.

“The cover of the sacred chest was called the mercy seat. . . .

“Above the mercy seat was the Shekinah, the manifestation of the divine Presence; and from between the cherubim, God made known His will.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 347–349.

3. THE SIN OFFERING

- a. What provision was made for sinners who had transgressed the law ignorantly? The priest: Leviticus 4:2–6; the congregation: Leviticus 4:13–15; a Ruler: Leviticus 4:22–24; the common people: Leviticus 4:27–29.

“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. ‘Without shedding of blood,’ says the apostle, there is no remission of sin. ‘The life of the flesh is in the blood’ (Leviticus 17:11). The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. 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. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: ‘God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation’ (Leviticus 10:17). Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.

“Such was the work that went on, day by day, throughout the year. The sins of Israel were thus transferred to the sanctuary, and a special work became necessary for their removal. God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 418, 419.

- b. When was the sacrificial system established, and why? Genesis 4:3–5; Galatians 3:19.

“When man fell by transgression the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given, and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin offering were established. But had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and no need of a Saviour; consequently there would have been no need of sacrifices.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 363.

4. THE COMMON PRIEST

- a. Who were called by God to serve as priests of the sanctuary? Exodus 28:1; 29:4. What clear command was given to them? Leviticus 10:9–11.

“The priests who burned incense before the Lord were required to use the fire of God’s kindling, which burned day and night, and was never extinguished. God gave explicit directions how every part of His service should be conducted, that all connected with His sacred worship might be in accordance with His holy character. And any deviation from the express directions of God in connection with his holy service was punishable with death.”—*Temperance*, p. 43.

“Assisted by his sons, Aaron offered the sacrifices that God required, and he lifted up his hands and blessed the people. All had been done as God commanded, and He accepted the sacrifice, and revealed His glory in a remarkable manner; fire came from the Lord and consumed the offering upon the altar.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

- b. How often was the priest to offer sacrifice? Exodus 29:39. What would this represent in our days? Psalm 55:17.

“As the priests morning and evening entered the holy place at the time of incense, the daily sacrifice was ready to be offered upon the altar in the court without. This was a time of intense interest to the worshipers who assembled at the tabernacle. Before entering into the presence of God through the ministration of the priest, they were to engage in earnest searching of heart and confession of sin. They united in silent prayer, with their faces toward the holy place. Thus their petitions ascended with the cloud of incense, while faith laid hold upon the merits of the promised Saviour prefigured by the atoning sacrifice. The hours appointed for the morning and the evening sacrifice were regarded as sacred, and they came to be observed as the set time for worship throughout the Jewish nation. And when in later times the Jews were scattered as captives in distant lands, they still at the appointed hour turned their faces toward Jerusalem and offered up their petitions to the God of Israel. In this custom Christians have an example for morning and evening prayer. While God condemns a mere round of ceremonies, without the spirit of worship, He looks with great pleasure upon those who love Him, bowing morning and evening to seek pardon for sins committed and to present their requests for needed blessings.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 353, 354.

5. THE HIGH PRIEST

- a. Who was chosen by God to be the high priest in the wilderness sanctuary? Exodus 29:5–7. What was the high priest's duty? Hebrews 9:25.

“Only once a year could the high priest enter into the most holy place, after the most careful and solemn preparation. No mortal eye but that of the high priest could look upon the sacred grandeur of that apartment, because it was the especial dwelling place of God's visible glory. The high priest always entered it with trembling, while the people waited his return with solemn silence.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 274, 275.

- b. While the high priest was ministering in the most holy place on the Day of Atonement, what were the people to do? Leviticus 23:27–32. When did the Day of Atonement begin in heaven? Daniel 8:14; Isaiah 22:12–14, 20–22 (cf. Revelation 3:7, 8).

“In 1844 our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to begin the work of the investigative judgment. . . . When the work of atonement was performed by the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the people were required to afflict their souls before God, and confess their sins, that they might be atoned for and blotted out. Will any less be required of us in this antitypical day of atonement, when Christ in the sanctuary above is pleading in behalf of His people, and the final, irrevocable decision is to be pronounced upon every case?”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 125.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What blessings come from having a sanctuary worship God?
 b. Moses saw a pattern of God's character (the Ten Commandments) and a pattern of His dwelling. How are the two connected?
 c. How did the sacrificial system operate in ancient Israel, and how does it operate today?
 d. What happens when we neglect to have morning and evening worship?
 e. Why is it important to understand the Day of Atonement?

The Day of Atonement

“On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Leviticus 23:27).

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 355.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 479–491.

1. ATONEMENT FOR SIN

- a. What gracious provision was made to atone for Adam's sin? Genesis 3:15, 21.

“The instant Adam yielded to Satan's temptation and did the very thing which God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying: ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man's place. Give him another trial.’ Transgression placed the whole world under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, ‘I have found a ransom’ (Job 33:24). He who knew no sin was made sin for fallen man.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900.

- b. What system was ordained by God, and how did Adam feel when he had to offer the first sacrifice for sin?

“As [Adam] slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

2. THE DAILY MINISTRATION

- a. What was the daily duty of the common priests in the sanctuary? Numbers 28:4; Hebrews 10:11.

“The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary. 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 Great Controversy*, p. 418.

“Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ. God expressly directed that every offering presented for the service of the sanctuary should be ‘without blemish’ (Exodus 12:5). The priests were to examine all animals brought as a sacrifice and were to reject everyone in which a defect was discovered.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352.

- b. Before the priests would enter the sanctuary, what were they ordained to do? Exodus 30:18–21; 40:30–32.

“Between the altar and the door of the tabernacle was the laver, which was also of brass, made from the mirrors that had been the freewill offering of the women of Israel. At the laver the priests were to wash their hands and their feet whenever they went into the sacred apartments, or approached the altar to offer a burnt offering unto the Lord.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 347, 348.

“So the priests were not to enter the sanctuary with shoes upon their feet. Particles of dust cleaving to them would desecrate the holy place. They were to leave their shoes in the court before entering the sanctuary, and also to wash both their hands and their feet before ministering in the tabernacle or at the altar of burnt offering. Thus was constantly taught the lesson that all defilement must be put away from those who would approach into the presence of God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 350.

3. THE MOST HOLY PLACE

- a. What separated the two apartments, and what object was placed in the most holy place? Exodus 26:31–34; Hebrews 9:3–5.

“The gorgeous curtain which formed the ceiling, inwrought with figures of angels in blue and purple and scarlet, added to the beauty of the scene. And beyond the second veil was the holy Shekinah, the visible manifestation of God’s glory, before which none but the high priest could enter and live.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 414.

“All the furniture of this [first] apartment looked like purest gold and reflected the image of the one who entered that place. The curtain which separated these two apartments looked glorious. It was of different colors and material, with a beautiful border, with figures of gold wrought upon it, representing angels.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 159.

- b. How did God manifest His presence among the children of Israel, especially in the sanctuary? Exodus 40:34, 35; Leviticus 16:2.

“Within the second veil was placed the ark of the testimony, and the beautiful and rich curtain was drawn before the sacred ark. This curtain did not reach to the top of the building. The glory of God, which was above the mercy seat, could be seen from both apartments, but in a much less degree from the first apartment. Directly before the ark, but separated by the curtain, was the golden altar of incense. The fire upon this altar was kindled by the Lord Himself, and was sacredly cherished by feeding it with holy incense, which filled the sanctuary with its fragrant cloud day and night. Its fragrance extended for miles around the tabernacle. When the priest offered the incense before the Lord he looked to the mercy seat. Although he could not see it he knew it was there; and as the incense arose like a cloud, the glory of the Lord descended upon the mercy seat and filled the most holy place and was visible in the holy place; and the glory often so filled both apartments that the priest was unable to officiate and was obliged to stand at the door of the tabernacle.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 273, 274.

“Above the ark, and forming the cover to the sacred chest, was the mercy seat, a magnificent piece of workmanship, surmounted by two cherubim, one at each end, and all wrought of solid gold. In this apartment the divine presence was manifested in the cloud of glory between the cherubim.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 412.

4. THE ROLE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

- a. What special event took place on the tenth day of the seventh month? Leviticus 16:29–31; Numbers 29:7.

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 419.

“On the tenth day of the seventh month the high priest entered the inner apartment, or most holy place, which he was forbidden, on pain of death, to enter at any other time. The cleansing of the sanctuary then performed completed the yearly round of service.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 263.

“Under the Mosaic system the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great Day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Leviticus 16:29–34), when the high priest, having made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed their sins from the sanctuary, came forth and blessed the people.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 400.

- b. Before entering in the most holy place, what was the high priest commanded to do? Leviticus 16:2–6, 16.

“Before the mercy seat God conversed with the high priest. If he remained an unusual time in the most holy, the people were often terrified, fearing that because of their sins or some sin of the priest, the glory of the Lord had slain him. But when the sound of the tinkling of the bells upon his garments was heard, they were greatly relieved. He then came forth and blessed the people.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 275.

“In the holy of holies the great I AM took up His abode, and no human being was permitted to enter there except by divine appointment. There, above the mercy seat, overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim, dwelt the shekinah of His glory, the perpetual token of His presence; while the breastplate of the high priest, set with precious stones, made known from the sacred precincts of the sanctuary the solemn message of Jehovah to the people. Wonderful dispensation, when the Holy One, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, thus manifested His glory, and revealed His will to the children of men!”—*The Review and Herald*, March 2, 1886.

5. THE TWO GOATS

- a. What was the meaning of the two goats taken on the Day of Atonement, and what was done to the goat chosen to be a sin offering? Leviticus 16:7, 8, 16.

“On the Day of Atonement two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, ‘one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat’ (Leviticus 16:8). The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 419.

- b. What happened to the scapegoat—Azazel—that was left alive? Leviticus 16:20–22. What did each of the two goats symbolize?

“Christ’s work for the redemption of men and the purification of the universe from sin will be closed by the removal of sin from the heavenly sanctuary and the placing of these sins upon Satan, who will bear the final penalty.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 358.

“When the ministration in the holy of holies had been completed, and the sins of Israel had been removed from the sanctuary by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, then the scapegoat was presented alive before the Lord. . . . In like manner, when the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed, then in the presence of God and heavenly angels and the hosts of the redeemed the sins of God’s people will be placed upon Satan; he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit. And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 658.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Explain the atonement in type and antitype.
- Name some facts showing the sacredness of the sanctuary service.
- What was in the second apartment of the sanctuary, the holiest of all?
- What reveals the great mercy of God in the sanctuary service?
- What did the two goats represent?

Marriage— a Divine Institution

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

“As the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall ‘leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one’ (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 63, 64.

Suggested Reading: *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 63–65.

Sunday May 24

1. GOD INSTITUTED MARRIAGE

- a. **After Adam named every animal, what event took place? Genesis 2:18, 21, 22. How does God regard marriage? Hebrews 13:4.**

“God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. . . . When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

- b. **What is the meaning that Eve was created from Adam’s rib? Ephesians 5:22–24; Colossians 3:18.**

“Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 46.

Monday May 25

2. A JOYOUS OCCASION

- a. **What event shows that the Lord approved the marriage institution? John 2:1, 2.**

“Christ came to our world to cause heavenly light to shine amid the moral darkness. He came to make men and women understand that the marriage institution is sacred. His presence at Cana gave high endorsement to this ordinance.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 188.

“Christ came not to destroy this [sacred and holy] institution, but to restore it to its original sanctity and elevation. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, and He began His work by sanctioning the marriage relation. He who made the first holy pair, and who created for them a paradise, has put His seal upon the marriage institution, first celebrated in Eden.”—*Ibid.*, p. 203.

“In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 64.

- b. **What do the Scriptures say about a happy home? Psalm 128.**

“The Scriptures state that both Jesus and His disciples were called to the marriage feast [at Cana]. Christ has given Christians no sanction for saying, when invited to a marriage, We ought not to be present on so joyous an occasion. By attending this feast Christ taught us that He would have us rejoice with those who rejoice in the observance of His statutes. He never discouraged the festivities of mankind when they were carried on in accordance with the laws of Heaven. A gathering that Christ honored by His presence, it is right that His followers should attend. After attending this feast, Christ attended many others, sanctifying them by His presence and instruction.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 30, 1899.

“‘If our happiness consists in making others happy, we are happy indeed. The true disciple will not live to gratify beloved self, but for Christ, and for the good of His little ones. He is to sacrifice his ease, his pleasure, his comfort, his convenience, his will, and his own selfish wishes for Christ’s cause, or never reign with Him on His throne.’ ”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 85, 86.

“Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 46.

3. THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

- a. What does the Bible enjoin upon the husband, the “house-band” of the home? Ephesians 5:25, 28; Colossians 3:19.

“The Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife to be her protector; he is the house-band of the family, binding the members together. . . . Christ’s authority is exercised in wisdom, in all kindness and gentleness; so let the husband exercise his power and imitate the great Head of the church.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 259.

- b. Specify the right attitudes in contrast to the wrong ones in a husband and father. Genesis 18:18, 19; Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:7–9.

“The father should enforce in his family the sterner virtues—energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness. And what he requires of his children he himself should practice, illustrating these virtues in his own manly bearing.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 391.

“It is no evidence of manliness in the husband for him to dwell constantly upon his position as head of the family. It does not increase respect for him to hear him quoting Scripture to sustain his claims to authority. It will not make him more manly to require his wife, the mother of his children, to act upon his plans as if they were infallible.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 82.

“Many husbands do not sufficiently understand and appreciate the cares and perplexities which their wives endure, generally confined all day to an unceasing round of household duties. They frequently come to their homes with clouded brows, bringing no sunshine to the family circle. If the meals are not on time, the tired wife, who is frequently housekeeper, nurse, cook, and housemaid, all in one, is greeted with faultfinding. The exacting husband may condescend to take the worrying child from the weary arms of its mother that her arrangements for the family meal may be hastened; but if the child is restless and frets in the arms of its father, he will seldom feel it his duty to act the nurse and seek to quiet and soothe it. He does not pause to consider how many hours the mother has endured the little one’s fretfulness, but calls out impatiently, ‘Here, Mother, take *your* child.’ Is it not *his* child as well as hers? Is he not under a natural obligation to patiently bear his part of the burden of rearing his children?”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 224, 225.

4. THE QUEEN OF THE HOME

- a. How does the Bible describe a true, virtuous, Christian wife? Proverbs 18:22; 19:14; 31:10, 11, 30.

“The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the Church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God. It is the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the word of God gives preference to the judgment of the husband. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, adviser, and protector.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 307, 308.

“Many husbands stop at the words, ‘Wives, submit yourselves,’ but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is, ‘As it is fit in the Lord.’”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 74.

- b. What injunction does the Lord direct to the queen of the home? 1 Peter 3:1, 2; Philippians 2:14.

“While the mistress of the household may perform her outward duties with exactitude, she may be continually crying out against the slavery to which she is doomed, and exaggerate her responsibilities and restrictions by comparing her lot with what she styles the higher life of woman, and cherishing unsanctified longings for an easier position, free from the petty cares and exactions that vex her spirit. She little dreams that in that widely different sphere of action to which she aspires trials full as vexatious, though perhaps of a different sort, would certainly beset her. While she is fruitlessly yearning for a different life, she is nourishing a sinful discontent and making her home very unpleasant for her husband and children.

“The true wife and mother will pursue an entirely opposite course from this. She will perform her duties with dignity and cheerfulness, not considering that it is degrading to do with her own hands whatever is necessary for her to do in a well-ordered household. If she looks to God for her strength and comfort, and in His wisdom and fear seeks to do her daily duty, she will bind her husband to her heart, and see her children coming to maturity, honorable men and women, having moral stamina to follow the example of their mother.”—*The Health Reformer*, August 1, 1877.

5. A LIFELONG BOND

- a. In harmony with the Word of God, how long does the marriage vow bind husband and wife? Mark 10:6–12; Romans 7:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39.

“This [marriage] vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which nought but the hand of death should sever.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 507.

“What of the marriage relation today? Is it not perverted and defiled, made even as it was in Noah’s day? Divorce after divorce is recorded in the daily papers. This is the marriage of which Christ speaks when He says that before the Flood they were ‘marrying and giving in marriage’ (Matthew 24:38).”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 56.

- b. If there is an unfortunate separation between husband and wife, what are the two alternatives? Malachi 2:13–16; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11.

“Jesus came to our world to rectify [man’s] mistakes and to restore the moral image of God in man. Wrong sentiments in regard to marriage had found a place in the minds of the teachers of Israel. They were making of none effect the sacred institution of marriage. Man was becoming so hardhearted that he would for the most trivial excuse separate from his wife. . . .

“Christ came to correct these evils, and His first miracle was wrought on the occasion of the marriage. Thus He announced to the world that marriage, when kept pure and undefiled, is a sacred institution.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 198.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How does the Bible describe the creation of the woman?
- When only can a wedding be a truly joyous occasion—and why?
- How can a husband improve his relationship with his wife?
- How can a wife improve her relationship with her husband?
- What is the evidence that God in His wisdom designed marriage to be a lifelong vow?

First Sabbath Offering

for the Czechoslovakian Mission



The country of Czechoslovakia, located in Central Europe, was founded in October 1918 as one of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of World War I. It consisted of the present day territories of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Carpathian Ruthenia. In 1948 the Communist Party took control of the country, religious freedom was abolished, and atheism became the official ideology of the country. In 1989 the country became democratic again, when freedom of conscience was granted to the people, and three years later Czechoslovakia was divided and its territory became as it is known today, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Our work in Czechoslovakia started in the very beginning of the Reform Movement. In 1923 there were 43 members in that country. Then Communism entered into the country and the believers could not meet together any longer. The shepherd was smitten and the fold was scattered. But the leader had a very interesting experience in prison. His wife managed to bring him a copy of the book *The Great Controversy*, and he read and reread the book recognizing that he had made a great mistake by not training younger people to take his place. He confessed his mistake to the Lord and had a real conversion experience. He began to send messages to the congregation through poems. He wrote 150 of them and put all of them into music. The believers were comforted with the brother’s messages and sang them too. Eventually the church fizzled out after so many years without a leader. After he was released from prison, he immediately began trained the young ones as he had promised to the Lord.

In 1995 Czechoslovakia became a Mission, and today we have again a new group of members, and the remnant of those who went through the dark days. We are planning to build a meeting place and go forward in spreading the Third Angel’s Message.

We need your help. Please be liberal when this special offering is collected.

Your brethren and sisters of the Czechoslovakian Mission

The Christian Family

“That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace” (Psalm 144:12).

“The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can; for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 304.

Suggested Reading: *Child Guidance*, pp. 318–325, 434–443.

Sunday

May 31

1. A LITTLE HEAVEN ON EARTH

- a. **In order to have a happy home, what does God’s Word enjoin upon both husbands and wives? 1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 5:33.**

“Do not try to compel each other to do as you wish. You cannot do this and retain each other’s love. Manifestations of self-will destroy the peace and happiness of the home. Let not your married life be one of contention. If you do you will both be unhappy. Be kind in speech and gentle in action, giving up your own wishes. Watch well your words, for they have a powerful influence for good or for ill. Allow no sharpness to come into your voices. Bring into your united life the fragrance of Christlikeness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 47.

- b. **How does Inspiration describe a true Christian home? Psalm 128; Isaiah 61:9. How can the home be a blessing or a curse?**

“We must let Christ into our hearts and homes if we would walk in the light. Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little heaven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being studiously repressed. Our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 539.

Monday

June 1

2. PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- a. **What do the Scriptures say about the children of God-fearing parents? Psalm 127:3; Proverbs 17:6; Isaiah 54:13.**

“Let it be remembered that children are not to be treated as though they were our own personal property. Children are the heritage of the Lord, and the plan of redemption includes their salvation as well as ours. They have been entrusted to parents in order that they might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might be qualified to do their work in time and eternity.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 280.

“Children are the heritage of the Lord, and unless parents give them such a training as will enable them to keep the way of the Lord, they neglect solemn duty. It is not the will or purpose of God that children shall become coarse, rough, uncourteous, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. The Scriptures state that this condition of society shall be a sign of the last days.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 229.

“[Children] . . . are to be guided in the path of obedience, not indulged in appetite or vanity.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 279.

- b. **What command does the Lord give to all parents who wish to see their children saved? Deuteronomy 6:4–7; 11:18, 19; Proverbs 22:6.**

“Throughout the week let parents remember that their home is to be a school in which their children shall be prepared for the courts above. Let their words be right words. No words which their children should not hear are to escape their lips. Let the spirit be kept free from irritation. Parents, during the week live as in the sight of a holy God, who has given you children to train for Him. Train for Him the little church in your home, that on the Sabbath all may be prepared to worship in the Lord’s sanctuary. Each morning and evening present your children to God as His blood-bought heritage. Teach them that it is their highest duty and privilege to love and serve God.

“Parents should be particular to make the worship of God an object lesson for their children. Passages of Scripture should be more often on their lips, especially those passages that prepare the heart for religious service. The precious words might well be often repeated: ‘My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him’ (Psalm 62:5).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 354.

3. THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- a. **What are children required to do regarding their parents? Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1–3.**

“There is no period in life when children are excused from honoring their parents. This solemn obligation is binding upon every son and daughter and is one of the conditions to their prolonging their lives upon the land which the Lord will give the faithful. This is not a subject unworthy of notice, but a matter of vital importance. The promise is upon condition of obedience. If you obey, you shall live long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. If you disobey, you shall not prolong your life in that land.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 292, 293.

“Children, do you desire eternal life? Then respect and honor your parents. Do not wound and grieve their hearts and cause them to spend sleepless nights in anxiety and distress over your case. If you have sinned in not rendering love and obedience to them, begin now to redeem the past. You cannot afford to take any other course; for it means to you the loss of eternal life. The Heart-searcher knows what is your attitude toward your parents; for He is weighing moral character in the golden scales of the heavenly sanctuary. O, confess your neglect of your parents, confess your indifference toward them, and your contempt of God’s holy commandment.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 22, 1893.

- b. **What is one of the signs of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2.**

“The sin which exists in this generation among children is that they are ‘disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God’ (2 Timothy 3:2, 4). And this state of things exists to such an extent that it is made a subject of prophecy as one of the signs that we are living in the last days of time.”—*Letters to Young Lovers*, p. 53.

“The word of God abounds in precepts and counsels enjoining respect for parents. It impresses upon the young the sacred duty of loving and cherishing those who have guided them through infancy, childhood, and youth, up to manhood and womanhood, and who are now in great degree dependent upon them for peace and happiness. The Bible gives no uncertain sound on this subject; nevertheless, its teachings have been greatly disregarded.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 101.

4. A THREEFOLD POWER

- a. **What family-related prophecy will be fulfilled in these last days? Malachi 4:5, 6; Luke 1:17.**

“The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are ‘the issues of life’ (Proverbs 4:23); and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

“Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. Their great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. As the claims of the law are presented, and men and women are convicted of their duty to render obedience, show them the responsibility of their decision, not only for themselves but for their children.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 556.

- b. **When fathers, mothers, and children are united in one happy family, what will be the result? Psalm 144:12.**

“More than human wisdom is needed by parents at every step, that they may understand how best to educate their children for a useful, happy life here, and for higher service and greater joy hereafter. Fathers and mothers, ever remember that to you is committed a sacred trust. The power of example is very great. If you fail to select proper society for your children and allow them to associate with persons of questionable morals, you place them or permit them to place themselves in a school where lessons of depravity will be taught and practiced.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 13, 1881.

“Parents, you have a solemn responsibility resting upon you. It is your duty to cooperate with Christ in aiding your children to form right characters. Jesus can do nothing without your cooperation. It is not mercy or kindness to permit a child to have its own way, to submit to its rule, and to neglect to correct it on the ground that you love it too well to punish it. What kind of love is it that permits your child to develop traits of character that will make him and everyone else miserable? Away with such love! True love will look out for the present and eternal good of the soul.”—*Ibid.*, July 16, 1895.

5. FAITHFUL WORK REWARDED

- a. In eternity—when the saved are secure in God’s kingdom—what will parents be able to say, and what will their children testify? Isaiah 8:18.

“When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened; when the ‘well done’ of the great Judge is pronounced, and the crown of immortal glory is placed upon the brow of the victor, many will raise their crowns in sight of the assembled universe and, pointing to their mother, say, ‘She made me all I am through the grace of God. Her instruction, her prayers, have been blessed to my eternal salvation.’ ”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 330.

“Mothers, remember that in your work the Creator of the universe will give you help. In His strength, and through His name, you can lead your children to be overcomers. Teach them to look to God for strength. Tell them that He hears their prayers. Teach them to overcome evil with good. Teach them to exert an influence that is elevating and ennobling. Lead them to unite with God, and then they will have strength to resist the strongest temptation. They will then receive the reward of the overcomer.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 172, 173.

- b. What will be the reward of the united Christian family when they enter God’s kingdom? Psalm 132:12; Revelation 5:13.

“[Jesus] tells you to be a partaker of His joy, and what is that? It is the joy of seeing of the travail of your soul, fathers. It is the joy of seeing that your efforts, mothers, are rewarded. Here are your children; the crown of life is upon their heads, and the angels of God immortalize the names of the mothers whose efforts have won their children to Jesus Christ.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 567, 568.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- What characterizes a true Christian family?
- Name some successful key elements in rearing God-fearing children.
- What special challenge do parents face in these last days?
- Why will truly Christian homes become rare in the end of time?
- What is needed in order to see our children in the kingdom of God?

True Education

“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).

“To many, education means a knowledge of books; but ‘the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’ (Psalm 111:10). The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 322.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 13–27.

1. IN EDEN

- a. What is the definition of true education? Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10.

“True education is the preparation of the mental, moral, and physical powers for the performance of every duty, pleasant or otherwise, the training of every habit and practice, of heart, mind, and soul for divine service.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 228.

“The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 595.

- b. What environment were Adam and Eve provided for their education? Genesis 2:8, 15.

“The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 294.

“When in counsel with the Father before the world was, it was designed that the Lord God should plant a garden for Adam and Eve in Eden and give them the task of caring for the fruit trees and cultivating and training the vegetation. Useful labor was to be their safeguard, and it was to be perpetuated through all generations to the close of earth’s history. To have a whole-sided education, it is necessary to combine science with practical labor.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 13, 1896.

2. THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

- a. To restore a more godly plan of education, what was provided for the “sons of the prophets” in Israel? 1 Samuel 7:15, 16; 2 Kings 2:2–5, 15.

“Three of these schools [of the prophets], one at Gilgal, one at Bethel, and one at Jericho, are mentioned in the record. Just before Elijah was taken to heaven, he and Elisha visited these centers of training.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 224, 225.

“In these ‘schools of the prophets’ young men were educated by those who were not only well versed in divine truth, but who themselves maintained close communion with God and had received the special endowment of His Spirit.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 20, 1882.

- b. Name the main subjects studied in the schools of the prophets. Psalm 86:11; John 17:3.

“The chief subjects of study in these schools [of the prophets] were the law of God, with the instructions given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In those schools of the olden time, it was the grand object of all study to learn the will of God, and man’s duty toward Him. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah.”—*Christian Education*, p. 62.

“Do you think [those in the school of the prophets] took the study books that were in the common schools? No, No! What were they taught? To have a knowledge of Jesus Christ.”—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 357.

“In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings, and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. . . . The great truths set forth by the types in the service of the sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system—the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellect brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song.”—*Education*, p. 47.

3. USEFUL TRADES

- a. Where did Jesus obtain His education? Matthew 13:54–56.

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

“Throughout His life on earth, Jesus was an earnest and constant worker. He expected much; therefore He attempted much. After He had entered on His ministry, He said, ‘I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work’ (John 9:4). Jesus did not shirk care and responsibility, as do many who profess to be His followers. It is because they seek to evade this discipline that so many are weak and inefficient.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 70–73.

- b. Where do we find appropriate material for true education apart from the Bible? 2 Thessalonians 3:8–10.

“Manual training is deserving of far more attention than it has received. Schools should be established that, in addition to the highest mental and moral culture, shall provide the best possible facilities for physical development and industrial training. Instruction should be given in agriculture, manufactures—covering as many as possible of the most useful trades—also in household economy, healthful cookery, sewing, hygienic dressmaking, the treatment of the sick, and kindred lines. Gardens, workshops, and treatment rooms should be provided, and the work in every line should be under the direction of skilled instructors.

“The work should have a definite aim and should be thorough. While every person needs some knowledge of different handicrafts, it is indispensable that he become proficient in at least one. Every youth, on leaving school, should have acquired a knowledge of some trade or occupation by which, if need be, he may earn a livelihood.”—*Education*, p. 218.

4. THE BIBLE IN EDUCATION

- a. What is the diligent study of the Bible able to do for us? Psalm 119:98–101; Proverbs 2:1–5.

“Above all other books, the word of God must be our study, the great textbook, the basis of all education; and our children are to be educated in the truths found therein, irrespective of previous habits and customs.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 131, 132.

“The Bible teaches the whole will of God concerning the sons and daughters of Adam. The Bible is the rule of life, teaching us of the character we must form for the future, immortal life.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 390, 391.

- b. As we give ourselves to study and be educated, what should be our priorities? Isaiah 55:2, 3; Psalm 25:4, 5.

“Today young men and women spend years and years in acquiring an education which is but wood and stubble, to be consumed in the last great conflagration. Many spend years of their life in the study of books, obtaining an education that will die with them. Upon such an education God places no value. This supposed wisdom gained from the study of different authors, has excluded and lessened the brightness and value of the word of God. Many students have left school unable to receive the word of God with the reverence and respect that they gave it before they entered, their faith eclipsed in the effort to excel in the various studies. The Bible has not been made a standard matter in their education, but books mixed with infidelity and propagating unsound theories have been placed before them.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 446, 447.

“Men need not the dim light of tradition and custom to make the Scriptures comprehensible. It is just as sensible to suppose that the sun, shining in the heavens at noonday, needs the glimmerings of the torchlight of earth to increase its glory.”—*Ibid.*, p. 391.

“The Bible should not be brought into our schools to be sandwiched in between infidelity. The Bible must be made the groundwork and subject matter of education. It is true that we know much more of the word of the living God than we knew in the past, but there is still much more to be learned. It should be used as the word of the living God, and esteemed as first, and last, and best in everything. Then will be seen true spiritual growth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 474.

5. EDUCATION FOR ETERNITY

- a. What does Inspiration say about the Scriptures? 2 Timothy 3:15, 16.

“Through all eternity the Scriptures will be shining forth brighter and brighter, like precious gems; but we do not half understand these truths. The precious Bible truth that we have accepted must do a great work for us, and the more we understand these things, the better will we understand how to make an impression upon other minds.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888.

- b. What will be the subjects of study in the kingdom of God, and who will teach the redeemed? Matthew 23:10; Ephesians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“[In the New Jerusalem,] immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 677.

“The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the ransomed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? Should we not praise God with heart and soul and voice ‘for His wonderful works to the children of men’? (Psalm 107:8).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 318.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What vital aspect of Christian education is often overlooked today?
 b. Why were the “schools of the prophets” successful in their mission?
 c. How can we come closer to the way Jesus was educated?
 d. In what sense is the Bible often eclipsed in many Christian schools?
 e. What role does education have in eternity?

The Spirit of Prophecy

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

“God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs, and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 230.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 24–39.

Sunday

June 14

1. IN THE BEGINNING

- a. **In the beginning, after God ended the work of creation, how did He communicate with Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:8, 9. How did He communicate with the patriarchs?**

“The holy pair [Adam and Eve] were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between.”—*Christian Education*, p. 207.

“Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man’s Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

- b. **How did God communicate His will to Moses, the great leader of Israel? Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12:7, 8.**

“Moses was the greatest man who ever stood as leader of the people of God. He was greatly honored by God, not for the experience which he had gained in the Egyptian court, but because he was the meekest of men. God talked with him face to face, as a man talks with a friend.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1113.

Monday

June 15

2. HOLY MEN OF GOD—THE PROPHETS

- a. **After sin raised a barrier between God and humanity (Isaiah 59:1, 2), whom did the Lord use to reveal His will to them? 1 Samuel 9:9; 2 Peter 1:21.**

“It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. . . . It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. ‘The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’ (Revelation 19:10).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 366, 367.

“The sayings of Christ are not a new revelation. The principles which He expounded were announced to Moses from the pillar of cloud, and to the prophets, who spoke and wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 7, 1896.

“The more fully we accept the light presented by the Holy Spirit through the consecrated servants of God, the deeper and surer, even as the eternal throne, will appear the truths of ancient prophecy; we shall be assured that men of God spake as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Men must themselves be under the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Spirit’s utterances through the prophets.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 114.

- b. **What was promised to God’s people regarding His will and plans? Numbers 12:6; Amos 3:7.**

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 455.

“We must follow the directions given through the spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 298.

3. THE ROLE OF A PROPHET

- a. What is the physical condition of true prophets when they receive divine revelations? Numbers 24:2–4; Job 33:14–16. What should be done with the visions received? Habakkuk 2:2.

“At a meeting held in Dorchester, Mass., November, 1848, I had been given a view of the proclamation of the sealing message, and of the duty of the brethren to publish the light that was shining upon our pathway.

“After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: ‘I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.’ ”—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 125.

- b. Besides foretelling future events, what else were the duties of the prophets? Hosea 6:5; 12:10, 13; Nehemiah 6:7.

“[God’s] prophets were sent to [the Israelites in captivity] with reproofs and warnings. The people were awakened to see their guilt, they humbled themselves before God, and returned to Him with true repentance. Then the Lord sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from their captivity, and restore them to His favor.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 468.

“The work of Elisha as a prophet was in some respects very different from that of Elijah. To Elijah had been committed messages of condemnation and judgment; his was the voice of fearless reproof, calling king and people to turn from their evil ways. Elisha’s was a more peaceful mission; his it was to build up and strengthen the work that Elijah had begun; to teach the people the way of the Lord. Inspiration pictures him as coming into personal touch with the people, surrounded by the sons of the prophets, bringing by his miracles and his ministry healing and rejoicing.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 235.

“John, as a prophet, stood forth as God’s representative, to show the connection between the law and prophets, and the Christian dispensation. His work and ministry pointed back to the law and the prophets, while he, at the same time, pointed the people forward to Christ, as the Saviour of the world.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 57.

4. WOMEN PROPHETS

- a. Name some of the women whom God called to the prophetic ministry. Exodus 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Luke 2:36; Acts 21:8, 9.

“There was dwelling in Israel a woman illustrious for her piety, and through her the Lord chose to deliver His people. Her name was Deborah. She was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice.”—*Daughters of God*, p. 37.

“The prophetess Huldah was living in Jerusalem, near the temple. The mind of the king, filled with anxious foreboding, reverted to her, and he determined to inquire of the Lord through this chosen messenger to learn, if possible, whether by any means within his power he might save erring Judah, now on the verge of ruin.”—*Ibid.*, p. 44.

- b. After two men (William Foy and Hazen Foss) refused to unveil God’s revelation to the people, what was shown to Ellen Gould Harmon? What title did she attribute to herself—and why?

“It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me: ‘Look again, and look a little higher.’ At this I raised my eyes and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling toward the city.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 58, 59.

“To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 34.

5. TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS

- a. What is one of the identifying marks of God's remnant church in these last days? Ephesians 4:11; Revelation 12:17; 19:10 (last part).

"The law of God and the Spirit of Prophecy go hand in hand to guide and counsel the church, and whenever the church has recognized this by obeying His law, the Spirit of Prophecy has been sent to guide her in the way of truth. . . .

"The remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the Spirit of Prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations."—*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33.

"It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the *Testimonies*. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 211.

"If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 98.

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God."—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 296.

- b. While, on the one hand, it is dangerous to reject the words of true prophets, on the other, what warning is also given us against false prophets? Matthew 7:15; 24:24, 25; 2 Peter 2:1, 2; 1 John 4:1.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How did God communicate with Adam and Eve in Eden?
- How has God spoken to His people in these last days?
- Name the general duties of a prophet.
- How was Ellen G. White's work similar to that of prophets of old?
- What should we do if the Testimonies cross our will, ways, or practices?

The Four World Empires in Prophecy

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me" (Isaiah 45:21).

"The Lord, who knows all, will make known the very things that are for the best interests of His children; and if He sees fit to veil the events of the future, it is only because He loves us, and would work out our highest good."—*The Signs of the Times*, August 19, 1889.

Suggested Reading: *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 492–502.

1. THE BABYLONIAN KINGDOM

- With what words do the prophets describe the beautiful city of ancient Babylon? Isaiah 13:19; 14:4. How did Babylon's glory affect the attitude of its monarch, Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 4:30.
- As Nebuchadnezzar considered the greatness of his kingdom, what was revealed to him in a dream? Daniel 2:1, 26–29, 31–38.

"The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world's history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven. In the interpretation of the dream, he had been plainly instructed regarding the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 503.

"God is the ruling power in the affairs of this world. He changes the times and the seasons, He removes kings and sets up kings, to fulfill His own purpose."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 49.

2. MEDO-PERSIA

- a. How was the destruction of Babylon foretold? Who were the human agents to fulfill that prophecy? Isaiah 45:1, 2; Daniel 5:30, 31.

“While those who had remained loyal to God in the midst of Babylon were seeking the Lord and studying the prophecies foretelling their deliverance, God was preparing the hearts of kings to show favor to His repentant people.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 21, 1907.

- b. What notable experience took place in the reign of Darius the Mede? Daniel 6:13–22. What important work was to be accomplished in the time of the kingdom of Medo-Persia? Ezra 5:13; 6:1; 7:12, 13.

“Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an excellent spirit was in him. . . . On account of his praying to God, he was cast into the lion’s den. Evil angels accomplished their purpose thus far. But Daniel continues to pray, even in the den of lions. Was Daniel suffered to be consumed? Did God forget him there? O, no; Jesus, the mighty Commander of the host of heaven, sent His angel to close the mouths of those hungry lions that they should not hurt the praying man of God, and all was peace in that terrible den. The king witnessed his preservation and brought him out with honors.”—*Ibid.*, February 18, 1862.

“The highest agencies of heaven were working on the hearts of kings, and it was for the people of God to labor with the utmost activity to carry out the decree of Cyrus.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 572.

“The provincial officers of the Medo-Persian realm visited the returned exiles, and requested them to state the name of the one who had commanded them to rebuild. If the Jews at that time had not been trusting the Lord for guidance, this inquiry made by men high in authority might have resulted disastrously to the builders. ‘But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius’ (Ezra 5:5). The officers were answered so wisely that they decided to write a letter to Darius Hystaspes, king of Medo-Persia, directing his attention to the original decree made by Cyrus, commanding that the house of God at Jerusalem be builded, and that the expenses for the same be paid from the king’s treasury.”—*Ibid.*, December 26, 1907.

3. GREECE

- a. What part and what material of the image represented the third empire of the world? Daniel 2:39. Why did Medo-Persia come to an end and was followed by Greece?

“The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of God because in it His law was trampled underfoot. The fear of God possessed no power among the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption were the prevailing influences in this kingdom; and the kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off God. Forgetting Him, they sank lower and lower in the scale.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900.

“The deification of the dead has held a prominent place in nearly every system of heathenism, as has also the supposed communion with the dead. The gods were believed to communicate their will to men, and also, when consulted, to give them counsel. Of this character were the famous oracles of Greece and Rome.”—*Evangelism*, p. 603.

- b. Following the example of the two previous kingdoms, how did the kingdom of Greece end? Daniel 7:6, 12; 8:5–8.

“Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of ‘the Watcher and the Holy One.’ Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another.”—*Education*, pp. 176, 177.

“From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring—how completely has it passed away! As ‘the flower of the grass’ (James 1:10). it has perished. So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 345.

4. THE ROMAN EMPIRE

- a. What part of the image represented the Roman empire, and of what material was it made? Daniel 2:40. What characterized Rome?

“The metals in the image [shown to Nebuchadnezzar], symbolizing the different kingdoms, became less and less pure and valuable, from the head down. The head of the image was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the sides of brass, and the feet and toes iron mingled with clay. So the kingdoms represented by them deteriorated in value.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900.

- b. What important events took place under Roman rule? Luke 2:1–7; 21:20, 21. Finally, into what did the powerful Roman empire mutate?

“Angels behold the weary travelers, Joseph and Mary, making their way to the city of David, to be taxed, according to the decree of Caesar Augustus. Here, in the providence of God, Joseph and Mary had been brought; for this was the place prophecy had predicted that Christ should be born. They seek a place of rest at the inn, but are turned away because there is no room. The wealthy and honorable have been welcomed, and find refreshment and room, while these weary travelers are compelled to seek refuge in a coarse building which shelters the dumb beasts. Here the Saviour of the world is born.”—*Ibid.*, December 17, 1872.

“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. . . . 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.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 712, 713.

“The vast empire of Rome crumbled to pieces, and from its ruins rose that mighty power, the Roman Catholic Church.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 22, 1903.

5. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

- a. The kingdom of Rome was represented by the legs of iron. What composed the material of the feet? Daniel 2:41, 42.

“Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 361.

- b. What was foretold about the mingling of iron and clay of the image’s feet and toes? Daniel 2:43. What event will take place in the time of the divided kingdom? Daniel 2:44, 45; 7:18, 27; Psalm 37:29.

“The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 50.

“[Micah 4:8 quoted.] The kingdom forfeited by sin, Christ has regained, and the redeemed are to possess it with Him.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 489.

“The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God’s favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God’s original purpose in its creation is accomplished”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 342.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What news was proud Nebuchadnezzar probably shocked to hear?
 b. What can we learn from the way God worked in the heart of heathen rulers, such as Darius the Mede and Cyrus of Persia?
 c. What warning should we heed from the rise and fall of various empires?
 d. Describe the bitter woe that came upon those who rejected Christ.
 e. What is signified by iron mingled with clay—and how will this era end?

First Sabbath Offerings



APRIL 4
for Belize
(See p. 4.)

MAY 9
for Whispering Pines
Christian School
(See p. 30.)



JUNE 6
for Czechoslovakian
Mission
(See p. 51.)