

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



**The Church &
*Her Mission***

Vol. 92, No. 2

April–June, 2016

Contents

1. God's Church Through the Ages..... 5
2. God's Church in the Last Days..... 10
3. God's Purpose for His Church..... 15
4. The Mission of the Church..... 20
5. The Object of Evangelism..... 25
6. The Message to Center in Christ..... 31
7. The Incarnation of Christ..... 36
8. The Righteousness of Christ..... 41
9. The Atoning Death of Christ (I) 46
10. The Atoning Death of Christ (II) 52
11. The Resurrection of Christ..... 57
12. The Ascension of Christ 62
13. The Priesthood of Christ 67

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 the front cover and Map Resources on pp. 4, 51, 72; Fotolia on pp. 31, 72.

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Foreword

“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 Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

The glory of God, His character, was manifested in its fullness when He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us from the curse of sin. In this was manifested God’s love for us. Today, the communication of that love to a world in ignorance of it has been entrusted to the church. Through its members, those who have received the message of salvation and been transformed by it, the world is to receive a revelation of God’s character of love. But to communicate that love, we must first understand it. This series of lessons considers first the purpose and mission of the church through the ages and establishes the reason for evangelism, and it then considers the central theme of the gospel message—Christ and Him crucified. “Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men’s minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God.” (*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1113).

“The burden of our message should be the mission and life of Jesus Christ. Let there be a dwelling upon the humiliation, self-denial, meekness, and lowliness of Christ, that proud and selfish hearts may see the difference between themselves and the Pattern, and may be humbled.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 11, 1888.

It is our prayer that these lessons will inspire you with a love that will constrain you to share this message with the whole world.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Kolomyia, Ukraine

Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, Belarus to the northwest, Poland and Slovakia to the west, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova to the southwest, and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south and southeast, respectively. Kolomyia is situated in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, a very picturesque



corner in Ukraine. The beautiful mountains, lushly grassed valleys, rivers with pure water, and natural mineral springs attract tourists from all over Ukraine and the neighboring European countries.

The Reform Movement had its beginning here in the 1940s. In various parts of this region, Reformers by their words and their life testified of the light of the third angel's message. Such was the work during the communist regime. In the 1990s the believers in Kolomyia began organizing Sabbath meetings in the apartment of a brother that had received the Reform message and gladly offered it for the work of God. In some other cities and villages gospel and medical-missionary programs were organized for the public. The years passed and a small group of believers in Kolomyia earnestly prayed for a revival and received an answer to their prayers. New visitors attended the meetings, and a few years ago two young families with their children joined our church in this city. The meetings are still being held in this one-room apartment.

Now the brethren are praying for a chapel for worship on the Sabbath and for other meetings. The believers here regularly spread tracts and carry on the colporteur work in the other nearby towns and villages. As workers in the vineyard of the Lord, they are full of gladness and enthusiasm, and they hope that God will bring new people. Every member of this local church prays and is ready to sacrifice for this cause, but it's not enough. That's why we are asking our brethren and sisters around the world to help us.

It is our prayer and hope that the Lord will impress your heart to please give generously for this project so that in this place we can have a monument for the living God. We thank you for your prayers and support and ask you to remember our work here in Kolomyia.

Your brethren and sisters from Kolomyia

God's Church Through the Ages

“Thus saith the Lord God, . . . Obey my voice, and do [the words of this covenant], according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God” (Jeremiah 11:3, 4).

“Christ has a church in every age.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1079.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 428–433.

Sunday

March 27

1. GOD'S CHURCH—THE FAITHFUL

- a. **What has God had in every age, and what does He call them?** Acts 2:47; Jeremiah 7:23; Romans 9:26. **What is the evidence of our love to God?** John 14:15.
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“Christ has a church in every age. Obedience to the commandments of God gives us a right to the privileges of this church. . . . If we comply with the conditions God has made, we shall secure our election to salvation. Perfect obedience to His commandments is the evidence that we love God.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 17, 1900.

“From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

- b. **Even though the church on earth has ever appeared imperfect, how does God regard it?** Exodus 19:5; 1 Peter 2:9.
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“Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.”—*Ibid.*, p. 12.

2. GOD'S CHURCH BEFORE THE FLOOD

- a. Among the descendants of Adam, who maintained the worship of the true God? Genesis 4:25, 26.
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“To Adam was given another son, to be the inheritor of the divine promise, the heir of the spiritual birthright. The name Seth, given to this son, signified ‘appointed,’ or ‘compensation;’ ‘for,’ said the mother, ‘God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew’ (Genesis 4:25). Seth was of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more closely than did his other sons. He was a worthy character, following in the steps of Abel. Yet he inherited no more natural goodness than did Cain. . . . While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness. By divine grace he served and honored God; and he labored, as Abel would have done, had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey their Creator. . . .

“The faithful had worshiped God before; but as men increased, the distinction between the two classes became more marked. There was an open profession of loyalty to God on the part of one, as there was of contempt and disobedience on the part of the other.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 80.

- b. Following after the example of Abel, what hope did the descendants of Seth cherish? Hebrews 11:13, 16. What is often necessary in order to preserve the faith of God's children? 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.
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“Abel had led a pastoral life, dwelling in tents or booths, and the descendants of Seth followed the same course, counting themselves ‘strangers and pilgrims on the earth,’ seeking ‘a better country, that is, an heavenly’ (Hebrews 11:13, 16).

“For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 81.

3. GOD'S CHURCH AFTER THE FLOOD

- a. **Who among the three sons of Noah maintained the worship of the true God? Genesis 9:18–27. After idolatry again became widespread, who was called to preserve the principle of true religion among the lineage of Shem? Genesis 12:1–3.**
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“After the dispersion from Babel idolatry again became well-nigh universal, and the Lord finally left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while He chose Abraham, of the line of Shem, and made him the keeper of His law for future generations. Abraham had grown up in the midst of superstition and heathenism. Even his father’s household, by whom the knowledge of God had been preserved, were yielding to the seductive influences surrounding them, and they ‘served other gods’ than Jehovah. But the true faith was not to become extinct. God has ever preserved a remnant to serve Him. Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, in unbroken line, had preserved from age to age the precious revealings of His will. The son of Terah became the inheritor of this holy trust. Idolatry invited him on every side, but in vain. Faithful among the faithless, uncorrupted by the prevailing apostasy, he steadfastly adhered to the worship of the one true God. ‘The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth’ (Psalm 145:18). He communicated His will to Abraham and gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of His law and of the salvation that would be accomplished through Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

- b. **What nation from the lineage of Abraham became God’s church for many centuries until the coming of Jesus Christ? Exodus 3:10; Deuteronomy 7:6–8; 14:2; Acts 7:38.**
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“God chose Israel to reveal His character to men. He desired them to be as wells of salvation in the world. To them were committed the oracles of heaven, the revelation of God’s will. In the early days of Israel the nations of the world, through corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. . . . Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them an opportunity of again becoming acquainted with Him through His chosen people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 14.

4. GOD'S CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- a. **Because of their apostasy and rejection of Christ, what judgment did God render against the Jewish church? Matthew 21:42–45; 23:37, 38.**
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“Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven’s purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 377.

“But Israel as a nation had divorced herself from God. The natural branches of the olive tree were broken off. Looking for the last time upon the interior of the temple, Jesus said with mournful pathos, ‘Behold, your house is left unto you desolate’ (Matthew 23:38). . . . Hitherto He had called the temple His Father’s house; but now, as the Son of God should pass out from those walls, God’s presence would be withdrawn forever from the temple built to His glory.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 620.

- b. **What important truth can we learn from the rejection of the Jewish church? 2 Chronicles 15:2; Jeremiah 18:7–10.**
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“There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election—once in grace, always in grace.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 157.

“God’s promises are all made upon conditions.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 47.

“When a church proves unfaithful to the work of the Lord, whatever their position may be, however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer work with them. Others are then chosen to bear important responsibilities.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 131.

- c. **What church was raised up in place of the Jewish church? 1 Peter 2:5–10; Romans 11:20–22; Acts 11:26.**
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“As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 296.

5. PAGANISM CORRUPTED THE CHURCH

- a. After the death of the apostles, what sad event did the professed Christian church experience? 2 Thessalonians 2:3–8.
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“This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of ‘the man of sin’ foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan’s power—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 50.

- b. How did Satan successfully cause the church to become corrupt? James 4:4; 1 John 2:15; Amos 3:3.
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“The great adversary now endeavored to gain by artifice what he had failed to secure by force. Persecution ceased, and in its stead were substituted the dangerous allurements of temporal prosperity and worldly honor. Idolaters . . . professed to accept Jesus as the Son of God . . . , but they had no conviction of sin and felt no need of repentance or of a change of heart. . . .

“Most of the Christians at last consented to lower their standard, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism. . . . Unsound doctrines, superstitious rites, and idolatrous ceremonies were incorporated into her faith and worship. As the followers of Christ united with idolaters, the Christian religion became corrupted, and the church lost her purity and power.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. From a biblical perspective, what makes up God’s church on earth?
2. Although both Seth and Cain had sinful natures, what made Seth different?
3. How was Abraham’s faith a blessing to those around him?
4. How is God’s organized church in danger of losing her connection with Him?
5. How could the church have avoided apostasy and corruption?

God's Church in the Last Days

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

“Although the law of God will be almost universally made void in the world, there will be a remnant of the righteous that will be obedient to God's requirements.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 22, 1889.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 45–62.

Sunday

April 3

1. THE REFORMATION CHURCH

- a. How does God regard the union of Christianity and paganism? Exodus 20:4, 5; Ezekiel 23:37.

“The close and sacred relation of God to His people is represented under the figure of marriage. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306.

- b. When the leadership of the apostate church failed to repent (Revelation 2:21), what principle did the faithful members follow? 2 Corinthians 6:17; Luke 6:22.

“When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

“After a long a severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 45.

2. THE REFORMATION CHURCH (CONTINUED)

- a. **How did the apostate church treat the Reformers who refused to support her corrupt practices? Revelation 12:13, 15. For how long did this treatment continue? Verses 6, 14.**

“In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority’ (Revelation 13:2). And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5–7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus: ‘Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake’ (Luke 21:16, 17). Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 54, 55.

- b. **How did God’s true church survive these persecutions of the Dark Ages? Revelation 12:16. What effect do such trials have upon believers? Romans 5:3, 4.**

“Romanists have persisted in bringing against Protestants the charge of heresy and willful separation from the true church. But these accusations apply rather to themselves. They are the ones who laid down the banner of Christ and departed from ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints’ (Jude 3).”—*Ibid.*, p. 51.

“Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. . . .

“Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains—in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed—the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

3. THE REFORMATION CHURCH BECOMES BABYLON

- a. **What did Jesus say would happen to the period of persecution of the Reformation church and why? Matthew 24:21, 22.**
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“The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. . . . Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 266, 267.

- b. **What prophecy began to be fulfilled after the termination of the Dark Ages, and what event in heaven was announced in connection with the preaching of the gospel? Revelation 14:6, 7.**
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“A great religious awakening under the proclamation of Christ’s soon coming is foretold in the prophecy of the first angel’s message of Revelation 14. An angel is seen flying ‘in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.’ . . . ‘With a loud voice’ he proclaims the message: ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters’ (Verses 6, 7).”—*Ibid.*, p. 355.

- c. **How did the Reformation church respond to the first angel’s message and how did this affect her standing before God? Revelation 14:8.**
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“When the churches spurned the counsel of God by rejecting the Advent message, the Lord rejected them. The first angel was followed by a second, proclaiming, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication’ (Revelation 14:8). This message was understood by Adventists to be an announcement of the moral fall of the churches in consequence of their rejection of the first message. The proclamation, ‘Babylon is fallen,’ was given in the summer of 1844, and as the result, about fifty thousand withdrew from these churches.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 232.

4. THE REMNANT CHURCH

- a. After the fall of the Protestant churches, what church did God raise up to perform a special work of restoration? Isaiah 58:8–14.
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“[Isaiah 61:4; 58:12 quoted.] The prophet here describes a people who, in a time of general departure from truth and righteousness, are seeking to restore the principles that are the foundation of the kingdom of God. They are repairers of a breach that has been made in God’s law—the wall that He has placed around His chosen ones for their protection, and obedience to whose precepts of justice, truth, and purity is to be their perpetual safeguard.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 677, 678.

“[Isaiah 58:12 quoted]. The prophet here refers to the breach made in the law of God by the breaking down of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This precept has been made waste by the man of sin; and the professed Christian world has accepted a day which he has substituted for the sanctified Sabbath of the Lord. Shall we be of the number who are repairing the breach made in the law of God? or shall we be of the number who receive the mark of the beast, by observing the human institution rather than the divine, thus nourishing the child of papacy?”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1878.

- b. What prophecy in the book of Revelation parallels the prophecy of Isaiah 58:8–14? Revelation 14:9–12.
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“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God’s messages and go forth as His agents. . . . Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 455, 456.

5. DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF THE REMNANT CHURCH

- a. **What does the Bible call those who are fulfilling the prophesied work of restoration and preaching of the three angels' messages? Revelation 12:17 (middle part).**
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“In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired. God’s remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 678.

- b. **What are the two most important distinguishing marks of God’s remnant people in these last days? Revelation 12:17 (last part).**
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“[Revelation 12:17 quoted.] This prophecy points out clearly that the remnant church will acknowledge God in His law and will have the prophetic gift. Obedience to the law of God, and the spirit of prophecy has always distinguished the true people of God, and the test is usually given on present manifestations.”—*Loma Linda Messages*, p. 33.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Even as a Christian, how might we possibly be guilty of spiritual adultery?**
2. **When is it wrong, and when is it right to separate from God’s organized church?**
3. **During the Dark Ages, who separated from the true church? Explain your answer.**
4. **Explain what it means to be a repairer of the breach in God’s law.**
5. **Name some of the distinguishing marks of the remnant church in the last days.**

God's Purpose for His Church

“To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. . . . To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:9–11).

“The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest . . . the final and full display of the love of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9–16.

Sunday

April 10

1. CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

- a. What did God say with regards to the creation of mankind, and to whom did He say it? Genesis 1:26, 27.

“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image’ (Genesis 1:26).”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 47.

- b. What does it mean to be created in God's image? Ecclesiastes 7:29.
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“God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 49.

“[Man's] affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason.”—*Ibid.*, p. 45.

2. THE GLORY OF GOD

- a. For what purpose did God create humanity? Isaiah 43:7.
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“Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 264.

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. ‘God created man in His own image’ (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator.”—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. How did inspiration define the glory of God? Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:5–7.
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“The glory of God is His character. While Moses was in the mount, earnestly interceding with God, He prayed, ‘I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.’ In answer God declared ‘I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy’ (Exodus 33:18, 19).

“The glory of God—His character—was then revealed: [Exodus 34:6, 7 quoted].”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 3, 1902.

- c. What forms our characters? Isaiah 55:7–9; Ecclesiastes 8:5; 2 Corinthians 10:5.
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“If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 310.

“Never forget that thoughts work out actions. Repeated actions form habits, and habits form character.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 89.

3. GOD'S PURPOSE THWARTED

- a. Upon what point did the serpent tempt our first parents and bring them under the dominion of sin? Genesis 3:3–6.
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“One of the strongest temptations that man has to meet is upon the point of appetite. . . .

“Since the first surrender to appetite, mankind have been growing more and more self-indulgent, until health has been sacrificed on the altar of appetite. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world were intemperate in eating and drinking. They would have flesh meats, although God had at that time given man no permission to eat animal food. They ate and drank till the indulgence of their depraved appetite knew no bounds, and they became so corrupt that God could bear with them no longer. Their cup of iniquity was full, and He cleansed the earth of its moral pollution by a flood.”—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 108, 109.

- b. How successful was Satan in causing humans to sin? Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:10–12, 18. What was his aim?
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“It was Satan’s purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter’s purpose to thwart the divine plan in man’s creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God’s work in creating man.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 17.

“Through sin the divine likeness was marred and well-nigh obliterated. Man’s physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death.”—*Education*, p. 15.

4. RESTORING THE LOST IMAGE

- a. **After Satan succeeded in destroying the image of God in humanity, what plan was put into operation? Genesis 3:15.**
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“Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man’s uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 759.

“[Genesis 3:15 quoted.] Here was the first promise of a Saviour who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 106.

- b. **What did God propose to accomplish through the plan of redemption? Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18.**
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“The race was not left without hope. By infinite love and mercy the plan of salvation had been devised, and a life of probation was granted. To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”—*Education*, pp. 15, 16.

- c. **Which of the three persons of the Godhead came to our world to restore in human beings the image of God? John 1:18; Luke 19:10.**
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“Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 11.

“Though the moral image of God was almost obliterated by the sin of Adam, through the merits and power of Jesus it may be renewed. Man may stand with the moral image of God in his character; for Jesus will give it to him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 246.

5. THE FINAL DISPLAY OF GOD’S CHARACTER

- a. What is God’s ultimate purpose for His church? Ephesians 3:8–11.
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“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 . . . are to show forth His glory.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

- b. What must be the condition of God’s church in order to reflect His fullness and His image to the world? Ephesians 5:27; John 13:34, 35. What will happen once this condition is reached? Mark 4:29.
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“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me’ (John 14:30). . . . This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did God the Father alone create everything? Explain.
2. What was the nature of Adam at creation, and what was he capable of forming?
3. How did Satan manage to thwart the purpose of God in the creation of humanity?
4. What is the main objective of the plan of redemption?
5. What do you understand as the reason why Jesus has not yet returned?

The Mission of the Church

“And [Jesus] said unto [the disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

“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.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

Suggested Reading: *Christian Service*, pp. 7–29.

Sunday

April 17

1. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- a. **What grand mission was given the church that required a thorough organization in order to accomplish it? Matthew 28:18–20.**
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“The mission of the church of Christ is to save perishing sinners. It is to make known the love of God to men and to win them to Christ by the efficacy of that love. The truth for this time must be carried into the dark corners of the earth, and this work may begin at home.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 381.

- b. **What were the first steps Christ took in organizing His New Testament church? Mark 3:13, 14. What further step related to church organization was taken by the apostles for the furtherance of the gospel? Acts 6:1–6.**
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“It was at the ordination of the Twelve that the first step was taken in the organization of the church that after Christ’s departure was to carry on His work on the earth. . . .

“By these feeble agencies, through His word and Spirit, [the Majesty of heaven] designs to place salvation within the reach of all.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 18.

2. THE COMMISSION INCLUDES ALL BELIEVERS

- a. **On what two occasions was the gospel commission given? Mark 16:14, 15; Matthew 28:16–20; 1 Corinthians 15:6. What lesson can we learn from this act?**
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“The commission had been given to the twelve when Christ met with them in the upper chamber; but it was now to be given to a larger number. At the meeting on a mountain in Galilee, all the believers who could be called together were assembled. Of this meeting Christ Himself, before His death, had designated the time and place. . . .

“This was the only interview that Jesus had with many of the believers after His resurrection. He came and spoke to them saying, ‘All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth’ (Matthew 28:18). . . .

“Clothed with boundless authority, He gave His commission to the disciples: ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations’ (Verse 19).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 818, 819.

“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 who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be coworkers with Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 822.

- b. **Where did Christ instruct His disciples to begin their work of preaching? Luke 24:47. How do you think this applies to us?**
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“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 work of many may appear to be restricted by circumstances; but, wherever it is, if performed with faith and diligence it will be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth.”—*Ibid.*

3. REACHING ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE

- a. How do we know that God is not a respecter of persons? Romans 2:11; Matthew 5:45; 1 John 2:2.
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“Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God’s family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 25.

- b. How did Jesus teach us by precept and example that the gospel should be preached to the lower classes, the poor, the sick, and the outcasts? John 4:5–9; Matthew 9:10–13; 10:7, 8.
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“At the table of the publicans [Christ] sat as an honored guest, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. . . .

“Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy.”—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

- c. How do we know that Jesus also ministered to the middle and upper classes? John 3:1–3; Matthew 8:5–10; Luke 19:1–5.
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“Christ preached the gospel to the poor, but He did not confine His labors to this class. He worked for all who would hear His Word—not only the publican and the outcasts, but the rich and cultivated Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, the centurion, and the Roman ruler. This is the kind of work I have ever seen should be done.”—*Evangelism*, p. 549.

4. PREREQUISITES FOR THE COMING OF JESUS

- a. **What work of the church must be finished before the end comes? Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6, 7. To what “end” is here referred and with what glorious event is it connected? Matthew 24:3.**

“In the prophecy [Revelation 14:6, 7] this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ’s second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ’s second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 227, 228.

- b. **To whom was given the work of giving the last message of mercy to the world? Revelation 3:14.**

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

- c. **What is to be the heart yearning of God’s remnant church today, which will carry this work to completion? Psalm 119:125–127.**

“Here are given the characteristics of those who shall be reformers, who will bear the banner of the third angel’s message, those who avow themselves God’s commandment-keeping people, and who honour God, and are earnestly engaged, in the sight of all the universe, in building up the old waste places. Who is it that calls them, The repairers of the breach, The restorers of the paths to dwell in? It is God. Their names are registered in heaven as reformers, restorers, as raising the foundations of many generations.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1151.

5. EMPOWERMENT NEEDED TO FINISH THE WORK

- a. What was accomplished by the early church of the first century, and how were they enabled to do this work? Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:23; Acts 1:8.
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- b. As we seek to evangelize the world today with a population reaching 7 billion people, what should we as reformers remember? Zechariah 4:6; Luke 18:27; 1 Samuel 14:6.
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“Human strength is weakness, human wisdom is folly. Our success does not depend on our talents or learning, but on our living connection with God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 158.

- c. What must the church members first experience before they are able to successfully preach the gospel to the world? Acts 3:19, 20. For what then should they plead? Zechariah 10:1.
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“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What mission was given by Christ to His organized church on earth?
2. Was the commission to preach the gospel given only to ordained ministers?
3. What work will true Seventh Day Adventists be engaged in today?
4. By what power has the work of God on earth been successfully accomplished?
5. What important work must you do to prepare yourself for the refreshing?

The Object of Evangelism

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, ASV).

“Ministers who labor in towns and cities to present the truth should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of the truth realize indeed the effect of its sanctifying power and are truly converted to God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 317.

Suggested Reading: *Evangelism*, pp. 15–24.

Sunday

April 24

1. THE MISSION OF CHRIST

a. What was the mission of Christ in coming to this world? Luke 19:10.

“Sinners were the special objects of the mission of Christ—sinners of every race and clime. . . . All are dear to Him.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 329.

b. What sacrifice did Jesus make to accomplish His mission? Hebrews 2:9.

“The angels look with awe and amazement upon the mission of Christ to the world. They marvel at the love that moved Him to give Himself a sacrifice for the sins of men.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 497.

c. In what part of Christ’s mission is His church to participate? Luke 4:18.

“The mission of Christ was to heal the sick, encourage the hopeless, bind up the brokenhearted. This work of restoration is to be carried on among the needy suffering ones of humanity.”—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 71.

2. THE OBJECT OF PREACHING

a. What is the gospel all about? 1 Corinthians 15:1–4.

“Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1113.

“The third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment . . . but the great Center of attraction, Jesus Christ, must not be left out of the third angel’s message.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 20, 1894.

b. What is the true object of preaching the gospel to all nations? Luke 1:77; Acts 2:21.

“Preaching, in itself, has no natural power to renew the heart, and yet this is the object of preaching. It is the divine influence accompanying the word, that brings souls in penitence to the foot of the cross.”—*Ibid.*, September 4, 1888.

“The first and chief object of the gospel and all that pertains to it is to seek to save that which is lost. The ministry of the gospel . . . is to reach out to man a helping hand wherever it is needed. It is to minister to the sick and suffering physically as well as to the sin-sick soul.”—*Ibid.*, October 29, 1914.

c. What promise belongs to those who believe the gospel, and what will happen to those who reject it? Mark 16:16; John 3:18–20.

“[Christ] does not say that all the world will be converted, but that ‘this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come’ (Matthew 24:14).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

- a. **What action should be taken by those who believe in Christ? Mark 16:16 (first part). What is the significance of baptism? Romans 6:3–6.**
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“Baptism is a most sacred and important ordinance, and there should be a thorough understanding as to its meaning. It means repentance for sin, and the entrance upon a new life in Christ Jesus.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 499.

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

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.’ And to them is fulfilled the promise: ‘I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty’ (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

- b. **What name was given to Christ’s disciples in Antioch, and why? Acts 11:26.**
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“It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. The name was given them because Christ was the main theme of their preaching, their teaching, and their conversation. Continually they were recounting the incidents that had occurred during the days of His earthly ministry, when His disciples were blessed with His personal presence. Untiringly they dwelt upon His teachings and His miracles of healing. With quivering lips and tearful eyes they spoke of His agony in the garden, His betrayal, trial, and execution, the forbearance and humility with which He had endured the contumely and torture imposed upon Him by His enemies, and the Godlike pity with which He had prayed for those who persecuted Him. His resurrection and ascension, and His work in heaven as the Mediator for fallen man, were topics on which they rejoiced to dwell.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 157.

4. CONVERTED DISCIPLES

- a. **What human relationship is used to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His disciples? 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22–25.**
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“In the Bible the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church is represented by the union of marriage. The Lord has joined His people to Himself by a solemn covenant, He promising to be their God, and they pledging themselves to be His and His alone.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 381.

- b. **How does the Bible describe the life of a baptized disciple of Christ, and why? 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:1, 4.**
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“The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1101.

- c. **What must the church consider before recommending that someone be baptized? Matthew 3:8.**
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“The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we are buried in the likeness of Christ’s death and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. . . . Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 98.

5. QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY

- a. Where does Jesus bring all those who desire to become His disciples, and why? John 10:16; Acts 2:41, 47.
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“All who will, may be reconciled to God and receive everlasting life. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to Israel first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. It is to be given to Jews and Gentiles. All who believe are to be gathered into one church.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 821.

- b. While joining Christ’s church is important, what is far more important? John 15:4–6; Luke 13:5–9.
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“Ministers who . . . present the truth should not feel content . . . until those who have accepted the theory of the truth . . . are truly converted to God. God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth as the result of their labors, than to have sixty make a nominal profession and yet not be thoroughly converted.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 317.

“Connection with a church does not take the place of conversion. To subscribe the name to a church creed is not of the least value to anyone if the heart is not truly changed.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 290, 291.

“We cannot secure a title to heaven by having our names enrolled upon the church book while our hearts are not in unison with Christ and His people.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 19, 1880.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the mission of Christ when He came into this world as the Son of man?
2. What is to be your object in doing evangelistic work?
3. What pledge is made at baptism?
4. Before baptizing a person, what duty must the church perform?
5. As important as church membership is, what is absolutely essential to our salvation?

First Sabbath Offering for World Missions

Dear brethren and sisters around the world:

We live in the closing days of the history of planet Earth, and for a long time our Lord has anxiously been waiting to take us home. The prophetic events unfolding right before our eyes tell us that the second coming of Jesus is near, even at the door. Unfortunately, the gospel message has not reached the ends of the earth



and not every creature has had an opportunity to hear the truth. "Men will soon be forced to great decisions, and they must have opportunity to hear and to understand Bible truth, in order that they may take their stand intelligently on the right side" (*Evangelism*, p. 25).

As members of Christ's body, it is our privilege to represent His character and to take part in spreading the gospel throughout the entire world by committing to this special work our time, strength, and financial resources.

Thanks to our members, and friends' prayers and financial contributions, new missions are being instituted in many regions. These new missions still need our support until they are well-established and become self-supporting, while other new fields are being opened. Every year at the time of the Week of Prayer, we collect a special offering to supply the necessary means to spread the message to many parts of the globe. But more is still needed.

"The Lord's heritage has been strangely neglected, and God will judge His people for this thing. Pride and the love of display are gratified by the accumulated advantages, while new fields are left untouched. The rebuke of God is upon the managers for their partiality and selfish appropriation of His goods."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 59.

Will you choose to unite your efforts with those of missionaries and their families by giving liberally from your resources so that the earth may be filled with God's glory and that Jesus can come soon? We hope you will.

On behalf of a world in need,

Your brethren from the GC Missionary Department

The Message to Center in Christ

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:11, 12).

“There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1084.

Suggested Reading: *Evangelism*, pp. 184–193.

Sunday

May 1

1. THE CENTRAL THEME OF OUR MESSAGE

a. As we studied earlier, what is the special message that we as Seventh Day Adventist reformers should be giving to the world? Revelation 14:6–12.

b. Like the early church, what should be the central theme of our message to the world? Acts 5:42; 1 Corinthians 2:2.

“Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out. It is at the cross of Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The sinner must be led to look to Calvary; with the simple faith of a little child he must trust in the merits of the Saviour, accepting His righteousness, believing in His mercy.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 156, 157.

2. CHRIST THE ONLY SAVIOUR

- a. Since the gospel is all about Christ (Romans 1:1–3), what knowledge must we first obtain and then go and preach it to the world? 2 Peter 3:18; Philippians 3:7, 8.
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“No man can succeed in the service of God unless his whole heart is in the work and he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 273.

- b. Why is the knowledge of the true Christ very important? Matthew 24:24. How do false Christs and false prophets appear before the people? 2 Corinthians 11:13–15; Matthew 7:15.
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“Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God’s holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God and deify him.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 12, 1893.

- c. Why is it important that the Christ we believe in and preach is the true Christ preached by the original apostles? John 14:6; Acts 4:10–12.
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“There is only one way to heaven. We must walk in the footsteps of Jesus, doing His works, even as He did the works of His Father. We must study His ways, not man’s ways; we must obey His will, not our own. . . . He is the Way, the Truth, the Life.”—*Our Father Cares*, p. 264.

“If you are conscious of your sins, do not devote all your powers to mourning over them, but look and live. Jesus is our only Saviour; and . . . not one who trusts in His merits will be left to perish. While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 352.

3. MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRIST

- a. **How does Inspiration explain the blending of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ? Philippians 2:5–8.**
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“[The Author of our salvation] voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own consent. He clothed His divinity with humanity. He was all the while as God, but He did not appear as God. He veiled the demonstrations of Deity which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. He was God while upon earth, but He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man. He walked the earth as a man. For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He laid aside His glory and His majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God He for a while relinquished.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887.

- b. **Regarding His humanity, how old was Jesus when His parents lost Him for three days during the Passover feast, and how old was He when He was baptized by John the Baptist? Luke 2:42, 43; 3:21–23.**
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“We want to comprehend so far as possible the truly human nature of our Lord. The divine and human were linked in Christ, and both were complete.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 135.

- c. **Regarding His divinity, how far back in time did He exist? Micah 5:2; John 17:5, 24.**
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“Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. . . .

“Christ is the preexistent, self-existent Son of God. . . . In speaking of His preexistence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. . . .

“His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 46.

4. MARKS OF THE TRUE CHRIST (CONTINUED)

- a. **How did Jesus explain the fact that He was the self-existent God that appeared to Moses in Mount Horeb? John 8:58 (compare with Exodus 3:14, 15).**

“With solemn dignity Jesus answered, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM’ (John 8:58). . . . The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, ‘whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity’ (Micah 5:2, margin).”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 469, 470.

“It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, ‘I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you’ (Exodus 3:14). This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came ‘in the likeness of men,’ He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God ‘manifest in the flesh’ (1 Timothy 3:16).”—*Ibid.*, p. 24.

- b. **How did Jesus express the truth that as a divine being He has the same divine nature, substance, and attributes as God the Father? John 10:27–30; Colossians 1:18, 19.**

“Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. ‘His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

“[John 10:21–30 quoted.]. . . The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus said, ‘I and my Father are one.’ The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as He put forth the claim that He and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 27, 1893.

5. A DIVINE COCREATOR WITH THE FATHER

- a. **By whom was the world created, and what significance does this fact have regarding the preexistence of Christ?** John 1:2, 3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15–17.
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“If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 247.

- b. **How does God, the Father, acknowledge the deity of Christ, and what assurance does this assertion give us?** Hebrews 1:8–12.
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“‘He that believeth in Me,’ said Jesus, ‘though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?’ (John 11:25, 26). Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is to be the center of the message that we are to bring to the world?
2. How can you recognize a false Christ who claims to be the true Christ?
3. Which person of the Godhead appeared to Moses on Mount Horeb?
4. How can you prove from the Bible that Jesus was a cocreator with the Father?
5. If Jesus is our Creator, what does this fact tell us about Him?

The Incarnation of Christ

“The angel said unto [the shepherds], Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10, 11).

“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 244.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19–26, 32–49.

Sunday

May 8

1. BEHIND THE SCENES

- a. How did the Godhead respond to the fall of Adam and Eve? 1 John 4:10.

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 2, 1912.

- b. Why were Adam and Eve not executed on the very day they ate of the forbidden fruit? Job 33:24; Mark 10:45; Revelation 13:8 (last part).

“The instant Adam yielded to Satan’s temptation and did the very thing which God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying: ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. Give him another trial.’ Transgression placed the whole world under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, ‘I have found a ransom.’”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900.

2. THE PLAN OF SALVATION

- a. **What was the very first step that Christ took to make the whole plan of salvation possible? Hebrews 2:9.**
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“[Jesus] made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

“At first the angels could not rejoice. . . . Jesus told them that He would . . . leave all His glory in heaven, appear upon earth as a man, humble Himself as a man, become acquainted by His own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted. . . .

“Jesus also told [the angels] that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man’s fallen nature, and His strength would not be even equal with theirs; that they would be witnesses of His humiliation and great sufferings; and that as they would witness His sufferings, and the hatred of men toward Him, they would be stirred with the deepest emotion, and through their love for Him would wish to rescue and deliver Him from His murderers; but that they must not interfere to prevent anything they should behold. . . .

“Satan again rejoiced with his angels that he could, by causing man’s fall, pull down the Son of God from His exalted position. He told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man’s nature, he could overpower Him and hinder the accomplishment of the plan of salvation.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 149–152.

- b. **What attribute of Christ’s made it impossible for Him to die before the incarnation? 1 Timothy 6:14–16.**
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“When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 76.

3. THE SON OF GOD BECAME THE SON OF MAN

- a. What is meant by the expression “the word was made flesh” (John 1:14)? Hebrews 2:14 (first part).
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“Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1130.

- b. How does the apostle Paul confirm that Christ possessed a fallen human nature when He came to this earth? Romans 1:3; 8:3.
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“Christ did not make believe take human nature; He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 247.

“He took upon Himself fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin. He took our sorrows, bearing our grief and shame. He endured all the temptations wherewith man is beset. He united humanity with divinity: a divine spirit dwelt in a temple of flesh. He united Himself with the temple. ‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14), because by so doing He could associate with the sinful, sorrowing sons and daughters of Adam.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 20, 1900.

- c. Why was it necessary for Christ to take human nature after the Fall instead human nature before the Fall? Hebrews 2:16–18.
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“The Saviour . . . came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 664.

“Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature. Clothing His divinity with humanity, that He might associate with fallen humanity, He sought to regain for man that which, by disobedience, Adam had lost for himself and for the world.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1896.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION

- a. What qualified Christ to perform His role as a mediator? 1 Timothy 2:5.
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“Jesus could give alone security to God; for He was equal with God. He alone could be a mediator between God and man; for He possessed divinity and humanity. Jesus could thus give security to both parties for the fulfillment of the prescribed conditions. As the Son of God He gives security to God in our behalf, and as the eternal Word, as one equal with the Father, He assures us of the Father’s love to usward who believe His pledged word. When God would assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, He gives His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature as a pledge that God will fulfill His word.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 3, 1894.

- b. What happened to humanity’s relationship to God as a result of sin, and how was this bond restored? Isaiah 59:2; Galatians 4:4, 5.
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“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 13, 1898.

“It was Satan’s purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. . . . God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the ‘Son of man’ who shares the throne of the universe. It is the ‘Son of man’ whose name shall be called, ‘Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6). . . . He who is ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,’ is not ashamed to call us brethren (Hebrews 7:26; 2:11).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

“To bring humanity into Christ, to bring the fallen race into oneness with divinity, is the work of redemption. Christ took human nature that men might be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that God may love man as He loves His only-begotten Son, that men may be partakers of the divine nature, and be complete in Him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 251.

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION (CONTINUED)

- a. **What divine purpose in the creation of humanity was fulfilled through the incarnation of Christ? 1 Corinthians 6:19.**
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“From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

- b. **What did the heavenly angels call the incarnation of Jesus, and why? Luke 2:6–11.**
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“Joy to the poor, for Christ has come to make them heirs of his kingdom! Joy to the rich, for He will teach them how to apply their earthly treasure that it may secure for them eternal riches in Heaven! Joy to the ignorant, for He has come to give them wisdom unto salvation! Joy to the learned, for He will open to their understanding deeper mysteries than they have ever before fathomed!”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 191.

“The condescension of Christ in behalf of men was a marvel to the angels. Redemption through Christ was to them a mystery of love and wisdom.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 15, 1909.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were Adam and Eve allowed to live for hundreds of years after they had sinned?
2. What did Christ pledge before God that secured for humanity a second probation?
3. Why was Christ obliged to take the fallen nature of Adam?
4. What makes it impossible for Christ to redeem the world without the incarnation?
5. Do you find the birth of Christ truly glad tidings for you? Why?

The Righteousness of Christ

“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:8, 9).

“It is impossible for man to save himself. He may deceive himself in regard to this matter, but he cannot save himself. Christ’s righteousness alone can avail for his salvation, and this is the gift of God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 331.

Suggested Reading: *Faith and Works*, pp. 15–27.

Sunday

May 15

1. THE CONDITION OF ETERNAL LIFE

a. What was the position given to Adam in Eden? Genesis 1:28.

“Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature. He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1082.

b. What test was given to Adam? Genesis 2:16, 17. What qualified humanity to pass this test? Genesis 1:26, 27.

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 25, 1905.

2. ADAM FAILED TO RETAIN ETERNAL LIFE

- a. What were some of the consequences of Adam's disobedience? Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4 (last part). What was God's reaction? John 3:16.
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"Adam's disobedience to God's commands brought the human family under the death penalty. 'In Adam all die,' and eternal death, not eternal life, is the final punishment of all who continue in transgression."—*The Signs of the Times*, June 17, 1897.

"The moment the workmanship of God refused obedience to the laws of God's kingdom, that moment he became disloyal to the government of God and he made himself entirely unworthy of all the blessings wherewith God had favored him. . . .

"And the reason why man was not annihilated was because God so loved him that He made the gift of His dear Son that He should suffer the penalty of his transgression. Christ proposed to become man's surety and substitute, that man, through matchless grace, should have another trial—a second probation—having the experience of Adam and Eve as a warning not to transgress God's law as they did."—*Faith and Works*, p. 21.

- b. How did Christ show that obedience to the law was still required after the Fall as a condition for obtaining eternal life? Luke 10:25–28; Matthew 19:16, 17.
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"The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

"Christ does not lessen the claims of the law. In unmistakable language He presents obedience to it as the condition of eternal life—the same condition that was required of Adam before his fall. . . . The requirement under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement made in Eden—harmony with God's law, which is holy, just, and good."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 391.

3. NO SALVATION IN HUMAN WORKS

- a. **While there was no change in the condition for eternal life after sin, what change took place in the nature of humanity, and what was the result? Ephesians 2:3; Romans 3:11, 12.**
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“Adam and Eve . . . were told that their nature had become depraved by sin; they had lessened their strength to resist evil and had opened the way for Satan to gain more ready access to them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 61.

- b. **Did the posterity of Adam inherit his sinless nature or his fallen nature? Psalm 51:5. What became impossible for Adam’s descendants to do on their own, and why? Romans 3:23; Romans 8:7.**
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“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

- c. **In order to be counted righteous, what is written about those who think to rely upon their own works rather than on the merits of Christ? Galatians 3:10; Romans 9:31–33.**
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“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. . . . The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 94.

“The rabbis counted their righteousness a passport to heaven; but Jesus declared it to be insufficient and unworthy. External ceremonies and a theoretical knowledge of truth constituted Pharisaical righteousness. The rabbis claimed to be holy through their own efforts in keeping the law; but their works had divorced righteousness from religion. While they were punctilious in ritual observances, their lives were immoral and debased. Their so-called righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 309.

4. CHRIST BECAME OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. As humanity forfeited their right to eternal life, what did the Father decide to do? Galatians 4:4, 5. What position did Christ as the second Adam occupy when He became a man? 1 Corinthians 15:47.
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“After the fall, Christ became Adam’s instructor. . . . In the fullness of time He was to be revealed in human form. He was to take His position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1901.

- b. What did Christ have to do to secure eternal life for us? Matthew 5:17, 18. How did Jesus fulfill the law? 1 Peter 2:22.
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“The law requires righteousness—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

“In His life on earth, Christ developed a perfect character, He rendered perfect obedience to His Father’s commandments. In coming to the world in human form, in becoming subject to the law, in revealing to men that He bore their sickness, their sorrow, their guilt, He did not become a sinner. . . . Not one stain of sin was found upon Him. He stood before the world the spotless Lamb of God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 29, 1898.

- c. After complying with the condition of eternal life in behalf of humanity, what gift from the Father does Christ offer to each person? Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11.
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“The Saviour of the world offers to the erring the gift of eternal life. He watches for a response to His offers of love and forgiveness with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, repenting, suffering son.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 20, 1876.

5. ACCOUNTED RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH ALONE

- a. As Adam's disobedience made us sinners, by whose obedience shall we be made righteous? Romans 5:17–19. When by faith we take hold of Christ's righteousness, how do we appear in God's eyes? Romans 3:28.
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“We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

- b. When a penitent believer is accounted righteous, what hope does he or she have, even upon death? John 3:16 (last part); Titus 3:7; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.
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“By faith [the sinner] can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 367.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the condition of eternal life before and after the Fall?
2. Because of sin, what change took place in the nature of humans?
3. Why will those who seek to be righteous through law-keeping be cursed?
4. What do you understand by the expression “Christ our righteousness”?
5. If a person who is accounted righteous through faith in the righteousness of Christ happens to die, what is his or her hope?

The Atoning Death of Christ (I)

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, . . . by which also ye are saved . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1–3).

“Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). . . . This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1113.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 741–764.

Sunday

May 22

1. A RANSOM IS FOUND

- a. What provision did God make in the experience of the sacrifice of Isaac, and what significance does this have in human experience? Genesis 22:7–13; Job 33:24.

“The ram offered in the place of Isaac represented the Son of God, who was to be sacrificed in our stead. When man was doomed to death by transgression of the law of God, the Father, looking upon His Son, said to the sinner, ‘Live: I have found a ransom.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 154.

- b. When was the provision made for the salvation of human race? Matthew 25:34; Revelation 13:8 (last part).

“The instant man . . . did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. He shall have another chance.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1085.

2. HOPE CENTERED IN A COMING SAVIOUR

- a. **From what height did Jesus come to die for the sins of humanity? 1 Timothy 6:14, 16; Philippians 2:6.**
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“[Jesus] had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. . . .

“He would leave all His glory in heaven, appear upon earth as a man, humble Himself as a man. . . . He would die the cruellest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 149, 150.

- b. **What promise was given to Adam after he had sinned, and what significance did this pledge have? Genesis 3:15.**
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“[Genesis 3:15 quoted.] This sentence, uttered in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. . . .

“Heavenly angels more fully opened to our first parents the plan that had been devised for their salvation. . . . The Son of God had offered to atone, with His own life, for their transgression. A period of probation would be granted them, and through repentance and faith in Christ they might again become the children of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 65, 66.

- c. **After sin entered the world, what system was introduced to Adam and his descendants and what was its purpose? Genesis 4:3–5; Hebrews 9:13, 14, 28.**
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“To fallen man was revealed the plan of infinite sacrifice through which salvation was to be provided. Nothing but the death of God’s dear Son could expiate man’s sin, and Adam marveled at the goodness of God in providing such a ransom for the sinner. . . . Through the institution of the typical system of sacrifice and offering, the death of Christ was ever to be kept before guilty man, that he might better comprehend the nature of sin, the results of transgression, and the merit of the divine offering.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1893.

3. SAVIOUR OF ALL HUMANITY

- a. When the proper time came, what did the Father decide to do to deliver humanity from the bondage of sin? Galatians 4:4, 5. Whom did Christ come to this world to save? 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 4:14.
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“[Christ] has suffered death for every man, and because of this He has a touching and profound interest in every man.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 222.

“The Samaritans believed that the Messiah was to come as the Redeemer, not only of the Jews, but of the world. The Holy Spirit through Moses had foretold Him as a prophet sent from God. Through Jacob it had been declared that unto Him should the gathering of the people be; and through Abraham, that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. On these scriptures the people of Samaria based their faith in the Messiah. . . .

“Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 193.

- b. In order to be the Saviour of the world, in what form did Christ come down to earth? Philippians 2:7, 8.
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- c. When Christ died for all humanity, what words of Jesus indicate to us that it was His humanity that died and not His divinity? John 10:17, 18.
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“He who had said, ‘I lay down my life, that I might take it again’ (John 10:17), came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself. Humanity died; divinity did not die. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 301.

“‘I am the resurrection, and the life’ (John 11:2). This language can be used only by the Deity. All created things live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of the Son of God. . . . They are replenished with life from the Source of all life. Only He who alone hath immortality, dwelling in light and life, could say, ‘I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1113.

4. THE SECOND DEATH ABOLISHED FOR BELIEVERS

- a. **When the penalty of eternal death shall be inflicted upon those who reject Christ as their Saviour, what is it called, and why? Revelation 20:14; 21:8.**
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“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (Romans 6:23). While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: ‘I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil’ (Deuteronomy 30:15). The death referred to in these scriptures is . . . ‘the second death’ that is placed in contrast with everlasting life.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 544.

- b. **How did Jesus experience the feeling of despair of those who suffer the second death? Matthew 27:46; Hebrews 2:9.**
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“Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. . . . If they refuse the heavenly benefit . . . , they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 210.

- c. **Through death, what did Christ abolish for us, and what did He make possible for us? 2 Timothy 1:10; John 5:24; Revelation 2:11.**
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“Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. . . . There could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. . . . Every man may come into possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All ‘who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,’ will receive ‘eternal life’ (Romans 2:7).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 533.

5. A WONDERFUL EXCHANGE

- a. **Why did Christ suffer the full penalty of sin when He was never guilty of any sin at all? 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:14.**
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“Jesus took humanity upon Him, and in so doing what honor He placed upon the race! He suffered as a man, He was tempted as men are tempted, yet without sin. He was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 18, 1890.

- b. **What does Christ offer to us in exchange for our sins? Romans 5:17.**
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“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

“We are not worthy of God’s love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness. . . . He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner’s place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me. Does Satan plead loudly against our souls, accusing of sin, and claiming us as his prey, the blood of Christ pleads with greater power.”—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, p. 8.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What was the purpose of God in giving humanity a second probation?**
2. **When Adam died at the age of 930 years, did he pay the penalty of his transgression mentioned in Genesis 2:17?**
3. **For whom did Jesus give His life on the cross?**
4. **What is the proof that Jesus did not abolish the first death?**
5. **If we exchange our sins for the righteousness of Christ, what must we also give Him, and what must we accept from Him?**

First Sabbath Offering for a chapel in Podgorica, Montenegro

Montenegro is a European mountainous country in the southern Balkan Peninsula. Its capital and largest city is Podgorica, while Cetinje is designated as the Prijestonica, meaning the former Royal Capital City. Montenegrins have been, historically, members of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox Christianity is still the most popular religion in that area today. There is also a small Roman Catholic population, mostly among the Albanians and some Croats. About one-fifth of the population identifies with Islam.



Montenegro is known for its natural beauty and a turbulent history resulting from the domination of the Ottoman Empire. The freedom-loving people of Montenegro will never reconcile with the hardships of war and slavery. Throughout the centuries they have faced the horrors of prolonged wars. The rugged nature in northern Montenegro, where snow can fall every month of the year, and the mild Mediterranean climate on the southern Adriatic coast, in the same country, have contributed to the development of a special mentality of people with strong emotions that are reluctant to give up traditional values.

In such circumstances the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement began its operations in the 1990s when, with the help of some overseas believers, we bought a piece of land and built a house of prayer and worship on the outskirts of Podgorica. Our local church community has operated in this building since 1992.

Due to the distance between the chapel and the city of Podgorica, and the difficulties in transportation links with the city, we have decided to relocate the existing chapel and to buy a property in a location closer to the people that need to hear the message of salvation. Which is why we need additional funds to advance the work of God in this part of the world.

We encourage our fellow believers and members of the Sabbath Schools around the world to remember our needs here in Montenegro and we thank you all for your generous offerings and prayers.

Your brethren and sisters in Christ from Montenegro

The Atoning Death of Christ (II)

“We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23, 24).

“The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 254.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 389–394.

Sunday

May 29

1. GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

- a. Describe the depth of the love of God? John 3:16; Romans 5:6–8.

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. . . .

“Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 209, 210.

- b. What new commandment should we endeavor to obey that would set us apart from the unbelievers? John 13:34, 35.

“As Christ had loved them, the disciples were to love one another. They were to show forth the love abiding in their hearts for men, women, and children, by doing all in their power for their salvation. But they were to reveal a specially tender love for all of the same faith. . . .

“It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal without possessing Christlike love for his brethren.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1140, 1141.

2. ALL HUMANITY BENEFITED BY CHRIST'S DEATH

- a. **What lesson did Jesus teach from the brass serpent lifted up in the wilderness? John 3:14, 15.**
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“When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass. . . . Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 174.

“To the cross of Calvary, bearing a dying Saviour, we must look. Our eternal interests demand that we show faith in Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 660.

- b. **Because of Christ's death, what daily blessing does God bestow upon all men and women in this present probationary life? Matthew 5:45.**
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“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **While believers and unbelievers alike enjoy everything pertaining to their temporal life because of the death of Christ, who only will receive eternal life? Matthew 7:21; John 3:16; Romans 2:7; Revelation 22:14.**
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“[Matthew 7:21 quoted.] The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but, ‘What do ye more than others?’ (Matthew 5:47). Full of meaning are His words, ‘If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them’ (John 13:17). Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 272.

“The word of God plainly tells us that few will be saved, and that the greater number of those, even, who are called will prove themselves unworthy of everlasting life. They will have no part in heaven, but will have their portion with Satan, and experience the second death.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 293, 294.

3. FULL PARDON AVAILABLE

- a. Under the sacrificial system, what did the law require for forgiveness of sin? Hebrews 9:22. What did Christ do to make it possible for all to be forgiven? Romans 5:8, 9.
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“Many have expressed wonder that God demanded so many slain victims in the sacrificial offerings of the Jewish people; but it was to rivet in their minds the great truth that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. A lesson was embodied in every sacrifice, impressed in every ceremony, solemnly preached by the priest in his holy office, and inculcated by God Himself—that through the blood of Christ alone is there forgiveness of sins. How little we as a people feel the force of this great truth! How seldom, by living, acting faith, do we bring into our lives this great truth, that there is forgiveness for the least sin, forgiveness for the greatest sin!”—*The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886.

- b. How does Christ’s sacrifice embrace all of humanity, and what obligation then rests upon us? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.
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“Christ suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for Calvary was outside the city walls. This was to show that He died, not for the Hebrews alone, but for all mankind.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 934.

- c. Upon what condition is the sinner pardoned, and to what will this lead? 1 John 1:9; Colossians 3:1–3.
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“How wonderful is the plan of redemption in its simplicity and fullness. It not only provides for the full pardon of the sinner but also for the restoration of the transgressor, making a way whereby he may be accepted as a son of God. Through obedience he may be the possessor of love and peace and joy. His faith may unite him in his weakness to Christ, the source of divine strength; and through the merits of Christ he may find the approval of God, because Christ has satisfied the demands of the law, and He imputes His righteousness to the penitent, believing soul.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 10, 1891.

4. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

- a. **When Christ signed the emancipation papers of the human race with His own blood, who became the legal owner of all humanity that have hitherto been “sold under sin” (Romans 7:14)? 1 Peter 1:18–20.**
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“By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord’s property.

“We are His by creation and by redemption. Our very bodies are not our own. . . . Our lives and all our faculties belong to Him.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 173.

- b. **As Christ has acquired the right of ownership, what does He now require of each individual in order to complete the process of adoption as a son or daughter of God? Galatians 3:26–29.**
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“Many . . . do not see the work which must be wrought in them by the Holy Spirit before they can be transformed from Satan’s subjects to sons of God. . . . ‘Except a man be born again’—unless he receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life—‘he cannot see the kingdom of God’ (John 3:3). . . . He is no longer to be a willing subject to the enemy of Christ. He is to become an heir of God by faith, a son of God by adoption.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 9, 1882.

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. . . .

“Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: ‘This is My child. I reprieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.’ Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ’s righteousness, stands faultless before God.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

5. GOD'S LAW VINDICATED

- a. Why was King Darius unable to stop Daniel from being cast into the lion's den for violating the king's own decree, even though he was bent on saving Daniel? Daniel 6:7–9, 15, 16.
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- b. In like manner, what did Christ's death on the cross prove regarding the nature of God's holy law? Psalm 111:7, 8. Who originated the idea that Christ's death abolished God's law?
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“It is ever the purpose of Satan to make void the law of God and to pervert the true meaning of the plan of salvation. Therefore he has originated the falsehood that the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary's cross was for the purpose of freeing men from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God. . . . Could the law have been abolished, and the government of heaven and earth and the unnumbered worlds of God maintained, Christ need not have died. The death of Christ was to forever settle the question of the validity of the law of Jehovah. Having suffered the full penalty for a guilty world, Jesus became the Mediator between God and man, to restore the repenting soul to favor with God by giving him grace to keep the law of the Most High. Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them to the very letter. The atonement of Calvary vindicated the law of God as holy, just, and true, not only before the fallen world but before heaven and before the worlds unfallen. Christ came to magnify the law and to make it honorable.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 118, 119.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How will we reveal our love for Christ in a practical way?
2. When only do our words benefit others?
3. Along with pardon for the sinner, what else does the plan of redemption provide?
4. What must we do in order to be adopted as sons and daughters of God?
5. What is the strongest proof that the law of God is immutable? Why?

The Resurrection of Christ

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3, 4).

“The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The countenance of the risen Saviour, His manner, His speech, were all familiar to His disciples. As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again.”—*Last Day Events*, p. 291.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 779–794.

Sunday

June 5

1. CHRIST FORETOLD HIS RESURRECTION

- a. How did Jesus foretell His death and resurrection? Matthew 20:18, 19.

- b. What did the Jewish leaders do on the Sabbath to prevent the fulfillment of Christ’s words concerning His resurrection? Matthew 27:62–66. What can we learn from the women who prepared spices for Jesus? Luke 23:55, 56.

“The priests gave directions for securing the sepulcher. A great stone had been placed before the opening. Across this stone they placed cords, securing the ends to the solid rock, and sealing them with the Roman seal. The stone could not be moved without breaking the seal. A guard of one hundred soldiers was then stationed around the sepulcher to prevent it from being tampered with. The priests did all they could to keep Christ’s body where it had been laid. He was sealed as securely in His tomb as if He were to remain there through all time.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 778.

2. THE SCENE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

- a. **Who raised Jesus according to the apostles? Acts 2:32; 13:33. Whom did the Father send to actually call Jesus back to life? Matthew 28:1-3.**
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“This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. . . . The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee. They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 780.

- b. **What part did the divine Son of God act in the resurrection of His human body? John 2:19-22; 10:17, 18.**
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“When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ’s tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. . . . Now was fulfilled the prophecy He had spoken to the priests and rulers, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’ (John 2:19).”—*Ibid.*, p. 785.

- c. **How did the Roman guards and the evil angels guarding the tomb react when they saw Christ being resurrected? Matthew 28:4. What did the resurrection of Christ confirm in the mind of Satan?**
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“Terror seized the Roman guard. Where was now their power to keep the body of Jesus? They did not think of their duty or of the disciples’ stealing Him away. As the light of the angels shone around, brighter than the sun, that Roman guard fell as dead men to the ground. . . .

“Satan’s angels had been compelled to flee before the bright, penetrating light of the heavenly angels. . . . Satan knew that after a season he must die, and his kingdom pass unto Him whose right it was. He lamented and raged that notwithstanding all his efforts, Jesus had not been overcome, but had opened a way of salvation for man, and whosoever would might walk in it and be saved.”—*Early Writings*, p. 182.

3. RAISED TO EVERLASTING LIFE

- a. How did Jesus explain to His disciples that He was resurrected as a human being with a physical body and not as a spirit being like the angels? Luke 24:36–40. When they doubted, what did He do to remove their doubts? Luke 24:41–43.
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- b. How does the Bible describe the resurrected human body of Christ? Philippians 3:21. How is the resurrected body of Christ different from our present mortal body? Romans 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:16.
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- c. What plan did Satan devise to destroy the impact of Christ resurrection, and how was this plot implemented? Matthew 28:11–15.
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“Satan bade his servants go to the chief priests and elders. Said he, ‘We succeeded in deceiving them, blinding their eyes and hardening their hearts against Jesus. We made them believe that He was an impostor. That Roman guard will carry the hateful news that Christ has risen. We led the priests and elders on to hate Jesus and to murder Him. Now hold it before them that if it becomes known that Jesus is risen, they will be stoned by the people for putting to death an innocent man.’ . . .

“. . . It was decided to hire the soldiers to keep the matter secret. The priests and elders offered them a large sum of money. . . . And when the guard inquired what would be done with them for sleeping at their post, the Jewish officers promised to persuade the governor and secure their safety. For the sake of money, the Roman guard sold their honor, and agreed to follow the counsel of the priests and elders.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 183, 184.

“A lying report was then given to the soldiers. . . . Here the priests overreached themselves. How could the soldiers say that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept? If they were asleep, how could they know? And if the disciples had been proved guilty of stealing Christ’s body, would not the priests have been first to condemn them? Or if the sentinels had slept at the tomb, would not the priests have been foremost in accusing them to Pilate?”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 781, 782.

4. TROPHIES OF CHRIST'S VICTORY

- a. **What countermeasure did God plan beforehand to overrule the cover-up that Satan had devised? Matthew 27:50–53.**
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“When Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, cried out, ‘*It is finished,*’ the rocks rent, the earth shook, and some of the graves were opened. When He arose a victor over death and the grave . . . many of the righteous dead, obedient to His call, came forth as witnesses that He had risen. Those favored, risen saints came forth glorified. They were chosen and holy ones of every age, from creation down even to the days of Christ. Thus while the Jewish leaders were seeking to conceal the fact of Christ’s resurrection, God chose to bring up a company from their graves to testify that Jesus had risen, and to declare His glory. . . .

“Those who came forth after the resurrection of Jesus appeared to many, telling them that the sacrifice for man was completed, that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, had risen from the dead; and in proof of their words they declared, ‘We be risen with Him.’ They bore testimony that it was by His mighty power that they had been called forth from their graves.”—*Early Writings*, p. 184.

- b. **What Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled by those raised by Christ on the day of His resurrection? Isaiah 26:19. How are these resurrected saints different from those He raised before His death? John 11:43, 44; Luke 7:11–15.**
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“During His ministry, Jesus had raised the dead to life. He had raised the son of the widow of Nain, and the ruler’s daughter and Lazarus. But these were not clothed with immortality. After they were raised, they were still subject to death. But those who came forth from the grave at Christ’s resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer the captives of Satan; I have redeemed them. I have brought them from the grave as the first fruits of My power, to be with Me where I am, nevermore to see death or experience sorrow.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 786.

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

a. What hope of the believer was made certain by Christ's resurrection? 1 Corinthians 15:20–23; John 6:40; 1 Thessalonians 4:14–17.

b. What kind of body will the resurrected Christian have, and why is the change to immortality necessary? 1 Corinthians 15:50–53.

“The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 180.

c. What symbolic Old Testament ceremony prefigured the resurrection of Christ? Leviticus 23:10–12; 1 Corinthians 15:20.

“Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. . . . His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 785, 786.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Jewish leaders go to great lengths to secure the body of Jesus?
2. Who actually resurrected the body of Jesus?
3. What did the resurrection of Christ confirm regarding the destiny of Satan?
4. What was special about those resurrected with Christ?
5. What is the “flesh and blood” that cannot inherit the kingdom of God?

The Ascension of Christ

“[Jesus] led [his disciples] out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Luke 24:50, 51).

“The very same Jesus whom they had seen go up into Heaven, should come again in like manner as he had ascended. This assurance has ever been, and will be till the close of time, the hope and joy of all true lovers of Christ.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 254.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 829–835.

Sunday

June 12

1. A QUICK VISIT TO THE FATHER

a. What did Jesus tell Mary Magdalene when she first recognized Him after His resurrection? John 20:14–17.

b. Based on His response to Mary, what suggests that Jesus later ascended to heaven that Sunday morning and came back the same day? John 20:19–27; Matthew 28:18.

“Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain eternal life. The Father ratified the covenant made with Christ, that He would receive repentant and obedient men, and would love them even as He loves His Son. . . . All power in heaven and on earth was given to the Prince of Life, and He returned to His followers in a world of sin, that He might impart to them of His power and glory.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 790.

2. CHRIST'S FINAL DAYS ON EARTH

- a. **How long did Jesus stay on earth after His resurrection, and what were some of the things He did with His followers during this time?** Acts 1:1–3; Luke 24:45, 46.
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“For forty days Christ remained on the earth, preparing the disciples for the work before them and explaining that which heretofore they had been unable to comprehend. He spoke of the prophecies concerning His advent, His rejection by the Jews, and His death, showing that every specification of these prophecies had been fulfilled. He told them that they were to regard this fulfillment of prophecy as an assurance of the power that would attend them in their future labors. . . .

“During these days that Christ spent with His disciples, they gained a new experience. As they heard their beloved Master explaining the Scriptures in the light of all that had happened, their faith in Him was fully established.”—*The Acts of Apostles*, pp. 26, 27.

- b. **Before ascending to heaven, what commission did Christ give to His disciples, and how far-reaching is this work?** Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19, 20. **Where was their work of preaching to begin, and why?** Acts 1:8.
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“Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. . . . You have been witnesses of My life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. You have seen My labors for Israel. And although My people . . . have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to Me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles—to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.

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

3. CHRIST ASCENDS TO HEAVEN THE SECOND TIME

- a. What specific place in Bethany did Jesus choose as the place for His ascension to heaven? Luke 24:50, 51. What other experiences made this place memorable to Christ?
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“As the place of His ascension, Jesus chose the spot so often hallowed by His presence while He dwelt among men. . . . The groves and glens of the mountain had been consecrated by His prayers and tears. Its steeps had echoed the triumphant shouts of the multitude that proclaimed Him king. On its sloping descent He had found a home with Lazarus at Bethany. In the garden of Gethsemane at its foot He had prayed and agonized alone. From this mountain He was to ascend to heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 829, 830.

- b. How did the angels comfort the disciples at Jesus' ascension? Acts 1:9–11.
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“The most precious fact to the disciples in the ascension of Jesus was that he went from them into Heaven in the tangible form of their divine Teacher. The very same Jesus, who had walked, and talked, and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; who had sought retirement with them in the groves; and who had that very day toiled with them up the steep ascent of Olivet—had ascended to Heaven in the form of humanity.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 254.

- c. Why was it expedient for Jesus to go to heaven? John 16:7; 14:16, 26.
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“The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

4. A GLORIOUS ENTRANCE TO THE CITY OF GOD

- a. **Who else ascended with Christ to heaven, and what was the reception they received before entering the city of God? Matthew 27:52, 53; Ephesians 4:8; Psalm 24:7-10.**
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“As [the Saviour] ascended he led the way, and the multitude of captives whom He had raised from the dead at the time when He came forth from the tomb, followed Him. The heavenly host, with songs of joy and triumph, escorted Him upward.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 31, 1895.

“The portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music. . . .

“The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 833, 834.

- b. **What did Christ request for His disciples, and what did the Father declare concerning them? John 17:24; Ephesians 1:6.**
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“Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son . . . had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. . . . The compact had been fully carried out. Now [Christ] declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, ‘I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am’ (John 19:30; 17:24).

“The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ’s toiling, struggling ones on earth are ‘accepted in the Beloved’ (Ephesians 1:6). Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. . . . The Father’s arms encircle His Son and the word is given, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him’ (Hebrews 1:6).”—*Ibid.*, p. 834.

5. THE ENTHRONEMENT OF CHRIST

- a. With what words did the angels in heaven praise Jesus? Revelation 5:12.
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“With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain’ (Revelation 5:12).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 834.

- b. What ceremony was performed for Christ, and what promise to His disciples was fulfilled as soon as that rite was over? John 16:7–13; Acts 1:8; 2:1–4.
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“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

PERSONAL AND REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How was Jesus able to verify if His sacrifice for sin was accepted by the Father?
2. How can we, like the disciples, be witnesses for Christ in preaching the gospel?
3. What special blessing does the Comforter bring to all humanity?
4. Who attended the inauguration ceremony of Christ?
5. During His inauguration in heaven, to what offices was Christ inducted?

The Priesthood of Christ

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

“The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 489.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 409–432.

Sunday

June 19

1. A PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC

- a. Under what order of priesthood was Christ inaugurated as priest and king? Hebrews 6:20. What is written about Melchizedek? Hebrews 7:1–4; Genesis 14:18–20.

“It was Christ that spoke through Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchizedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 409.

- b. After Christ was inducted as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, which sanctuary did He enter to minister? Hebrews 8:1, 2. What had happened to the earthly sanctuary and its services? Matthew 27:50, 51.

“The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. . . . The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 259, 260.

2. IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

- a. **As our high priest, what is one of Christ's offices? 1 Timothy 2:5. To perform His mediatorial work, where must Jesus be? Hebrews 8:1; Colossians 3:1.**
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- b. **Where was the throne of God located when in vision John saw Christ ministering to His people soon after His ascension? Revelation 4:2, 5; 8:3, 4.**
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"The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there 'seven lamps of fire burning before the throne' (Revelation 4:5). He saw an angel 'having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne' (Revelation 8:3). Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the 'seven lamps of fire' and 'the golden altar,' represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 414, 415.

- c. **How did Paul corroborate John's witness that Jesus entered with His own blood into the first apartment called the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary? Hebrews 9:8, 11, 12.**
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- d. **How do we know that the chariot throne of God is not permanently attached to the Ark of the Covenant in the most holy place but rather can be move from one place to another? Ezekiel 1:15–17, 24–26.**
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"I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him."—*Early Writings*, p. 55.

3. "WITHIN THE VEIL"

- a. What other terms does Scripture use to refer to the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where Christ entered at His ascension? Hebrews 6:18–20; Numbers 4:25, 26.
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"The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, 'within the veil' which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered at His ascension. . . . So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven."—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 420, 421.

- b. If the priest coming from the holy place would enter "within the veil" where the ark was, which veil is meant, and to which apartment would the expression "within the veil" refer? Hebrews 9:3; Exodus 26:31–33; Leviticus 16:2, 15.
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"Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement . . . two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, . . . (Leviticus 16:8). The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat."—*Ibid.*, p. 419.

- c. How does inspiration also use "within the veil" to refer to the whole sanctuary without referring specifically to either the first or second apartment? Numbers 18:5, 7. [Note: altar and sanctuary (v. 5) parallels with "altar" and "within the veil" (v. 7).]
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"Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them. . . . Their earnest prayers will enter into that within the veil."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 112, 113.

4. WRITING THE LAW IN THE HEART

- a. **As a minister of the heavenly sanctuary, under which covenant is Christ working as our mediator? Hebrews 8:6; 9:11.**
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“[Hebrews 8:1, 2 quoted.] Here is revealed the sanctuary of the new covenant. The sanctuary of the first covenant was pitched by man, built by Moses; this is pitched by the Lord, not by man. In that sanctuary the earthly priests performed their service; in this, Christ, our great High Priest, ministers at God’s right hand. One sanctuary was on earth, the other is in heaven.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 413.

- b. **What divine purpose must Christ’s ministry accomplish in the heart of those who come under the new covenant? Hebrews 8:8–11. What does it mean to have the law written in the heart? Romans 2:14, 15; Titus 2:14.**
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“He who has God’s law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 361.

“When the law of God is written in the heart it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. . . . All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil. . . . They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 17, 1887.

- c. **Into what condition must Christ bring the church if the great controversy between Him and Satan is to end in His favor? Ephesians 4:11–14; 5:25–27.**
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“Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

5. MINISTERING FORGIVENESS TO HIS PEOPLE

- a. **Who is pleading with God for us, and what argument is He using to secure pardon for our sins? Hebrews 9:11–15, 22; 7:25.**
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“We have a risen Lord, ascended on high, who ever liveth to make intercession for us . . . in the presence of the Father, pleading His blood for the forgiveness of our sins.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886.

- b. **What encouragement is given to those who are discouraged because of their sins and imperfection of character? 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2; Hebrews 12:2, 3.**
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“Believe Jesus loves you, and in your efforts to obey the truth, if you err, don’t feel that you must worry and worry, give up your confidence in God, think that God is your enemy. . . .You cannot cleanse yourself from impurities. Carry all your burdens to Jesus. He will help you. He wants you to not wait and expect through your good deeds to make atonement for sin or to make yourself righteous. Trust in the merits of the blood of a crucified, risen Saviour.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 376.

“We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 123.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. **What was the meaning of the rending of the veil of the temple at the death of Jesus on the cross?**
- 2. **How do we know that the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary correspond to those in the earthly tabernacle?**
- 3. **What are the three meanings of “within the veil” as used by Inspiration?**
- 4. **What does it mean to have God’s law written in the heart?**
- 5. **What encouragement is given to the erring members of Christ’s church?**

First Sabbath Offerings



APRIL 2

For a chapel in Kolomyia,
Ukraine
(See p. 4.)

MAY 7

For World Missions
(See p. 30.)



JUNE 4

for chapel in Podgorica,
Montenegro
(See p. 51.)