

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division



The Light *of the World* (IV)

Vol. 90, No. 4

October–December, 2014

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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.

Illustrations: Sermonview on front cover; Map-Resources on pp. 4, 51, and back cover; Wikipedia on p. 25 and back cover.

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Foreword

During the first three quarters of this year we have studied lessons in evangelism from the history of God's people before the first advent of Christ. In this quarter we will look at lessons of evangelism from the experience of the first disciples of Christ and the early Christian church. We will also consider instruction that God has provided for our benefit in order that we may fulfill His purpose as God's remnant people.

"Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. . . .To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. In every part of the earth, men and women are responding to the Heaven-sent message which John the revelator prophesied would be proclaimed prior to the second coming of Christ: 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come' (Revelation 14:7)."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 714.

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God (Ephesians 3:10)."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

"The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin and sorrow and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God's love. From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven's throne to be excluded.

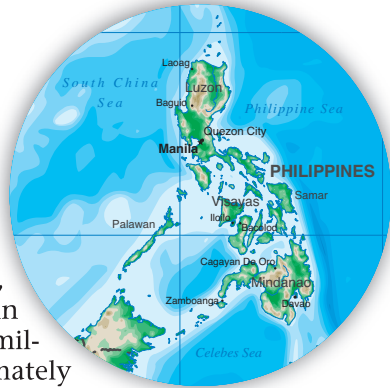
"The message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God's strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 719.

It is our prayer that this series of lessons will help our Sabbath School students to become more effective missionaries in taking forward this last message of mercy to the world.

—*The General Conference Sabbath School Department*

First Sabbath Offering for the Philippine Union headquarters

The Philippines is an archipelago comprising 7,107 islands with a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers (115,831 sq mi). The islands are divided into three groups: Luzon island, Visayas, and Mindanao. The population in January 2013 was estimated at 99 million. While there are approximately more than 170 dialects in the Philippines, Filipino and English are widely used. The Philippines is marked by a wide range of spiritual beliefs, including Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist, Hinduism, and others.



The message of Reformation began when D. Nicolici visited the Philippines, at the end of 1958, in answer to a call received from Adventist believers who had been separated from the main Adventist denomination in Davao City. In 1959, the Philippine Union was organized. Since then, faithful workers, ministers, and lay members have continued their missionary work, carrying the banner of truth to the different islands of the country. Today, the Philippine Union is comprised of 5 missions with 60 churches and groups, comprised of 1,375 members. There are two missionary training schools that are regularly operating notwithstanding the financial difficulties that are always proving a hindrance to our missionaries.

The building used for our Union headquarters was established in 1970 within the capital city, Manila. Now, this old building is in serious need of repair. However, the believers in the Philippines have decided to transfer the headquarters to a more suitable place and use the old building as a publishing house.

In view of this situation, the Philippine Union with the help of all the believers are financially incapable to pursue this project. We therefore wish to make this appeal to all our brethren and sisters around the world to help us with your prayers and to share with us your financial blessings.

We are looking forward to realizing this noble request.

May the Lord be glorified as we put into action that which He has given us as a burden to accomplish. May God bless you all.

Your brothers and sisters in the Philippines

“We Have Found the Messiah”

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“John was sent in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of Jesus. Those who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus.”—*Early Writings*, p. 259.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 132–143.

Sunday

September 28

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST

- a. Considering the interview of John the Baptist with the Jerusalem authorities, what lessons can we learn from the way the Baptist identified himself and his work? John 1:19–28.

“When [John] the Baptist began his ministry, many thought that he might be the prophet Moses risen from the dead.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 135.

- b. What did John declare the day after the interview with the priests and Levites? John 1:29–34.
-

“With awe and wonder the people looked upon the One just declared to be the Son of God. They had been deeply moved by the words of John. He had spoken to them in the name of God. They had listened to him day after day as he reproved their sins, and daily the conviction that he was sent of Heaven had strengthened. But who was this One greater than John the Baptist? In His dress and bearing there was nothing that betokened rank. He was apparently a simple personage, clad like themselves in the humble garments of the poor.”—*Ibid.*, p. 137.

2. "HE BROUGHT HIM TO JESUS"

- a. What did John the Baptist say the following day? Who is specifically mentioned as hearing him? John 1:35, 36.
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- b. What essential attitude of an evangelist did these two disciples of John the Baptist have? John 1:37–39.
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"If John and Andrew had possessed the unbelieving spirit of the priests and rulers, they would not have been found as learners at the feet of Jesus. They would have come to Him as critics, to judge His words. Many thus close the door to the most precious opportunities. But not so did these first disciples. They had responded to the Holy Spirit's call in the preaching of John the Baptist. Now they recognized the voice of the heavenly Teacher. To them the words of Jesus were full of freshness and truth and beauty. A divine illumination was shed upon the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. The many-sided themes of truth stood out in new light.

"It is contrition and faith and love that enable the soul to receive wisdom from heaven. Faith working by love is the key of knowledge, and everyone that loveth 'knoweth God' (1 John 4:7)."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

- c. Who were these first two disciples? John 1:40. [Note: When writing the gospel of John, the author never identified himself by his name.] Explain Andrew's desire, after spending time with Jesus, to share the good news. Verse 41.
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"The disciple John was a man of earnest and deep affection, ardent, yet contemplative. He had begun to discern the glory of Christ—not the worldly pomp and power for which he had been taught to hope, but 'the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). He was absorbed in contemplation of the wondrous theme.

"Andrew sought to impart the joy that filled his heart. Going in search of his brother Simon, he cried, 'We have found the Messiah.'"—*Ibid.*

3. PETER, PHILIP, NATHANAEL

- a. What did Jesus say to Simon Peter as soon as He saw him? John 1:42.

“Simon waited for no second bidding. He also had heard the preaching of John the Baptist, and he hastened to the Saviour. The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all, and He said, ‘Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

- b. How did a new disciple show his desire to share the good news the next day? John 1:43–45.

- c. How did Nathanael express doubt in his heart about the good news, and how did Philip try to remove that doubt? John 1:46. What may we learn from the method these first Christian evangelists used in their work?

“While they trust to the guidance of human authority, none will come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Like Nathanael, we need to study God’s word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance.

“With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors. There are those who for a lifetime have professed to be acquainted with Christ, yet who have never made a personal effort to bring one soul to the Saviour.”—*Ibid.*, p. 141.

4. IF YOU BELIEVE ON ME

- a. Despite Nathanael's disbelief, what did Jesus say about him? John 1:47. What remark of Jesus caught Nathanael by surprise, and what was his response? Verses 48, 49.

- b. As Jesus was looking forward with joy to the precious blessings that His work would bring to humanity, what did He say to Nathanael? John 1:51. Explain this verse.

"If you believe on Me . . . your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men. . . .

"And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us. In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 142, 143.

- c. How can we come to God through Christ? John 14:6.

"Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now *choose* to be Christians.

"Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 47, 48.

5. REVEALING JESUS' CHARACTER

- a. What highly effective method of evangelism should each of us use? 1 John 3:10, 11.

“Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, His disciples are His representatives among men, and one of the most effective ways of winning souls to Him is in exemplifying His character in our daily life. Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world.

“The teaching of Christ was the expression of an inwrought conviction and experience, and those who learn of Him become teachers after the divine order. The word of God, spoken by one who is himself sanctified through it, has a life-giving power that makes it attractive to the hearers, and convicts them that it is a living reality. When one has received the truth in the love of it, he will make this manifest in the persuasion of his manner and the tones of his voice. He makes known that which he himself has heard, seen, and handled of the word of life, that others may have fellowship with him through the knowledge of Christ. His testimony, from lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, is truth to the receptive heart, and works sanctification upon the character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 141, 142.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did John the Baptist say about Jesus Christ as soon as he recognized Him?
2. What was Andrew's first evangelistic experience—and what should we learn from it?
3. How did Philip manifest a concern similar to Andrew's?
4. Explain how we are to come to God.
5. Summarize the most powerful means of evangelism.

Jesus Called Twelve

“[Jesus] ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14).

“Jesus had called His disciples that He might send them forth as His witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, and was second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the saving of the world.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 11, 1912.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 290–297.

Sunday

October 5

1. TWELVE APOSTLES

- a. What kind of people did Christ train to proclaim the message of salvation to the world? What were their names? Matthew 10:2–4.

“Our Saviour . . . connected with Himself men who were faulty in character and granted them the benefits of His teachings and example, that they might have an opportunity to see their errors and correct them.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 43.

- b. What statement of Christ shows that He knew the character of those men? John 6:70.

“The Saviour knew the character of the men whom He had chosen; all their weaknesses and errors were open before Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 291.

“Among the twelve apostles was a traitor. Judas was accepted, not because of his defects of character, but notwithstanding them.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 43, 44.

2. JUDAS

- a. How and why did Christ accept Judas? Matthew 8:19, 20.
-

“While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples. With great earnestness and apparent sincerity he declared, ‘Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.’ Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him, but uttered only the mournful words: ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head’ (Matthew 8:19, 20). . . .

“The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 293, 294.

- b. What choice was open before Judas, as it is for all of us? Deuteronomy 30:19.
-

“If [Judas] would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God. . . .

“Judas had the same opportunities as had the other disciples. He listened to the same precious lessons. But the practice of the truth, which Christ required, was at variance with the desires and purposes of Judas.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 294, 295.

- c. In what way alone could Judas have chosen life, and what would have such a choice involved on his part? John 1:12, 13; 1 Peter 1:22, 23.
-

“[Judas] was connected with the disciples, that, through the instruction and example of Christ, he might learn what constitutes Christian character, and thus be led to see his errors, to repent, and, by the aid of divine grace, to purify his soul ‘in obeying the truth’ (1 Peter 1:22).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 44.

3. "LEARN OF ME"

- a. How does the apostle Paul describe the simplicity of the men and women called to work for God? 1 Corinthians 1:26–28.
-

"God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 294.

"In the common walks of life there is many a toiler patiently treading the round of his daily tasks, unconscious of latent powers that, roused to action, would place him among the world's great leaders. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse and develop those dormant faculties."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 511.

- b. What did the call to service for Christ mean for those first disciples? Luke 14:27, 33; Ephesians 4:20–24.
-

"All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called 'the sons of thunder.' . . . [But] by beholding Christ, they became transformed in character."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 295, 296.

- c. Of whom did the disciples need to learn in order to fulfill their calling? Upon what principle was their education based? Matthew 11:29; John 17:26.
-

"A life devoted to God should not be a life of ignorance. Many speak against education because Jesus chose uneducated fishermen to preach the gospel. They assert that He showed preference for the uneducated. But there were many learned and honorable men who believed the teaching of Christ. Had these fearlessly obeyed the convictions of their consciences, they would have followed Him."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 511.

4. MAKING OUR CALLING SURE

- a. What does the apostle Paul mean when he says that he was always praying for the believers in Thessalonica “that our God would count you worthy of this calling”? 2 Thessalonians 1:11.
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- b. How are the “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Hebrews 3:1) instructed to make their calling sure? 2 Peter 1:2–11.
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“You are not to think that you must wait until you have perfected one grace before cultivating another. No; they are to grow up together, fed continually from the fountain of charity; every day that you live, you can be perfecting the blessed attributes fully revealed in the character of Christ; and when you do this, you will bring light, love, peace, and joy into your homes.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E.G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 943.

- c. What instruction is especially given to those who feel that they have been called to be evangelists? 2 Timothy 2:15.
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“If the worker has consecrated himself fully to God and is diligent in prayer for strength and heavenly wisdom, the grace of Christ will be his teacher, and he will overcome his defects and become more and more intelligent in the things of God. But let none take license from this to be indolent, to squander time and opportunities, and neglect the training that is essential in order to become efficient. The Lord is not pleased with those who, having had opportunities to obtain knowledge, neglect to improve the privileges placed within their reach. . . .

“Above all other people on earth the man whose mind is enlightened by the word of God will feel that he must give himself to greater diligence in the perusal of the Bible and to a diligent study of the sciences; for his hope and his calling are greater than any other. The more closely man is connected with the Source of all knowledge and wisdom, the more he can be helped intellectually as well as spiritually.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 510.

5. JESUS STILL CALLS MEN AND WOMEN

- a. In this time of the end, what scriptures should we bear in mind with regard to the finishing of God's work on earth? Matthew 24:14; 9:37, 38; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

"He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. . . .

"[2 Corinthians 4:7, RV quoted.] This is why the preaching of the gospel was committed to erring men rather than to the angels. It is manifest that the power which works through the weakness of humanity is the power of God. . . . Having been in peril themselves, they are acquainted with the dangers and difficulties of the way, and for this reason are called to reach out for others in like peril. There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ.

"We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our cooperation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 297.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Although Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, why and how did He accept Judas?
2. How can we avoid the tragic mistakes of Judas?
3. Explain some key aims and requirements in collaborating with Christ.
4. What is the real secret of successful evangelism?
5. How are we instructed to make our calling sure?

The First Missionary Tour

“[Jesus] called his twelve disciples . . . and . . . sent them to preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:1, 2).

“These disciples were to be heralds of the truth, to prepare the way for the coming of the Master. The burden of their message was a repetition of that of John the Baptist and of Christ Himself, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand.’”—*The Review and Herald*, March 23, 1897.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 349-358.

Sunday

October 12

1. A CALL TO REPENTANCE

- a. With what message did Christ send His twelve disciples after a period of training? Matthew 10:7.

- b. What power did Christ give to them, and what was His admonition afterwards in view of their success? Mark 6:7; Luke 10:20. What benefits are there in sending out evangelists two by two?

“Calling the twelve about Him, Jesus bade them go out two and two through the towns and villages. None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counseling and praying together, each one’s strength supplementing the other’s weakness. In the same manner He afterward sent forth the seventy. It was the Saviour’s purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be far more successful if this example were more closely followed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

2. HELPING THE NEEDY

- a. During His ministry, how did Christ divide His time? Matthew 4:23, 24.
-

“During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

- b. What promise will be fulfilled toward those who, in the Spirit of Christ, help the needy and preach His message? Isaiah 58:8.
-

“The followers of Christ are to labor as He did. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing and inspire hope in the hopeless. And to us also the promise will be fulfilled, ‘Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward’ (Isaiah 58:8). The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice. These are necessary to strike terror to the lawbreaker, but the loving missionary can do more than this.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 350, 351.

- c. Christian missionaries will not be involved today in pseudo-miraculous healings; but what can they do?
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“The missionary cannot only relieve physical maladies, but he can lead the sinner to the Great Physician, who can cleanse the soul from the leprosy of sin. Through His servants, God designs that the sick, the unfortunate, those possessed of evil spirits, shall hear His voice. Through His human agencies He desires to be a Comforter such as the world knows not.”—*Ibid.*, p. 351.

“Not only should those who believe the truth practice health reform but they should also teach it diligently to others; for it will be an agency through which the truth can be presented to the attention of unbelievers. They will reason that if we have such sound ideas in regard to health and temperance, there must be something in our religious belief that is worth investigation.”—*Evangelism*, p. 514.

3. EFFECTIVE HOUSE-TO-HOUSE WORK

- a. What instruction did Christ give to His disciples in effective house-to-house work? Matthew 10:11–14; Luke 10:5.
-

“In every place [the disciples] were to accept the hospitality of those who were worthy, those who would welcome them heartily as if entertaining Christ Himself. They were to enter the dwelling with the beautiful salutation, ‘Peace be to this house’ (Luke 10:5). That home would be blessed by their prayers, their songs of praise, and the opening of the Scriptures in the family circle.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 351, 352.

- b. In their first missionary tour, to whom were the disciples to go first? Matthew 10:5, 6. Why?
-

“If [the disciples] had now preached the gospel to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, they would have lost their influence with the Jews. By exciting the prejudice of the Pharisees they would have involved themselves in controversy which would have discouraged them at the outset of their labors. Even the apostles were slow to understand that the gospel was to be carried to all nations. Until they themselves could grasp this truth they were not prepared to labor for the Gentiles. If the Jews would receive the gospel, God purposed to make them His messengers to the Gentiles.”—*Ibid.*, p. 351.

- c. When the 70 disciples were to enter people’s homes, how did Jesus counsel them to show gratitude and respect for the hospitality of the householders? Luke 10:7–9. Why?
-

“[Luke 10:1–3, 8, 9 quoted. The seventy disciples] were not to lose sight of [this] message, nor to enter into controversy over matters that were unessential, or that would close the door to the important truths Jesus had bid them teach.”—*This Day With God*, p. 113.

4. SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES

a. What is the meaning of Christ's warning in Matthew 10:16?

"The servants of Christ are not to act out the dictates of the natural heart. They need to have close communion with God, lest, under provocation, self rise up, and they pour forth a torrent of words that are unbefitting, that are not as dew or the still showers that refresh the withering plants. This is what Satan wants them to do; for these are his methods. . . . But God's servants are to be representatives of Him. He desires them to deal only in the currency of heaven, the truth that bears His own image and superscription. The power by which they are to overcome evil is the power of Christ. The glory of Christ is their strength. They are to fix their eyes upon His loveliness. Then they can present the gospel with divine tact and gentleness. And the spirit that is kept gentle under provocation will speak more effectively in favor of the truth than will any argument, however forcible.

"Those who are brought in controversy with the enemies of truth have to meet, not only men, but Satan and his agents. Let them remember the Saviour's words, 'Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves' (Luke 10:3). Let them rest in the love of God, and the spirit will be kept calm, even under personal abuse. The Lord will clothe them with a divine panoply. His Holy Spirit will influence the mind and heart, so that their voices shall not catch the notes of the baying of the wolves."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 353.

"Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm and steadfast, free from extravagance in thought, word, or deed. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth, silencing every other voice but that which comes from Him who is the truth."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 289.

b. What did Christ mean when, continuing His instructions to His disciples, He said, "Beware of men"? Matthew 10:17.

"[The disciples] were not to put implicit confidence in those who knew not God, and open to them their counsels; for this would give Satan's agents an advantage."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 354.

5. CONFESSING CHRIST

- a. Continuing His instruction, how did Christ stress the importance of confessing Him correctly before people? Matthew 10:32, 33.

“You are to be My witnesses upon earth, channels through which My grace can flow for the healing of the world. So I will be your representative in heaven. The Father beholds not your faulty character, but He sees you as clothed in My perfection. I am the medium through which Heaven’s blessings shall come to you. And everyone who confesses Me by sharing My sacrifice for the lost shall be confessed as a sharer in the glory and joy of the redeemed.

“He who would confess Christ must have Christ abiding in him. He cannot communicate that which he has not received. The disciples might speak fluently on doctrines, they might repeat the words of Christ Himself; but unless they possessed Christlike meekness and love, they were not confessing Him. A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life’s burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 357.

- b. What assurance may all who confess Christ faithfully claim? Revelation 3:5.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the mission entrusted to the 70 disciples.
2. What can Christians do for the sick today?
3. Name some key elements in effective house-to-house evangelism.
4. How are we to understand the phrase “sheep in the midst of wolves”?
5. What are some ways by which we represent Christ correctly or incorrectly?

A United Work

“And [Christ appointed different responsibilities and offices] . . . for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:11–13).

“ ‘The church must flee to God’s Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected.’ This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.”—*Early Writings*, p. 100.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 91, 92, 95, 96.

Sunday

October 19

1. A KEY TO PROGRESS

- a. Does Christ call us to labor independently from all others or does He want us to work in unity with those who submit to God? On what condition would the early church go forth from victory to victory? John 17:21–23.

“As [the disciples of the early church] should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth. . . . Nothing could withstand her onward progress.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 91.

- b. If the disciples failed to labor unitedly as the body of Christ, what would they be able to do? John 15:4, 5.

“The proclamation of the gospel was to be worldwide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 90.

2. CHOOSING MEN AND WOMEN FOR GOD'S SERVICE

- a. As the membership of the early church grew, what step was taken in harmony with gospel order? Acts 6:2, 3. Who selected the men to be ordained as deacons? What moral and spiritual qualities were considered as a main requirement?
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"[Acts 6:2–4 quoted.] The church accordingly selected seven men full of faith and the wisdom of the Spirit of God, to attend to the business pertaining to the cause."—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 260.

"[Acts 6:1–7 quoted.] The Lord here gives us an example of the care that should be exercised when choosing men for His service."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1056.

- b. How was God consulted by the congregation concerning these candidates for ordination? Acts 6:6. How should we follow the example of the early Christians in this regard? Acts 13:1–3.
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"Brethren of experience and of sound minds should assemble, and following the Word of God and the sanction of the Holy Spirit, should, with fervent prayer, lay hands upon those who have given full proof that they have received their commission of God, and set them apart to devote themselves entirely to His work. This act would show the sanction of the church to their going forth as messengers to carry the most solemn message ever given to men."—*Early Writings*, p. 101.

- c. How were they able to have a united influence upon the entire flock? 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2:16.
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"The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 95, 96.

3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- a. What qualifications should prospective soul winners develop under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Matthew 9:38; 1 Timothy 3:2–7. Why is self-education necessary?
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“The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31.

“Those in the service of God must show animation and determination in the work of winning souls.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 418.

“Those who make no decided effort, but simply wait for the Holy Spirit to compel them to action, will perish in darkness.”—*Christian Service*, p. 228.

- b. Genuineness, integrity: 2 Corinthians 6:3; 1 Peter 3:16.
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“Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed, gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of the truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 59.

- c. Decorum, courtesy, politeness (Christian dignity): Colossians 4:6. Humility: Matthew 3:16; John 3:30.
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“The man of God, the minister of Christ, is required to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. A pompous minister, all dignity, is not needed for this good work. But decorum is necessary in the desk. A minister of the gospel should not be regardless of his attitude.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 648.

“The minister of Christ should possess sobriety, meekness, love, long-suffering, forbearance, pity, and courtesy. He should be circumspect, elevated in thought and conversation, and of blameless deportment. This is gospel dignity.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 568, 569.

4. MORE QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- a. **Tact:** 2 Timothy 2:22–26. **Honesty, faithfulness:** Acts 6:3; 1 Corinthians 4:2.

“If a man has tact, industry, and enthusiasm, he will make a success in temporal business, and the same qualities, consecrated to the work of God, will prove even doubly efficient; for divine power will be combined with human effort.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 276.

“When responsibilities are to be entrusted to an individual, the question is not asked whether he is eloquent or wealthy, but whether he is honest, faithful, and industrious; for whatever may be his accomplishments, without these qualifications he is utterly unfit for any position of trust.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 413.

- b. **Sober-mindedness (having cautious, moderate ideas, and calm judgment):** Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8. **Cleanliness, tidiness, orderliness:** 1 Corinthians 14:40.

“Ministers should love order and should discipline themselves, and then they can successfully discipline the church of God and teach them to work harmoniously like a well-drilled company of soldiers. . . .

“Angels . . . turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 649.

- c. **Mental culture, cultured speech, correct language:** 2 Timothy 2:15.

“Men have labored with a measure of success who have had little training in school or college; but these might have attained a greater measure of success, and might have been more efficient laborers, if at the very start they had acquired mental discipline.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 92.

“Unless we can clothe our ideas in appropriate language, of what avail is our education?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 380.

“The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work. . . . We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, and words that are kind and courteous.”—*Christian Service*, p. 223.

5. COOPERATION

- a. What lesson should we learn from farm work before we can expect the Lord to bless our evangelistic efforts? 1 Corinthians 3:6–9.

“The Lord desires that the cities shall be worked by the united efforts of laborers of different capabilities. All are to look to Jesus for direction, not depending on man for wisdom, lest they be led astray. As laborers together with God they should seek to be in harmony with one another. There should be frequent councils and earnest, whole-hearted cooperation. Yet all are to look to Jesus for wisdom, not depending upon men alone for direction.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 109.

- b. In the first place, on what does the progress of our evangelistic work depend? Psalms 127:1.

“It is not the power that emanates from men that makes the work successful, it is the power of the heavenly intelligences working with the human agent that brings the work to perfection. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase. Man cannot do God’s part of the work. As a human agent he may cooperate with the divine intelligences, and in simplicity and meekness do his best, realizing that God is the great Master Workman. Although the workmen may be buried, the work will not cease, but it will go on to completion.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 14, 1893.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the practical benefits of working unitedly in evangelistic efforts.
2. Name some steps the church must take prior to performing ordinations.
3. What qualities are essential in soul winning?
4. How can we cultivate the essential qualifications for Christian service?
5. What agriculture illustration helps us to understand evangelism?

First Sabbath Offering for Printshops in Africa

Did you know there are many countries where SDA Reformers do not have access to the *Sabbath Bible Lessons* in their own languages? Many lack even basic publications explaining our beliefs. How easy would it be to study end-time prophecies without the Spirit of Prophecy?

As we approach the end of the time, one pressing duty rests upon every believer—the gospel commission to “teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20). The apostle Paul reminds us that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17), which is most effectively transmitted by the printed pages.

So far, the General Conference has been seeking ways to provide a remedy for the situation in Africa by sending literature in bulk quantities. Yet that literature was only in English—which actually cannot benefit most people living in the African continent. Some official languages there are Afrikaans, Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Swahili, but there are vast numbers that speak only local dialects. By some counts there are more than 2,000 languages in Africa.

By God’s grace, the General Conference Council resolved to establish two printshops in Africa. One will be in Angola to support the southern and western part of the continent, the other in Rwanda to support the central and eastern part of Africa. This may be a small beginning, and there are many other challenges ahead of us. Yet we are confident in the Lord and in the prayers and generous help of all believers around the world, that these small lighthouses will enable the precious truth to penetrate the darkest parts of the continent.

“Among earth’s inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. . . . In heathen Africa, . . . in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 188, 189.

Let us arise and support these precious lighthouses to enlighten the path of many until Christ comes to take us home!

May God bless you all.

—The General Conference Publishing Department



What Is Gospel Ministry?

“Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good” (Mark 14:7).

“The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ’s love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 82.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 637–641.

Sunday

October 26

1. WE ARE GOD’S STEWARDS

- a. From the abundance with which God blesses the earth, what provision has He made for sustaining the poor? Psalms 65:9–11; 68:10; 107:9.
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- b. What duty does Christ enjoin on His followers when He says, “Blessed are the merciful”? Matthew 5:7.
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“There never was a time when there was greater need for the exercise of mercy than today. The poor are all around us, the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowing, and those who are ready to perish.

“Those who have acquired riches have acquired them through the exercise of the talents that were given them of God, but these talents for the acquiring of property were given to them that they might relieve those who are in poverty. These gifts were bestowed upon men by Him who maketh His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, that by the fruitfulness of the earth men might have abundant supplies for all their need.”—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 15.

2. OUR DUTY TO THE WORLD

- a. Since, according to 1 John 5:19, the whole world is under the control of the power of darkness, what misery exists even in so-called Christian countries?

“While God in His providence has laden the earth with His bounties and filled its storehouses with the comforts of life, want and misery are on every hand. A liberal Providence has placed in the hands of His human agents an abundance to supply the necessities of all, but the stewards of God are unfaithful. In the professed Christian world there is enough expended in extravagant display to supply the wants of all the hungry and to clothe the naked. Many who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ are spending His money for selfish pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for strong drink and rich dainties, for extravagant houses and furniture and dress, while to suffering human beings they give scarcely a look of pity or a word of sympathy.

“What misery exists in the very heart of our so-called Christian countries! Think of the condition of the poor in our large cities. In these cities there are multitudes of human beings who do not receive as much care and consideration as are given to the brutes. There are thousands of wretched children, ragged and half starved, with vice and depravity written on their faces.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 274, 275.

- b. What blessings does God want us to impart to the world besides the knowledge of the way of salvation? Isaiah 58:7; James 1:27.

“Some think that if they give money to this work, it is all they are required to do; but this is an error. Donations of money cannot take the place of personal ministry. It is right to give our means, and many more should do this; but according to their strength and opportunities, personal service is required of all.

“The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 275, 276.

“Heavenly angels are waiting for human beings to cooperate with them in the practical carrying out of the principles of truth. It is through the agency of our sanitariums and kindred enterprises that much of this work is to be done.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp 58, 59.

3. “THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF”

- a. What kind of self-sacrifice is a genuine representation of the character of Christ? Galatians 6:9, 10; Romans 12:20.
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“We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God every day grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 276.

“The lesson [in the story of the good Samaritan] is no less needed in the world today than when it fell from the lips of Jesus. Selfishness and cold formality have well-nigh extinguished the fire of love and dispelled the graces that should make fragrant the character. Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 504.

- b. How can we best arouse the religious interest of our neighbors? 2 Thessalonians 3:13.
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“Every church member should feel it his special duty to labor for those living in his neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Present Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. This, united with simple songs and fervent prayers, will touch their hearts. Let church members educate themselves to do this work. This is just as essential as to save the benighted souls in foreign countries. While some feel the burden of souls afar off, let the many who are at home feel the burden of precious souls around them and work just as diligently for their salvation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 276.

4. A SPECIAL BLESSING TO THE MERCIFUL

- a. When Christ shall come in His glory, how many classes of people will there be? What will He say to those on His “right hand”? Matthew 25:34–36.

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.

“How surprised and gladdened will be the lowly among the nations, and among the heathen, to hear from the lips of the Saviour, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me’ (Matthew 25:40)! How glad will be the heart of Infinite Love as His followers look up with surprise and joy at His words of approval! . . .

“[Christ] identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

- b. Why should we be merciful to all kinds of sinners? Matthew 25:37–40.

“[Christ’s] followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints. The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ’s love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him.”—*Ibid.*

5. LET US BE UNSELFISH WORKERS

- a. How does the apostle Paul admonish us to cooperate with the angels of heaven in their ministry for sinners? Hebrews 13:1, 2.

“As you open your door to Christ’s needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. Every deed of mercy makes music there. The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 639.

“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.”—*Ibid.*, p. 640.

“In all who suffer for My name, said Jesus, you are to recognize Me. As you would minister to Me, so you are to minister to them. This is the evidence that you are My disciples.”—*Ibid.*, p. 638.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What duty is implied in the words, “Blessed are the merciful”?
2. Describe the far-reaching scope of true evangelism.
3. What kind of self-sacrifice is a genuine representation of the character of Christ?
4. How can we best arouse the religious interest of our neighbors?
5. When Christ shall come in His glory, what will He say to those on His right hand?

Workers Together With Christ

“Let him that heareth say, Come” (Revelation 22:17).

“When Christ went away, He gave to every man his work. This rests upon every one of us.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 820–828.

Sunday

November 2

1. OUR FIRST INTEREST

- a. What should be the first interest of every Christian? Of what does evangelistic ministry consist? Revelation 22:17.

“Whatever one’s calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. . . . Nigh and afar off are souls weighed down by a sense of guilt. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity. It is guilt, wrongdoing. This brings unrest and dissatisfaction. Christ would have His servants minister to sin-sick souls.

“The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ’s workers is to begin where he is. In our own families may be souls hungry for sympathy, starving for the bread of life. There may be children to be trained for Christ. There are heathen at our very doors. Let us do faithfully the work that is nearest. Then let our efforts be extended as far as God’s hand may lead the way.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

- b. In what sense should every Christian feel constrained by the love of Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 19.
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2. LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

- a. Why and how are we to be workers together with Christ? 2 Corinthians 6:1.
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“We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

- b. How may we be more efficient coworkers in the plan of salvation? Colossians 1:9, 10.
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“Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, are educated for the line of business they hope to enter. It is their policy to make themselves as efficient as possible. Go to the milliner or the dressmaker, and she will tell you how long she toiled before she had a thorough knowledge of her business. The architect will tell you how long it took him to understand how to plan a tasteful, commodious building. And so it is in all the callings that men follow.

“Should the servants of Christ show less diligence in preparing for a work infinitely more important? Should they be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed in winning souls? . . .

“It is a lamentable fact that the advancement of the cause is hindered by the dearth of educated laborers. Many are wanting in moral and intellectual qualifications.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 92, 93.

- c. How can we “go on unto perfection” in the school of Christ? Philippians 3:12–14; Hebrews 6:1.
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“The cause of God calls for all-round men, who can devise, plan, build up, and organize. And those who appreciate the probabilities and possibilities of the work for this time, will seek by earnest study to obtain all the knowledge they can from the Word, to use in ministering to needy, sin-sick souls. A minister should never think that he has learned enough, and may now relax his efforts.”—*Ibid.*, p. 94.

3. SEARCHING FOR THE LOST SHEEP

- a. What question did Jesus ask certain men who invested money in flocks and herds? Luke 15:4.
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“In the parable [of the lost sheep] the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.

“The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 187.

- b. How does a true colaborer of Christ act and feel when one of his sheep is missing? Luke 15:5, 6.
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“The shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, ‘I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in.’ No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When he is sure that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine within the fold and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd’s anxiety and the more earnest his search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 187, 188.

- c. What is the meaning of 1 John 3:1; 4:19?
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“We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.”—*Ibid.*, p. 189.

4. THE LOST COIN AND THE PRODIGAL SON

- a. What does the lost coin mentioned in the parable represent? Luke 15:8, 9.

“The lost coin represents those who . . . have no sense of their condition. . . . Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. . . . Even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God. . . .

“This parable has a lesson to families. In the household there is often great carelessness concerning the souls of its members. Among their number may be one who is estranged from God; but how little anxiety is felt lest in the family relationship there be lost one of God’s entrusted gifts.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, pp. 193, 194.

- b. In the parable, what two tasks were required of the housewife in order to find the lost coin? Luke 15:8 (second part).

“The woman in the parable searches diligently for her lost coin. . . . She will not cease her efforts until that piece is found. So in the family if one member is lost to God every means should be used for his recovery. . . . Let there be diligent, careful self-examination. . . . See if there is not some mistake, some error in management, by which that soul is confirmed in impenitence.”—*Ibid.*, p. 194.

- c. How does the Lord deal with modern prodigal sons and daughters? Luke 15:11–32. What lesson should we learn from the attitude of the elder brother?

“When you see yourselves as sinners saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. . . . When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with God and will share His joy in the saving of the lost. . . .

“[Your brother] is bound to you by the closest ties; for God recognizes him as a son. Deny your relationship to him, and you show that you are but a hireling in the household, not a child in the family of God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 210, 211.

5. THE WORK OF GOSPEL MINISTERS

- a. Define the main work of a gospel minister. 2 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:10, 11; 4:5.

“The work of the gospel minister is ‘to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God’ (Ephesians 3:9). If one entering upon this work chooses the least self-sacrificing part, contenting himself with preaching, and leaving the work of personal ministry for someone else, his labors will not be acceptable to God. Souls for whom Christ died are perishing for want of well-directed, personal labor; and he has mistaken his calling who, entering upon the ministry, is unwilling to do the personal work that the care of the flock demands.

“The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. . . . By the preaching of the word and by personal ministry in the homes of the people, he learns their needs, their sorrows, their trials; and, cooperating with the great Burden Bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul hunger, and wins their hearts to God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 527.

- b. What other qualities are essential in ministry? James 3:1, 2, 13–18.

“There is tactful work for the undershepherd to do as he is called to meet alienation, bitterness, envy, and jealousy in the church, and he will need to labor in the spirit of Christ to set things in order.”—*Ibid.*, p. 526.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What does it mean to be constrained by the love of Christ?
- b. What type of education does the gospel minister need and why?
- c. How does a true colaborer of Christ act and feel when a sheep is missing from the flock?
- d. Which qualities are often forgotten as requirements in the gospel ministry?
- e. How essential are tact and wisdom in the gospel ministry?

Personal Service

“And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29).

“[Christ has shown] that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 376.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 497–505.

Sunday

November 9

1. AN ACTUAL OCCURRENCE

- a. What happened to a man as he was passing through a place infested with robbers? Luke 10:30.

“In journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, the traveler had to pass through a portion of the wilderness of Judea. The road led down a wild, rocky ravine, which was infested by robbers, and was often the scene of violence.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 499.

- b. What did the priest do as he came that way? Luke 10:31.

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- c. What did the Levite do? Luke 10:32.

“Both [the priest and the Levite] were in sacred office and professed to expound the Scriptures. They were of the class specially chosen to be representatives of God to the people. They were to ‘have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way’ (Hebrews 5:2), that they might lead men to understand God’s great love toward humanity.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 499, 500.

2. THE RIGHT PRINCIPLE EXEMPLIFIED

- a. When the Samaritan saw the sufferer, what did he do? Luke 10:33, 34.
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“A certain Samaritan, in his journey, came where the sufferer was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He did not question whether the stranger was a Jew or a Gentile. If a Jew, the Samaritan well knew that, were their condition reversed, the man would spit in his face and pass him by with contempt. But he did not hesitate on account of this. He did not consider that he himself might be in danger of violence by tarrying in the place. It was enough that there was before him a human being in need and suffering. He took off his own garment with which to cover him. The oil and wine provided for his own journey he used to heal and refresh the wounded man. He lifted him on his own beast and moved slowly along with even pace, so that the stranger might not be jarred and made to suffer increased pain.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 503.

- b. What else did the Samaritan do? Luke 10:34 (second part), 35.
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“[The Samaritan] brought [the wounded traveler] to an inn and cared for him through the night, watching him tenderly. In the morning, as the sick man had improved, the Samaritan ventured to go on his way. But before doing this, he placed him in the care of the innkeeper, paid the charges, and left a deposit for his benefit; and not satisfied even with this, he made provision for any further need.”—*Ibid.*

- c. Finally, what question did Jesus put to the lawyer? And how was the lawyer led to answer his own question? Luke 10:36, 37.
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“The Samaritan had fulfilled the command, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ thus showing that he was more righteous than those by whom he was denounced. . . . This Samaritan represents Christ. . . . When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. . . . He beheld our sore need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for His murderers.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 381, 382.

3. IDENTIFYING OUR NEIGHBOR

- a. What command has become a basic principle of Christianity? Luke 10:37 (second part).
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“Divine truth exerts little influence upon the world, when it should exert much influence through our practice. The mere profession of religion abounds, but it has little weight. We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will save neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession.

“By no selfish practices can the cause of Christ be served. His cause is the cause of the oppressed and the poor. In the hearts of His professed followers there is need of the tender sympathy of Christ—a deeper love for those whom He has so valued as to give His own life for their salvation. These souls are precious, infinitely more precious than any other offering we can bring to God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 383, 384.

- b. What reconciliation among races, nationalities, and social classes has been achieved by the cross of Christ? Ephesians 2:13–16.
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“It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. . . .

“No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition. . . .

“Whatever the difference in religious belief, a call from suffering humanity must be heard and answered. Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice, and win souls to God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 384–386.

4. "FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE"

- a. In the work of Christ, how do we find reasons for rejoicing and reasons for weeping? Romans 12:15.

"We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. 'Freely ye have received,' Christ says, 'freely give' (Matthew 10:8). All around us are poor, tried souls that need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God's property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God's great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them. 'Their souls,' He says, 'will I require at thine hand.'—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 386, 387.

- b. When words are not enough, how can we reach many people? James 2:15, 16.

"Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. . . . There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance. . . . Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. Many of these can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. . . . As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.

"There are many who err, and who feel their shame and their folly. They look upon their mistakes and errors until they are driven almost to desperation. These souls we are not to neglect. When one has to swim against the stream, there is all the force of the current driving him back. Let a helping hand then be held out to him as was the Elder Brother's hand to the sinking Peter. Speak to him hopeful words, words that will establish confidence and awaken love."—*Ibid.*, p. 387.

5. ACHIEVING POSITIVE RESULTS

- a. How can we help sin-sick people to make peace with God? Isaiah 27:5.

“Thy brother, sick in spirit, needs thee, as thou thyself hast needed a brother’s love. He needs the experience of one who has been as weak as he, one who can sympathize with him and help him. The knowledge of our own weakness should help us to help another in his bitter need. . . .

“It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature. Tell the wanderer of an almighty hand that will hold him up, of an infinite humanity in Christ that pities him.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 387, 388.

- b. How much does our personal service in behalf of human sufferers affect our preparation for the kingdom of God? Daniel 12:3; Zechariah 3:7.

“Upon your faithfulness in this work not only the well-being of others but your own eternal destiny depends. Christ is seeking to uplift all who will be lifted to companionship with Himself, that we may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. . . . He seeks to develop in us the attributes of His character—compassion, tenderness, and love. By accepting this work of ministry we place ourselves in His school, to be fitted for the courts of God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 388, 389.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What actions of the Samaritan demonstrated a Christian spirit?
2. What did the lawyer who came to Christ finally realize?
3. How is Christianity unique among religions in this world?
4. Describe the most powerful sermon that can be preached to unbelievers.
5. Name the key elements that draw people to Christ.

The One-Soul Audience —Nicodemus

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

“Consider the incident that Christ presents before Nicodemus in referring to the uplifted serpent.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 149.

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

Sunday

November 16

1. A PRIVATE INTERVIEW

- a. After Nicodemus heard Jesus, he decided to talk with Him. Who was Nicodemus—and why did he come at night? John 3:1, 2 (first part).

“Since hearing Jesus, Nicodemus had anxiously studied the prophecies relating to the Messiah. . . . He beheld the wonderful manifestation of divine power; he saw the Saviour receiving the poor and healing the sick; he saw their looks of joy and heard their words of praise; and he could not doubt that Jesus of Nazareth was the Sent of God.

“He greatly desired an interview with Jesus but shrank from seeking Him openly. It would be too humiliating for a ruler of the Jews to acknowledge himself in sympathy with a teacher as yet so little known. And should his visit come to the knowledge of the Sanhedrin, it would draw upon him their scorn and denunciation. He resolved upon a secret interview, excusing this on the ground that if he were to go openly, others might follow his example. Learning by special inquiry the Saviour’s place of retirement in the Mount of Olives, he waited until the city was hushed in slumber, and then sought Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 168.

“Nicodemus had witnessed the miracle of Christ, and he came to the Master by night, for he had not the moral courage to approach him openly, since this would excite the criticisms of the priests and Pharisees.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1311.

2. NO THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION, BUT A REGENERATION

- a. As soon as Nicodemus found Jesus in His place of retirement, what did he say to Him? John 3:2 (second part).
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“Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.

“Nicodemus had heard the preaching of John the Baptist concerning repentance and baptism, and pointing the people to One who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. He himself had felt that there was a lack of spirituality among the Jews, that, to a great degree, they were controlled by bigotry and worldly ambition. He had hoped for a better state of things at the Messiah’s coming. Yet the heart-searching message of the Baptist had failed to work in him conviction of sin. He was a strict Pharisee, and prided himself on his good works. He was widely esteemed for his benevolence and his liberality in sustaining the temple service, and he felt secure of the favor of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

- b. Since the Lord realized that Nicodemus didn’t need a theological discussion but a regeneration, with what answer did Jesus startle him? John 3:3.
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“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. Hence his surprise at the Saviour’s words.”—*Ibid*.

3. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON THE HEART

- a. With what ironical question did Nicodemus try to dismiss Christ's words? John 3:4.
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- b. Ignoring Nicodemus' useless argument, how did Jesus emphasize His point? John 3:5-7.
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"By nature the heart is evil, and 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one' (Job 14:4). No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies' (Romans 8:7; Matthew 15:19). The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

- c. How did Jesus illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit? John 3:8.
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"The wind is heard among the branches of the trees, rustling the leaves and flowers; yet it is invisible, and no man knows whence it comes or whither it goes. So with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. It can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher."—*Ibid.*

4. "I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU"

- a. Nicodemus was impressed by the words of Jesus, which he did not fully understand. What did he then ask? John 3:9. What did Jesus answer? Verses 10–13.

"The Jews whom Jesus had driven from the temple claimed to be children of Abraham, but they fled from the Saviour's presence because they could not endure the glory of God which was manifested in Him. Thus they gave evidence that they were not fitted by the grace of God to participate in the sacred services of the temple. They were zealous to maintain an appearance of holiness, but they neglected holiness of heart. While they were sticklers for the letter of the law, they were constantly violating its spirit. Their great need was that very change which Christ had been explaining to Nicodemus—a new moral birth, a cleansing from sin, and a renewing of knowledge and holiness."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 173, 174.

- b. What scriptures did Nicodemus now begin to understand? Psalm 51:10; Isaiah 64:6; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

"[Isaiah 64:6; Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 36:26, 27 quoted.] Nicodemus had read these scriptures with a clouded mind; but he now began to comprehend their meaning. He saw that the most rigid obedience to the mere letter of the law as applied to the outward life could entitle no man to enter the kingdom of heaven. In the estimation of men, his life had been just and honorable; but in the presence of Christ he felt that his heart was unclean and his life unholy.

"Nicodemus was being drawn to Christ. As the Saviour explained to him concerning the new birth, he longed to have this change wrought in himself."—*Ibid.*, p. 174.

- c. By what symbol did Christ make plain His mission to Nicodemus? John 3:14–16.

5. A NEW LIFE

- a. As Nicodemus wanted to know by what means the new birth could be accomplished, what did Jesus say? John 3:17–21.

“The symbol of the uplifted serpent made plain to [Nicodemus] the Saviour’s mission. When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ was to be their Redeemer (Romans 8:3). Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their faith in the Gift of God. They were to look and live. . . .

“The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 174–176.

- b. How are we saved? Titus 3:4–6.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is needed by many people who have a desire to discuss religion?
2. How did Jesus focus on Nicodemus’ need rather than on his words?
3. Why did Christ use the wind to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit?
4. What symbol did Christ use to explain His mission to Nicodemus?
5. How did Jesus explain to Nicodemus the mystery of a new birth?

The One-Soul Audience— “A Woman of Samaria”

“The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (John 4:9).

“Only by love is love awakened.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 23.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 183–195.

Sunday

November 23

1. AT JACOB’S WELL

- a. What happened when Jesus sat down to rest during one of His trips? Where were the disciples? John 4:3–7 (first part).

- b. Had Jesus offered to help her draw water, would His offer have been accepted? John 3:8. What did He do to eliminate her prejudice? (Verse 7, second part). Very much surprised, what did she say? John 4:9.

“The hatred between Jews and Samaritans prevented the woman from offering a kindness to Jesus; but the Saviour was seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 184.

“Where bitterness of feeling exists because of difference in religion, much good may be done by personal service. Loving ministry will break down prejudice and win souls to God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 386.

2. HOW JESUS AWAKENED THE WOMAN'S CURIOSITY

- a. How did Christ seek to arouse the woman's curiosity and divert her attention to something more important? John 4:10.

"The woman had not comprehended the words of Christ but she felt their solemn import."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 184.

- b. Supposing that Jesus was speaking of Jacob's well, what did she say? John 4:11, 12.

"[The Samaritan woman] saw before her only a thirsty traveler, wayworn and dusty. In her mind she compared Him with the honored patriarch Jacob."—*Ibid.*, p. 184.

- c. Since she was not yet prepared to accept the answer to her own question, how did Jesus try to raise her curiosity still further? John 4:13, 14.

"Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing—'a well of water springing up into everlasting life' (John 4:14). From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs.

"As Jesus spoke of the living water, the woman looked upon Him with wondering attention. He had aroused her interest and awakened a desire for the gift of which He spoke."—*Ibid.*, p. 187.

3. JESUS' GREAT TACTFULNESS

- a. What did the Samaritan woman say when she realized Jesus was offering her something better than mere water? John 4:15.
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- b. What was she required to admit? How tactful was Jesus in bringing out the facts of her life that she tried to keep secret? John 4:16–18.
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“Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour. He ‘saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.’ She answered, ‘I have no husband.’ Thus she hoped to prevent all questioning in that direction. But the Saviour continued, ‘Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly’ (John 4:16–18).

“The listener trembled. A mysterious hand was turning the pages of her life history, bringing to view that which she had hoped to keep forever hidden. Who was He that could read the secrets of her life? There came to her thoughts of eternity, of the future judgment, when all that is now hidden shall be revealed. In its light, conscience was awakened.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 187, 188.

- c. How did the woman still try to evade all reference to her past and present life? John 4:19. How did she seek to turn the direction of the conversation? Verse 20.
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“Patiently Jesus permitted her to lead the conversation whither she would. Meanwhile He watched for the opportunity of again bringing the truth home to her heart. ‘Our fathers worshipped in this mountain,’ she said, ‘and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship’ (John 4:20). Just in sight was Mount Gerizim. Its temple was demolished and only the altar remained. The place of worship had been a subject of contention between the Jews and the Samaritans.”—*Ibid.*

4. JESUS SHOWS NO NATIONAL PREJUDICE

- a. Showing that he had no prejudice against the Samaritans, what did Jesus say? John 4:21–24.

“Jesus had shown that He was free from Jewish prejudice against the Samaritans. Now He sought to break down the prejudice of this Samaritan against the Jews. While referring to the fact that the faith of the Samaritans was corrupted with idolatry, He declared that the great truths of redemption had been committed to the Jews, and that from among them the Messiah was to appear. In the Sacred Writings they had a clear presentation of the character of God and the principles of His government. Jesus classed Himself with the Jews as those to whom God had given a knowledge of Himself.

“He desired to lift the thoughts of His hearer above matters of form and ceremony, and questions of controversy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 188, 189.

- b. How did this woman tactfully try to find out if Jesus was indeed the Messiah? John 4:25, 26.

“Not by seeking a holy mountain or a sacred temple are men brought into communion with heaven. Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. . . .

“While the very purity of His presence condemned her sin, He had spoken no word of denunciation but had told her of His grace, that could renew the soul. She began to have some conviction of His character. The question arose in her mind, Might not this be the long-looked-for Messiah?”—*Ibid.*, pp. 189, 190.

“The Saviour is still carrying forward the same work as when He proffered the water of life to the woman of Samaria. Those who call themselves His followers may despise and shun the outcast ones; but no circumstance of birth or nationality, no condition of life, can turn away His love from the children of men.”—*Ibid.*, p. 194.

5. THE FATHER SEEKS SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM

- a. What happened when the Samaritan woman, filled with great joy, acted as a fully-persuaded missionary? John 4:28–30.

“In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us a willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit’s working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them and to make them His sons and daughters.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 189.

“The woman had been filled with joy as she listened to Christ’s words. The wonderful revelation was almost overpowering. Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. Jesus knew why she had gone. Leaving her waterpot spoke unmistakably as to the effect of His words. It was the earnest desire of her soul to obtain the living water; and she forgot her errand to the well, she forgot the Saviour’s thirst, which she had purposed to supply. With heart overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious light she had received.”—*Ibid.*, p. 191.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus try to overcome the prejudice that existed between Jews and Samaritans?
2. What did Christ explain to the Samaritan woman about the living water?
3. Why is tact so important when sharing the gospel?
4. What do we all need to realize about the two-sided nature of prejudice?
5. What did the woman do as soon as she was fully persuaded?

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Rocklin, California, U.S.A.

The United States of America, with a population of over 317 million, is a federal republic consisting of 50 states, and a federal district. In a 2012 survey, 73% of adults identified themselves with Christianity, with Protestant denominations accounting for 51.3%, while Roman Catholicism, at 23.9%, was the largest individual denomination. Although the U. S. has been a bastion of religious freedom for more than two centuries, as with other Western countries, this nation is becoming less religious. Recent surveys show irreligion is growing rapidly among Americans under 30. For many years the headquarters of our Movement was based in California, the most populous state.



For more than 20 years the church of Rocklin has been involved in outreach programs located in the east of the Greater Sacramento area. The pioneers of this church have consecrated their lives for the progress of God's work in such a manner that today there is an established membership in the area that propagates the gospel through health and cooking classes, and spiritual seminars. In recent times, these programs have attracted many visitors and regular attendees. At present, the church rents a place for their regular meetings. With a view to establishing a more permanent witness in this area of California, the local church has planned its own building project. The members are very willing to support the construction or purchase of a building but due to the high cost of living in this area, the project is beyond their ability to complete.

When calls have come from our brothers and sisters around the world to help with First Sabbath Offering projects, the Lord has moved the Rocklin church membership to give generously. The time has arrived when they now need your help.

For the sake of our dear Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, and in behalf of the Rocklin church, we appeal to our brothers and sisters around the world to please give generously for this building project.

The General Conference North American Regional Secretary

Seeking the Saviour

“This day is salvation come to this house” (Luke 19:9).

“In this chief of the publicans was awakened a longing for a better life.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 301.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 552–556.

Sunday

November 30

1. ZACCHAEUS, A CHIEF TAX COLLECTOR

- a. What did Zacchaeus do as he wanted to see Jesus? Luke 19:3, 4. What conviction got hold of him?
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“The wealthy customs officer was not altogether the hardened man of the world that he seemed. Beneath the appearance of worldliness and pride was a heart susceptible to divine influences. Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus. The report of One who had borne Himself with kindness and courtesy toward the proscribed classes had spread far and wide. In this chief of the publicans was awakened a longing for a better life. Only a few miles from Jericho, John the Baptist had preached at the Jordan, and Zacchaeus had heard of the call to repentance. The instruction to the publicans, ‘Exact no more than that which is appointed you’ (Luke 3:13), though outwardly disregarded, had impressed his mind. He knew the Scriptures and was convicted that his practice was wrong. Now, hearing the words reported to have come from the Great Teacher, he felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God. Yet what he had heard of Jesus kindled hope in his heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 553.

- b. What fact should we always bear in mind with all evangelistic endeavors? Luke 18:27.
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“Repentance, reformation of life, was possible, even to [Zacchaeus].”—*Ibid.*

2. AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUMMONS

- a. When Jesus arrived at the place where Zacchaeus was waiting in the Sycomore tree, with what words did He call him? Luke 19:5.
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“Above the clamor of priests and rabbis and the shouts of welcome from the multitude, that unuttered desire of the chief publican spoke to the heart of Jesus. Suddenly, just beneath the fig tree, a group halts, the company before and behind come to a standstill, and One looks upward whose glance seems to read the soul. Almost doubting his senses, the man in the tree hears the words, ‘Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house’ (Luke 19:5)”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 553, 554.

- b. When Zacchaeus met Jesus and started leading the way toward his home, what did the rabbis scornfully say? Luke 19:6, 7.
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“The multitude give way, and Zacchaeus, walking as in a dream, leads the way toward his own home. But the rabbis look on with scowling faces, and murmur in discontent and scorn, ‘that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner’ (Luke 19:7). Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his newfound Master unseal his lips. He will make public his confession and his repentance.”—*Ibid.*, p. 554.

- c. What confederacy existed among the publicans?
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“Among the publicans there was a confederacy, so that they could oppress the people and sustain one another in their fraudulent practices. In their extortion they were but carrying out what had become an almost universal custom. Even the priests and rabbis who despised them were guilty of enriching themselves by dishonest practices under cover of their sacred calling. But no sooner did Zacchaeus yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit than he cast aside every practice contrary to integrity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 555.

3. A SOFTENED HEART

- a. Aware that many of his detractors were questioning his integrity, what did Zacchaeus say? Luke 19:8. With what Old Testament principle was this in harmony—and what should we learn from it? Exodus 22:1.
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“Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Explicit instruction is given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 37, 38.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation. The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin; it is a principle of life that transforms the character and controls the conduct. Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven.

“The Christian in his business life is to represent to the world the manner in which our Lord would conduct business enterprises. In every transaction he is to make it manifest that God is his teacher. ‘Holiness unto the Lord’ is to be written upon daybooks and ledgers, on deeds, receipts, and bills of exchange.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 555, 556.

- b. What does the psalmist say about those who pour out their innermost soul in a genuine confession? Psalm 34:18.
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- c. What did Christ say after hearing Zacchaeus’ confession? Luke 19:9.
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4. CHRIST'S MISSION TO THE WORLD

- a. How did Christ use Zacchaeus as an example of His mission to the world? Luke 19:9, 10.

“Christ went to [Zacchaeus’] home to give him lessons of truth, and to instruct his household in the things of the kingdom. They had been shut out from the synagogues by the contempt of rabbis and worshipers; but now, the most favored household in all Jericho, they gathered in their own home about the divine Teacher, and heard for themselves the words of life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 556.

- b. Relate the parable that Christ added to complete the lesson He used to illustrate the good news of salvation. Luke 19:12–26.

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- c. What is required of us in seeking to save that which was lost? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 20.

“We are to exert a saving influence over those who are without God and without hope in the world. The pathway to the city of refuge is to be kept free from the rubbish of selfishness of sin. Those who profess to be following the Lamb of God are to take every stumbling block out of the way. But too often those who claim to believe the truth lay stumbling blocks in the way of others. They say that they know Christ, but in works they deny Him. By their trifling conduct they hurt those they might have helped.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 29, 1899.

“We are living in a time when the last message of mercy, the last invitation, is sounding to the children of men. The command, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges,’ is reaching its final fulfillment. To every soul Christ’s invitation will be given. The messengers are saying, ‘Come; for all things are now ready’ (Luke 14:23, 17). Heavenly angels are still working in cooperation with human agencies. The Holy Spirit is presenting every inducement to constrain you to come. Christ is watching for some sign that will betoken the removing of the bolts and the opening of the door of your heart for His entrance. Angels are waiting to bear the tidings to heaven that another lost sinner has been found.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 237.

5. COLABORERS WITH GOD

- a. If we, as coworkers with God, will but do our God-given part, what words of the Saviour will come to many homes? Luke 19:5.

“If the servants of God will walk with Him in faith, He will give power to their message. They will be enabled so to present His love and the danger of rejecting the grace of God that men will be constrained to accept the gospel. Christ will perform wonderful miracles if men will but do their God-given part. In human hearts today as great a transformation may be wrought as has ever been wrought in generations past. John Bunyan was redeemed from profanity and reveling, John Newton from slave dealing, to proclaim an uplifted Saviour. A Bunyan and a Newton may be redeemed from among men today. Through human agents who cooperate with the divine, many a poor outcast will be reclaimed, and in his turn will seek to restore the image of God in man. There are those who have had very meager opportunities, who have walked in ways of error because they knew no better way, to whom beams of light will come. As the word of Christ came to Zacchaeus, ‘Today I must abide at thy house’ (Luke 19:5), so the word will come to them; and those who were supposed to be hardened sinners will be found to have hearts as tender as a child’s because Christ has deigned to notice them. Many will come from the grossest error and sin, and will take the place of others who have had opportunities and privileges but have not prized them. They will be accounted the chosen of God, elect, precious; and when Christ shall come into His kingdom, they will stand next His throne.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 236.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can Christ’s attitude toward Zacchaeus bring us hope?
2. What did Zacchaeus say before anyone had time to accuse him?
3. Why was Christ able to proclaim an open victory in Zacchaeus’ home?
4. How are many to rejoice today just as did the household of Zacchaeus?
5. What cooperation is required of us in the work of seeking to save that which was lost?

Gospel Order

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

“There is order in heaven, and it is to be imitated by those upon earth who are heirs of salvation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 697, 698.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 97–104.

Sunday

December 7

1. THE PARAMOUNT WAYS OF GOD

- a. What does God say about the difference between our ways and His ways? Isaiah 55:8, 9.
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- b. In all our plans to conduct the work of God, what should we take into serious consideration? Ephesians 6:6.
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“As a people we should study God’s plans for conducting His work. Wherever He has given directions in regard to any point, we should carefully consider how to regard His expressed will.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 342.

- c. Describe Paul’s attitude and that of the other apostles regarding gospel order. 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2.
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“Paul stood firm for the right. He realized that the church must never be brought under the control of human power. The traditions and maxims of men must not take the place of revealed truth. . . . While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 199, 200.

2. ORGANIZATION IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

- a. What counsel did Jethro give to his son-in-law, Moses, and why? Exodus 18:14–22.
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“God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. Success can only attend order and harmonious action. God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel. All who are working for Him are to labor intelligently, not in a careless, haphazard manner. He would have his work done with faith and exactness, that He may place the seal of His approval upon it.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 376.

- b. Specify the four main qualities to be sought in the men chosen to carry responsibilities in the camp of Israel. Exodus 18:21.
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“[Exodus 18:19–23 quoted.] This counsel is for us. . . . In His instruction to Moses the Lord very plainly set forth the character of those who were to fill important positions as counselors. They are to be ‘able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.’ The Lord’s counsel has been strangely neglected.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 341.

- c. Why was Balaam constrained to pronounce blessings upon Israel, while his mind was filled with curses? Numbers 23:8, 9. On what basis would Israel be blessed? Deuteronomy 4:1, 6–9.
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“As Balaam looked upon the encampment of Israel he beheld with astonishment the evidence of their prosperity. They had been represented to him as a rude, disorganized multitude, infesting the country in roving bands that were a pest and terror to the surrounding nations; but their appearance was the reverse of all this. He saw the vast extent and perfect arrangement of their camp, everything bearing the marks of thorough discipline and order. He was shown the favor with which God regarded Israel, and their distinctive character as His chosen people. They were not to stand upon a level with other nations, but to be exalted above them all.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 447.

3. ORGANIZATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

- a. For what purpose does God give gifts and grace to every one of His servants? Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11, 12.
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“In our several callings there is to be a mutual dependence on one another for assistance.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 491.

- b. In order for the Lord's work to succeed in our midst, what must characterize our spirit? 1 Corinthians 12:21, 25; Ephesians 4:16. To what error should they close the door?
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“Let us each wait on the Lord, and He will teach us how to labor. He will reveal to us the work that we are best adapted to perform. This will not lead men to start out in an independent spirit, to promulgate new theories. In this time when Satan is seeking to make void the law of God through the exaltation of false science, we need to guard most carefully against everything that would tend to lessen our faith and scatter our forces. As laborers together with God, we should be in harmony with the truth and with our brethren. There should be counsel and cooperation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 490.

“The spirit of pulling away from our fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe. By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous—as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery.”—*Ibid.*, p. 488.

- c. How should the followers of Christ respect one another? 1 Peter 5:5, 6.
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“Among God's people are some who have had long experience in His work, men who have not departed from the faith. Notwithstanding the great trials through which they have passed, they have remained faithful. These men should be regarded as tried and chosen counselors. They should be respected, and their judgment should be honored by those who are younger or who have had less experience, even though these younger men may be in official positions.”—*Ibid.*, p. 497.

4. UNSELFISH SERVANTS

- a. What standard are we to adopt in ordaining church officers?
Titus 1:5–9.

“Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 92.

“In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures.”—*Ibid.*, p. 95.

“The church should feel their responsibility and should look carefully and attentively at the lives, qualifications, and general course of those who profess to be teachers. If unmistakable evidence is not given that God has called them, and that the ‘woe’ is upon them if they heed not this call, it is the duty of the church to act and let it be known that these persons are not acknowledged as teachers by the church.”—*Early Writings*, p. 100.

“Those who profess to be the ministers of Jesus should be men of experience and deep piety, and then at all times and in all places they can shed a holy influence.”—*Ibid.*, p. 103.

“Suffering, want, despondency, misery, unbelief, the ministers of God will meet every day. Their work is not a work of self-pleasing. Many, many souls are unsaved. Fasten yourselves by faith to the Lord and tell sinners that the Saviour is calling for them.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 26, 1898.

- b. What did the apostle Peter say to the elders of the church regarding their responsibilities as undershepherds of Christ’s flock?
1 Peter 5:1–5.

“Those who occupy the position of undershepherds are to exercise a watchful diligence over the Lord’s flock. This is not to be a dictatorial vigilance, but one that tends to encourage and strengthen and uplift. Ministry means more than sermonizing; it means earnest, personal labor.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 526.

“In connection with his instruction to those in positions of trust in the church, the apostle outlined some general principles that were to be followed by all who were associated in church fellowship. The younger members of the flock were urged to follow the example of their elders in the practice of Christlike humility”—*Ibid.*, pp. 527, 528.

5. SELF-SENT MESSENGERS

- a. What work is God doing in behalf of His children in these last days? What stratagem is Satan using to hinder the Lord's work? Romans 16:17, 18; Acts 20:27–30.

“Now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and to destroy it. Therefore men are hurried into the field who lack wisdom and judgment, perhaps not ruling well their own house, and not having order or government over the few that God has given them charge of at home; yet they feel capable of having charge of the flock.”—*Early Writings*, p. 97.

“Men whose lives are not holy and who are unqualified to teach the present truth enter the field without being acknowledged by the church or the brethren generally, and confusion and disunion are the result.”—*Ibid.*

- b. Which is easier—to go into places that have been spoiled by self-sent messengers or to enter new fields?

“It is much more wearing to the spirits of God's messengers to go into places where those have been who have exerted [a] wrong influence than to enter new fields.”—*Ibid.*, p. 99.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What qualities should be evident in those who are selected for God's work?
2. Why does God give gifts and grace to every one of His servants?
3. What attitude must we all manifest towards one another to ensure the success of the Lord's work in our midst?
4. What standard did the apostles adopt in ordaining officers for the church?
5. What is the warning of Paul in Acts 20:27–30?

Go and Teach All Nations

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19).

“Upon all the inhabitants of the earth, high and low, rich and poor, was the light of heaven to shine in clear, strong rays. The disciples were to be colaborers with their Redeemer in the work of saving the world.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 9, 1913.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 818–823.

Sunday

December 14

1. THE MEETING IN GALILEE

- a. During the Last Supper, what instruction did Jesus give the disciples about a future meeting with all the believers? Matthew 26:32; 28:16.

- b. How many were present in that meeting? 1 Corinthians 15:6.

“At the time appointed, about five hundred believers were collected in little knots on the mountainside, eager to learn all that could be learned from those who had seen Christ since His resurrection. From group to group the disciples passed, telling all they had seen and heard of Jesus, and reasoning from the Scriptures as He had done with them. Thomas recounted the story of his unbelief and told how his doubts had been swept away. Suddenly Jesus stood among them. No one could tell whence or how He came. Many who were present had never before seen Him; but in His hands and feet they beheld the marks of the crucifixion; His countenance was as the face of God, and when they saw Him, they worshiped Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 818, 819.

2. THE SACRED COMMISSION

- a. As the disciples were called to be collaborators with Christ in the work of saving souls, what commission did He give them? Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16.
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- b. How was this commission opposed to the exclusivism of the Pharisees? Acts 13:46; 22:21, 22; Galatians 3:28.
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“The Jewish people had been made the depositaries of sacred truth; but Pharisaism had made them the most exclusive, the most bigoted, of all the human race. Everything about the priests and rulers—their dress, customs, ceremonies, traditions—made them unfit to be the light of the world. They looked upon themselves, the Jewish nation, as the world. But Christ commissioned His disciples to proclaim a faith and worship that would have in it nothing of caste or country, a faith that would be adapted to all peoples, all nations, all classes of men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 819, 820.

- c. Why did the disciples have to begin the work at Jerusalem? Acts 1:8.
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“There were in Jerusalem many who had secretly believed on Jesus, and many who had been deceived by the priests and rulers. To these also the gospel was to be presented. They were to be called to repentance. The wonderful truth that through Christ alone could remission of sins be obtained was to be made plain. While all Jerusalem was stirred by the thrilling events of the past few weeks, the preaching of the gospel would make the deepest impression.

“But the work was not to stop here. It was to be extended to the earth’s remotest bounds. . . . All who will, may be reconciled to God and receive everlasting life. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to Israel first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. It is to be given to Jews and Gentiles. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 820, 821.

3. THE PROMISED GIFT

- a. How would the disciples be enabled to preach among other nations without taking time to learn their languages? 1 Corinthians 12:7, 10.
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“The disciples were to have the same power which Jesus had to heal ‘all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.’ By healing in His name the diseases of the body, they would testify to His power for the healing of the soul (Matthew 4:23; 9:6). And a new endowment was now promised. The disciples were to preach among other nations, and they would receive power to speak other tongues. The apostles and their associates were unlettered men, yet through the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their speech, whether in their own or a foreign language, became pure, simple, and accurate, both in word and in accent.

“Thus Christ gave His disciples their commission. He made full provision for the prosecution of the work, and took upon Himself the responsibility for its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 821, 822.

- b. What miracles would be wrought by the representatives of the gospel through the gift of the Holy Spirit? Mark 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 12:11.
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“The gospel still possesses the same power, and why should we not today witness the same results?

“Christ feels the woes of every sufferer. When evil spirits rend a human frame, Christ feels the curse. When fever is burning up the life current, He feels the agony. And He is just as willing to heal the sick now as when He was personally on earth. Christ’s servants are His representatives, the channels for His working. He desires through them to exercise His healing power.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 823, 824.

4. THE SOLEMN DUTY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

- a. What obligation, and what prohibition, was put on the leaders of Israel since their government had been established in the name and by the authority of God? Deuteronomy 4:1, 2.

“The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to enforce the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation. This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel’s existence as a nation. From age to age men inspired by God were sent to instruct the people and to direct in the enforcement of the laws.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 603.

- b. How are we to understand our obligation to teach the people to “observe all things” as Christ commanded? Matthew 28:20.

“In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, ‘to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:20). The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

- c. What is the duty of the church toward those who fall into sin? 2 Timothy 4:2.

“Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbathbreaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Galatians 5:21). If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God’s word is pronounced upon them in heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 806.

5. A BASIC QUESTION FOR EVERY SOUL WINNER

- a. What question should every prospective worker for Christ answer? John 21:15–17.

- b. How only can we be instruments in the work of Christ? 1 John 4:7–12.

“The power of love was in all Christ’s healing, and only by partaking of that love, through faith, can we be instruments for His work. If we neglect to link ourselves in divine connection with Christ, the current of life-giving energy cannot flow in rich streams from us to the people. . . .

“It is in doing Christ’s work that the church has the promise of His presence. Go teach all nations, He said; ‘and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world’ (Matthew 28:20). To take His yoke is one of the first conditions of receiving His power. The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord’s commission. To neglect this work is surely to invite spiritual feebleness and decay. Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim.

“Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in gospel work. They are to teach the people how to seek and save the lost. But is this the work they are doing?”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is Christ’s commission to each of His followers?
2. How are we warned against Pharisaical-style exclusiveness?
3. What specific gift enabled the disciples to take the message of salvation to other nations—and what must we understand about this?
4. Why does the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:20 exclude human teachings?
5. What is the first quality that should characterize every soul winner?

God Is Calling You!

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come” (Matthew 22:14; Revelation 22:17).

“The Lord has sent His people to different parts of the globe . . . that they may win souls from darkness to light. Their first work is to bear the message, Christ the crucified one is our Saviour.”—*The Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 15, 1899.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 824–828.

Sunday

December 21

1. THE CALL OF GOD

- a. Does the commission that Christ gave to His disciples include all the believers—or just some who have received special offices in the church? Matthew 28:19, 20.

“The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

- b. Must the light of the world shine only upon a certain number of people or must it shine upon all human beings without distinction? John 1:9; 8:12; Matthew 24:14.
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“Christ tears away the wall of partition, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle which their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies.”—*Ibid.*, p. 823.

2. DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS IN GOD'S WORK

- a. Why doesn't God demand the same kind of service from all His servants? 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.
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"God asks us to give His service the first place in our lives, to allow no day to pass without doing something to advance His work in the earth. He does not expect from all the same kind of service. One may be called to ministry in a foreign land; another may be asked to give of his means for the support of gospel work. God accepts the offering of each. It is the consecration of the life and all its interests, that is necessary. Those who make this consecration will hear and obey the call of Heaven."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 221.

- b. When we are convinced that God is calling us to serve, what should we answer? Isaiah 6:8.
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"To everyone who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot, saying, 'Here am I; send me.' Whether a man be a minister of the Word or a physician, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic, the responsibility rests upon him. It is his work to reveal to others the gospel of their salvation. Every enterprise in which he engages should be a means to this end."—*Ibid.*, p. 222.

- c. What did Jesus say about some who hesitated when the call came to them? Matthew 19:23; Luke 9:59–62; 14:33. What should those who lack self-discipline in their preparation for evangelistic work understand?
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"There must be men who will begin a work in the right way, and hold to it and push it forward firmly. Everything must be done according to a well-matured plan, and with system. God has entrusted His sacred work to men, and He asks that they shall do it carefully. Regularity in all things is essential. Never be late to an appointment. In no department or office should time be lost in unnecessary conversations. The work of God requires things which it does not receive, because men do not learn from the God of wisdom."—*Evangelism*, p. 649.

3. OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

- a. What question does God put to hesitant or discouraged Christians? 1 Kings 19:9.

“Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. He leads them to settle down at ease, or, for the sake of greater worldly advantages, to remove from places where they might be a power for good. Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty, because of opposition or persecution. But all such are regarded by Heaven with tenderest pity. To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls had succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, ‘What doest thou here?’ I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here? Who sent you?”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 171, 172.

- b. When we realize what salvation means to us, how will we be able to view the vast needs of those around us? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 19, 20.

“Those who realize, even in a limited degree, what redemption means to them and to their fellow men, will comprehend in some measure the vast needs of humanity. Their hearts will be moved to compassion as they see the moral and spiritual destitution of thousands who are under the shadow of a terrible doom, in comparison with which physical suffering fades into nothingness.

“Of families, as of individuals, the question is asked, ‘What doest thou here?’ In many churches there are families well instructed in the truths of God’s word, who might widen the sphere of their influence by moving to places in need of the ministry they are capable of giving. God calls for Christian families to go into the dark places of the earth and work wisely and perseveringly for those who are enshrouded in spiritual gloom. To answer this call requires self-sacrifice. While many are waiting to have every obstacle removed, souls are dying, without hope and without God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 172, 173.

4. OVERCOMING INDIFFERENCE

- a. Besides discouragement, what other danger lies at our door? Revelation 3:15.

“The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 961.

“The fervor of the love of God is wanting in their hearts, but it is this very fervor of love that makes God’s people the light of the world.”—*Ibid.*

“Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do.”—*Ibid.*, p. 963.

- b. How can we as individual believers find the way out of the Laodicean indifference? Acts 3:19, 20; Revelation 3:18, 19.

“When the work of repentance is earnest and deep, the individual members of the church will buy the rich goods of heaven. [Revelation 3:18 quoted.]”—*Ibid.*, p. 961.

“The true Witness presents encouragements to all who are seeking to walk in the path of humble obedience, through faith in His name. He declares, ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.’ . . .

“He who is the divine Head of the church, the mightiest of conquerors, would point His followers to His life, . . . that they might be encouraged to press on toward the mark for the prize and reward of the overcomer. Victory is assured through faith and obedience.”—*Ibid.*, p. 966.

- c. What sentence will be pronounced on those who decide to remain indifferent? Revelation 3:16, 17; Matthew 24:48–51.
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5. HOME AT LAST!

- a. What will Christ say to the overcomers who have taken an active part in the work of saving souls? Matthew 25:34.

- b. What reward is promised to the redeemed saints? John 14:1–3; 1 John 3:2.

“Glorious will be the reward bestowed when the faithful workers gather about the throne of God and of the Lamb. When John in his mortal state beheld the glory of God, he fell as one dead; he was not able to endure the sight. But when the children of God shall have put on immortality, they will ‘see him as he is’ (1 John 3:2). They will stand before the throne, accepted in the Beloved. All their sins have been blotted out, all their transgressions borne away. Now they can look upon the undimmed glory of the throne of God.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 355.

- c. What surprises will the saints have in heaven? 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“A Christian once said that when he reached heaven he expected to meet with three causes of wonder. He would wonder to find some that he did not expect to see there. He would wonder not to see some that he expected to meet, and, lastly, he would wonder most to find so unworthy a sinner as himself in the Paradise of God.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 370.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

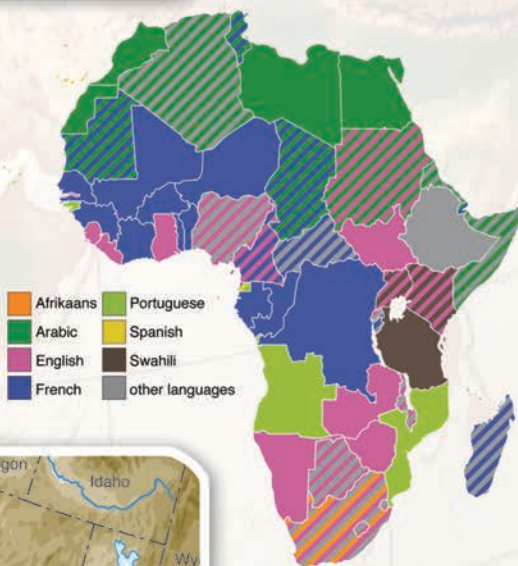
1. Explain the far-reaching extent of the Great Commission.
2. When we truly realize what salvation means to us, how will we be able to view the vast needs of those around us?
3. What question does God put to hesitant or discouraged Christians?
4. How can we be overcomers in the period of Laodicea?
5. What factors compose the eternal joy awaiting successful soul winners?

First Sabbath Offerings



OCTOBER 4
for the Philippine Union
headquarters
(See p. 4.)

NOVEMBER 1
for Printshops
in Africa
(See p. 25.)



DECEMBER 6
for a chapel in Rocklin
California, U.S.A.
(See p. 51.)